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Submission: Opal Fare Changes

I agree with the changes to charge all fares 'as the crow flies' on all modes of transport. However, I have issue with some of the suggestions.

The suggestion to do away with the free trips after 8 paid journeys and to instead charge for the 10 most expensive trips in a week & refund the others will be extremely cumbersome. It will also cause problems for the customers. Some people must budget very carefully & this proposal would make budgeting for their transport very difficult, if not impossible. People would then fear that they may have to top up their Opal, even though they will be 'credited' at the end of the week. How can someone budget under such a system?

The increases in caps may seem a small amount, but for someone on a tight budget or a Centrelink payment (other than a Pension), it is a large increase. To suggest that Seniors will no longer have access to the Gold Opal is a dreadful idea. Seniors who are on a Centrelink payment (other than a Pension) receive less income than a pensioner, but your proposal will increase their daily cost from \$2.50 or \$3.60 to \$9! That is an enormous increase for someone who receives less than \$530 per fortnight & has to pay bills and buy food. To quadruple their travel costs will leave these people feeling they must remain homebound. They will no longer be able to afford to volunteer as they do now, because they won't be able to afford the fares to get there and back. Plus, there are already many Seniors who have this Gold card. How are you going to justify telling them they can't have it any longer & that your substitute will vastly increase their expenses? They have been legitimately issued the Gold card. Such a change cannot be reasonably justified.

I think the changes to the weekend fares is also wrong. It is too much of an increase. I predict that your patronage will decline with such an increase. Isn't that the opposite result than the one the government wants to happen?

Opal was supposed to encourage people to use Public Transport more often. Many of these changes will have the opposite effect. It will discourage Seniors on low incomes from traveling anywhere. It will discourage families from traveling on Sunday (or Saturday).

This is not what Opal was supposed to achieve.