

IPART submission in relation to OPAL fare changes

To whom it may concern.

I would like to address the list of draft decision points 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 11.

1. Fares should continue to be different for rail, bus and ferry services.

This should remain the same. This issue has always been the case whereby rail, bus and ferry fares have always been different. This should remain the same because the majority of people only catch one form of transport and not multiple. Combining journey types surely increases the complexity of the fare system and adds to costs incurred and makes it harder for passengers to determine what is best for them.

4. Multi-mode journeys should be charged based on the distance travelled, measured as the longest straight-line distance between any tap-on and any tap-off point on the journey, according to the fares in Table 2.1. However, the single-mode fare for any of the component journeys can be charged if it is higher than the multi-mode total journey fare.

This relates to decision point 1. This should not be consideration. All modes of transport have been considered different ever since they were available and this change is only going to make the transport system more complicated and less attractive to users. This would only lead to less people taking transport as they believe it would cost more.

5. Fares should continue to vary by the distance travelled

I think IPART are on the right track with this but to make things fair and simpler it would be best to divide the fare on each train station, bus stop or ferry stop travelled rather than kilometre bands. i.e. each stop has a different cost. This would encourage train use especially for those in the western suburbs who see little difference for quite a number of kilometres. Setting individual prices for each stop would encourage use due to not being penalised for being too close or too far from a fare kilometre band.

7. Customers should no longer receive free travel after making 8 journeys between Monday and Sunday.

The whole point of the 8 trip rule was to compensate for the fact that weekly, monthly and yearly tickets were no longer available. This point I believe is one of the most important aspects of fare changes suggested and believe it should remain. However to compensate for those who possibly abuse it there should be a slight increase in fares but with the trip limit remaining. This will cause users to attain the current \$15 daily limit with less trips causing more to be made during the week. This change I believe would increase revenue and still give discounts to those who previously would have achieved them through yearly tickets etc. One other point that is not

considered is that users now spend on average (this is base on what I have seen) \$100 dollars on Opal cards. This money is sitting in the treasury for weeks at a time before it is spent and surely is being invested which should be earning the government money. I refuse to acknowledge that this money is not being used to allow users subsidised fares.

8. A weekly travel credit scheme should be implemented under which, at the end of the Opal week, a customer's Opal account is credited with the greater of:

This relate to decision 7 and I believe will result in less people using public transport as the fares will start to be level with car usage. Essentially this option would drive users away from the public transport system rather than encourage its use.

11. The premium on paper tickets should be 40%, rounded to the nearest 10 cents, as set out in Table 2.8.

I feel that the use of paper tickets should increase as it encourages the local population to use the opal system and due to opal credit expiry being a long period it is perfect. It in some way penalises tourists but they are free to obtain an opal card so it is easily countered.

Another point listed in the draft recommendation which I think should be considered is the pensioner daily travel increase.

This should be increased but not so heavily. Almost a %50 increase is a bit harsh. It should be introduced over a 5 year period to allow those who rely on it to budget appropriately.

A final point regarding this review is that I think fare revenues could be increased is the fully functional systems on buses. The number of times that I have used buses as a form of transport and the opal reader is not working so all people get a free ride is simply ridiculous. Regular maintenance of this system must be done to ensure all users pay for the journey they are taking. This could easily increase revenue.

Thank you for reviewing this submission and I hope it is used to consider choices made to fare changes in NSW.