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Submission: Your draft report on Public Transport Fares recommends that non-Opal fares be set 40% higher than Opal fares, to encourage use of Opal, because of the cost of running two fare systems.

This would be perfectly reasonable if the Opal cards were easy to obtain and top-up.

At present holders of interstate seniors cards have to apply by mail or email in advance. This is itself unreasonable since people just don't expect to have to research and plan their use of the local public transport when they travel.

The website implies that cards will be issued within two weeks. In fact I applied 4 weeks ago, and after 20 minutes on the phone to several people when I called the Opal card number, I'm given to understand that I should get it within two more weeks.

Then I will have to go through this again every 60 days since the card lasts just that long.

In short I have every reason to prefer paper tickets.

Others have commented in more detail about the difficulties of topping up an Opal card once you have one, but I find it beyond bizarre that (by way of example) one cannot top up a card at a station ticket office.

I submit that the recommendation should be that non-Opal fares should be the same as Opal so long as it is not reasonably easy to get and use one. And (to make myself absolutely clear) "reasonably easy" implies at least that interstate visitors can get one immediately on arrival.