

## **Submission to IPART Review of public transport fares from 1 July 2016**

The *Sydney Trains Fare Calculator* informs that rail tickets from Tempe station to any City station are more expensive than rail tickets from neighbouring Sydenham station to any City station. Staff on the 131500 enquiry line have advised that this is because Tempe is deemed to be 10.05 kilometres from the City; 50 metres beyond the first 10 kilometre fare band.

The *Sydney Trains and NSW Trains Fares and Ticketing Customer Handbook* informs that this 10.05 kilometres is the sum of the 6.84 kilometre distance between Tempe and Central and 3.21 kilometres that, for fare calculation purposes, is added to every journey to the City beyond the gateway station of Central.

Tempe commuters understand that the actual distance between Tempe and each station within the City, other than Kings Cross, is less than 10 kilometres. The journey from Tempe to Town Hall, for example, is 8.02 kilometres; from Tempe to Wynyard is 8.89 kilometres; and from Tempe to Circular Quay is 9.79 kilometres. That is, the true distance of each journey from Tempe to any City station—with the exception of Kings Cross—means the cost of these journeys should fall within the first and lowest fare band.

Acknowledging that the addition of the abovementioned 3.21 kilometres pushes the rail commute from Tempe to the City into a more expensive fare bracket, Tempe residents have sought information about the calculation and application of the 3.21 kilometres.

Staff on the 131500 enquiry line have been unable to explain why this distance is added to trips to the City for fare calculation purposes. The Customer Relations Unit at Sydney Trains has also been unable to justify this addition and advised us to seek information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)*. The response to our GIPA application was that no Government information falling within scope of the application could be identified.

It is unreasonable that commuters from Tempe must pay more for train tickets to the City on account of the addition of 3.21 kilometres that no one from Transport for NSW can adequately explain when the actual distance between Tempe and all but one of these stations is less than 10 kilometres.

The review of the Opal fare structure affords an opportunity to rectify this problem. Under Opal, commuters tap-on and tap-off with their Opal cards, which allows Transport for NSW to measure the distance travelled between any two stations, including City stations, and to then apply the appropriate distance-based rail fare.

That said, in determining appropriate maximum fares for classes of Opal fares from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2019, we urge IPART to recommend that the NSW

Government discontinue the policy and practice of adding, for fare calculation purposes, 3.21 kilometres to every journey to the City beyond the gateway station of Central.

Sincerely,

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Arlene Carter  
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