

Diane Somerville

5 February 2016

IPART

(online submission through website)

Submission – Public Transport Fares in Sydney and Surrounds

I have reviewed the draft determination on IPART's website together with associated documentation, and would like to make the following comments for your consideration:

- I am concerned about the rate of increase in bus fares following the proposed change to remove the travel rewards discount after 8 journeys. For example, for the bus fare of 8-15km, the weekly fare will increase from \$36.00 (8 x \$4.50) to \$41.10 (10 x \$4.11) for 2016/17. This is **an increase of 14.2% in a single year which is excessive in my opinion.**
- The **increases in proposed Sydney Ferries fares for distances of 8 to 25 kilometres are exorbitant.** From 2016/17 to 2017/18 the fares will increase 11.6% - 17.6%, and then increase by a further 10.6% - 14.8% to 2018/19. I believe that such unreasonable increases will result in reduced patronage of services such as the Manly Ferry over those periods as passengers will increasingly choose other modes of transport such as buses which are significantly cheaper. By way of comparison, fares for trains and buses over the same distances will only increase by 4% - 7% per annum.
- The comments above about annual increases in Sydney Ferrie fares also apply in relation to the **fares for Multi-Mode journeys involving Sydney Ferries**, i.e. increases of up to 17.6% in a single year **are excessive.**
- I consider the **proposed fares for Multi-Mode journeys including Sydney Ferries are too steep** relative to the fares for Multi-Mode journeys involving train and bus/light rail. To highlight this point, the fares for Multi-Mode journeys including Sydney Ferries are higher than the Multi-Mode journeys of train/bus **by 53% in 2016/17, 63% in 2017/18 and 69% in 2018/19. Such differences are overpriced and could be viewed as discriminatory** to passengers who do not have the option of choosing train services (such as Northern Beaches residents and workers).
- There are no discounts for commuters who are travelling to work 5 days a week unless they are travelling long distances, which contrasts with past discounts for regular travel such as weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual ticketing through MyMulti tickets in the past and the Travel Reward currently under Opal. There seems to be a view that any fare can be charged as commuters have no choice but to travel. However, this is likely to cause more congestion

on the roads, particularly around the Northern Beaches where I live, as more people will choose to drive rather than use public transport. **Applying discounts for frequent travel encourages increased use of public transport.** The proposed fare scheme only encourages discretionary travel on the weekends, but does not reward those who use public transport throughout a year.

- I would like you to consider whether an **“Unlimited”** type would be feasible. This could be **applied on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis**, and would allow a passenger to travel as many times as they like within that period. You may choose to apply differences between multi-modes similar to the structure of the proposed multi-mode journey fares (Schedule 2) in setting the fee for the “Unlimited” pass. I believe that this could be implemented by charging the initial fee up-front onto the Opal card, and either applying credits on a weekly basis so that the total fee deducted from the Opal Card Account over the relevant period (e.g. quarter) is only the agreed fee for the Unlimited pass (i.e. rebate any journey amounts in excess of this value, similar to the proposed Credit Amounts for Weekly Caps) and/or re-setting the passenger’s Opal Card Account to nil at the end of the period (i.e. any unused credit is forfeited).

I hope the above points will receive your thoughtful consideration before making your final determination.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Diane Somerville.

Diane Somerville