



changing lives  
reducing crime

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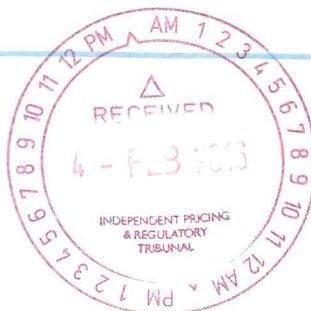
The Chairman

Mr Peter Boxall

IPART

P.O. Box K35,

HAYMARKET POST SHOP NSW 1240



Dear Mr Boxall,

**Ref: Public Transport Fare Review – CRC's Court Support Scheme Submission**

***Background.***

I work in the not for profit sector at The Community Restorative Centre (CRC) which was established in 1951. My role is Coordinator of the Court Support Scheme established in 1982.

The Court Support Scheme (CSS) operates in local courts across the Sydney metropolitan area, Central Coast and the City of Newcastle. Funded by Legal Aid NSW, the CSS is available for defendants, witnesses, victims of crime, as well as the many friends and families of those attending court.

The Court Support Scheme is made up of over 50 volunteers who give freely of their time to help people navigate the court system. For those facing the stress of their first court appearance or multiple adjournments or having a family member in custody, being assisted in a friendly manner can make a real difference. CSS volunteers provide information on court protocol, sources of legal assistance, emotional support and referrals to other services. CSS volunteers do not offer legal advice. There is no referral or fee required.

***This volunteering initiative delivers an outstanding commitment to improving access to justice for many. Over 43,000 local court attendees were offered assistance in the past financial year.***

***Gold Opal Card also known as The Pensioner Ticket (PET)***

The majority of our volunteers are senior citizens, retired, pensioners or self-funded retirees. They use the Gold Opal Card to travel to and from their unpaid work each week, delivering this valuable work 50 weeks a year, year in year out. Many of our volunteers have been with the service for over 10 years. One volunteer received the 2011 Law and Justice Volunteering Award from the NSW Law and Justice Foundation.

Community Restorative Centre Inc.

[www.crcnsw.org.au](http://www.crcnsw.org.au)

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The volunteers willingly waive recoupment of the daily \$2.50 cost of the Pensioner Excursion Ticket (PET). The IPART recommendation to increase this transport fare to a daily maximum of \$9.00 on weekdays will affect the volunteer service donated to local courts. An increase in this fare will force these volunteers to reassess their financial ability to continue this essential work.

The IPART recommendation to change the eligibility criteria of the Gold Opal Card (PET) will be detrimental to CRC's valuable volunteer work and the hundreds of people assisted each week across the 16 Local Courts we operate in.

As one Local Court Registrar advised:

***"We are one of the busiest courts in NSW outside Sydney and without the information and referral services these volunteers supply to clients, I doubt we could function as efficiently as we do. This is a fantastic scheme and the expanded days of attendance this year have made a noticeable difference. The coordinator and the volunteers have both our gratitude and full support for the great work they do"***

Mr. Boxall, it is hard to think of one part of our day to day lives whether it be - health, education, tourism, social justice, religion and faith based organisations, the arts, the law, sport, animal welfare organisations, aged care, disability care and the list goes on and on that volunteering carried out by retired citizens is not affected.

Local, State and Federal arenas all benefit from the volunteering effort.

Volunteering is a two way street. Connecting older people with tasks, responsibilities and communication opportunities keep them well and healthy. We have an obligation to keep our senior citizens active, contributing to society and supporting others.

IPART would do well to visit acquaint themselves with Volunteering NSW, plus NSW Government Agencies to find out what the volunteering workforce delivers to the NSW economy.

***In closing:***

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission. I would urge IPART to think carefully about what the community risks losing should the reported IPART changes to the GOLD OPAL CARD go ahead. And remember, seniors have paid their fair share of tax over many decades. Maintaining affordable public transport is not asking too much. Quid Pro Quo IPART.

[REDACTED]  
Helen Matthews  
CRC Court Support Coordinator  
[REDACTED]

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CC Alison Weston CEO Community Restorative Centre

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG, Patron Community Restorative Centre

The Hon. John Ajaka MLC – Minister For Ageing, Disability, Multiculturalism and Volunteering