

Busfares and Electronic DataFare Cards

DataFare cards that are used on buses avoid the need to find change, and with some bus companies offer a discount.

The use of DataFare cards reduces the time needed to pay the bus fare when boarding the bus, which is to everyone's benefit.

To encourage bus companies to use DataFare cards more, they should be allowed to charge a slightly higher cash fare when offering a DataFare discount, so that the discount is not borne entirely by the bus company. The slightly higher cash fare might be implemented by rounding fares up to amount such as whole dollars that tend to reduce the amount of change required. Since the DataFare card transactions are electronic, they can be set to the nearest cent if required.

Assuming that the DataFare computers are capable of this, the discount might be adjusted to exclude scheduled buses that are regularly overloaded, so that passengers have a financial incentive to avoid travelling at those times. This is called demand management or congestion charging.

Percentage Increase In Fares

Because bus fares are rounded to the nearest 20c, a particular bus fare may increase by more than the average amount, causing complaints. Obviously, if the increases are calculated over several years, the too big and too little increases will cancelled out so that the average increase is more acceptable.

To reduce such complaints, IPART should, if it doesn't already do so, quote the average increase over five or ten years, and not just the increase for a single year.