



NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard

Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Levy for Major Events) Bill

Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Wednesday 23 February 2005.

Second Reading

Mr JOHN WATKINS (Ryde—Minister for Transport) [10.49 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government has provided special public transport services to Sydney Olympic Park since 1998 for events such as the Royal Easter Show, rugby league State of origin and grand final matches, rugby union tests and Sydney Swans games. These transport services were a crucial factor in the tremendous success in transporting spectators to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and the 2003 Rugby World Cup. Whilst these services have been generally well patronised by the people of Sydney and visitors, there has been a downward trend in public transport use since the Sydney Olympics. A corresponding increase in car use has placed additional pressure on the road network surrounding Sydney Olympic Park resulting, at times, in unacceptable traffic congestion and delays to event patrons and other road users. Sydney Olympic Park, its tenants, and the travelling public rely on the provision of accessible and affordable public transport and the Government is committed to continuing to provide these vital services.

Given the success of combined event-transport ticketing for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, this bill provides for an integrated ticket whereby the cost of public transport, or a transport levy, is included in the ticket price of major events. Benefits of the levy include a reduced day-out cost for the majority of people attending the event, the convenience of one ticket, increased public transport use, and a reduction in car use that means reduced traffic congestion and ensures the continuing provision of high-standard public transport services. The transport levy allows the cost of transport to be spread across all patrons attending the event. This concept was applied to the 2003 NRL Grand Final and a number of events during 2004 including the Royal Easter Show, rugby union tests, and rugby league State of origin and grand final matches. Under the integrated ticket model ticket holders can travel to and from the event by train, bus or ferry.

Train travellers can use any CityRail service from as far as Newcastle, Dungog, Scone, Richmond, Lithgow, Goulburn, and Bomaderry. Patrons can also use any of the services on the major event bus route network and regular Sydney Buses and Sydney Ferries services. The integrated ticket has been well accepted by event patrons, event organisers, venue managers and transport operators. Until now the event and transport integrated ticket has been applied under an administrative arrangement. This has meant that the transport levy has been subject to goods and services tax. Establishing the transport levy via legislative amendment will provide an exemption from GST on the levy. Obtaining an exemption from GST will increase the funding available to assist in meeting the cost of providing public transport services for major events. This in turn will ensure that the transport levy amount can be kept to a minimum.

Introducing legislation for the transport levy will also ensure that the levy is not caught under the provisions of the Trade Practices Act 1974 in relation to products being bundled together. This is the case with the transport levy, whereby the cost of transport is bundled with the event entry component on a single ticket. The Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Levy for Major Events) Bill is modelled on the successful arrangements used during the Sydney 2000 Olympics, which were underpinned by the Olympic Roads and Transport Act 1998 and the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games Act 1998.

The Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Levy for Major Events) Bill provides for a transport levy to assist in meeting costs arising out of the provision of public transport services for major events; enables particular events to be declared for which a transport levy will apply—initially, the events will be those held at Sydney Olympic Park but in future the levy could be applied to other events if considered appropriate; provides certainty for event organisers and venue managers in respect of the provision of event public transport services; provides assurance for Government in relation to income and payment for the services; and allows for flexibility in regard to the level of transport services to be provided for each event.

The bill allows the Director-General of the Ministry of Transport to negotiate and enter into an agreement with a major event organiser or venue manager in respect of the amount of a transport levy—the event organiser may choose to apply different levy amounts depending on ticket category; payment of the levy by the event organiser; allowing the event organiser or venue manager to require all or any of the patrons of the event to pay the transport levy. This includes inclusion of the levy in membership or benefit prices, the level of public transport services provided for an event, the sale and use of tickets to major events as tickets for public transport services, the issue of event tickets by transport authorities and other transport providers, the collection and payment of the levy, and the provision and liability for costs of public transport services.

In addition, the bill prevents agreements and the conduct of parties entering into agreements from contravening part 4 of section 51 of the Trade Practices Act 1974, which relates to restrictive trade practices. The bill will ensure that the Government can continue to provide high standard transport services for major events, and I commend it to the House.