



## **IPART Draft Report – Maximum Opal Fares until July 2028 BusNSW Submission**

16 September 2024

Review of Maximum Opal Fares  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal  
PO Box K35  
HAYMARKET POST SHOP NSW 1240

Dear Tribunal Members for this review,

BusNSW welcomes the opportunity to comment on IPART's Draft Report and Draft Determination regarding the review of maximum Opal fares to apply until July 2028. BusNSW made an initial submission to the IPART Issues Paper in March 2024, where we expressed our commitment to fostering the efficient and sustainable growth of public transport in NSW and ensuring that bus services provide value for money to the public.

### **Support for Key Proposals**

BusNSW generally supports IPART's draft determination, particularly the proposal for most maximum fares for bus services to remain unchanged, with a modest 1.6% increase to the 3 to 8 km fare band. This approach strikes a balance between maintaining affordability for commuters and ensuring the sustainability of public transport services.

We also support IPART's proposal for annual CPI adjustments to maximum fares, beginning in July each year. This indexation approach provides predictability for customers and ensures that fares evolve in line with inflation, preserving the financial viability of the public transport system without imposing sudden, sharp increases in fare levels.

### **Implications for Contracted Bus Services**

BusNSW members operate under gross cost contracts in both Greater Sydney and Outer Metropolitan areas, where performance is measured through key performance indicators (KPIs) that reflect service quality, reliability, and value for taxpayers. Changes to Opal fares can influence customer demand and travel behaviour, which can, in turn, impact the achievement of KPIs by bus operators. The proposed fare stability with modest adjustments aligns with the performance regimes in these contracts and is unlikely to significantly impact service quality or patronage.

### **Rural and Regional Considerations**

In our March 2024 submission, BusNSW highlighted the ongoing challenge faced by operators in Rural and Regional areas, where Opal is not available. Communities in proximity to the Opal network increasingly expect integrated fare systems that include Opal, especially when their journeys span both Rural/Regional and Opal-enabled areas. We encourage IPART and Transport for NSW to continue exploring opportunities for extending Opal's availability to these regions, ensuring fare consistency and ease of use across the state.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, BusNSW supports the key elements of IPART’s draft determination and looks forward to continuing to work with IPART and Transport for NSW to ensure that fare structures contribute to a sustainable and high-performing bus network.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED].

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BusNSW