

## IPART – Draft Report More efficient, more integrated Opal Fares – Submission

- These proposed changes are to meet objectives including:
  1. Encourages greater use of public transport
  2. Minimises impacts on customers

How will these two objectives be met when for some, the cost of travel will increase, and discounts will decrease. Surely this will impact negatively on a number of public transport users and cause a decline in use of public transport and push travellers back on to already congested roads.

- Agree with the recommendation to have a separate fare schedule for multimode journeys.
- Agree with the recommendation for discounts on off-peak fares, however, it cannot be assumed that the number of passengers will increase to take up spare capacity in off-peak times as most workers cannot change their core hours to take advantage of off-peak times. This is most likely to be utilised in school holiday periods.
- Whilst costs based on distance travelled sounds fair, it puts those travelling by train greater than 65 km at a disadvantage with a significant increase in cost by 2018 (e.g. \$8.30 to \$14.24) Most travellers who travel long distances do so because there are no applicable jobs closer to home, forcing people through no fault of their own to travel further distances for work.
- The comment is made that “more than 40% are paying less than they are now” for a single mode. This means that almost 60% will be paying more. It states that “20% on a single mode will be paying 20% more” how is this fair and equitable.
- Currently travellers are provided with a discounted trip (free travel) after 8 journeys – this is a great incentive to leave the car at home and catch public transport. I’m sure that most people do not “rort the system” by making unnecessary trips early in the week to benefit from more free travel later in the week. All frequent travellers should not be disadvantaged by the removal of the incentive scheme just because of a few who may take advantage.
- The new suggested Travel credit scheme is touted in the report as a “more efficient and fairer scheme” – efficient and fair for whom? It will certainly not benefit the majority of travellers, particularly those that only travel on a single mode of transport 5 days a week (10 journeys). In addition to the weekly cap suggested to be raised to \$65 up from \$60, most single mode travellers would not reach that cap – therefore the suggested “fairer” travel credit scheme would have nil benefit.
- This recommended incentive scheme removes all existing travel incentives at the same time increases the costs over the period up till 2018 (e.g. up 6% for trains and 11% for buses).
- The report states that the current discount/incentive scheme is inefficient – but surely an in-depth cost analysis was undertaken prior to the opal card system being introduced, which would have shown whether the incentive scheme was financially doable in terms of efficiencies?

Especially considering the opal scheme for some travellers is already more expensive than previous paper ticketing options, prior to opal being brought in (particularly those on my multi passes). Now the recommendation is to increase further. This could mean that costs, for e.g. a single mode train traveller travelling up to 65km (without the travel discount) could increase by up to approx. \$570pa. This is not fair and equitable nor affordable for some. Is there really sufficient reasoning for an increase such as this. What can travellers expect to see for an increase in ticket prices – in terms of service?

- The report states that the new incentive scheme would increase travel – what logic is being used here. Why would travellers use public transport more often than they need to just to meet the new incentive scheme travel discounts? The increased costs and lack of incentive for regular travellers, travelling 5 days per week only, is more likely to act as a deterrent with less people catching public transport.
- It states that “revenue from reducing the number of free journeys will allow single fares to be reduced by 8%. Is this included in the draft pricing scheme, as the provided tables show that whilst there is generally a decrease in opal costs for 2016, there is an increase in costs over the entire period up to 2018, which for people travelling longer distances is well above current costs.
- The suggested increase in the caps for travel on Sundays (from \$2.50 to \$8 adults by 2018, and \$6 concession), is excessive. Families currently travel on Sundays because it is affordable. To say that fares will increase, particularly on ferries to cover the maintenance costs of increased patronage on Sundays is illogical, given the fact that if prices increase it is more than likely that patronage will also decrease meaning those additional costs required for upkeep of the ferries would not be needed. Increasing the cap to \$8 is a disadvantage to large families choosing to travel by public transport.
- Increasing the Gold Opal from \$2.50 to \$3.60 and up to \$4 by 2018/19 may not seem like a lot, however users of the gold opal are elderly people who are on a pension and who may not have the option of driving so are reliant upon public transport to get around. For those on a fixed pension this increase would again make travelling on public transport unaffordable.

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