

Opal card IPART submission

It is disappointing the Minister for Transport in today's Sydney Morning Herald (13 June 2019) has tried to pre-empt the outcome of this submission process.

The idea of charging more for congested bus and trains is frankly ridiculous. The T4 Illawarra line I catch each morning at 7.27am has become so crowded I can barely enter the vestibule – same carriage, same time for 5 years. The past 12 months has worsened considerably and Transport for NSW has not made it clear what will happen when the Bankstown line closes as part of the Metro development.

Minister Constance only kept Opal fares constant because of the looming NSW state election. It's disappointing train and bus users seem to be going to be charged more for worsening services. The NSW Government has admitted the privatisation of the Inner West bus service has been a disaster with a deluge of complaints and worsening service.

Increasing fares will hardly encourage people to use public transport or for it to remain affordable considering the current wage stagflation.

Generally speaking the open-ended questions of this Opal fare enquiry is not conducive to authentic public engagement. Questions need to be targeted.

In short the \$2 discount for transferring between different modes be kept the same or lowered.

I do not support IPART reviewing any suite of discounts on Opal services. Public transport users were forced to use the Opal card and promised significant benefits by the then Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian. Most of these have evaporated so it is imperative for authentic public engagement that the Opal discount of 8 trips is retained.

Frankly for the NSW Government to complain about the financial sustainability of the public transport network when on the other hand the Treasurer says the State Budget is the best in the Western World is disingenuous in the extreme.

Given its failed privatisation agenda, is it too much to expect a State Government to provide public transport as a necessary mantra such as health and education? Is the same cost-benefit used in these areas?

7 Are the current suite of discounts available on Opal services appropriate? Do you support IPART reviewing these discounts?

8 Should contactless payment cards and devices attract the same discounts as the Opal card?

9 What other methods of payment are likely to become available over the next five years?

10 Are there any issues regarding fare discounts or concessions that we should consider? Pricing for on-demand services

11 Do you agree with our proposed approach to establishing appropriate fares for on-demand services?

12 Which groups of people are most likely to use on-demand services, and how could this change over time?

13 How much would you be willing to pay for on-demand services?

1.1 Opal fares should encourage people to use public transport 2 1.2 Opal fares should maximise the benefits of public transport use to the community 2 1.3 Opal fares should help deliver a financially sustainable public transport network 3 1.4 Opal fares should remain affordable for public transport users 4 1.5 Opal fares should be predictable and stable over time

7am-9am and 4pm-6.30pm in the Sydney Trains network area

Should the \$2 discount for transferring between different modes of transport be higher or lower?

Passengers pay around a quarter of the costs of providing these services. Patronage has grown significantly, with around 12% of all trips in Sydney being made on public transport. But the growth in revenue from these additional passenger journeys has not kept up with the increase in costs. At the same time, fares have fallen in real terms.

We propose to retain a price differential between maximum fares for peak and off-peak train services. We also propose to consider a number of possible changes to this fare structure element: 0

The size of the differential, that is, whether it should be smaller or larger than 30% θ Whether it should only apply to trips in particular locations (such as CBD train stations in periods where overcrowding is a major problem) θ Whether the current peak times are the right ones θ Whether there should also be different peak and off-peak fares on other modes.

2.4 Fare discounts for frequent travel and weekly and daily caps Currently, Opal offers passengers several discounts and caps, including:²¹ θ The Weekly Travel Reward – with an Opal card, when you have paid for eight journeys in one week (Monday to Sunday), you reach the Weekly Travel Reward. For the rest of that week, your fares will be half price. You must tap on and tap off each time to receive the discount. θ Daily and weekly fare caps – after \$15.80 in fares have been paid with an Opal card in a day (or \$63.20 in a week) passengers get free travel for the rest of the day (or week).²² θ On Sundays, Opal passengers can travel on all modes for a discounted, capped price of \$2.70.

Are the current suite of discounts available on Opal services appropriate? Do you support IPART reviewing these discounts?