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Submission: The inquiry into setting OPAL fares seems to clash with the Coalition Government's undertaking to cap OPAL fares at $50 from July 1, 2019. This will go ahead, as has been confirmed to me in writing by the Premier's office. Consequently, there is not much room for any changes over the forward estimates.

The benefits to non-users of public transport seem to be underestimated. Commuters that travel long distances, do not only reduce congestion on the roads, but also the housing market and services in the city, amongst others. What if all the people that commute lived in the city? Alternatively, who will fill their jobs if they stop commuting? Many spent long hours on the train to work in essential jobs in the city and the community should honour that, through providing cheap long-distance fares.

There is a question whether different services should be priced differently. Most cities around the world provide zone-based pricing (not distance), independent of mode of transport. We should do that, too. This would simplify the system and remove to need for discounts when mode is changed. Of course, some forms of transport are more expensive than others, but users often have no influence on what is available in their zones.

The issue of frequent travellers and infrequent travellers is raised in the above context, but maybe should be looked at in a different light. Currently (since the removal of the free trips after 8) there is no significant benefit for frequent travellers in the OPAL system. However, it is these travellers/commuters that make the system feasible. The system could not run on infrequent travellers. So why do regular 5-day-a-week commuters not get more benefit from providing the customer backbone to the system.

When the current fares are compared to those before the introduction of OPAL, I wonder whether the comparison is based on single trips, or whether it considers the quarterly and yearly tickets that were available then. If not, that should be done.