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Review of public transport fares from 1 July 2016
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

To whom it may concern

Submission regarding the IPART 'Finding the best fare structure for Opal' Issues Paper

On behalf of the Shore Regional Organisation of Councils (SHOROC) I make the following submission in regard to the review of the Opal fare structures.

SHOROC is a partnership of Manly, Mosman, Pittwater & Warringah Councils led by a Board of the council Mayors and General Managers. We advocate for our region, coordinate regional planning, and build partnerships to improve the strategic capacity of our member councils.

The number one priority for SHOROC and our partner councils for our region is a modal shift to faster and more reliable public transport together with less congested roads. We have been planning and advocating for public transport and road improvements for many years and are now working in partnership with the NSW Government to deliver a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services, improved regional bus services, and major road upgrades.

This submission has been endorsed by the SHOROC General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) of council General Managers.

Background

Residents of the SHOROC region rely heavily on private vehicles and public buses to commute to work and for travel to retail and recreation places.

The geography of the region as a peninsula means that travel patterns are focused on key roads along three corridors – Pittwater/Spit/Military Road, Mona Vale Road and Warringah Road. These three corridors are significantly congested, with the Pittwater/Spit/Military Road corridor the most congested in Sydney according to Transport for NSW and Warringah Road identified by Infrastructure Australia as the third most costly corridor to the Australian economy due to congestion.

Demand is high with over one million passenger trips generated within the region every weekday.

Buses are the key public transport mode, with 140,000 customers travelling on the north-south corridor and 30,000 customers on the east-west corridor each week. During the AM peak period, approximately 11,500 customers and almost 300 buses enter the Sydney CBD from this corridor.

The region has high employment containment relative to other areas of Sydney, with 76.6% of jobs filled by locals and 48.0% of working residents employed within the region. However this has declined marginally in recent years and congestion is impacting local business operations. If not addressed it will mean a loss of local jobs and put pressure on future job creation, placing even more pressure on the transport network.

The NSW Government is implementing its \$633 million Northern Beaches Transport Action Plan which includes construction of a BRT on the north-south corridor from Mona Vale to the CBD, and public transport service improvements for the Warringah Road and Mona Vale Road corridors.

This significant investment is planned to provide faster and more reliable services, and it will also mean that bus will remain the primary mode of public transport across the region.

The priorities in revising the Opal fare structure

The NSW Government's review of the Opal fare structure and consideration of integrated ticketing is welcomed. The guiding principle in such a review is a structure that encourages a modal shift to public transport and reduced road congestion.

It's the view of SHOROC that this should include a fare structure that is integrated to, at a minimum, remove the penalty of changing transport modes in a single journey and facilitates quick, convenient and flexible connections for northern beaches and Mosman travellers across the CBD.

Q 4. Should there be a higher level of fare integration between modes?

Yes. This should be integrated to, at a minimum, remove the penalty for changing transport modes in a single journey. If possible all endeavours should be made to implement a fully integrated ticketing structure across all travel modes, however not at the expense of significant price increases that would discourage public transport use.

As outlined above the main public transport mode for the SHOROC region is buses. The NSW Government is implementing BRT for the Mona Vale to CBD corridor and SHOROC is advocating that a BRT also be implemented on the Warringah Road corridor.

The BRT is a major investment and needs to be viewed by the community as the major piece of public transport infrastructure that it is to encourage patronage. The current bus 'trunk routes' are used by the majority of residents as a commuter service converging on the CBD as there is no train service.

From October 2015 it is planned that all buses from this region will terminate at Wynyard or nearby. This will mean residents will need to transfer to the train, to another bus or, in the future, to light rail to continue their journey. Removing the penalty for changing modes will mean travellers will be able to choose the most efficient public transport solution for their journey, regardless of mode.

Integrating Opal ticketing of these buses with light and heavy rail will mean transfers will be easy and efficient, encouraging use.

In addition, it will enable flexibility for the government to provide more efficient services and adapt to changing demand by providing for example more ferry services or introducing feeder bus services for the BRT.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the review of the Opal fare structures. Should you wish to discuss this submission further please feel free to contact me on (02) 9905 0095 or by email to ben.taylor@shoroc.com.

Yours sincerely



Ben Taylor
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