

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concern about the cost of travel on the Spirit of Tasmania, especially during peak travel times.

My mother and two sisters live in Tasmania. I visit once a year and sometimes more, if there are special family events. As one sister lives in Hobart and the other in Launceston, I choose to go on the Spirit of Tasmania so I can bring my car with me. I usually stay between 3 to 5 weeks over Christmas holidays.

I drive from Barmera to Melbourne to catch the Spirit and it costs me roughly \$90 in petrol for the 700km drive. I was charged \$696 to travel on the Spirit for a distance of 458 kms! I find this price scandalous! If I was driving to Devonport on a normal highway, I would pay approximately another \$70 in fuel. Instead, I was charged 9 times that amount on the Spirit!

I believe that the Bass Strait should be treated like a sea highway and passengers should be charged accordingly. The cost should be an equal cost as if I was driving on a normal highway to Melbourne, Queensland and other states of Australia.

I would visit Tasmania more often, on the Spirit of Tasmania, if the cost was reduced. My mother is in her 80's and I would like to spend as much time as possible with her over the next few years. As I am a teacher, I have four holidays a year that I could utilise and travel to Tasmania. I cannot afford it with the prices as they are now.

My nephew, Jake Hodgkinson, competes in slalom kayaking competitions. Last year he was selected to represent his state on the junior squad. He has to travel to Penrith, Sydney, to train and compete. It is costing my sister \$1500 to travel on the Spirit from Devonport to Melbourne for their car, kayaks and three people. This is on top of petrol and accommodation for the rest of their stay. If they could 'drive' on a normal highway, the cost would be quite small.

I hope you will think about what I have mentioned above and take into consideration how unfair it seems for travellers to Tasmania. More people WOULD travel on the Spirit if it was a lot cheaper and equal to what it would cost on a normal highway.

Regards  
Cherie Cooper