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Submission: The "transfer penalty" should be removed. "Distance travelled" should be regardless of which mode of public transport is used.

The cost of public transport should remain low – and continue to be subsidised – so as to encourage more people to use public transport. Hugo Harmstorf recognised this when he wrote (SMH 24 January 2016): "Discounts for frequent use have benefits to the broader community only if they encourage people to switch out of their cars and onto public transport." He is correct, so if fares were left as they are – with discounts for frequent travel – then this would serve as a greater incentive to get people onto public transport. Putting up fares and/or eliminating/reducing the discounts act as a disincentive!

The SMH's Transport Editor, Matt O'Sullivan (28 January 2016) reported on the positive effect of cheaper fares when he wrote: "Demand for ferries on Sundays to destinations such as Taronga Zoo and stops along the Parramatta River has risen substantially since the \$2.50 limit was introduced several years ago... Many ferry services now experience their peak loads for the week on Sundays as travellers delay their trips to take advantage of the cheaper fares."

It is blatantly obvious, cheaper fares will attract more people to use public transport and the NSW government will see an increase in revenue by virtue of the increase in customers.

Let us also remember that whilst there has been a huge cost in implementing the Opal Card, there are also offsets (not really talked about in the media) that are (and will continue to be) hugely beneficial to the bottom line: the reduction in station staff/hours worked; the elimination of the costs associated with producing the paper-based tickets (paper, printers, ink, etc); the reduction in the back-office costs associated with rostering, staff management, etc. If those station staff/hours are replaced with more officers on the trains to ensure that people are paying their rightful fares, then that also sees a beneficial return on investment.

Regarding the Seniors Opal Card discounts, I think it is wrong to increase the Seniors' fares to the level that has been proposed in IPART's draft report. To increase the fares so substantially, would be a deterrent to many seniors who do voluntary work. Further, it could act as a disincentive for older citizens to get out and connect with friends and others in the community. Some use the discounted fares to get out and see other parts of Sydney and, in doing so, spend their money on lunches, etc, whilst engaged in this local tourism. Increasing the fares will see an end to this for many.

Let us also remember model examples in other states – such as Western Australia – where the CATs around the city are FREE! In South Australia there are concessions for seniors during peak travel times and outside of these times, they travel FREE.