



29 JUN 2009

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D09/48780

Our Ref:

Mr Paul Coats
President
Graduate Students Association
Graduate Centre
University of Melbourne
VICTORIA 3010

Ms Sarah Quek
President
Melbourne University Overseas
Students Service
University of Melbourne
VICTORIA 3010

Dear Mr Coats and Ms Quek

Paul and Sarah

STUDENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONCESSIONS

Thank you for your letter of 29 April 2009 regarding extending public transport concessions to all students.

I acknowledge receipt of your petition and, as my Office has discussed with you, regret that the rules of parliamentary procedure prevented the petition's lodgement.

In recognition of the financial difficulties that students may experience undertaking higher education, the Victorian Government extended transport concessions to all Victorian residents holding Centrelink Health Care Cards. As you are aware, this ensures that part-time undergraduates and all postgraduates on low incomes are able to travel at concession fares on public transport if they are eligible for a Low Income Health Care Card.

In its 2007-08 Budget, the Commonwealth Government extended eligibility for Student Income Support to postgraduate students undertaking a wide range of professionally-oriented Masters Degrees. Postgraduate students undertaking these degrees at Victorian institutions who qualify for income support receive a Health Care Card which makes them eligible for public transport concessions in Victoria.

All Australian State and Territory Governments accept various concession cards issued by the Commonwealth Government and its agencies. This includes Pensioner Concession Cards issued by Centrelink, Pensioner Concession Cards issued by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and Health Care Cards issued by Centrelink. The acceptance of these cards enables concessions to be means tested.

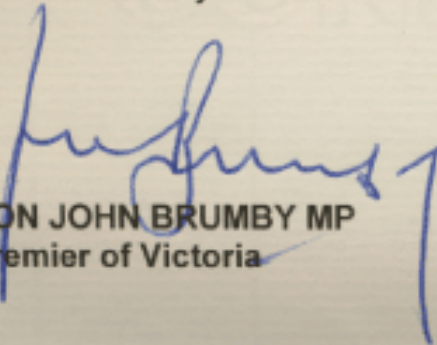
The current policy is intended to target concessions to students in genuine financial need. There are no plans to provide postgraduate students with concessions that are not means tested.

International students may be eligible for Victorian public transport concessions if they are studying as part of a recognised exchange program, have refugee status or hold an Australian Development Scholarship. Fee-paying international students are not entitled to public transport concession fares. Public transport only recovers a proportion of its cost through fares. The majority of the cost of providing public transport to international students is met by the State of Victoria. There are not currently plans to provide fee-paying international students with transport concessions in Victoria.

I have forwarded your letter to the Minister for Public Transport, The Hon Lynne Kosky MP, to bring your concerns to her attention.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Brumby', is written over the typed name and title.

HON JOHN BRUMBY MP
Premier of Victoria