

REGIONAL RAIL ACTION – NSW

**Border Rail Action Group
Orange Rail Action Group
Southern Tablelands Rail Users Group
Sydney – Canberra Rail Action Group**

Dennis E Toohey

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

12 June 2019

Tribunal Members

Review of Maximum Opal fares

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

PO Box K35

Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

On-line lodgement: 12 June 2019

Dear Tribunal Members

Maximum Opal Fares 2020 – 2024: RRA-NSW Response

Four community-based rail action groups constitute an umbrella entity, Regional Rail Action – NSW (RRA-NSW), for facilitating presentation and discussion of views on passenger rail services in Central and Southern areas of NSW and the Australian Capital Territory.

Presently OPAL card services are offered beyond the metropolitan area, such as to Bathurst in the Central West and Goulburn in the Southern Tablelands.

The arrival in 2023 of new regional trains' heralds an opportunity for establishing inter and intra-regional services. RRA-NSW favours an extension of OPAL card or like electronic ticketing into more regional services.

Attached is a collation of responses on questions one through to 10 asked by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). The Sydney – Canberra Rail Action Group did not contribute to this submission.

Please forward enquires to the writer.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

Media Spokesperson Regional Rail Action-NSW.

[REDACTED]

. E. tooheyde@optusnet.com.au

Maximum Opal Fares 2020 – 2024: RRA-NSW Response

Q 1. Are these objectives the right ones to focus on?

In the opinion of RRA-NSW they are correct.

Q 2. Are any of the objectives more important than others?

In the opinion of RRA-NSW:

Fares to encourage use of public transport

Fares remain affordable for public transport users.

Q 3. Should light rail and metro services have their own mode-specific fares? Or should light rail continue to be set in line with bus fares, and metro fares set in line with rail fares?

In the opinion of RRA-NSW:

Yes, light rail and bus fares should align while the Metro and heavy rail fares should be aligned.

This should encourage the public to use the most appropriate forms of public transport instead of their cars. Even to the extent of changing to multiple types of services.

Q 4. Should the \$2 discount for transferring between different modes of transport be higher or lower?

In the opinion of RRA-NSW:

The \$2 discount should stay

Q 5. Do we currently have a good balance between fares for short distance and long distance travel? Should fares increase more gradually and smoothly as the distance travelled increases?

In the opinion of RRA-NSW:

No, to first part of question.

Yes, to the second part but **abide by** the two objectives of ‘encouragement’ and ‘affordability’. (See response to Q. No. 2).

Comment. All member groups strongly support growth in long-distance train travel for much broader reasons than that of ‘congestion’, (IPART December, 2014)¹. Rail’s value proposition to society is extensive such as reduction in road trauma and its superior environmental externalities, (Deloitte, 2017).

¹ The 2014 report investigated maximum fares for public transport in the metropolitan and surrounding areas, (IPART 2014).

Q 6. Should we make changes to when and where peak fares apply? Should all modes have peak and off peak fares?

In the opinion of RRA-NSW:

No, to the first part of the question

Yes, to the second part of the question.

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

RRA-NSW does not express an opinion on the question as a whole.

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

In the opinion of RRA-NSW:

Yes, contactless payment cards and devices should attract the same discounts as the Opal card. The notion of discriminating on method of payment should not be part of a public transport fare system.

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

RRA-NSW does not express an opinion on this question.

Q. 10. Are there any issues regarding fare discounts or concessions that we should consider?

RRA-NSW does not have further issues to consider.

References

Deloitte, 2017. *Value of rail: Contribution of rail in Australia*. A report commissioned by the Australasian Railway Association. Deloitte Access Economics, Canberra Airport ACT. November. Available at:

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/Economics/deloitte-au-economics-value-rail-contribution-australia-161117.pdf>

IPART, 2014. *Review of external benefits of public transport – Draft Report*. Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. Sydney. December. Available at:

https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/files/sharedassets/website/trimholdingbay/review_of_external_benefits_of_public_transport_-_december_2014.pdf

End of RAA-NSW response.