

Dear Tribunal Members,

Re: Rising Taxi Costs for Passengers on Centrelink Benefits.

I write to lodge this e-mail submission as part of your review of taxi fares in NSW and wish to draw your particular attention to the plight faced by those of us on Centrelink Payments.

I'm a long standing Transport Campaigner and Disability Support Pensioner who receives a payment of approximately \$500 a fortnight which equals \$250 a week.

Obviously out of this per week I've got to contribute to buying groceries, paying bills, clothe and entertain myself and of course participate in community and workforce life.

Subsequently, in order to participate in community and workforce life transport becomes an important issue.

For me, it once involved several taxi trips once a month but because of rising costs in fares, tolls, fees and charges the regularity of trips has had to be scaled back with the negative impact on the quality of my life.

For example, I recently had to attend NSW Parliament House from my house in Mt. Druitt which in effect is a full trip into the city and back during non-peak hours.

The total return fare including my TTSS Subsidy Scheme Vouchers totalled \$225! That is \$100 going and \$125 back.

The point being that Aged and Disability Support Pensioners like myself simply can not continue to afford these types of taxi fares and rising costs as they make taxi transport out of reach for most of us and greatly impact our quality of life.

I can still recall a couple of years ago the same city trip by taxi costing \$80 both ways and whilst this was expensive also it wasn't as bad as its getting now.

Therefore, I submit to you all given my statements above that you consider providing Centrelink Payment Receipients like myself either a 'Consession' or 'Exemption' to cover the added rising costs of paying tolls, fees and charges.

This would greatly improve our lives and could in my opinion be possible to achieve as a lasting outcome.

Please be advised I'm happy to have this submission published on your website and elsewhere and would love to appear before the Tribunal to provide oral evidence at the appropriately scheduled time.

For your reference and information, I've attached an article that I recently appeared in the Sun Herald for featuring me and the experience I alluded to earlier in the submission.

I trust that my contribution to your review assists in your work and efforts and I extend my thanks to you for your time.

I look forward to receiving your considered response to my submission in due course.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID CUNNINGHAM.

EXTRA Naked Eye



Edited by **KERRY-ANNE WALSH** and **LISA CARTY**

Costello's very public job hunt peters out

MUCH has been written but little light shed on the intentions of former Treasurer and permanent political bridesmaid **Peter Costello**. In his public job application – sorry, news conference – the day after the election, Costello said he'd be seeking to build a commercial career. His job hunt will obviously be on the taxpayer's time, as he's still a backbencher. Apart from the teeny moral question that raises, how's the hunt going? We're told a large entrepreneurial bank that has a few Liberal ex-MPs on its books has shown some interest in the one-time industrial legal eagle, but many big-end corporates are more interested in casting their eyes into Labor nooks and crannies for their boardroom appointments. The reasons are obvious – wall-to-wall Labor governments across the country.

Clare to the rescue



He came, he saw bearpit

DAVID CUNNINGHAM (pictured left) of Mount Druitt was all dressed up with no place to go after travelling to State Parliament to support an Opposition call for RailCorp to introduce an evacuation plan for disabled customers and staff on January 25. Cunningham, 29, who has cerebral palsy and is an advocate for services for the disabled, was to front a press conference with Opposition disability services spokesman **Andrew Constance**. But Constance was sick and the Opposition postponed the presser. Cunningham, who had left home before the Opposition rang to tell him the jam was off, doesn't have a mobile. "The taxi took more than two hours because the driver was new," Cunningham said. A Liberal staffer coughed up Cabcharges to cover the return fare (\$225) but Cunningham faced a dilemma – he'd made a big trip for nothing and didn't want to go straight home. Luckily, some kindly Parliament employees gave him a tour of the bearpit. Cunningham doesn't bear a grudge and plans to return for the presser in a week or so. The Opposition might want to take more care with the people it brings out to highlight issues. In November, a press conference featuring another disabled man fell flat when it was revealed the Government was already acting on the issue, spending \$150,000 to make his new home accessible.