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Submission: 1) Consultation process:

The timing of the Media Release in Christmas week 2015 is extremely cynical. The period allowed for “community feedback” coincides with the shutdown of many volunteer agencies/ seniors groups etc. and the traditional holiday season.

This has all the hallmarks of a token attempt to gauge community opinion and is poor public administration. It is straight out of the “Yes Minister” lexicon for public consultation processes. IPART should be ashamed of this shoddy practice.

2) Proposal for tightened eligibility for the Gold Opal Card and linking of the Gold Opal cap to other daily caps:

I totally oppose the proposal to tighten the eligibility for the Gold Opal card by shunting seniors (not holding PCCC/ War Widow/er cards) off to a Concession Opal card.

As part of the rollout of the Opal system, considerable advertising effort (and money) was spent on encouraging Seniors to switch to the Gold card as paper PETs would no longer be sold from 1/1/2016. The expectation was that this was the only action necessary to continue access to public transport.

It is simply farcical to learn that it is now proposed that an expensive effort be made to identify those Gold Opal cards that would now be ineligible, cancel those cards and freshly issue Concession Opal cards to those Seniors who would now miss out from Gold card eligibility! What about grandfathering rights!

The proposed differential between the daily cap of Gold Opal cards compared to Concession Opal cards is most unfair to the current Gold Opal card holders who would be dispossessed.

It is not our fault that the \$2:50 cap has not been revised for over 10 years – what an utter failure of public administration! Not doubt the decision was made not to “rock the boat” by changing the cap during the Opal card rollout. Only now, after the withdrawal of paper PETs from sale, is the cap being reviewed!

However, the daily cap for Gold Opal cards should now be reviewed on a yearly basis and a CPI adjustment made as necessary. The proposed increase in the cap to \$3:60 and the “40% linking arrangement” seems a reasonable proposal.

3) Conclusion:

Retain the current arrangements for Gold Opal card eligibility and increase the daily cap to \$3:60 from 1 July 2016 and link it to 40% of the concessional cap – this way we will avoid the ridiculous situation of having a cap that is over 10 years out of date!

In summary, I cannot state the case against the proposed change to Gold Card eligibility any better than the submission made by our State peak volunteer body – the NSW Centre for Volunteering.

I have read their submission and I commend it most strongly.