

High school students campaign for free public transport

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The Educator



A state-wide student representative body of 100 South Australian senior students is asking Premier Peter Malinauskas to remove all public transport fares for students.

Launching their Free Fares for Our Future Campaign on Friday 23 June, members of the South Australian Student Representative Council (SA SRC) are pushing for the change to reduce inequality and the likelihood of fines, and to ease pressure on young people who may already be experiencing financial stress.

“For many young people, public transport is not just a means of getting from point A to point B - it connects individuals and communities,” SRC member, Bodhi Wait, said. “Public transport is crucial for me to visit my grandparents in their retirement village, access the city, and participate in extracurricular activities.”

This position is supported by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Helen Connolly, who has looked extensively into the impacts of fares and fines on young people, particularly those who are already in financial stress.

As outlined in the Commissioner's Safe and Sound report released earlier this month, young people rely heavily on having access to public transport, with one in five patrons either a primary or secondary school student. One of the key recommendations made in the report is to reduce the cost barrier of transport, particularly for low-income families.

“Young people from low-income families who already have a School Card would benefit significantly from access to free public transport,” Commissioner Connolly said.

“This group of young people rely on public transport to get them to and from school, work, and other commitments. Free public transport would remove the barrier to their participation in the activities they enjoy outside of school too, which they often have to forego because they cannot afford the transport costs involved.”

The campaign is also being supported by the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA).

“Young people are informed and care deeply about the issues that affect them. Spearheading this campaign shows decision-makers that they have ideas and solutions for better public transport, and want their voices to be heard,” FYA’s SA SRC Program Coordinator, Maddie Diamond, said.

All South Australians, no matter their age, are encouraged to sign the petition and take action to make public transport more equitable.