

## **POLICY DOCUMENT**

### **TRANSPORT CONCESSIONS FOR STUDENTS OF AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES**

#### **Background**

Medical degrees in Australia are full-time courses and demand a significant amount of time for private study. This significantly limits the capacity for medical students to engage in paid work. For many students, public transport is their primary mode of transport.

Student concessions recognise the limited income of this population. Concession rates are available for a variety of different activities including transport, entertainment and store discounts. The criteria for student transport concessions are varied and inconsistent between States and Territories.

#### **Students and Transport Concessions**

As of 2011, many postgraduate and international students of Australian universities are ineligible to access concessions on public transport in New South Wales and Victoria<sup>1</sup>. Despite calls from Universities Australia<sup>2</sup> and student organisations<sup>3</sup> to extend transport concessions to all full-time tertiary students, as is currently the case in every other State and Territory<sup>1</sup>, the New South Wales and Victorian State Governments continue to show disregard for these students, who wish to travel on public transport under the same terms and conditions as undergraduate domestic students.

As medicine is an experiential course, medical students spend a significant amount of time and money travelling to and from clinical placement sites, during day and night, which may be located in metropolitan, rural and remote areas. Medical schools may assist students with travel by organising transport or providing financial assistance; however, many medical schools do not offer such assistance. Restriction of access to transport concessions places an additional and unnecessary financial burden on students and, through efforts to save money, may lead them to take unnecessary risks when travelling to and from university. Violent attacks in Melbourne in 2009, committed against Indian university students without access to transport concessions, have highlighted the dangers of such situations.

#### **Transferability**

As of 2011, transport concessions for students enrolled at universities in one State or Territory are not automatically transferable to another. Currently, only the Northern Territory

and South Australia offer student concessions on public transport to visiting interstate students<sup>1</sup>.

## Policy

AMSA believes that:

1. For many students, the affordability of public transport is an integral part of higher education accessibility.
2. All full-time medical students should be entitled to transport concessions, where these are offered.
3. Excluding postgraduate and international students from accessing transport concessions is inequitable and to the detriment of their wellbeing.
4. Excluding international medical students from accessing student transport concessions is unfair.
1. All Australian states and territories must offer transport concessions to all full-time tertiary students in Australia.
5. Student transport concession cards should be transferable between States and Territories nationwide.

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## References

1. Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations Incorporated. (2009). Concession travel on public transport in Australia. Retrieved March 7, 2011, from <http://www.capa.edu.au/transportconcessions>
2. Universities Australia. (2010). Transport Concessions for International Students: A Position Paper. Retrieved May 23, 2011, from [http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/resources/85/2010-02%20PP%20-%20Transport%20conc\\_Intl%20students.pdf](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/resources/85/2010-02%20PP%20-%20Transport%20conc_Intl%20students.pdf)
3. Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations Incorporated. (2009). Postgrads and international students take to streets on concession fares. Retrieved May 23, 2011, from <http://www.capa.edu.au/mediarelease/2009/postgrads-and-international-students-take-streets-concession-fares>