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Submission: Dear Sir/Madam;

I am writing in response to the inquiry into OPAL fares in Sydney and surrounds, following recent publicity of the Draft Determination (Dec'15).

As a family with two working parents who commute to and from work (15km, mainly rail), and regular users of public transport outside of work, the proposed changes will impact how we use OPAL and public transport in general, if implemented according to the recommendations of the report.

We would welcome any reduction in off-peak fares, as we often travel outside of peak times. Increasing OPAL fares to a maximum cap of A\$65 (or A\$130/week for two adults) would impact how we use public transport. Based on our current travel, we estimate we would incur additional costs of A\$1100/year.

For example, we take advantage of the Sunday discounts (A\$2.50 cap) at times to travel via light rail to Darling Harbour. Should the cost increase to A\$28/family, we would drive in and park, as it would be both cheaper and more time efficient.

Currently, the free travel on weekends on OPAL (once the 8 trips used up) encourages us to take a bus rather than drive sometimes to travel short distances locally for one person. If this was not available, the car becomes a better option. Perhaps increasing the trip minimum to 10 is more equitable (thus still free on the weekend).

I also use Uber on a regular basis, and a decrease in OPAL discounts would also have an indirect result of increasing my usage of this service for local trips.

In the end, I agree a balance is needed on costs and service, however public transport does remove cars from the road and thus congestion. Fares are already quite expensive for many short journeys in the inner-city, and further increases will certainly not help increase patronage of public transport or reduce fare evasion. The end 'cost' to the city of Sydney may well be higher than the easily quantifiable revenue increase.

Yours Sincerely,

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