

Author name: M. Ibaceta

Date of submission: Friday, 5 February 2016

Submission: I make my submission in my capacity as a private citizen, and will address concerns held regarding areas of the public transport network which were included within ticketing arrangements under the MyZone system but are excluded from Opal's operation, and the proposed weekly travel credit.

The draft report addresses options for fare structure reform, and proposes that paper tickets should be 40% higher than Opal fares. This arrangement disadvantages commuters who travel on routes where Opal cards are not valid, and are required to travel with a MyTrain ticket such as the Lithgow to Bathurst, Picton to Bowral, and Wollongong to Bundanoon rail replacement services. In addition to a large price increase to the only available ticketing option, the fares would not be subject to weekly caps or contribute towards journeys which the integrated system under Opal imposes. The benefit of a reformed system of fare calculation by straight line distance between origin and destination would also be diminished for these commuters, who would be required to pay an additional fare upon connecting between a rail service and rail replacement service. The tribunal should observe that the MyMulti3 served as a valid ticketing option on these routes, capping the maximum weekly expenditure across the greater Sydney transport network to the price of the MyMulti3. A similar issue is experienced by commuters using buses which connect to rail services in regions such as the Southern Highlands; while the MyMulti3 included these connecting bus services for a maximum weekly cost, the proposed Opal system fails to integrate the services in the ticketing arrangements, and commuters are subjected to two sets of fares. These instances represent a backward step in fare integration for users of the affected services.

In determining the appropriate number of paid journeys required prior to issuing the weekly travel credit, the tribunal would be wise to consider the relationship between single tickets and longer term commuter tickets under the previous ticketing systems. In the draft report, it is highlighted that eight paid journeys would, in the case of commuters who make two journeys on each day from Monday to Friday, result in a day's free travel. The observation is accurate, however previous tickets such as the weekly MyTrain fare cost the same as eight single peak journeys. TravelTens and FerryTens offered a 20% discount on ten journeys, the equivalent to eight journeys paid at an undiscounted rate. In the case of longer term MyTrain and MyMulti tickets – arguably targeted towards regular commuters – monthly, quarterly, and yearly tickets, the discounts exceeded 20%. Considering this longstanding previous practice, it would be consistent with the expectation of commuters that a weekly travel credit would refund expenditure after eight, not ten, of the most expensive journeys.