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Submission: Submission - Public Transport Fares Sydney and Surrounds

The proposed OPAL fare rises are far too high. The rise for pensioners is especially so, to a non pensioner this might seem reasonable but when stated as a percentage is a 44 percent rise. Some pensioners volunteer and may even have some part time work or other appointments to attend. If they travel regularly this is a massive hike on those in our society who can least afford it.

The whole pricing structure used by the urban transport systems in NSW is flawed. It should be priced to attract patronage not just hike it up on those that are forced to use the system.

The Victorian Government intermodal Zone System "Myki" is a good example to follow with only two major urban zones, fares are uniform and count all daily usage across The differing modes of trains, trams and buses as one cross modal system with a daily maximum and reasonable daily cap.

The more riders that are attracted especially outside of peak periods the larger the fare base the transport system will have. Close head ways on all major routes, a multi modal fare system (ie one fare for a trip no matter the differing modes used for the trip and timed or daily caps) may see an improvement in usage of the NSW Transport System. That is make it easy convenient and great value.

With the current lack of investment income for self funded retirees this is the wrong time to be removing or raising senior fares. Interest rates and equity markets are returning very low returns and Seniors may actually be suffering incomes in decline, these are real users of Public Transport and should be attracted to use the system and not detracted through lack of affordability.

Travellers from our outer suburban/inter urban areas travel long distances from the Blue Mountains, The Illawarra and the Central Coast , They often live in these areas as affordable rents and house prices can be found compared to the inner metro areas. Often they are battling to make ends meet and should be supported with longer based trips paying less on a per KM basis compared to short trip travellers. (Again if a true zonal system was introduced this may solve much of this problem.)

In fact with inflation so low it questionable whether any fare rise outside of the inflation level is justified for any user of the network.

The Opal system was launched as new system that was easy to use but also great value and the challenge was given to get the best value out of it. Now that travelers have little choice but to use the OPAL system the most economical parts of the heralded system are being called loopholes and being closed, with fares to rise in line with the changes.

I ask that this submission be taken into account especially in regard to transport fare affordability and equity for travellers.