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Submission: The Death of the Weekly

Why do you propose to charge for 10 fares a week, and why is the "frequent use cap" set to \$65?

I strongly dispute that charging people for 10 trips a week is either more fair than the current system, or is a responsible approach to objectives 3 & 4 of your remit - minimising impact, and encouraging public transport use.

Your proposals have disadvantaged a great many 'normal commuters' - who I would believe to be the most common user group, and in fact the group most likely to need to use the services.

A very small minority of users take advantage of the poorly drafted current regulations to 'fill up' their eight charged trips with multiple short & cheap trips early in the week. It is hardly fair to the bulk of commuters - from as far out as Penrith - who use their 10 trips a week and pay for eight. This 'discount' is simply providing for the equivalent discount of the old weekly ticket.

If you want to remove that "perverse incentive" yet provide the anticipated benefit, then simply make the eight longest trips chargeable. It's the sort of rules-tweaking that should have taken place early on, rather than used as leverage for an increase of 25% in weekly fares for most normal commuters.

The other aspect of your proposals that is poorly thought out is the weekly cap. Even under your current system, if a user has paid for ten trips, they must continue to pay until they have reached \$60. If you have a weekly paid trips limit, then that should be the weekly cap for that user. Computation has allowed for this to be automated - everyone can have different caps, depending on their use. You can continue to process their usage and apply the credit at the end of the week, that way you can still charge for the ten most expensive or longest trips.

In summary, I find your proposed changes on the normal commuter charges to be unfair to many, and an example of bait-and-switch. Users were encouraged and then forced to get onto Opal, politicians encouraged 'creative' use of the ticketing - and now, only a year or two later and we find that an official review has recommended that a great many people are going to face a noticeable increase in fare cost.