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Submission: Pre-amble:

I've travelled on public transport systems in North America, Europe, and for the last 13 years, in Sydney, Australia.

Poor Value For Money:

I wasn't fooled by the purported savings said to be delivered by the forced introduction of Opal. When one looks fully at the conditions and arbitrary weekly allotment for any discounts delivered, it is much worse value for most travellers. The Opal program is inherently flawed if it is meant to promote public transport as a viable, economically fair option.

A Single Comparison on Rates and Service:

Let's look at current rates for 1 month of unlimited travel on public transport (metro/subway, and bus) for Montreal, Canada:

Regular fare: \$79.50

Reduced fare for age 6 -25, and 65+: \$47.25

However, one also has many more options, including the option of purchasing only a single trip, which costs a mere \$3. But this allows transfers between transport modes, unlike in Sydney, where the traveller has copped outrageous fares for multi-mode travel, and this continues to be the case under Opal.

This example shows Sydney transport fares, in some cases, are at least 2 to 4 times the cost of travel in other cosmopolitan cities (my own WEEKLY fair for MyMulti2 was \$54), with LESS allowance for what can be covered by the fare for a single journey. In my view (a view of someone who has actually used the system for years, here, and around the world), Sydney public transport well and truly sets the benchmark for the definition of poor value in public transport.

Poor Customer Experience:

And don't get me started on the lack of train seating, or even the ability to board an often non-airconditioned, smelly train because it is unsafely overcrowded. I cannot believe any legitimate consideration has been given to an emergency scenario involving such an overloaded train.

Poor Value For Money Part 2:

I now avoid public transport altogether: I now much more happily drive to work and pay all day parking WHICH COSTS LESS THAN A RETURN BUS FARE (and further saves me AN ADDITIONAL 30 MINUTES travel time - each way). I am happy to pay the petrol and wear-and-tear on top of this, because it is still a better value proposition to the service offered by public transport.

Poor Service Coverage:

I need to own a car in any case because the area I live in has historically, and continues to be, a black hole in terms of public transport options to certain locations.

Just Not Customer Focused:

Sydney Trains in particular should take a hard look at all the glaring ways it's failing its customers. e.g. no lifts at Redfern, Sydney's 3rd busiest station, and the use of 'guards' throughout the network using WHISTLES to ensure passenger safety. This last unnecessarily bloats the cost of providing basic train service, a cost which should be removed and the savings returned to the customer. I have no faith any of that will ever happen.