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I oppose the proposal for a marked increase in the costs of Gold Opal Cards.

The effect of the increases would be a reduction in the use of public transport by senior citizens. This would lead to more senior citizens staying at home instead of going out, with negative effects on physical and mental health. Keeping senior citizens active reduces health costs for individuals and the community.

Other senior citizens who now use public transport (myself included) would be likely to decide it was cheaper to travel instead by car, placing more stress on our roads.

A great deal of volunteer work is carried out by retired senior citizens. Some volunteers travel by public transport every weekday to serve in a voluntary capacity. An increase of this magnitude in the price of public transport is likely to result in a reduction in the number of volunteers with time to help in the community.

Senior citizens on fixed incomes worry about the possibility of an increase in the GST. If this occurs and if transport costs are also increased, this will lead to a fall in living standards for some of the most vulnerable people in the community.