

File
Bus fare

S.A.M.P.

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About face in bus fare row

Fierce objections from two fronts yesterday forced the Government to scrap plans which would have doubled the cross-harbour bus fare.

Both bus companies and members of the Transport Advisory Committee lashed out at the proposal to put the fare up from \$1 to \$2.

As a result the Government made a rapid turn about and bowed out.

The fare, due to come in the New Year, will go up by only half to \$1.50 — the figure mentioned in official applications by the bus

companies.

But passengers boarding after the bus has crossed the tunnel are likely to have to pay \$1 instead of 50 cents — a 100 per cent rise.

Several transport executives saw the hefty increase, proposed by the Government, as a form of protectionism towards the Mass Transit Railway and a means of narrowing the fare gap between the two modes of transport.

The bus companies saw it as a sure way of losing passengers.

"If the price increase is too steep, we are going to get passenger resistance and start losing subscribers," said the China Motor Bus traffic manager, Mr Lyndon Rees.

"Thus we think we've struck a fare structure we think is equitable to everybody."

The proposals were thrown out at yesterday's meeting of the TAC.

Another meeting, set for next month, will probably be the last before recommendations are made by the TAC to the Executive Council.

The committee is working out final details to the increase for each route — KMB for example has 230 different routes, each of which has to be examined.

Most of the cheaper fares of up to 40 cents are expected to go up by no more than 10 cents.

But bigger increases are due for the longer journeys.