

Submission to IPART  
27 September 2006

## **2007 Bus Fare Review**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the 2007 Bus Fare Review.

Whilst no travelling commuter ever welcomes fare increases the Ministry of Transport (MOT) submission makes a satisfactory case for same. Recent reductions in fuel prices should be considered.

My main concern is regarding the lack of integrated ticketing and comments regarding alignment of Sydney Buses fares with those of private operators.

On integrated ticketing, Sydney remains the only mainland state without integrated ticketing arrangements for all modes of transport (generally Zone or Time based). This lack of integration is a serious disincentive to commuters who need to use multiple modes or routes to complete their journeys, chiefly due to the enormous cost that accrues with single fares at every mode/route change. The ability to divert people from cars to public transport is lost here, together with time considerations.

I am aware that the Government's T-Card is being proposed as the system to fix a number of problems. The difficulties in delivery this technology due to Sydney's complicated fare structures are well documented. From what I understand, however, the T-Card will achieve little other than removing cash fares from public transport.

The potential for this as a basic function of T-Card is apparent when considering the success of the Octopus card in Hong Kong. This system brings with it a flat-fare system on buses and ferries, with tag on-tag off arrangements on trains. Even to achieve this and keep the system cheap will require significant fare reform. Unfortunately neither Government nor opposition parties in this NSW have even raised this. Opportunities lost.

There are however two tickets in existence that allow an element of integration but are sadly yet to be utilised.

The BusTripper allows all day travel on Sydney Buses, and DayTripper on Sydney Buses, Sydney Ferries and Cityrail trains. Both tickets do not allow travel by privately operated buses.

I emailed the Minister for Transport, John Watkins, on this topic on 1 September 2006 and am yet to receive even an acknowledgement. As extract from my email, detailing a simple suggestion for use of these tickets on privately operated buses, follows:

"As I understand it, under the Metropolitan Bus Reform regime, the MOT pays the bus operators on a kilometre basis. All farebox revenue is transferred to the MOT. Ownership or lease of the vehicles and depots is in effect transferred from the operators to the MOT. If this is so, then the operators profit formula is essentially MOT income and charter income in, less wages/fuel and operating costs = Profit.

Now, assuming that the MOT is collecting all farebox revenue, and operator revenue from bus operations is essentially fixed, then why does the DayTripper ticket continue to be restricted to Sydney Buses (State Transit) only? Revenue sharing is no longer an issue. Rider recording on private buses can be a simple keystroke on the ticket machine similar to the Pensioner Excursion Ticket (PET)."

I note that the MOT submission at page 5, dot point 1 talks of the PET and other concessions for all day travel on bus, rail and certain Government ferry services in metropolitan Sydney. I see no reason why the recording of ridership for BusTripper and DayTripper users cannot be aligned to that currently being conducted for the PET.

I assume it is not the place of IPART to recommend implementation of such things. However it is surely food for thought and could be raised in the context on the finding of the submission.

I look forward to your response and final report.

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