

NSW State Election 2007 Fact Sheet

Transport

Western Sydney Community Forum is a peak regional community-based organisation committed to social justice principles, meeting the needs of community groups and other relevant local and regional organisations for resourcing and representation to enable them to improve and maintain the quality of life for the residents of Western Sydney

The NSW State Election will be held on 24th March 2007. These policy proposals were developed by Western Sydney Community Forum in association with the New South Wales Council of Social Services and our member organisations to improve outcomes for residents of Western Sydney.

Background

Western Sydney residents experience longer travel times and higher travel costs. This adversely affects their opportunities to access employment, education and health services as well as recreational and social activities. Transport disadvantage denies individuals, families and communities the opportunity to participate in society and results in social exclusion.

Bus reform: The focus of the NSW Government's bus reform process is on providing services for workers at peak hour. Attempts to develop more efficient services mean distances to bus stops is lengthening, making it more difficult for some people to access services. Off peak services are being cut to increase peak hour services. This strategy is likely to increase transport disadvantage.

As part of this process contracts for the Sydney bus regions specify that the Director-General may request the bus operator provide up to 20,000 'Community Kilometres' outside of scheduled routes. But there are no funds for them and they are distributed equally across Sydney regardless of need.

Fares: In Western Sydney passengers are frequently forced to buy a new ticket when they use a different form of transport. It can make public transport costly and act as a disincentive to using public transport. Low income households are disproportionately affected by fare inequities.

Policy proposals

WSCF recommends the introduction of integrated fares to reduce travel costs.

WSCF recommends a concession regime that targets socio-economically disadvantaged groups first.

WSCF recommends establishment of a Bus Reform Funding Package to:

- trial Community Kilometres delivered on a need basis
- speed up the implementation of bus priority on strategic corridors
- install bus seats, shelters and signs at appropriate bus stops
- develop a Parking Strategy to ensure well patronised bus services.

WSCF recommends:

- the implementation of all EasyAccess stations within 5 years
- the Cumberland Rail line is brought back to full service
- expansion of the rail network system to the northwest, southwest and cross city to relieve pressure on the network and provide for growth
- funding of a Major Rail and Bus Interchange Investment Program to make interchanges efficient and speed up transfers between modes

WSCF recommends a 'whole of community response' to transport exclusion by:

- funding Transport Improvement Planners in Local Councils to champion public transport, similar to the RTA Road Safety Officers Program
- fund community-based Transport Development Workers in local government areas to facilitate community input into transport planning

WSCF recommends enhancing the Council Bike Planning Funding Program.

What you can do

There are many ways you can help promote these issues. Use this fact sheet to:

- Write about the issue in your group's newsletter.
- Write a letter about the issue to your local paper.
- Set up a letter writing stall and ask local people to write their own letters to local candidates supporting the issue.
- Organise a public meeting and invite local political candidates to speak.
- Contact Christine Laurence at Western Sydney Community Forum to discuss how your group can work with us to promote your issue.
Phone: 9687 9669 or email: christinel@wscf.org.au