

Transport Affordability Amendment Bill 2026

Submission No: 039

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Publication: Making the submission and your name public

Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee Regarding: Transport Affordability Amendment Bill 2026

To the Committee Secretary and Mr. Bart Mellish MP,

I am writing to formally submit my views on the *Transport Affordability Amendment Bill 2026*. As a technology founder and commuter advocate, I strongly support the Bill's intent to protect public transport affordability, particularly the requirement for parliamentary approval before the current 50-cent fare can be increased.

With global tensions driving fuel prices past \$2.80 a litre and consecutive interest rate hikes squeezing household budgets, South East Queenslanders are increasingly forced to leave their cars at home. The 50-cent public transport fare is an essential lifeline for these families. However, the legislative intent of this Bill is currently being undermined by the technical realities of the Translink network, where the 'go card' infrastructure imposes a hidden tax on commuters through punitive default charges and an archaic refund system.

The Friction of the Current Refund System

While commuters expect to pay 50 cents, routine system failures—such as glitchy card readers, unrecorded touch-offs, and failed bus-to-train transfers—automatically penalise passengers with fixed fares ranging from \$2.50 to \$10.00. The burden of correcting these system errors is placed entirely on the commuter.

To reclaim their money, commuters must navigate a tedious, complex portal to manually audit every line of their travel history. For a family scanning through weeks of trips, identifying a missed transfer is a formidable administrative barrier. Consequently, the vast majority of commuters simply give up, allowing millions of dollars in fixed fares to be quietly absorbed by the system. This friction is not merely an inconvenience; it acts as an ongoing structural barrier to the very affordability this Bill seeks to ensure.

Technical Evidence: FareClaim.app

To address this systemic failure, I co-developed **FareClaim.app**, a secure, **100% free web application** for South East Queenslanders. Commuters simply upload their Translink travel history file, and the application scans their trips in seconds to identify exact overcharges, failed touch-ons, and missed transfers, providing the precise details required to submit a Translink adjustment form. FareClaim serves as technical evidence that the current system is fundamentally flawed. If an independent, browser-based tool can instantly spot and format these system leaks, it demonstrates that Translink possesses the data to automate or vastly simplify this process. Instead, the current system relies on administrative friction to suppress legitimate refund claims.

Recommendation

If the *Transport Affordability Amendment Bill 2026* aims to genuinely protect Queenslanders from rising transport costs, it must recognise that affordability extends beyond the advertised ticket price. I

urge the Committee to consider the mechanisms by which fixed fares are applied and refunded, and to recommend systemic improvements that remove the administrative burden from commuters. Legislating a 50-cent fare will only provide true cost-of-living relief when the infrastructure guarantees that passengers are not quietly penalised for the network's own technical shortcomings.

Thank you for your time and your service to the Queensland public.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Tan

Brisbane Commuter, Creator of FareClaim.app