

## INTRODUCTION.

I am a retired senior public transport department executive from Qld. I was the Project Manager responsible for (i) fully integrating the entire public transport system from Coolangatta to Gympie, involving rail, bus and ferry across eighteen different Government, Local Government and private operators. (ii) Introducing the smartcard delivery system (the Go Card) for fare payment, leading to the virtual elimination of paper tickets.

## PREAMBLE.

- It is not sensible for issues directly related to the efficiency and effectiveness of the public transport system, to be determined by an “external” agency, viz “IPART”. This is bureaucracy gone mad. Key public policy issues for Schools, Hospitals and Police etc are not made by IPART. They are made by portfolio experts having regard to government priorities and funding parameters etc. The same should be true of public transport. The fact that Sydney has such a muddled, confusing, inconsistent and inefficient public transport system, (or, more correctly, **non system**), is very probably related to “outside” influences being involved. These influences have retarded progress, not enhanced it.
- That said, it is pleasing that IPART has now landed on a comprehension that was totally lacking five years ago (?), when the last review was conducted. The issues of “integration” are now identified, and partially understood, but from a very narrow, incomplete, and, I must say it, **uninformed** perspective. That is, the “issues paper” doesn’t really comprehend the key issues and limits the breadth of possibilities re future actions. However, the fact that it has put the issue on the table (at last), and invited feedback is a very positive step.

## GRASP OF WHAT A PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM IS ALL ABOUT.

Of course, public transport must be provided as a service to the public. Therefore, it must be of acceptable pricing and acceptable service delivery standard. But, the thinking must come from a much higher altitude, if service and commercial imperatives are to be married. Some talking points are:

- (i) While ever there are two concurrent systems (electronic and paper), there are concurrent, but avoidable costs. Costs for staff, systems support etc etc. Massive. The issues paper talks a lot about “efficiencies” (correctly), but doesn’t comprehend the massive inefficiencies of the framework it puts forward. If mega millions could be eliminated by eliminating the paper system, then this money becomes available for service enhancement etc. In other words, a major obstacle to efficiency, is the failure to comprehend a major barrier to it.
- (ii) The paper, correctly, has tables on greenhouse factors. But, it doesn’t identify the link between what it suggests is bad, but what, never the less, it condones. Muddled thinking. A major pollution contributor is exhaust fumes from buses during idle, or “dwell” times for passenger pick-up. Major. So, what would reduce it? Reduced dwell time obviously. How do you get that? Speed up boarding, obviously. How do you do that? Eliminate the payment of fares. How do you do that? “Electronically”.
- (iii) So, what happens then, if boarding times are reduced?. Four things of massive consequence. (a) Trip times are reduced, so that passengers benefit and are more likely to catch buses. (b) greenhouse gasses are reduced. (c) Traffic being held up behind stationary buses is reduced, improving both road efficiency and limiting exhaust, and (d). Available bus time increases.
- (iv) So, focus on (d). If you have more bus time availability, you can run more services. Yes, more services for no extra buses. No extra staff. No extra shifts. A no brainer. But, this depends on **no paper tickets**. This is the message you need to get.
- (v) So, again, moving forward, what happens with a fully electronic system? Customers must add funds to their cards. That is, pre-pay for fares they have not used. So, do the math. How many customers are there?. How much would they pre-pay, (\$50-\$100?). So, about 1 **billion** dollars in interest free money. Which could be used to augment services
- (vi) So that a lot of this stuff in the paper is muddle-headed ; it doesn’t come at the issue from any coherent, basic objective. It is not heading the public transport system decisively in the right direction.

## SOME OBSERVATIONS.

Take these as talking points. I could list 10 million if I had the energy.

- (i) There is no sense nor fairness to public transport pricing in the greater Sydney region. (a) Central to Circular Quay by bus (374)=\$2.10. By train =\$3.38. (b) Campsie to Wynyard by train=\$4.20. By bus (Clempton Park) =\$4.70. The anomalies run into millions.
- (ii) Errors in assumptions. (a) 4.2.1. “ bus fares are calculated on a straight line distance between origin and destination”. Wrong. Calculated on Sections. If this assumption was correct, the bus fare from Balmain East to Wynyard would be one third the price of Balmain East to Pymont.(It isn't).Why?, Because fares **are not** calculated on straight line distance, and, (see below), can never be.
- (iii) Under 4.2.1 the issues paper contemplates “what fully integrated fares would look like”. No. No. No. This illustrates better than ever why IPART rationality should not apply to public transport policy. IPART has applied mathematical extrapolations which reflect its mindset, or way of thinking about the problem. The correct answer to” what fully integrated fares would like like”, is “**what you want them to look like**”. The IPART illustrative table would be irrelevant. This bureaucratic way of thinking (“its how we've always done it”),is retarding progress. It's getting in the way. It is holding Sydney on the wrong track.

#### FARE CALCULATION.

Fare calculation cannot be (purely) distance based. (a) It cannot be based on straight lines, because PT does not run that way. (b) It cannot be based on distances actually travelled, because of the anomalies involved. However you configure it, distance models don't work.

#### SUMMARY.

It is a step in the right direction that IPART places integration on the table.

However, it does so from its frame of reference, From its view of the world. From its vested interests which include retention of its long held ideologies. It is not coming at the issue from a strategic perspective. It is not being guided by higher order policy objectives. It is naive to commercial and operational possibilities.

This is not an issues paper which gives the necessary leadership to the subject matter. The right answers are not all that difficult. The willpower to bite the bullet has been missing before. Sorry Sydney, buy this paper and you're buying more mediocrity. Full integration is the answer.

Sincerely

Bob Lutherborrow