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News release

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Million \$ Lottery for Train and Bus Passengers

Lotteries are the answer to debt ridden public transport systems and environmental problems in Australian cities according to a radical new proposal by the Australia Institute.

Passenger tickets would double as lottery tickets.

“Giving people the opportunity to buy a bus or train ticket that was then entered into a monthly lottery with a substantial prize would get more people on public transport,” Institute Executive Director Dr Clive Hamilton said today.

The proposal is made in *Taxes and Charges for Environmental Protection*, Australia’s first comprehensive report examining the use of taxes and other economic incentives to improve the environment. Dr Hamilton released the report today.

He said recent problems with traffic congestion at Sydney’s Royal Easter Show are an example of just how hard it is to get people to abandon their cars for the benefits of public transport.

“In the interests of both the economy and the environment, measures to encourage greater use of public transport need to be seriously considered,” he said.

“The passenger ticket-lottery proposal would have a greater impact on patronage than other measures designed to get people on public transport because it takes advantage of Australian’s love of a punt.

“Not only would the scheme put more people on buses and trains, cutting congestion on the roads and reducing environmentally harmful fuel emissions, a lottery would also provide additional funds for transport infrastructure.”

Dr Hamilton said taxes and charges designed to solve environmental problems had proliferated throughout the OECD. Australia lags well behind. The new report looks at ways in which taxes and charges could deal with the environmental problems of transport, land, water, forests, wastes and stationary energy.

Recommendations include providing free parking for owners of vehicles with low environmental impact, auctioning parking spaces, penalising fuel consuming four-wheel drive vehicles (other than for genuine primary producers), giving recycled goods a price advantage and an extensive system of product taxes and deposit refunds covering tyres, batteries, car bodies computers, packaging and white goods.