

14th June 2013

The Chairman
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW
Level 8, 1 Market St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Boxall

RE: Issues Paper on the Review of Fares for Metropolitan and Outer Metropolitan Bus Services from January 2014

I have just read the issues paper on the review of bus fares and appreciate the opportunity to make comment by way of a more general example of how changes to fare structures can impact the individual. My comments mostly relate to the question of 'Are our proposed pricing principles relevant to determining fares for buses? Are there any other factors that we should take into account?'

I am a regular ferry commuter and occasional bus and train traveller, mostly within the 9km Sydney Ferries zone. I have also recently read a poster at my local wharf about the Government's planned abolition of MyMulti1 tickets on the ferry network. The poster also states that fares will NOT increase, which is not the same as commuters not being substantially worse off. By my calculations I will be very substantially worse off under this change, and I would like to use this scenario to illustrate how a seemingly simple change can add up to a massive disadvantage to commuters and disincentive to use public transport.

I currently hold an **annual** MyMulti1 ticket, which covers my daily ferry commute to work, as well as the bus, train and/or ferry trips I may need to make around the city during the day. The annual pass costs \$1,672.

With the planned abolition of MyMulti1 on the ferry service, I calculate my annual travel costs will increase by between 18% and 133% (or more), depending on which ticketing system I end up with:

- I could upgrade to a MyMulti2 annual ticket at a cost of \$1,976 which is an increase of \$304 or 18% compared with what I pay now, just to maintain my current public transport service
- I could get an Opal card, which appears like it will cost between 39% and 133% extra per year for the same service (and I can't yet use it on buses or trains, so will still need at least a MyMulti1 additionally)

As I read the Opal Card fares, if I only travel by ferry, it looks like there's a \$44.80 weekly cap for travel within 9km. That matches the weekly fare, but it does not recognise the current ANNUAL fare price. If I travelled on ferries and nothing else, that would cost up to \$2,329.60 a year, equating to an increase of \$657.60 or 39% above my current annual MyMulti1 cost. My regular bus & train trips would be extra.

If I continued my current travel arrangements of ferries, buses and trains, it looks like there's a \$15 daily cap planned for the Opal Card (when it becomes available across the network). This would cost up to \$3,900 a year for Monday to Friday travel only - an increase of up to \$2,228 a year, or 133% in my weekday annual travel cost, plus any weekend travel.

While not strictly about this bus fare review (the change in ferry arrangements is the cause), the resultant minimum 18% fare hike in the scenarios described above is unfair and unsustainable for commuters. The separation of modes of transport from a common fare and ticketing system only exacerbates the problem – possibly by more than 133%.

The MyMulti system was the best thing to happen to public transport ticketing that I can remember. It simplified the system and allowed commuters to be flexible in their arrangements, times of travel and modes of transport. The annual pass discount incentives both encourage the use of public transport and reduce queuing at ticketing outlets. Although I receive a discount for purchasing an annual pass, the transport system sees the benefits of receiving the income in advance, and the system also receives my money whether I travel or not. It also encourages me to take public transport when I could drive. There are benefits on both sides.

I implore you to recommend ways for the Government to retain the positive attributes of the MyMulti system, particularly with regard to the flexibility of being able to travel any time and on any mode of transport on a single ticket, and with maintaining the availability of financial incentives for annual passes.

I used to drive to work from another part of Sydney. The availability of public transport was a key reason for my decision to move to my current home. It would be unthinkable to have to return to the roads because the public transport system, which currently works so smoothly for my needs, became untenable or unaffordable.

With regard to the question of 'Are there any other factors we should consider when determining forecast patronage growth over the next 3 to 5 years?', I believe that if the planned changes to the validity of MyMulti1 tickets on ferries go ahead, there could be more commuters, where choice is available, moving from ferries to buses. This could potentially be the case throughout the areas serviced

by ferries, and could have significant impact on bus crowding, while leaving ferries underutilised. I believe the only responsible way to address Sydney's transport and road congestion is to seek maximum utilization of all parts of the network, which need to work together for public transport to be a viable option for commuters.

Thank you for the opportunity to feed my personal circumstances into the review. I hope this information will enlighten and inform your decisions on the recommendations to be made to the Government.

I wish to remain anonymous and for my comments to remain confidential, however if required I can be contacted at maestro22@bigpond.com