

Submission - Opal Fares from July 1 2020

Is it possible for IPART to consider not reducing the weekly cap as promised by the government but instead implement other measures to encourage more people to use public transport during non-peak times?

Currently, on Saturdays, the road network is experiencing gridlock, traffic jams are bigger than during the week with parents taking children to sporting games.

Sunday is becoming very busy on specific modes of transport (ferries), creating timetabling issues.

The cost of upgrading our road network to handle the ever-increasing traffic on the weekend would far out way any cost subsidising weekend fares.

1. Consider increasing Sunday fares to \$3.00 or even \$3.50

It's great to have the current \$2.70 Funday Sunday fare, but this is putting a burden on certain parts of the network. Increasing the fare would still be cheaper than a takeaway coffee or a 600ml bottle of coke to travel on public transport all day Sunday.

2. Have the same price for Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays

Currently, the Funday Sunday fare encourages people to put off travelling on Saturday on public transport to instead travel on Sunday. Encouraging people to travel on Saturdays and also public holidays will reduce people putting off travelling on Saturday's and public holidays. This would allow the simplification to 2 timetables to become Weekday & Weekend/public holiday saving the government money.

3. Increase free travel for all children up to and including five years of age.

Currently, free travel is only for children three years and under and by increasing the age to school-aged children would return it to the previous age limit encouraging more young parents to use public transport.

4. Default fare for buses would reduce as the bus nears terminus

Currently, if a passenger makes a mistake tapping off their Opal on a bus, they are charged the maximum default fare for the full distance fo travel and would not get any transfer discounts. Buses are different from other modes of transport because the Opal reader is located on the bus.

As the bus travels along the route the default fare would reduce, i.e. If you tap on more than 8km from the terminus would be \$4.71 between 3-8km would be \$3.66, and if you tap on less than 3km from the terminus, you would be charged \$2.20.

Many people make mistakes when getting off the bus or suddenly realise the bus is at their stop and jump up getting without tapping off so this would reduce the considerable default fare revenue saving people money.

Single ferry ticket would include the connecting ferry link bus.

Currently people usually tourist purchase a single ferry ticket and they cannot purchase a bus ticket of the connecting bus at the ferry wharf.

Have a paper day Opal ticket for \$17.00 issued from Opal ticket Machines

Currently, many people forget their Opal card at home and therefore cannot purchase a cash ticket or have to buy multiple single ferry tickets. By having a paper, Opal Day ticket able to be purchased from the Opal vending machines, people including tourists can buy a paper ticket to use public transport all day from the first tap on.

Overhaul weekly and yearly cap

Include Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays into the weekly cap. If you reach the weekly cap, then the weekend and public holiday within that week are free.

If the weekly cap only includes five days then consider reducing to \$50.00 or \$55.00 per week

Consider having a yearly cap maybe after 47 weeks then five weeks free.

Have a rewards system

Implement a similar system <https://rewards.rabbit.co.th/> which sits behind the Bangkok transport equivalent of the Opal card. The Rabbit rewards system allows the Bangkok transport operator to encourage people to use the network at different times and to top up their cards instead of just throwing the card away.