

## 82% Bus fare increase North Bondi to Bondi Junction under Opal effective January 2016

### Submission to IPART

**Review:** Public Transport Fares in Sydney and Surrounds

**Document:** Draft Report - More efficient, more integrated Opal fares - December 2015

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### 82% Bus fare increase North Bondi to Bondi Junction under Opal effective January 2016

How is it possible that the regulator or the service provider was able to pass on an annual bus fare increase of 82.29% effective January 2016 to the citizens of NSW?

**Table 1** outlines the historical bus fares and annual increases, based on the use of a TravelTen ticket. The upfront cost of these tickets was only \$17.60 (2013), \$18.40 (2015), and \$19.20 (2015) compared to Opal \$40 (minimum auto top up).

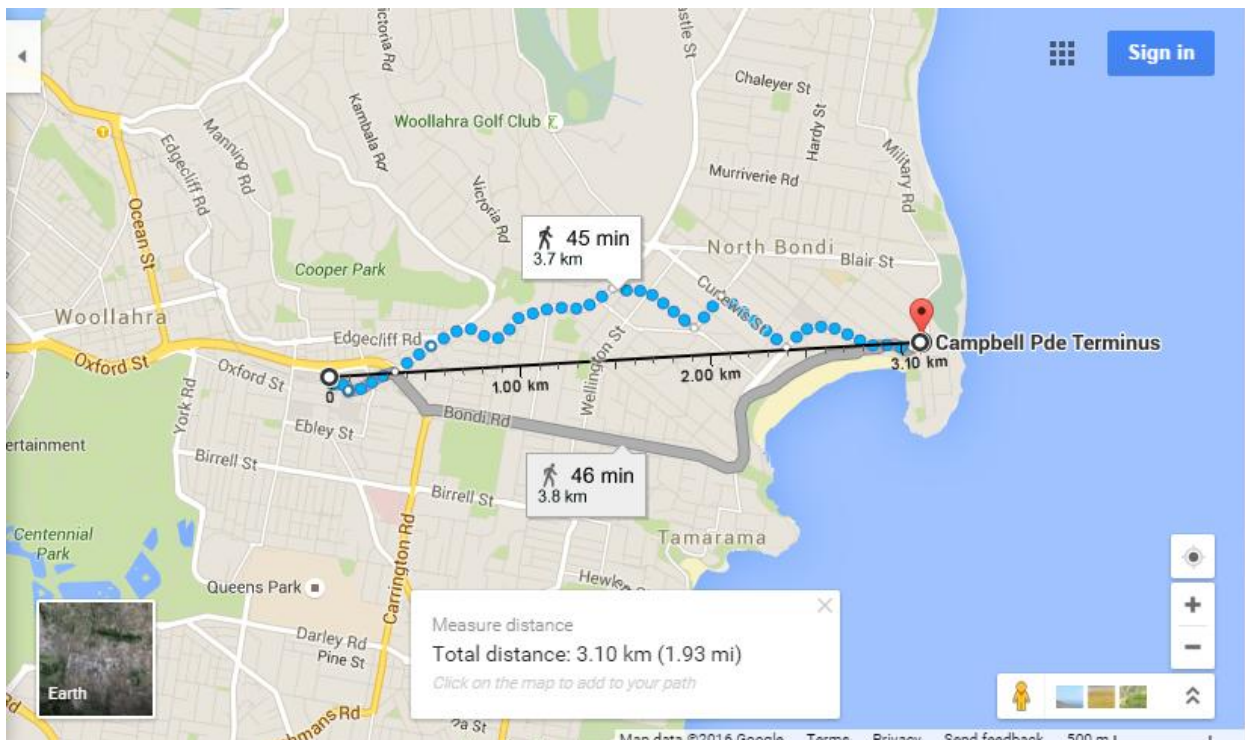
The cost of a single journey from the North Bondi bus terminus to the Bondi Junction was only \$1.76 (2013), \$1.84 (2014) and \$1.92 (2015) but now with Opal (2016) it is **\$3.50**.

The annual increase of a single journey from the North Bondi bus terminus to the Bondi Junction was only 4.55% ( 8 cents in January 2014) and 4.35% (8 cents in January 2015) but now with Opal replacing the paper ticket, the fare increased from \$1.92 to \$3.50 – which is an incredible 82.29% increase (\$1.58 extra in January 2016).

Inflation is currently about 2%. How was it possible that the regulator or service provider was able to increase the fee for this service by approximately 80% above the rate of inflation?

Table 1. Sydney metropolitan bus Full Fares - North Bondi bus terminus to Bondi Junction station (Distance travelled 3.1 km)							
Year	2013 fare	2014 fare	2014 fare increase (%)	2015 fare	2015 fare increase (%)	2016 opal paper ticket replacement fare	2016 fare increase (%)
Ticket Type	TravelTen MyBus1 (cost of single trip)					Opal	
TravelTen MyBus1 (cost of single trip)	\$1.76	\$1.84	4.55%	\$1.92	4.35%	\$3.50	<b>82.29%</b>

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**Figure 1. 3.1 km distance from North Bondi to Bondi Junction (previously classified as 1-2 sections)**

**Figure 1** illustrates that absolutely absurd application of a one size fits all approach to the distance based pricing used by Opal when applied blindly across Sydney; disregarding popular point to point destinations. Historically, the trip from North Bondi to Bondi Junction was classified as 1-2 sections. Now because of an extra 100 m the trip costs an extra \$1.58.

The North Bondi Bus terminus and the Bondi Junction Train Station are very popular point to point destinations. The popularity of this journey is evident by the type and frequency of buses servicing this journey (bus routes 333, 380, 381, 382, X84, 389 and X89). Express services X84 and X89 terminate at Bondi Junction Interchange to facilitate the mass point to point transit required during peak hour for this journey. The bus trip is efficient and very well used. There is no justification to increase fares by 82.93%.

The application of Opal in this way does not encourage public transport use (it is cheaper to drive) and the Opal disadvantages those who can least afford the fare increase (part time workers, stay at home mums, and even full time PAYE workers who do not commute 5 days a week).

The current January 2016 Opal fare structure is grossly unfair and unjustified. Part time workers, stay at home mums, and many full time workers are severely penalised; and gain no discounts from the Opal card despite being in credit of at least \$40 at any one time! It's now actually cheaper to drive (including licence and registration) than using the bus!

**Registered Opal card users with auto top up activated should be offered the same transit discount as applied under the TravelTen paper ticket system.**

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