



Hon Rachel Nolan MP
Member for Ipswich



**Queensland
Government**

Our ref: MC48085

Minister for Transport

12 APR 2010

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to a petition number 1389-10 lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Ms Fiona Simpson MP, Member for Maroochydore on 9 March 2010 about the fare increase, go card retail agents and system reliability.

The cost of running the TransLink Transit Authority's public transport network that spans more than 10 000 square kilometres, across 23 zones is significant. Yearly operating costs such as equipment, wages and fuel have steadily increased over the last few years. Furthermore, South East Queensland's \$1.2 billion public transport network is heavily subsidised with the state government paying \$3.00 for every \$1.00 collected in fares.

Additionally, South East Queensland is Australia's fastest growing region. By 2031, our population is expected to grow from 2.8 million to 4.4 million people. With this growth comes increased demand on public transport services.

It is acknowledged that any increase in fares impacts public transport users, however, the Queensland Government has a responsibility to all taxpayers across the state to ensure that the financial burden of providing public transport services is kept to a reasonable level and that all attempts are made to ensure reasonable cost recovery. We believe that this is a reasonable and responsible fare increase that will allow us to continue to deliver new and improved services in order to meet with the growing demand.

The fare increase will deliver an additional 301 000 public transport seats every single week.

TransLink has been encouraging the use of the go card product since its introduction in 2007. The go card is now used for more than half of all passenger trips on week days – a saving of more than 3000 hours per week in boarding times

The go card offers flexible and seamless travel across the 23 zone network. This offers customers the freedom and flexibility to change their plans at any time without having to change their ticketing product due to zonal restrictions, as specified on ticketing products such as weekly and monthly tickets.

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The *go* card is a trip-based card so that the fare charged is fair for all customers. The *go* card provides incentives for frequent travel where customers receive a 50% discount when they use their card more than ten times in a week, from Monday to Sunday.

I am pleased to advise that there are more than 465 places for passengers to buy a *go* card (newsagents, 7 Elevens, all staffed train stations and new ticketing machines at busway stations), and over 1000 places to top-up a *go* card across South East Queensland (newsagents, 7 Elevens, train stations, selected busway stations and all non-Brisbane Transport bus services). 17 new ticking machines are now available at 12 busway stations. A further 23 machines will be rolled out in the coming months.

In addition, *go* cards can be ordered and managed by phoning the TransLink Call Centre on 13 12 30, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as well as on the website at www.translink.com.au at anytime. Alternatively, customers are able to top up registered cards online or by phoning the Call Centre.

Customers can now also register for the auto top up functionality, this is when a customer's *go* card balance falls below \$5 a preset amount of their choice is transferred to their *go* card. The preset amount starts from \$20, increasing by \$20 increments up to a maximum of \$200. The first transaction requires the *go* card to be presented to a card reader before the funds are loaded; the subsequent transactions will be automatic.

In relation to errors on the *go* card system, TransLink has acted upon any anomalies occurring on the system and provides an around the clock service to customers that may need to report any problems with their *go* card by way of the TransLink Call Centre. Where customers have been overcharged, TransLink has credited any owing amounts back to their *go* card and the system anomaly has been investigated and corrected on each occasion.

Failure rates of *go* card equipment are closely monitored and, from April 2009 to January 2010, the fare gates, the card readers and the fare machines at rail stations have reported over a 99% on average availability level. All *go* card equipment and devices are required to be fixed within prescribed timeframes, to minimise impact to users of the system.

TransLink is planning an expansion of the *go* card product suite to introduce products to meet the needs of a range of customer groups, such as tourists, convention attendees and occasional users of public transport. TransLink is exploring a number of technology options, including limited life smart cards, to develop products that best meet these needs.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



RACHEL NOLAN MP
Minister for Transport