



Review of Public Transport Fares
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35,
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

Homelessness NSW is a peak not for profit organisation that works with its members to prevent and reduce homelessness across NSW. Our members include small, locally based community organisations, multiservice agencies with a regional reach and large State-wide service providers. We are pleased to provide our comments on the *More efficient, more integrated Opal fares* Draft Report.

Homelessness NSW believes that it is possible to eliminate homelessness and that all government agencies and programs should ensure that policies and programs should not increase the susceptibility of people to become homeless or the disadvantage they suffer. According to the 2011 Census there were over 28,000 people experiencing homelessness in NSW. Homeless people include rough sleepers, young people and women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. Of these 30% are either sleeping rough or living in a boarding house, while another 34% are living in a severely overcrowded dwelling.

In December Homelessness NSW, along with other community organisations, interviewed 516 people who are homeless in the Sydney CBD. Without exception all of these people were existing below the poverty line. We believe there is an extricable link between homelessness and poverty.

As such we are concerned that if implemented some aspects of the *More efficient, more integrated Opal fares* Draft Report would have a negative impact on people experiencing homelessness. Our main concern is the draft decision to set individual paper fares 40% above the Adult Opal fares. This would have a hugely detrimental impact on the lives of many people experiencing homelessness who because of their situation may be unable to organise to arrange for an Opal card (for example fleeing violent homes or living on the streets so difficult to set up) or are unable to afford to set up an Opal Card. One unintended consequence of this draft decision may be that because of the cost of paper tickets, more people experiencing homelessness avoid purchasing a ticket and risk a fine, sending them further into poverty.

We would be pleased to discuss any aspect of our submission. Please contact me on (02) [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Katherine McKernan
CEO
Homelessness NSW
21 Jan 2016