

Resolution of Council

8 April 2024

Item 13.1

Public Transport Concession for International and Part-Time Students

Moved by Councillor Chan, seconded by Councillor Kok –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) NSW is home to the most international students in Australia;
- (ii) unlike domestic tertiary students in NSW, international tertiary students are not eligible for travel concessions, except for recipients of Commonwealth scholarship programs;
- (iii) NSW is the only Australian state or territory that does not offer any form of concession or discounted public transport to international students, despite undertaking full-time study;
- (iv) in October 2023, public transport Opal fares increased by an average of 3.7 percent. Currently, the adult weekly travel cap at \$50 is double the concession cap at \$25;
- (v) the international education sector contributed more than \$11.4 billion to the NSW economy in 2020. Extending the public transport concession program to international students would cost the NSW Government significantly less;
- (vi) approximately, 40 percent of all education providers in NSW are located in the City of Sydney. This includes over 550 education establishments such as universities, vocational and educational training providers, and English language intensive courses for international students;
- (vii) the majority of students who opt to study part-time are women, carers, and people with disabilities;

- (viii) in 2020, a research study conducted by the University of Sydney (USyd) showed that more than 90 percent of its students live off-campus. The escalating costs of living and housing expenses have caused further financial burdens to students, forcing many to reside further away from campuses;
 - (ix) on 27 July 2023, the Lord Mayor wrote to the Minister for Transport requesting an investigation into implementing travel incentives for international students so they can fully participate in their Sydney experience. Disappointingly, the Minister responded confirming that an extension of the concession travel to international students was not being considered by Transport for NSW; and
 - (x) in March 2024, a petition launched by the USyd's Students' Representative Council and the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association to 'Make transport concessions available to all students in NSW' had received over 21,000 signatures and is currently being tabled in NSW Parliament. It will be debated in the NSW Legislative Assembly on 9 May 2024;
- (B) Council endorse the petition to make transport concessions available to all students in NSW; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write again to the Minister of Transport requesting that the necessary regulatory changes are made so that international and part-time tertiary students are eligible for public transport concessions in line with other Australian states and territories.

The motion was carried on the following show of hands –

Ayes (8) The Chair (the Lord Mayor), Councillors Chan, Davis, Ellsmore, Kok, Scott, Weldon and Worling

Noes (2) Councillors Gannon and Jarrett.

Carried.

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