

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 3  
**Output Group:** 3.3

#### **DEST Question No. E789\_07 International student transport concessions**

Senator Carr provided in writing.

#### **Question:**

1. Can you confirm press reports that the Minister, Julie Bishop, has written to the NSW Transport Minister asking him to fund public transport concessions for international students in that State?
2. Can you confirm that the Minister said that this followed "representations made by the Malaysian Minister for education?"
3. Can you provide details of representations to the Minister and/or the department on this matter from other people and organisations, since 2000?
4. How many times has the Government been lobbied on this matter since 2000?
5. What has been the Government's response, until now? Has it approached state and territory ministers, urging them to grant transport concessions to international students? Please provide details and copies of any relevant correspondence.

#### **Answer:**

##### *International student transport concessions*

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. A number of organisations and individuals have made representations to the Minister and/or the Department on this matter.
4. The Australian Government has received written correspondence on this issue ten times since 2000.
5. The Australian Government response to this still remains that it is a State and Territory matter, whilst pointing out the valuable contribution that international students make to the Australian economy and society.

Copies of relevant correspondence are provided.



## The Hon Julie Bishop MP

Minister for Education, Science and Training  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues

The Hon Peter Batchelor MP  
Minister for Transport  
Nauru House  
80 Collins Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

12 OCT 2006

Dear Minister 

### Public transport concession fares for international students

I am writing to you in response to representations made to me by the Malaysian Minister for Education regarding the decision made by your Government to continue to charge full fares to international students travelling on public transport.

International education plays a crucial role in Australia's engagement with the world. International education also provides significant social, cultural and intellectual benefits as well as economic benefits to Victoria and Australia more broadly. In 2005, international education contributed approximately \$2.9 billion to the Victorian economy.

As you may be aware, a recent ruling of the New South Wales Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT) held that the New South Wales Government is discriminating against international students based on their country of origin by denying them access to concession fares on public transport. The ruling of the ADT has resulted in a level of negative coverage that could adversely affect Australia's international education industry, particularly as international students do not necessarily understand the distinction between States in Australia's federal system of government. I understand that a similar claim has also been lodged with the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission.

Australia's international education industry contributed \$10 billion to the economy in 2005. It is in the best interests of this industry that all levels of government work together to ensure that Australia is the most attractive location for international students regardless of their final destination in-country. Accordingly, I strongly encourage you to re-evaluate your Government's policy on the availability of concession fares on public transport for international students.

Yours sincerely

  
JULIE BISHOP



# Office of the Minister for Transport

RECEIVED

23 OCT 2006

Minister for  
Education, Science and Training

80 Collins Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
GPO Box 2797Y  
Melbourne Victoria 3001  
Telephone (03) 9655 8683  
Facsimile (03) 9655 8617  
www.doi.vic.gov.au  
DX 210410

Ref: DOI061296

Our Ref:

The Hon Julie Bishop MP  
Minister for Education, Science and Training  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONCESSION FARES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

On behalf of the Minister for Transport, I acknowledge receipt of your correspondence dated 12 October 2006 concerning the above matter.

Your letter is receiving attention and a response will be forwarded as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

*for* **Michael Henderson**  
**Senior Coordinator, Executive Services**  
**Ph: (03) 9655 8970**

19 October 2006



## The Hon Julie Bishop MP

Minister for Education, Science and Training  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues

12 OCT 2006

The Hon Lynne Kosky MP  
Minister for Education and Training  
GPO Box 4367  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear *Lynne* Minister

### **Public transport concession fares for international students**

I am writing to you in response to representations made to me by the Malaysian Minister for Education regarding the decision made by your Government to continue to charge full fares to international students travelling on public transport.

International education plays a crucial role in Australia's engagement with the world. International education also provides significant social, cultural and intellectual benefits as well as economic benefits to Victoria and Australia more broadly. In 2005, international education contributed approximately \$2.9 billion to the Victorian economy.

As you may be aware, a recent ruling of the New South Wales Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT) held that the New South Wales Government is discriminating against international students based on their country of origin by denying them access to concession fares on public transport. The ruling of the ADT has resulted in a level of negative coverage that could adversely affect Australia's international education industry, particularly as international students do not necessarily understand the distinction between States in Australia's federal system of government. I understand a similar claim has also been lodged with the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission.

Australia's international education industry contributed \$10 billion to the economy in 2005. It is in the best interests of this industry that all levels of government work together to ensure that Australia is the most attractive location for international students regardless of their final destination in-country. Accordingly, I strongly encourage you to re-evaluate your Government's policy on the availability of concession fares on public transport for international students.

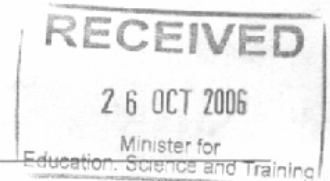
Yours sincerely

*Julie Bishop*  
JULIE BISHOP



# Department of Education & Training

Office of Strategy and Review



MEM016116

Monday, 23 October 2006

The Hon Julie Bishop, MP  
Minister for Education, Science and Training  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter dated Thursday, 12 October 2006 addressed to the Minister for Education and Training, Lynne Kosky, MP, concerning public transport concession fares for international students.

This is an interim response to acknowledge receipt of your letter.

The Minister has asked me to advise you that your letter is receiving attention and will be responded to in detail as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Flanagan  
Departmental Liaison Officer



**The Hon Julie Bishop MP**

Minister for Education, Science and Training  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues

The Hon John Watkins MP  
Minister for Transport  
Governor Macquarie Tower  
Level 30, 1 Farrer Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

12 OCT 2006

Dear Minister

**Public transport concession fares for international students**

I am writing to you in response to representations made to me by the Malaysian Minister for Education regarding the decision made by your Government to continue to charge full fares to international students travelling on public transport.

International education plays a crucial role in Australia's engagement with the world. International education also provides significant social, cultural and intellectual benefits as well as economic benefits to New South Wales and Australia more broadly. In 2005, international education contributed approximately \$3.4 billion to the New South Wales economy.

As you would know, a recent ruling of the New South Wales Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT) held that the New South Wales Government is discriminating against international students based on their country of origin by denying them access to concession fares on public transport. While I understand that the New South Wales Government is pursuing an appeal against this decision, the ruling of the ADT has resulted in a level of negative coverage that could adversely affect Australia's international education industry, particularly as international students do not necessarily understand the distinction between States in Australia's federal system of government.

Australia's international education industry contributed \$10 billion to the economy in 2005. It is in the best interests of this industry that all levels of government work together to ensure that Australia is the most attractive location for international students regardless of their final destination in-country. Accordingly, I strongly encourage you to re-evaluate your Government's policy on the availability of concession fares on public transport for international students.

I look forward to your positive response on this important issue.

Yours sincerely

  
JULIE BISHOP



**Office of Deputy Premier  
Minister for Transport  
Minister for Police**



RML 86235

The Hon Julie Bishop MP  
Federal Minister for Education, Science & Training  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

10 November 2006

Dear Minister,

The Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, the Hon John Watkins MP, has requested that I acknowledge receipt of your correspondence regarding public transport concession fare for international students.

The matters raised by you have been noted and are presently receiving attention.

A further reply will be forwarded to you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Johnson  
Private Secretary  
**Office of the Deputy Premier  
Minister for Transport  
Minister for Police**

ML06/14532



## The Hon Julie Bishop MP

Minister for Education, Science and Training  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues

The Hon Carmel Tebbutt MLC  
Minister for Education and Training  
Governor Macquarie Tower  
Level 33, 1 Farrer Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

12 OCT 2006

Dear *Carmel* Minister

### Public transport concession fares for international students

I am writing to you in response to representations made to me by the Malaysian Minister for Education regarding the decision made by your Government to continue to charge full fares to international students travelling on public transport.

International education plays a crucial role in Australia's engagement with the world. It also provides significant social, cultural and intellectual benefits as well as economic benefits to New South Wales and Australia more broadly. In 2005, international education contributed approximately \$3.4 billion to the New South Wales economy.

As you would know, a recent ruling of the New South Wales Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT) held that the New South Wales Government is discriminating against international students based on their country of origin by denying them access to concession fares on public transport. While I understand that the New South Wales Government is pursuing an appeal against this decision, the ruling of the ADT has resulted in a level of negative coverage that could adversely affect Australia's international education industry; particularly as international students do not necessarily understand the distinction between States in Australia's federal system of government.

Australia's international education industry contributed \$10 billion to the economy in 2005. It is in the best interests of this industry that all levels of government work together to ensure that Australia is the most attractive location for international students regardless of their final destination in-country. Accordingly, I strongly encourage you to re-evaluate your Government's policy on the availability of concession fares on public transport for international.

I look forward to your positive response on this important issue.

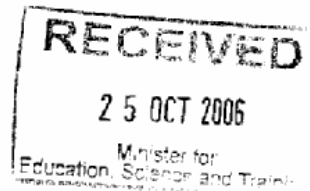
Yours sincerely

*Julie Bishop*  
JULIE BISHOP





New South Wales  
Government



**Carmel Tebbutt MP**  
Minister for Education and Training

The Hon J Bishop MP  
Minister for Education, Science and Training and  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

RML 06/4892

Dear Minister

I refer to your letter dated 12 October 2006, regarding public transport concession fares for international students.

This matter comes under the administration of The Hon J A Watkins MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport.

Accordingly, I have referred your letter to Minister Watkins for consideration and reply to you direct.

Yours sincerely

Liz Cartmell  
**Assistant to the Chief of Staff**  
**Office of the Minister for Education and Training**

18 OCT 2006