

Comments on Draft Report

More efficient, more integrated Opal Fares

Transport – Draft Report

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please find following some comments on this topic as best as I understood what was being touted here.

I would like to start by saying that I began by reading or attempting to read the following documents:-

1. A new methodology for setting fares Sept 2015
2. Sydney Public Transport User Survey 2015 Dec 2015 Roy Morgan
3. More efficient, more integrated Opal Fares Dec 2015
4. Transcript of community meeting

Watched a few videos and read a few other articles to give myself some background.

Well what can I say, these reports are written at a level that your average person including me would find it very difficult to comprehend what is being written, and as such it is great that a summary is include. Additionally I believe that you are trying to address too many objectives in one hit.

You **want** to (and will) increase prices for travel on public transport. This is the guts of it all. I would like to thing that these comments are taken into consideration BUT??

The attempt to justify these price increase by indicating additional benefit to the passengers, commuters and the community as a whole are to me a little short sited. I will only address 2 to 3 point.

Overcrowding, time of travel
Real Benefits for the extra \$\$
Ticket Prices – Opal prices

Regarding overcrowding,

First of all I would be very interested to see how many of you at IPAR, senior execs at TfNSW actually use public transport, I am very very confident that you all have company supplied vehicle etc. Sorry.

I did see some very interesting and true comments about Sydney Wollongong trains departing Bondi, Central between 3 and 5 pm. You try finding a seat on these trains? Since the new timetable huge number of people living in Hurstville, Sutherland are catching these trains which vastly contributed to the overcrowding.

I have been commuting between Wollongong and Sydney , North Sydney (train-train) and just recently to Milperra out west (train-bus-bus) for over 20 years and I am the first to admit that I would strongly recommend the public transport instead of using my own transport. I used to buy Yearly tickets for convenience and dollar savings?

Therefore I am all for the encouragement of greater use of public transport and yes it should be utilized more. I have to give credit for example where travel is included in the price of concert and sports tickets. Fantastic idea!

BUT saying that, people do not really “choose” when to travel. This is dictated by the reason to travel, i.e , work start time, job interview at 9am etc. One would not choose to travel in the “peak hour”. They must travel in this peak hour. So I cannot see how you can try to get people to travel outside of these hours, give that they must be there at a designated time. This also applies to the pensioners etc., you make it sound like they just want to jump on a train or bus and go out there. They too travel for a purpose!!

Since the last time table change where trains from the west way were always overcrowded, even I trying to get a train from Town Hall to North Sydney had to let trains go and wait for the next one. This solution simply required more carriages! I do understand the concept that the trains that are currently used do comes in fixed sets.

More people are commuting from far away as Nowra, Wollongong and out Newcastle way. Again not by choice, but by necessity. We need the job!

Will the price increase solve this problem, if your answer truly is YES and I am all for the increase, But right now I do not believe any real immediate benefit will be realized. I do not have a problem paying for something that I know I will get.

I will touch on the benefits. Once again your reports uses great flowery language, I do hold a degree in Engineering but not Micro economics where your terms appear to come from. You rightly expressed that one and the only benefit I can see is related to our use of motor vehicles, the congestion they create on the roads, especially in and around the CBD area, the pollution that they exhume and the stress that they created drivers which can lead to road rage.

Nowhere did I see any indication that services will improve, in my case, on time running of the services, my travel time being reduced, better comfort level just to mention the key one that REAL commuters are looking for. YES for all the city based people who pretty well jump on and jump off are really not as important as worst case they have to stand for 10 to 15 minute between a few stations.

Finally the guts of it all, the prices.. I cannot see you NOT increasing the prices and waiting to offer something that we can immediate see for the increase in price.

Distance based pricing appears to be your preferred option, maybe a great idea but it strongly penalises those that already find it a struggle to pay the current fares. Your figure of 60% of people paying lower fares will be those that most that will be least likely be affected.

I am not a fan of the OPAL card system, although it looks and feels great, as an Engineer I feel that we have been supplied a second rate system. Sorry I had to say that.

This system has took me back about 10+ years. I commute from stations that do not have boom gates, I simply ran/run for the train and avoided ALL queues at these stations and jumped on the train. For commuters that is a luxury, NOW I have to queue up again to tap on and off and if absentmindedly jumped on without tapping on, here comes a \$200 contribution to the TfNSW coffers, with very little leniency!

Not so much for the commuters but for people that travel very frequently (pensioners) now appear have to have the opal card topped up and thus having money sitting in TfNSW coffers instead their pockets.

The caps you have today (daily, 8 trips etc.) are IDEAL and realistic and have been accepted today and most people appear to be happy with. I get one day FREE. You will NEVER stop the abuse and people finding loop holes to minimize how much they pay. I feel that you are trying to compensate for these deficiencies in the OPAL card system by making others pay for this.


By not having an annual ticket costs us typically additional \$400 per year. Now Wollongong is at a distance that will see maximum fares increases. I would suggest final price being the 85 km and beyond. There is no need for the additional 100+ fares?

Finally, Please excuse by naivety, I hope I have made some sense here, as a commuter, I can say public transport is the way to go. I will always keep using it!

People like myself and those people that travel 65km or more to go to work should be rewarded and not penalised , typically we have less disposable income compared to people that live in proximity of CBD, and every cent counts. Think about if you went to woollies and you were 5 cent short, check out operator will most likely ask what item would you like to put back?

Thanking you very much for the opportunity to provide feedback and I do hope that common sense prevails!

Thanks you and Best Regards


5th February 2015