

Locking in Cost of Living Support (50 Cent Fares Forever) Amendment Bill 2025

Explanatory Notes

Short title

The short title of the Bill is the *Locking in Cost of Living Support (50 Cent Fares Forever) Amendment Act 2025*.

Policy objectives and the reasons for them

The objective of this Bill is to make 50 cent fares on the Translink public transport network permanent ensuring a lasting impact on public transport usage and cost of living.

The Miles Labor Government introduced 50 cent fares on 5 August 2024 for a six-month trial and announced its intention to make 50 cent fares permanent in September 2024.

The 50 cent fare was introduced to make public transport more affordable and encourage greater usage.

Making it permanent through legislation will provide long-term-cost of living relief, reduce congestion, and improve accessibility for all Queenslanders.

Achievement of policy objectives

To achieve its objectives, the Bill will amend various clauses of the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994* to cap in legislation fares at 50 cents per journey across the Translink network in Queensland.

Legislating a 50 cent fare is reasonable and appropriate because it ensures long-term affordability, provides cost of living relief, encourages public transport use and creates certainty for commuters, while also preventing arbitrary fare increases.

Alternative ways of achieving policy objectives

A permanent 50 cent fare means that the reduced fare is guaranteed indefinitely, rather than being a temporary measure subject to government budget changes.

To make the 50 cent fare truly permanent in Queensland, legislative changes are necessary to ensure the policy's longevity and stability.

Legislating the 50 cent fare provides security and certainty for Queenslanders who are relying on affordable fares.

It also provides additional certainty about fare revenue and patronage trends which is crucial for future transport planning of new bus routes, train and ferry services, and transport projects.

There are no known alternate ways of making 50 cent fares permanent.

Estimated cost for government implementation

All implementation costs are expected to be met from within existing budget allocations.

If public transport demand grows significantly, higher patronage may necessitate more frequent services to prevent overcrowding and new transport routes to service high-demand areas.

Consistency with fundamental legislative principles

The Bill and relevant amendments are consistent with fundamental legislative principles.

Consultation

The six-month trial of 50 cent fares, which began in August 2024, served as a practical consultation.

The results showed a significant increase in patronage, with an 18.3% overall growth compared to the previous year and nearly a 5% increase above pre-COVID-19 levels.

Additionally, the trial delivered cost of living relief, saving Queenslanders over \$181 million in fares.

Regional transport networks also saw a 20% patronage boost, demonstrating broad support for the policy across different communities.

These outcomes confirm that cheaper fares led to higher public transport use, reinforcing the case for making the policy permanent.

Consistency with legislation of other jurisdictions

The Bill is specific to the State of Queensland and is not uniform with the legislation of another state.

However, other jurisdictions, including Victoria, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory have implemented or announced measures to reduce public transport fares, aiming to alleviate cost of living pressures and encourage public transport use.

Notes on provisions

Part 1 Preliminary

Clause 1 provides the Short Title of the Act.

Clause 2 provides the Act to be amended to achieve the policy objectives.

Clause 3 amends Section 41(1)(ea) to ensure any services that do not require fares to be set by the chief executive are not impacted by the new Section 53 of the Act.

Clause 4 inserts a new Section 53 in the Act which explicitly outlines the fares for all Translink services to be set at 50 cents, including for urban buses in regional areas.

Clause 5 sits Section 53 into Chapter 6, Part 2 of the Act to ensure the definition of non-integrated mass transit area remains the same in both sections.