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Date of submission: Friday, 14 August 2015

Submission: As attached - I have put these same questions to both the Minister for Transport and the Premier. I did receive a woefully inadequate response from the Minister for Transport and am yet to hear back from the Premier.

OPAL FARES – Submission to IPART Review

I am writing to voice my dissatisfaction with the Opal card ticket pricing system.

As a long term resident of the Blue Mountains – over 20 years – I have always travelled to various parts of the city for work. In the past, I have taken advantage of buying yearly tickets, which on average equate to around 40 weekly tickets. This represented an excellent saving over the course of the year.

My final yearly ticket expires at the end of August 2015. I purchased the MyMulti 3 ticket for \$2,444, which equates to \$47 per week. Under the Opal system, I will pay \$65 per week for a similar ticket, or \$3,380 for the year, assuming no price increases. This represents an increase of more than **38%** in my travel cost! An extra **\$78 per month** - as a parent with a mortgage and two teenagers, \$78 a month is difficult to lose – a hike of more than 38% in my annual travel costs is ridiculously excessive!

We are already coping with infrastructure that is hopelessly out of date and trains that can't run if it's too hot/ cold/ wet/ dry/ stormy/ slippery/ foggy (yes, these are all excuses that have been announced to the travellers!). It is also becoming increasingly difficult to park at Springwood Station – with services being stripped back, travellers from further up the Mountains are now forced to come to Springwood to park, as services no longer stop at their local stations. To now be stripped of the yearly ticket option – the one advantage the trains offered - seems a step too far.

Can you please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Can you please tell me what consideration, if any, was given to people not living in the CBD/ metropolitan area when this new ticketing system and pricing were rushed in? What exactly was considered? Certainly not price or affordability, it seems.
2. Was the government aware of the impact the new pricing system would have on long distance commuters? Did the Department consult with the local members from outside of the metropolitan area, for example?
3. What is the government's justification for such an enormous price hike? What am I getting in return? The trains are just as filthy as they've always been, they're still over/ under heated, so what exactly am I getting?
4. In view of this horrendous increase in travel cost, is the Government prepared to reintroduce a yearly ticket option? I just don't understand why people living outside of the Sydney area are being penalised so heavily. Perhaps people living more than, say 50/ 60kms from the CBD could still be offered yearly tickets at reduced/ discounted prices?