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Submission: If IPART without being able to quantify, considers changes simply because customers have a theoretical incentive to abuse Opal by taking un-needed shorter trips - wait the hour before re-joining the transport or walk back to the office in the CBD to score the free trips quicker, then IPART ought to factor in my experiences sitting up front.:

Suburban bus drivers RARELY challenge failed tap-ons (no funds, invalid) or no tap-ons because the driver assumes the passenger is moving past the first device to use the next one. Inspectors never check Gold Opal users entitlement. I see young workers with Gold Opal cards. On buses, the opal user can abuse by tapping off well before journey's end using the device down the bus.

If the device does not work, the driver offers a free trip. As a Gold opal user, this is not truly free as the \$2:50 will be expended before day's end.

And being a daily user of my Gold Opal, it is impossible to reach the 8 paid trips any quicker than 4 days. I have however missed the free trips in a week simply by swapping transport - a "transfer" - where 2 trips count as one and as I've spent the \$2:50 for the day, no other trips count.

All the advertising was at train stations. The restrictions/control of ticket barriers is irrelevant to buses. What to do with the frequency of failed tap on devices on the buses or where the driver's device is closed so honest users go to the mid bus device and what needs to happen where buses break down and we change buses seems inconsistent. And I now rarely see the guard on the light rail from Darling Harbour.

Without the free trips, it costs me \$17:50 a week and that is still great. With free trips, becomes \$10. I accept the free trips after 8 seems generous and as a non-pensioner more so. Why not after 10 as a start? You already have a captive 'audience'.

The balance in my Gold Opal should always be divisible by \$2:50 but never is. While computers handle fractions well, it would help seniors/pensioners if the fee stayed easy - say \$3:00?

I don't see the issue as savings over paper tickets. The issue is a better balance between what the traveller adds to the general economy that public transport helps and the cost of an efficient public transport system where wastage is limited.

I hope this helps.

Jeff Munday  
2 January 2016