

The following is my response to “Frequency discounting and cap” information paper 3 and general suggestion of the proposed Opal fare structure.

- Many stakeholder called for higher frequency discount

The comments stated on the information paper 3 was misunderstood by IPART and interpreted to support the proposition to change current opal card fare system. People who bought longer periodical ticket were not high frequency users; it was simply because the periodical ticket was much cheaper than weekly ticket. Weekly ticket was 8 fully trip from A to B. My quarterly ticket was about \$70 cheaper than 3 x 28 days ticket. I didn't travel more outside weekdays or outside route. I bought the longer ticket just for cheaper price.

What IPART proposed new fare structure is to encourage people to take more than 10 public transport trips and average out the cost by increasing the dominator. Average cost per trip could be lower, however total cost is increased.

Assume I only take public transport to work Monday to Friday. I would travel 10 trips on train. I wouldn't make more trips on the weekend.

Under current fare structure, my weekly train expense is 33.6 (4.2×8) which is 4.8 per day ($33.6/7$)

Under the proposed fare structure, my weekly train expense is 42 (4.2×10) which is 6 per day

If the longer periodical ticket would be available, my monthly ticket is \$127* which is 4.53 per day ($127/28$)

And quarterly ticket is \$368.40* which is 4.093 per day ($368.40/90$)

*price is quoted from previous ticket purchased.

Hence price is solely incentive for commenter to purchase longer periodical ticket, not they are high frequency user. IPART totally misunderstood this stakeholders' statements and use it to their advantage.

- Customers receiving free travel for non-discretionary journeys

Some stakeholders were about not able to receive travel rewards as they are part time worker or sometimes working from home. Or colleagues are taking short trips on Monday or Tuesday. Before the opal card system was introduced, whether part time worker would purchase a weekly ticket or working from home people wasted one day of their weekly ticket, they were ok with the system. Just because they couldn't get the reward, neither should other full time workers who actually travel for work. Working from home people also save commute time. Time is more precious than money. They have saved more than they thought about.

-Propose increase Sunday travel gap

This would discourage people to go out on the weekend. Ever since the Sunday gap introduced, I travelled to Manly, Watson Bay and Blue mountain multiples times. If Sunday travel gap increased, I don't think I would make such trips. It really bad for the economy, as people wouldn't make such trips; there would be no more discretionary spending. If the Sunday travel gap increased, the cost of multiple people going to any places is going up; they would be probably driving rather than taking the public transport.

Final comment:

The current Opal card fare structure was designed by allowing people to make non-discretionary journeys. It was widely published on the newspaper and TV program. Government wanted to reduce fare evasion and rolled out Opal card system. It was good incentive and it had flaws at the beginning. I continued use quarterly ticket till the very last moment. IPART wants to improve efficiency and fairness of the Opal system. **Opal card system should allow people to purchase longer periodical tickets as their favour route. Normally it would be their home- work route, either charged by date period or time of uses (such as travel ten, multiple times and cheaper rate). This would improve fairness of the fair structure. If people choose to travel outside favour route, they would be pay as you go. So no more non-discretionary journeys would be made.** Sunday gap should not be changed