NSW grants international students travel concessions

VICTORIA has been isolated by NSW’s decision to reverse its long-term policy of refusing to grant transport concessions to international students.

Premier Barry O’Farrell announced the change today from India, where he is on a trade mission.

The new concessions are a direct response to a recommendation in the NSW Government's International Education and Research Taskforce's final report, which was released in Sydney today.

Mr O'Farrell said international education was the state's second biggest export industry, earning about $6 billion a year. "We need to do more to attract international students seeking high quality education, cultural and employment experience," he said.

Transport concessions are currently available to international students in every state and territory apart from NSW and Victoria, the jurisdictions with by far the most overseas students.

The two states have maintained their arrangements even though international students regard them as discriminatory, and successive reports have called for change.

Acting Premier Andrew Stoner said the changes meant international students would soon have access to discounts of up to 35 per cent on periodic bus, rail and ferry tickets in Greater Sydney, the Hunter and the Illawarra.

He said the government would respond to the taskforce's other 20 recommendations "soon".

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