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Submission: We refer to the report “More efficient, more integrated Opal fares; Draft Report December 2015”. We are concerned by the proposal to raise the daily transport cap for self funded retirees to \$9.00.

This submission is made on behalf of the NSW Justices Association (NSWJA), established in 1911. NSWJA is a professional association for Justices of the Peace in New South Wales. It is a non-sectarian, non-political and non-profit organisation with more than 3000 members. Its aims and objectives are to promote, protect and assist the rights, character and interests of Justices of the Peace (JPs) in New South Wales, to keep them informed, and to advise them on their duties. The Association is the advocate for all JPs in New South Wales, and has established cooperative working links with the New South Wales State Government.

Justices of the Peace voluntarily staff Community Desks, often located in court houses, libraries and shopping centres, throughout New South Wales, to allow the public to more easily access JP services. The NSWJA itself manages over 100 Community desks and many of the volunteers at these Desks are self funded retirees, who currently benefit from the Opal gold card and use it for transport to the community desk. JPs are prevented by law from charging for their services so they cannot pass on any increase in their costs. Currently, while the NSWJA tries to reduce these for its members: generic stamps, voluntary workers insurance cover, etc., JPs do bear some costs in providing their free service: e.g. “tools of trade” like personalised stamps, attend meetings and educational/training events. We are concerned that the addition of this extra burden of transport costs may cause volunteers to rethink their contribution.

Volunteers have been estimated to contribute “to more than \$14.6 billion of voluntary work to the Australian economy in 2006–2007” (State of Volunteering in Australia, 2012, Volunteering Australia). On the basis of population alone, the NSW share of these benefits would be close to \$5 billion in 2006, which, at an inflation rate of 2.5% (RBA figures), corresponds to \$6.3 billion today. Limiting the ability of people to make voluntary contributions to the economy of NSW seems short sighted.

We understand the need to meet increased costs, but urge the NSW Government to not adopt the recommendation within the report to increase the daily cap on fares for self-funded retirees.