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Submission: OPAL CARD PRICING REVIEW SUBMISSION

When introducing the OPAL card, the NSW Government promised reduced fares. This was welcome news.

In its review of OPAL card fares, IPART is stating that its proposed changes will also reduce fares. Even better news.

I work full time in the city and so travel Mondays to Fridays from Glenfield station. Until the advent of the OPAL card, I could purchase an annual ticket. For this privilege I was paying over \$2,000 upfront annually (equivalent to \$40 per week).

Although I do not work 52 weeks per year, I was nonetheless able to use my train ticket for other trips outside of work, which meant I still benefitted from my annual ticket.

Under the current OPAL rules, a one-way ticket now costs \$6.46, which works out at \$51.68 per week with the eight trip cap.

So my first question is: how is \$51.68 cheaper than \$40? Per week. Even taking account of four weeks train-travel-free holidays, that is equivalent to \$2,480 p.a. How is that less than \$2,000 p.a.?

My arithmetic may be faulty, but that would appear to be a 24-25% increase (not taking into account any train travel during work holidays: that is extra).

IPART's current proposal to scrap the eight trip cap will increase the weekly cost to \$64.60 (still under the \$65/wk proposed cap).

This brings me to my second question: how is \$64.40 per week cheaper than \$40 per week? Using the 48 week per year formula, this translates into \$3,100 per year. Equivalent to a minimum 55% increase in train fares.

Proposed cheaper off peak fares, \$65 caps and only paying for the most expensive trips in no way affects the outcome: this will cost in excess of \$1,000 per year more than under my previous annual ticket.

Australia's inflation rate is 2.9% p.a. You are proposing a 55%+ annual increase in fares.

Can someone please explain to me how this is a saving?

The truth of the matter is that OPAL fares are more expensive than previous tickets. The IPART proposal makes them more expensive still. Either propose a fare structure that actually saves money or at least tell the truth: **FARES WILL BE SUBJECT TO HEFTY INCREASES UNDER YOUR PROPOSAL.**

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