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Submission: TOPIC: Review of public transport fares from 1 July 2016

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Off-peak discounts should apply to all modes of public transport. Any financial incentive to encourage off-peak travel can only be positive. Increased off-peak discounts would be even more beneficial. There are more people who cannot avoid travelling into the city during morning peak than there are people who have the flexibility of not having to do so. As such, any surcharge levied against inbound CBD travel during peak times would likely be interpreted as gouging. However, pensioner concessions should be removed from peak travel. Anybody who doesn't need to be travelling during peak times should be actively encouraged not to do so. Pensioner Concession fares should revert to full fare during peak times.

Fares should also be more evenly (though not entirely) related to distance. e.g. if I live 8.63km from Central and my friend lives in Katoomba, why should I pay \$0.39/km for my peak ticket, while my friend travelling 109.92km pays just \$0.08/km for theirs? I don't propose that people travelling 100km to the city should face a \$100 fare but nor do I believe those living relatively close to it - who already contend with a higher cost of living for that very reason - should be charged five times as much. The cost of getting to my destination via any means of public transport should be relatively the same, regardless of where I travel from.

Mode-specific legacy fare differentials should be either abolished or fully integrated. Everyone using public transport on a regular basis, irrespective of the mode, should have access to the same benefits. There's little point discussing the efficiency of one form of payment (Opal) if there's no cross-mode consistency of benefit and massively differentiated fare arrangements. For full customer buy-in, any increase to specific fares must be clearly explained and fully justified.

Morning peak time for trains could end earlier than 9am. I changed my travel pattern some years ago to avoid peak times and, living just 8km from Central station, I note substantially decreased passenger numbers by the last peak train at 8:52am. Presumably the further from Central a station is, the earlier this reduction of passenger numbers occurs. As such, a sliding scale of peak hours could be applied, rather than a blanket application of 7-9am. This mightn't be as simple as one 2 hour period across the board, but it would certainly be fairer for passengers travelling from further away during genuine peak travel times (which, from some parts of the central and south coasts, can be as early as 6am). Similarly afternoon peak could also be altered. In CBD stations such as Town Hall and Wynyard, there are many more passengers still waiting on platforms at 6:30pm than there are at 4pm. Even a shift to 4:30-7pm would be more appropriate to current passenger movements.