

J Longton

Dr T Parry
Chairman
 Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal of NSW
 Level 2 44 Market Street
 Sydney 2000

Determination of fares for Taxis, private buses and private ferries.

The chairman of the Commuter Council has requested a submission on private bus fares be submitted to the Tribunal on behalf of Western Sydney representatives of the Commuter Council.

Firstly, it is of great concern that it is reported that the Tribunal has advised that Transitway fares will not be subject to government bus fare review as Transport NSW states the Transitway is privately owned. The setting up of a dummy company by Transport NSW, which is also owned by the government, is clearly not privately owned. Does the Tribunal accept this ploy to deceive the public in reviewing fares on behalf of the community? Complainants to the Transport Infoline regarding high fare costs of the Transitway are told the government has no control over fares as the Transitway is privately owned,

It is also reported that the Tribunal cannot review fares on the Westbus operated bus service between Baulkham Hills and Sydney CBD via the M2 route. Could it be clarified as to why this anomaly?

In the previous Western Sydney Commuter Council submission to the Tribunal dated 7.05.02, safety concerns for passengers standing on buses travelling at 100 kph on the M2 was reported and still continues today without any action by Transport NSW regarding this safety issue.

With regard to the 2003 Issues paper, the following comments and concerns are submitted for consideration by the Tribunal;

Item 2 Overview.

Transport Data Centre comments on factors in the decline of public transport use and omits the most obvious factor. Only 15% of Western Sydney residents live within 1km of a railway station. Private bus service levels, offpeak and at weekends are mostly non-existent. A car is therefore a necessity for everyone. Who can then afford to then leave the car at home and pay extra costs to take an average of three times longer, changing from bus, train, bus for most work destinations across Sydney. Also, examining the cost of one fare is ignoring the real cost of at least three fares of about \$80 total per week which ensures the car will remain Western Sydney's public transport.

The much government trumpeted integrated ticketing will not address this cost as it has been made clear by the BCA that there will be no integrated fares will continue.

Item 2.2 Private buses.

Table 2.5 private bus companies does not reflect ownership, rather it reflects company structures. Multiple listings of common ownership companies is misleading. For example, Glenorie Bus Co has the same ownership as all the Westbus listings. These common ownership companies operating across Glenorie, Castle Hill, Baulkham Hills, Rouse Hill, Winston Hills and all other Parramatta linking services have no integrated fares or services which would encourage greater patronage.

The data provided by the Tribunal on private bus payments for SSTS travel clearly shows this is the core business in Western Sydney. The operators are stretched to the limit to cope with the peak demand and school travel commitments each day.

-2-

It is not in the best business interests of private bus companies to continue to expand peak work related travel demand as this would greatly increase capital and operating costs each year.

The most profit effective strategy therefore for the private bus industry, is to increase fare costs and not increase peak work related travel and this would increase capital expenditure.

Transport NSW continued call for more bus use across Western Sydney is contrary to the business interests of the private bus industry.

Item 4.1.2 Private buses

With regard to commercial contracts, the Victorian contracted out operation of government public transport should provide a useful lesson. The contracts included fare box subsidies to maintain existing service levels and fares. It is understood on expiration of the five year contracts, private operators did not seek renewal. Major USA city light rail and bus systems are owned by the city and contracted out to operate at fares and service levels set by the city to encourage use in lieu of cars.

Western Sydney is the only major city public transport in Australia that attempts to combine profits for shareholders and service levels and fares to attract patronage. Current government policy of ignoring the failure of this strategy ensures the car will remain the only viable public transport for Western Sydney.

Item 5.2 Private buses - fares

An STA bus trip from Palm Beach to Sydney CBD costs \$9.40 return and weekly ticket \$39.80. A similar length bus trip on the same government owned buses on the transitway from Liverpool to Parramatta costs \$12.60 return and weekly ticket \$56.30.

A similar length Westbus bus trip Castle Hill to Sydney CBD costs \$13.10 return and weekly ticket \$56.00.

The government suggestion to further increase the above weekly private fare rates for longer distance travel will ensure even greater car use for travel across the Sydney region.

It should also be noted that the above Westbus Castle Hill to Sydney CBD service is the only Westbus route that provides a return and weekly ticket. All other Westbus owned routes only provide single journey tickets and no bus to bus transfer allowed on tickets.

Transport NSW has recently bypassed route minimum service levels to allow Westbus to link three routes in the Penrith area into one roving bus after 7pm. One bus every hour now replaces previously three separate hourly services for each route and is called move zone. This approval results in massive cost savings to Westbus. Also no services from home to the railway station will operate and a phone call be necessary to book a bus. Lower fares have not flowed from these major cost savings to Westbus.

The attached Fairfield Champion newspaper report dated 12-03-03 details Transport NSW refusal to issue a school travel pass for transitway use in lieu existing three journey modes, blaming additional cost. Could the Tribunal examine the claim that one more direct operating cost exceeds the combined cost of three separate longer journey operating costs as claimed by Transport NSW?

Item 6.1.2 Private buses - performance standards.

As previously submitted in the 7.05.02 submission to the Tribunal, the then enclosed newspaper reports and complaint letters to local papers outlined major performance problems by a major operator. Attached is a recent Hills Shire Times complaint dated 25-02-03 which suggests service reliability and customer service are far from satisfactory. Transport NSW has no mechanism or procedures to actively monitor the performance of the private bus industry. STA buses and Taxis performance is reported each year in the department's annual report. The private bus industry performance is ignored.

-3-

It should also be noted that two failed separate performance assessment regimes has now been carried out by TransportNSW without any outcomes,

Reference to the BCA commissioned attributes of service quality omits passenger friendly bus facilities. The following are STA bus standards that are not met in any private buses:

- (a) Interior lighting is poor compared to STA buses making reading difficult on the long journeys.
- (b) Old single sided ceiling mounted stop cords and the latest stop press buttons cannot be conveniently reached by all seated passengers as is the case with STA buses.
- (c) Most new private buses have omitted rear doors which speed up loading times.
- (d) All private buses only have front destination signs. STA buses also have side and rear signs. Elderly passengers approaching from the rear at bus ranks cannot tell if they have just missed a bus with an hour wait and a taxi maybe the necessary option.

Item 7.1 Environmental Issues

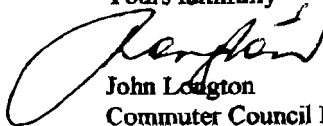
Diesel exhaust has been identified by the EPA as causing lung cancer and heart disease. A study conducted by the Queensland University of Technology found that a well tuned diesel truck or bus engine produces 600 times more pollution than one car engine. This has been cut to 300 times in Latest design engines. The EPA reports that there is no known safe level of diesel fine particulate exhaust pollution. This serious pollution has resulted in the government converting to compressed natural gas power for all new STA buses. At the same time the government is allowing private buses to continue introducing more diesel buses. Government calls to switch from cars to private buses across Western Sydney results in more deadly diesel pollution. See EPA report 98/16, Action For Air and attached SMH report dated 3-04-02.

Item 7.2 Social Impacts

A new report on migration, see attached SMH report dated 5-5-03, details major disadvantages, including transport costs that affect the outer area population of Sydney. The more expensive private bus fares forced on Western Sydney residents while inner Sydney receives subsidized government services and fares is selective discrimination carried out by the government.

Private bus companies are responsible to shareholders and social impact and community services is the responsibility of government.

Yours faithfully



John Loughton
Commuter Council Member

(7 pages)

FAIRFIELD CHAMPION 12-03-03

Kids denied T-way passes

By JIM GAINSFORD

FAIRFIELD schoolchildren have been refused bus passes on the new multi-million dollar T-way because it would cost too much money.

Angry father Mark Clinghan contacted the *Champion*.

What was the point of building the expensive roadway, he said, if it wasn't going to be economically viable without hammering the community?

"I thought the idea of public transport was to make it a viable alternative," he said.

His three children - Rebecca, 16, Samantha, 14, and Joshua, 11, - were refused passes for the government T-way buses because they would cost \$585 each a term.

Instead, they will now have to catch a combination of privately-owned buses and CityRail trains.

It will save the government nearly \$100 a term but adds hours to their journey each week.

Mr Clinghan's complaint is only one of many received by the *Champion*, ranging from expense and accidents to lack of signage.

Transport minister and Smithfield MP Carl Scully is happy with the progress of his massive public works project and is supported by some business leaders.

But Mr Scully yesterday said he was concerned by the Clinghans' case and would personally review it.

The Clinghans travel from

'Too dear,' department advises

Fairfield West to school at Parramatta High School.

"We applied for T-way passes for my kids on February 3 and the school sent their applications off to Transport NSW on the same day," Mr Clinghan said.

"All three were stamped 'Approved', dated February 26. But their passes were later stamped 'Mode of travel declined'.

"We were told they could not get the passes because of economic grounds.

"By using the T-way, they would save 15 to 20 minutes each way every day. The bus could drop them right in front of their school.

"Economically, I understand why [the government] is doing this but I want to know why the T-Way is not priced for people to travel on," he said.

"Weigh it up. If three services with three lots of flag fall and three lots of administrative overheads works out cheaper than one T-Way service, what does this say about the T-way?

"We are only one family. How many others are affected?" he asked.

T-Way views, page 5

HILLS SHIRE TIMES

25-02-03

A crack or two in that record

SO the new general manager for Westbus, Owen Eckford, (*Times*, February 11) wants to build on "what has been achieved". Is he running a bus company or living in Disneyland?

The residents of Kellyville who use the 601 don't see anything being achieved and complaints to the customer service area are about as effective as talking to a brick wall.

Our half-hourly peak hour service is not exactly

wonderful, especially when buses fail to show or run very late.

Kellyville passengers pay more than \$45 a week in fares, yet Westbus offers no weekly discount passes.

Despite the Rouse Will-to-Parramatta being the longest journey from Parramatta to the Hills, Westbus seems to allocate the greatest number of super-annuated Volvos to this route - a real pleasure on hot days, especially when they break down.

Westbus seems to run innumerable school buses, yet the two Parramatta services due at Acres Rd at 7.15am and 7.45am are chockful of school kids, making it difficult for adult passengers to even get on on some mornings.

Mr Eckford, you don't have an achievement to build on. What you have is a shabby record to overcome.

**Ross Pollock
Kellyville**

● More letters on page 12

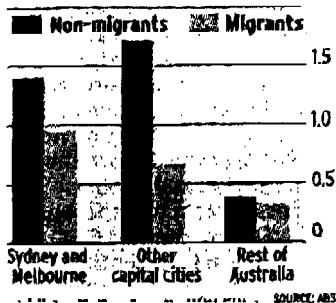
Lifeline for locals sinking

From Page 1

Australia and Comparisons with the US: Who Benefits? says there are rewards through economies of scale from a larger population.

where low-skilled

cent



cope with Australia's expanded immigration program with an overhaul of the tax system to spur them into jobs, a Federal Government report says.

While immigration "makes Australians richer on average", the report says, adverse side effects can be headed off.

Without help, the poorly educated could suffer as they competed for jobs in parts of Sydney

ceded in the United States - paying low-skilled workers less.

Instead, the author of the 60-page report, economist Ross Garnaut, suggests bold measures including changing federal-state funding to help the areas hardest hit by immigration, such as western Sydney, and putting more resources into transport and other urban services.

shield international competition from And yet low-income Australian workers generally get bigger income "kick" from the ion system than their better-educated counterparts, the report says.

That was because government redistributed the financial



lose

highly skilled. contrasted with the ap-

Despite this, highly skilled locals were better placed to benefit from property prices.

"Owners of urban land are es-

part of its evaluation of the program, bringing in 100,000-plus migrants a year,

low, mi-

SMH 5-5-03

helped the entry into jobs without reducing the disposable income of the off.

JMH 3-4-02

Air pollution deadlier than we thought, say scientists

Richard Macey

Inhaling tiny pollution particles pumped into the air by trucks, industry and fires may be more deadly than previously thought, United States researchers say.

The scientists, who tracked 500,000 Americans for 16 years, found long-term exposure to very small particles significantly increased deaths from lung cancer and heart disease. The findings prompted calls for Australia to do more to fight air pollution and quickly establish its own standard for very fine particles.

Researchers from New York University and Brigham Young University, Utah, calculated that lung cancer deaths increased by 8 per cent for every 10 micrograms of fine-particles pollution floating in every cubic metre of air. Cardio-pulmonary disease deaths rose 6 per cent with the same exposure.

"We found that the risk of dying from lung cancer as well as

heart disease in the most polluted cities was comparable to the risk associated with non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke over a long period of time," said the team's leader, Dr Arden Pope.

The co-leader, Associate Professor George Thurston, said: "This study is compelling because it involves hundreds of thousands of people in many cities across the US who were followed for almost two decades. The bad news is that fine-particle pollution is even more toxic than we thought."

The researchers defined fine particles as smaller than 2.5 micrometres in diameter. Leigh Martin, urban campaign manager for Sydney's Total Environment Centre, said Australia did not even have a standard for particles that small.

"That is a major shortcoming."

A spokesman for the NSW Environment Protection Authority conceded that it was concerned by the US findings.