



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

RURAL AND REGIONAL BUS REFORM INTERIM MEASURE - AVERAGE AGE RELIEF

The Minister for Transport has agreed that as an interim measure, relief from the existing average bus age requirements be provided for smaller bus operators in accordance with the recommendations of the Rural and Regional Bus Reform Taskforce.

During 2007 the contracting, funding and service planning arrangements for rural and regional bus services will be finalised. This will include sustainable arrangements concerning bus age, category provisions and applicable funding. These reforms are expected to be progressively implemented from early 2008.

Interim relief from average age requirements is available for small operators who average the age of buses over either 1 or 2 vehicles subject to vehicles being within the same category bands, i.e., Category 1 and 2, and Category 3 and 4.

This interim relief acknowledges that in complying with current average age requirements smaller operators must replace buses at an earlier age than larger operators.

Relief is available to operators who can demonstrate that they meet requirements regarding safety and reliability. This will be measured through a satisfactory HVIS inspection report and the Ministry's previous operator audit results.

The period of relief is for a maximum of three years or until the contract expiry date, whichever is the earlier. Where an operator holds multiple contracts the earliest contract expiry date is the applicable date for this interim relief.

Relief is only available on existing vehicles that were purchased prior to 1 March 2007. Where a vehicle is replaced after average age relief has been approved the replacement vehicle must comply with the average age requirement in the non-commercial contract and the relief of average age will cease to apply.

During the relief period there will be no changes to contract payments as a consequence of the relief.

Prior to the implementation of reform, any transitional measures required will be determined. In the event an operator has elected to seek relief from average age, this will be taken into account to ensure no operator is inadvertently disadvantaged.

The granting and maintaining of relief is at the Ministry's discretion subject to operator's vehicles(s) meeting the necessary standards of safety and reliability and operator compliance with vehicle maintenance requirements.

Operators must apply for average age relief on the attached form with applications being sent to their applicable Regional Office.

Should further information be required operators may contact:

- Northern Regional Office on (02) 4929 7006
- Southern Regional Office on (02) 4224 3333
- Parramatta Regional Office on (02) 8836 3100
- Bus Reform Unit on (02) 9268 2933
- Or by email to: statewidebusreform@transport.nsw.gov.au