

## Submission

### Public Transport Fares in Sydney and Surrounds Draft Report – More efficient, more integrated Opal fare

I would like to respond to the "Review of Public Transport Fares" draft report.

I welcome the proposal to charge the most expensive journeys instead of the first 8 journeys in a week. This closes the loophole for customers taking unnecessary short trips early in the week, which is a waste of labour time and negatively affects the public transport system (bus drivers need to make more frequent unnecessary stops, buses and trains appear to be more crowded than they need to be).

However, I do not believe that the overall proposal is fair.

My partner and I take the train to and from work five days a week. The newly proposed opal fare structure is equivalent to a 28% increase in our train fares. I do not believe this is a fair price increase because:

1. the CPI rose by merely 1.5% over the 12 months to September quarter 2015
2. train frequency did not increase
3. train services have not shown any major improvement

The proposal improves fairness for customers who use more than one mode of transport for a single journey by discriminating against customers who take single mode of transport for each journey. The draft report noted clearly that the majority of customers are currently taking single mode of transport. To claim that the proposal increases fairness is deceptive, as it benefits the minority at the expense of the majority.

The draft report encourages customers to switch to commuting during off-peak hours, which I have done when paper tickets were phased out. I'm able to switch 4 journeys a week to off-peak hours, and my partner is able to switch 2 journeys a week to off-peak. Had we not been able to make this change, our train fare would have already been increased by 19% when we were forced to switch from annual paper ticket to opal card. And with the newly proposed fare, it would be equivalent to a 47% increase over two years. What is concerning is that the draft report seems to have ignored the fact that working hours is not set by the majority of the commuters, that is, employees. Commuters simply cannot switch to off-peak hours if their employers require standard working hours (9am-5pm). The suggestion is simply impossible for many commuters. To address the problem of road congestion and overcrowding on public transport during peak hours, reforms in the area of employment standards / entitlements should be considered, rather than putting pressure on the employees who have the least power and control over this issue.

The government should address the issue of Sydney's notorious traffic congestion by encouraging commuters to switch from driving to taking public transport, and substantial increase in public transport fare would simply exacerbate the congestion issue.

In conclusion, I support the proposal to charge the most expensive journeys in a week, as well as increased fairness for customers who take more than one mode of transport each journey, however, I believe the proposal is structured such that the majority of the customers will be substantially worse off. The large increase in public transport expenses imposed on the majority of the customers is not justifiable. The proposal also makes impractical suggestions for customers to keep their cost down. The substantial increase in fare will likely worsen the already horrendous traffic congestion issue.

Thank you for your consideration of my submission above.

Kind regards,

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