



## COMBINED PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

Founded 1931. Celebrating 75 years of service in 2006.  
Serving pensioners of all ages, superannuants and low-income retirees.

*Consumer Protection Awards – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005*

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# MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate release

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15 June 2006

## **Pensioners Irate over CountryLink Booking Fee**

“Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association (CPSA) supports the NSW Opposition’s policy to abolish the booking fee Pensioner Travel Vouchers”, said CPSA State Secretary Bob Jay today.

“CPSA was appalled when the NSW Government introduced a booking fee of 15 per cent (or a minimum of \$10) for Countrylink travel using Pensioner Travel Vouchers. Pensioners can use up to four vouchers each year to cover four one-way journeys.

“It’s something that’s hit hard the estimated 200,000 pensioners in NSW who use Pensioner Travel Vouchers each year. These are people who are subsisting on incomes of less than \$13,000 a year.

“A booking fee of \$20 or \$30 on a return trip stops them from visiting friends and relatives. The NSW Government stands condemned of causing a massive personal and social impact in the lives of 200,000 pensioners, who have worked hard all their lives and paid their taxes.

“No other CountryLink passengers pay a booking fee at any time. Only pensioners are made to pay to get them off the trains.

“CPSA estimates that Countrylink patronage will drop by 50 per cent as a result of the introduction of the booking fee for Pensioner Travel Vouchers.

“Half of all CountryLink travel is done by pensioners. Every year pensioners use about half a million Pensioner Travel Vouchers.

“So the Government is upsetting an estimated 200,000 pensioners who use half a million Pensioner Travel Vouchers to make a measly \$5 million a year.

“It’s part of the NSW Government’s plan of getting rid of CountryLink. Get patronage down progressively and cancel services progressively.

“Already the NSW Government has replaced half the Countrylink trains with buses. Only the main train lines are left and that’s because the NSW Government is developing the main north- and southbound tracks for lucrative freight rail contracts.

“The next bit could be to cut back the CountryLink daily Dubbo rail service, or, maybe the NSW Government will get rid of one of the two daily services to Melbourne.

“The NSW Government keeps saying it is “refurbishing” the XPTs. What this really means is that XPTs are being continuously patched up. No planning has been done to date to replace the XPT fleet, which is already beyond its economic life span.

“The NSW Government is all set to abolish CountryLink rail services.”

<b>RETURN SYDNEY TO:</b>	<b>BOOKING FEE FIRST CLASS</b>	<b>BOOKING FEE ECONOMY</b>
Canberra	\$22.80	\$20.00
Cootamundra	\$29.70	\$21.50
Griffith	\$40.60	\$29.40
Melbourne	\$52.50	\$37.30
Dubbo	\$31.00	\$22.40
Broken Hill	\$55.10	\$39.90
Moree	\$40.60	\$29.40
Grafton	\$40.60	\$29.40
Casino	\$43.20	\$30.70
Brisbane	\$52.50	\$37.30

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