



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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CountryLink Services Cut and Pensioners Taxed 15% More

Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of NSW Inc (CPSA) and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) are calling on NSW Premier Morris Iemma to intervene and direct the Minister for Transport to scrap the NSW Pensioner Travel vouchers booking fee, especially after RailCorp has made huge saving by closing 12 metropolitan CountryLink Booking Offices, reducing CountryLink services and cutting jobs in rural areas.

Effective from Wednesday 1 March 2006, NSW pensioners wishing to use their NSW Pensioner Travel Vouchers for travel on CountryLink Services will be required to pay a booking fee of \$10 or 15% of the full adult first or economy class fare, whichever is greater.

CPSA State Secretary Bob Jay stated "We cannot believe the Iemma Government not only has the audacity to reduce public transport services that older people, especially those in rural areas, rely on, but also then tax us for a greatly inferior service. CPSA, with the support of the RTBU, is calling on the Iemma Government to do the honourable thing by older people living in NSW and scrap the booking fee which is nothing more than a tax on older NSW residents."

RTBU Secretary Nick Lewocki, in supporting CPSA's call for the scrapping of the travelling tax on older NSW residents, stated "This is one of the most outrageous and underhanded things I have seen in my 30 years as a union official. We are asking pensioners to pay a booking fee of up to 15% the cost of their ticket for a significantly reduced service. These are a group of people who have worked hard, paid their taxes and made significant contributions as members of our community. Now the Iemma Government has decided to tax them out of our public rail system."

The RTBU and CPSA are seeking an urgent meeting with the Premier in order to have this issue resolved immediately.

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