

# Dangar Island League

PO Dangar Island, NSW 2083  
www.dangarislandleague.net



6 August 2017

Dear Madams/Sirs

## **Subject: Dangar Island Brooklyn Ferry Service: IPART fare review 2017**

This submission is on behalf of the Dangar Island league, representing the residents and ratepayers of Dangar Island.

As an island community of 250 permanent residents and 100 weekenders, the Ferry Service is a vital part of our infrastructure. As well as the everyday business of commuting and off island travel, it provides the school transport service for all primary and secondary school children on the island, numbering over 50, under the STSS scheme. It is also the only available transport for day trippers, who enjoy the Dangar Island experience and support our local Café and Bowling Club. The Ferry Service is an essential part of the infrastructure of the Island.

We were eagerly anticipating this year's consideration of external benefits in the pricing model. We regard the conclusion in the draft report that no benefits arise as baffling. In particular:

- The Ferry Service replaces what would be a very large number of passenger trips by private boats carrying 1 or 2 passengers at a high carbon input, often requiring a round trip to drop off and then another to collect. The review seems only to be considering 'avoided road congestion', and does not appreciate the avoided impacts of inefficient commuter boats.
- The Ferry Service takes significant pressure off the Brooklyn Port, which has very limited mooring opportunities. Again, the service goes some way to avoiding the significant financial and environmental costs associated with upgrading the capacity of the port.
- The social benefits to those less mobile or unable to utilise small boats are significant, with the Ferry Service ameliorating the potential for social isolation of this demographic.
- During inclement weather, the ferry is the only mode of transport available to most residents. It provides not only external community safety benefits, but also the benefits associated with productivity losses that would occur were that critical service not available to commuters during these times.

IPART should also take into account the considerable cost impost associated with the current non-inclusion of the ferry service in the Opal scheme. Under the current pricing arrangement, a Dangar Island adult pays \$27.82 per day, or just under \$140 per week to

commute to employment in the CDB. Other Sydney commuters within the Opal scheme have weekly costs capped at \$61.60. This is a significant cost to island residents that will only increase with any rise in ferry fares. The equity issues associated with this differential treatment of Sydney transport users are also apparent, and should be considered by IPART in its fare determination.

We note and appreciate the current treatment of senior Island residents who travel on the ferry free of charge, with the \$2.50 daily transport cap applying when they enter the Opal system from or beyond Brooklyn. We strongly support the retention of this arrangement.

The report makes reference to ferry patronage and forecasts of this. Any 'external benefit' included in the pricing model would have the effect of lowering prices to the user and hence making travel more affordable. The Island is an attractive destination for day-trippers, particularly the elderly and young families. Current fares, and the proposal to increase these, act as a deterrent to such visitors, and serve only to reduce patronage.

The fare increases proposed for the coming years seem again likely to be over CPI and average earnings growth. We therefore ask IPART to reconsider external benefits (the "Bus model") for 2018 as a way of bridging the gap between affordable fares and economic sustainability.

We conclude by noting the high quality of the Brooklyn Ferry Service. The ferry is clean and reliable, punctuality is excellent, and the ferry staff is courteous and efficient.

We look forward to seeing consideration of the above issues in the Draft Report due for release in September, and are keen to be involved in any roundtable discussions following the release of that report.

Yours sincerely

Sophia Walsh  
DIL President



Vanessa O'Keefe  
DIL Vice President

