

qconnect Bus Fares and Concession Policy

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Document control sheet

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Author	Debra Blazely
Contact officer	Principal Advisor (Ticketing Policy)
Contact details	07 3338 4124

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1.	Background	5
2.	Scope	5
3.	Responsibility	5
3.1	Review	5
4.	Fare Structure and Calculation	5
5.	Concession Fares and Free Travel	6
5.1	Concession Fares	6
5.2	Concession Categories with Reimbursement	6
5.2.1	Pensioners	6
5.2.2	Veterans – Gold or White card	6
5.2.3	Seniors	7
5.2.4	Asylum Seekers	7
5.2.5	Job Seekers	7
5.2.6	Tertiary Students	7
5.2.7	Vision Impaired Persons	7
5.2.8	Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) and Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) Veterans	7
5.2.9	Primary and Secondary School Students	7
5.2.10	Children	8
5.3	Concessions (without reimbursement)	8
5.3.1	Infants	8
5.3.2	Companion Card Holders' Companions	8
6.	Guide Dogs and other Assistance Animals	8
7.	Concessions on Fully Funded Services	8
8.	Fare Price Adjustments	8
9.	Ticketing Suite	9
	Schedule A: Definitions	10
	Schedule B: Fare Schedules	15

1. Background

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (the department) contracts operators to provide urban and certain school bus public passenger services to a number of regional centres. The provision of public passenger services must comply with the legislative requirements of the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994*.

Urban bus passenger services are provided through the *qconnect* urban bus network. *qconnect* is a Queensland Government initiative providing improved public transport and greater connectivity and accessibility of services throughout regional, rural and remote Queensland.

In August 2019 an Integrated Regional Transport Agreement (IRTA) was developed for a number of regional centres no longer operating under the *qconnect* network.

2. Scope

This 'policy' (the policy) only applies to public passenger services provided under the terms and conditions of *qconnect* urban service contracts as outlined in Annexure B1 and B2, which includes the carriage of Eligible Students under the School Transport Assistance Scheme.

This policy does not apply to:

- Integrated Regional Transport Agreements (IRTA)
- prescribed School Service Contracts
- long-distance scheduled passenger services
- charter bus services
- tourist services, and
- any other service not provided under the terms and conditions of the contract.

Notwithstanding the arrangement within the policy, the department will continue to examine opportunities for innovative fare products.

3. Responsibility

The TransLink Division of the department will be responsible for administration of this policy.

All service contract holders must comply with the policy, as outlined in the service contract.

3.1 Review

This policy is subject to review on an annual basis or as otherwise determined by the department.

4. Fare Structure and Calculation

For each *qconnect* operator, the area of operation is divided into a number of zones or boundaries emanating from a central point. This point is usually the CBD or another central attractor. A base fare (the adult single fare for travel within a single zone) is applied and increases incrementally as the number of

zones travelled within or through increases. The base fare is comprised of a flag fall component and a distance component.

Fare schedules and zone boundaries are contained on public timetables available from the TMR and/or TransLink websites.

5. Concession Fares and Free Travel

5.1 Concession Fares

As the service contract holder is required to provide concessions, this policy details the scheme under which the holder of a service contract will be reimbursed for revenue foregone through the provision of concessions by government funding in accordance with section 51 of the Act.

Concession fares are prescribed by government to achieve its objective of ensuring a suitable level of access and mobility for many people who would otherwise be disadvantaged.

In accordance with each service contract, operators are required to adhere to this policy which mandates that operators must offer concession fares calculated at 50 per cent of the adult fare rounded up to the nearest ten cents. In addition, Vision Impaired Travel Pass holders, Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) Veteran Travel Pass holders, Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) Veteran/Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) Veteran Travel Pass holders and infants are entitled to 100% concession fares, as outlined below.

With the exception of primary school students and children (see 5.2.9 and 5.2.10), a person must carry evidence of concessional entitlement when buying a ticket and when travelling on the journey for which the ticket is issued.

In accordance with the requirements of the service contract, the operator is to provide a Monthly Summary Report which provides the basis for concession (where nominated) reimbursement. For the purposes of payments under the service contract any reimbursement for concessions will be described as concessional reimbursements.

With the transition from 3G to 4G *qconnect* service contracts the reimbursement of revenue foregone due to the 3 November 2014 fare decrease no longer applies. The calculation of reimbursement will be directly related to the concession categories as outlined below.

5.2 Concession Categories with Reimbursement

The following concessions are required to be provided by operators and will be reimbursed by the department on a dollar for dollar basis.

5.2.1 Pensioners

A 50 per cent concession fare applies to holders of a Pensioner Concession Card issued by the Australian Government Department of Human Services or the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

5.2.2 Veterans – Gold or White card

A 50 per cent concession fare applies to Queensland residents that hold a gold or white Veteran card, or a Department of Veterans' Affairs DVA Health Card - for All Conditions or for Specific Conditions within Australia with the prefix 'Q'.

Note: Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) Veterans and Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) Veterans are eligible for a Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI)/Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) Veteran Travel Pass (see 5.2.8).

5.2.3 Seniors

A 50 per cent concession fare applies to holders of a Seniors Card issued by any Australian state or territory government. This excludes Seniors Business Discount Card holders.

5.2.4 Asylum Seekers

A 50 per cent concession fare applies to holders of an Immicard identification card issued by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection or a Regional Concession Access Pass. The Immicard identification card must have the valid public transport concession sticker affixed.

5.2.5 Job Seekers

A 50 per cent concession fare applies to eligible job seekers receiving Newstart or Youth Allowance payments from the Australian Government Department of Human Services who reside in Queensland who hold a Regional Concession Access Pass.

5.2.6 Tertiary Students

A 50 per cent concession fare applies to eligible tertiary/post secondary students who hold a current student identification card issued by a Queensland institution registered with the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Students are required to carry this card with them when travelling on a concession fare. The student identification card must have the valid Public Transport Concession sticker affixed.

5.2.7 Vision Impaired Persons

A 100 per cent concession fare applies to the holder of a Vision Impairment Travel Pass (also known as a Vision Impaired Persons Travel Pass or Vision Impaired Travel Pass) issued within Australia. Cards are issued by relevant state and territory authorities (operator will be reimbursed the full fare).

5.2.8 Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) and Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) Veterans

A 100 per cent concession fare applies to the holder of either a Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) Veteran Travel Pass or a Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI)/Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) Veteran Travel Pass issued by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (operator will be reimbursed the full fare).

5.2.9 Primary and Secondary School Students

A 50 per cent concession fare applies to primary and secondary school students attending a Queensland school.

Primary school students must be wearing a Queensland school uniform, otherwise they are considered as *Children* (see 5.2.10).

Secondary school students must have a valid student identification card or be wearing a Queensland school uniform.

5.2.10 Children

A 50 per cent concession fare applies to passengers aged 5 to 14 years inclusive. A child whose age appears to be in doubt may be requested to show identification.

5.3 Concessions (without reimbursement)

The following concessions are required to be provided by operators and will not be reimbursed by the department.

5.3.1 Infants

A 100% concession fare applies to infants (4 years of age and younger).

5.3.2 Companion Card Holders' Companions

In line with the Department of Transport and Main Roads' *Companion Recognition Policy*, a 100% concession is to be provided to the companion of the holder of a Companion Card (issued by all states and territories) on approved services only. Cardholders must purchase a valid ticket for travel. Proof of entitlement for companions of Companion Card holders must be produced at time of purchase, on request by an authorised person, or upon boarding a bus.

6. Guide Dogs and other Assistance Animals

Certified guide, hearing and assistance dogs trained in accordance with the *Guide Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act (2009)* and assistance animals trained in accordance with the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* are permitted on *qconnect* services.

A handler identity card issued by a training institution registered with the Department of Communities or an Assistance Animal Pass issued by TransLink must be shown to the driver.

Interstate Assistance Animal Passes are also accepted on all *qconnect* services.

7. Concessions on Fully Funded Services

For services that the department fully funds the cost to provide, and are put into place after the signing of the fourth generation service contract, the amount funded by government will include an amount for concessional reimbursement in the total amount paid to the operator.

8. Fare Price Adjustments

In accordance with section 41(1)(c) and 41(1)(ea) of the Act, the service contracts require the holder to charge fares as set by the Chief Executive. The service contract also provides that any fare adjustments are at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive.

In accordance with the service contracts, for approved school bus services provided under a *qconnect* contract, fares can only increase in line with approved *qconnect* fares.

The department may adjust the fare schedules referred to in Schedule B from time to time. Generally, the department adjusts fares annually as directed by the Chief Executive.

9. Ticketing Suite

The following ticket types must be available:

- **qconnect single** A one-way ticket valid on *qconnect* services including transfers within two hours. This is a one-way journey only and a separate ticket must be purchased for a return journey.
- **qconnect daily** A ticket allowing unlimited travel on *qconnect* services within the zones nominated on the ticket until the last service scheduled on the day of issue. Daily tickets are priced at the cost of two single tickets.

Operators must also offer one of the following multiple trip tickets:

- **qconnect weekly** A ticket allowing unlimited travel on *qconnect* services within the zones nominated on the ticket for a period of seven consecutive days from the date of purchase. Weekly tickets are priced at the cost of eight single tickets and rounded up to the nearest ten cents.
- **qconnect ten trip ticket** A ticket valid for ten trips on *qconnect* services within specified zones, and valid for a twelve month period. Ten Trip Tickets are priced at the cost of eight single tickets and rounded up to the nearest ten cents.

At the discretion of the operator, and subject to approval by the department, the following periodical ticket may be offered:

- **qconnect monthly** A ticket allowing unlimited travel on *qconnect* services within the zones nominated on the ticket for a period of one calendar month (including any designated public holidays). These tickets are priced at the same cost as four weekly tickets.

Operators will not be reimbursed by the department for any revenue foregone due to the difference between the price of the tickets set out in section 8 of this policy and the farebox revenue that would otherwise have been received had these tickets not been offered.

All *qconnect* tickets issued by an operator are transferable between operators (in regions where more than one *qconnect* operator exists) and must be honoured, allowing passengers to transfer between different operator services within a contiguous Service Area.

Any other reduced fares offered by operators are at the operator's risk and will not be reimbursed.

Schedule A: Definitions

Act

The *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994* (Queensland).

Adult

A person fifteen (15) years of age and older.

Approved Public Transport Service

A public passenger service provided under the terms and conditions of a *qconnect* urban service contract.

Assistance Animal

Under Section 9(2) of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, an assistance animal is a dog or other animal that is:

- accredited under a State or Territory law that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; or
- accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph; or
- trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability, and to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

Asylum Seeker

Asylum Seekers must:

- Be deemed as an Asylum seeker according to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP); and
- Be 18 years of age and over; or
- or aged 15-17 and not in full time education; and
- Hold one of the following:
 - a current Australian Government Evidence of Immigration Status (EIS) ImmiCard or
 - a current Australian Government Residence Determination (RD) ImmiCard; or
 - a document issued by the DIBP confirming Asylum Seeker status; or
 - documentation issued by a Designated Support Agency confirming status as an asylum seeker for example confirmation of support under the Status Resolution Support Programme ; and
- reside in Queensland.

Authorised Person

A serving Queensland police officer, and any person whom the chief executive (or nominee) has appointed under the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994* and issued with an Authorised Person Identity Card.

Bus Services

Road-based general route services and approved school services, irrespective of the vehicle used.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive of the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads including any person exercising a valid delegation on behalf of the Chief Executive.

Child

A person aged five (5) years to fourteen (14) years inclusive.

Companion Card

A card issued by all state and territory governments to eligible people with a disability who need the significant assistance of a companion to attend activities and venues in their communities. A Companion Card allows one accompanying carer to travel with the cardholder at no charge, valid on approved services only. The cardholder must have a valid ticket for travel.

Concession Fare

A reduced fare offered to eligible persons intended to provide a reasonable level of community access and mobility in support of the government's social justice objectives. Operators providing concession fares may be eligible for reimbursement by government.

Contract Area

The service contract area(s) and/or routes declared in accordance with the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994*, as set out in service contracts.

Department

Unless otherwise specified refers to the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Department of Veterans' Affairs DVA Health Card - for All Conditions

A card issued to eligible persons by the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs. White or Gold DVA Health Card holders are eligible for a concession fare.

Driver

Means the driver of a vehicle providing a public passenger service.

Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) Veterans

See Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI)/Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) Veteran Travel Pass below.

Fare

The price of a ticket for a journey calculated on zones travelled for a specific passenger and ticket type (including GST).

General Route Service

As defined by the Act.

Guide Dog

See Assistance Animal

Identity Card / Concession Entitlement Card

Identification issued by organisations, institutions or government departments which identify the holder as a person meeting specific criteria. Used to support eligibility for a particular concession.

Infant

A person four (4) years of age or younger.

Job Seeker

A Job Seeker must be a recipient of Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance from the Australian Governments Department of Human Services – Centrelink.

The basic requirements for Newstart Allowance include:

- Being aged 22 years or older but under pension age;
- looking for paid work;
- prepared to meet the Mutual Obligation Requirements while looking for work;
- meeting an income and assets test; and
- meeting Australian residency requirements.

The requirements for Youth Allowance recipients are:

- aged 16 to 21 years inclusive
- looking for full time work or undertaking activities approved by Centrelink.;
- if the person is dependent or independent;
- meeting income and assets tests, and
- meeting Australian residency requirements
- reside in Queensland.

Journey

The distance travelled from origin to final destination. A journey can involve several trips using more than one service. The sum of these trips makes one journey.

Listed School Services

School services as listed in Annexure B2 of each *qconnect* service contract

Monthly Summary Report

A report containing the information in the format required by the service contract or other format as may be directed by the Chief Executive from time to time. The report is used as the basis for concessional reimbursement by government to operators.

Operators

Service Providers contracted by the Department of Transport and Main Roads to operate services under the *qconnect* platform.

Pensioner Concession Card

A card issued to eligible persons by the Australian Government Department of Human Services or the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Public Passenger Service

As defined by the Act.

qconnect

A Queensland Government initiative providing improved public transport and greater connectivity and accessibility of services throughout regional, rural and remote Queensland.

Regional Concession Access Pass

A Regional Concession Access Pass is issued to Job Seekers and Asylum Seekers (who do not hold an Immicard) to identify the person named on the card is eligible for a 50% concession fare.

School Services

As defined by the Act.

School Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS)

The School Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS) provides assistance to eligible students travelling to and from primary and secondary schools on bus, train, ferry, and tram services.

Seniors Business Discount Card

A card issued to eligible persons by the Queensland Department of Communities, Disability Services, and Seniors. The card provides discounts and special offers at participating businesses.

Seniors Card

A card issued to eligible persons by any Australian state or territory government – in Queensland the Department of Communities, Disability Services, and Seniors.

Student

A person enrolled at a Queensland primary or secondary school with a Queensland Student ID card or in a Queensland school uniform.

A home-schooled student with a valid Home Education Unit ID card.

Tertiary/Post secondary Student

A 50 per cent concession fare applies to eligible tertiary and post-secondary students on approved public transport anywhere in Queensland.

To be eligible for a concession when travelling on *qconnect* services, the student must carry a student ID (issued by an institution registered with the Department of Transport and Main Roads) with a Regional Concession Sticker applied to the ID as proof of eligibility.

Eligible students must meet the following criteria:

- reside in Queensland; and
- be enrolled in and attending a course:
 - at a university, higher education provider or other registered training organisation in Queensland (unless otherwise approved by the Department of Transport and Main Roads) that is registered with the department; and
 - that has been developed and accredited under the Australian Qualifications Framework, or
 - that is a Course in Core Skills supported by the Queensland Government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work Initiative*; and
- be a full time student enrolled on an internal basis. To be considered full time and internal:
 - a university student must be enrolled full time on an internal basis, as deemed by their university; or
 - students attending an institution other than a university must be enrolled in a course of study requiring attendance at classes (or unpaid practical requirements) for at least 12 hours per week for a minimum course duration of 12 weeks.

*for details on eligible courses, visit translink.com.au/tertiary

Ticket

Ticket means an entitlement to travel, as evidenced by a paper or electronic ticket, token, coupon, pass, card or another instrument (including a Smartcard).

Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) Veteran Travel Pass

The proof of eligibility card issued upon application to Queensland residents who are holders of a Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs Repatriation Health Card – for All Conditions (Gold Card), that is embossed Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) which entitles the holder to free travel on approved public transport services.

Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI)/Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) Veteran Travel Pass

The proof of eligibility card issued upon application to Queensland residents who are holders of a Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs Repatriation Health Card – for All Conditions (Gold Card), that is marked Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) or Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) which entitles the holder to free travel on approved public transport services.

Transfer

The movement of a passenger between services when more than one trip is required to complete a journey. This includes, where applicable, movement between different operators' services within a contiguous service contract area or route, but excludes a return journey.

Trip

The distance travelled from point of embarkation on a vehicle to where the passenger disembarks. A trip may be a full journey or part of the journey.

Veterans Card

A card issued to eligible persons by the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs. White or gold Veteran Card holders are eligible for a concession fare.

Vision Impairment Travel Pass

A card issued by any Australian state or territory government (also known as a Vision Impaired Persons Travel Pass or Vision Impaired Travel Pass) to a person who has been certified by a medical practitioner as meeting the criteria for legal blindness. Such persons are entitled to free travel on all approved public transport.

Zone

The area between zone boundaries to which a particular fare applies.

Zone Boundary

A line dividing the *qconnect* service network into zones for the calculation of fares.

Schedule B: Fare Schedules

Current fare schedules are listed on the TransLink or TMR websites as per the following:

- **TransLink:** <https://translink.com.au/tickets-and-fares/fares-and-zones/current-fares>
- **TMR:** <https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/public/transport/timetables/qconnect>

Periodical and multi-trip tickets, where offered in the fare schedules, are calculated on the following basis:

- Weekly tickets are calculated at the cost of ten single tickets less 20 per cent and rounded to the nearest ten cents.
- Ten trip tickets are calculated at the cost of ten single tickets less 20 per cent and rounded to the nearest ten cents.
- Monthly tickets are calculated at the cost of four weekly tickets.