

Submission by Rozelle Interchange Community Oversight Panel on Draft IPART Report: Maximum Opal Fares until July 2028

The Rozelle Interchange Community Oversight Panel comprises a group of residents appointed by the Inner West Council Mayor to advise on transport issues stemming from the opening of the Rozelle Interchange in November 2023.

One of the issues of concern identified by the Panel is the high cost of ferry fares relative to other modes of public transport.

Many residents in the Inner West rely on ferries as a mode of public transport to commute to and from Sydney CBD and North Sydney. Key waterborne corridors include:

- Balmain and Balmain East to the lower north shore (F4 and F3 lines)
- Birchgrove, Balmain and Balmain East to Circular Quay (F8 and F4 lines)
- Balmain East to Barangaroo (F4 line)
- Glebe to Barangaroo (F10 line). An extension of this line to include another stop at Annandale has been promised by the NSW Government.

For many residents in the catchment areas of these wharves, ferry transport is the only practical option available to reach their travel destination. The alternative of bus travel is either not available (eg Thames Street Balmain) or requires a circuitous and traffic affected journey of up to 25 minutes in peak periods (from Balmain East and Glebe). Longer travel times and transfers to other services are needed for journeys to the north shore.

The Panel is concerned that the current draft recommendations by IPART continue and widen the differentiation between fares for ferry travel and fares applying to other modes. The minimum Adult Ferry single fare is currently \$7.13 (including GST), which is more than double the equivalent bus peak fare from Balmain to the CBD and more than three times the off peak Adult bus fare.

The minimum Adult ferry fare is only 10 cents more than the off peak Adult train fare from Central to Newcastle.

The draft IPART recommendations propose a further price penalty for ferry users. While most bus fares are recommended to stay at the same in real terms, a rise in Sydney Ferry fares in real terms of between between 3.2% and 3.9%, depending on distance travelled, is now proposed by IPART .

In most jurisdictions around the world where integrated smart card technology is available for all public transport, including Melbourne and Brisbane, fares are based on either distance travelled or time, not the particular mode or combination of modes which passengers are able to access. The lack of mode differentiation in the fare structures adopted in other cities is a recognition that:

- It is not passengers who decide which mode operates on which corridor, or the level of service provided . Those decisions are made by Government.
- Government decisions on the type of public transport service to be provided is not based on the aggregate or average measures of mode “efficiency” adopted by IPART. This is because aggregate measures are meaningless in decision making about individual corridors. Construction costs, environmental issues, geography, social and economic impacts and

many other issues which relate to the particular location need to be considered. One transport technology could be more suitable (efficient) for one corridor, but not for another.

- In most cases there is (at best) only one practical option available to passengers to reach their destination and that single option may unavoidably include intramodal transfers (eg feeder bus to train station or ferry). In these cases, passengers do not have a genuine choice of modes.

Panel Recommendations

The Rozelle Interchange Community Panel recommends that IPART adopts a new Opal fare structure where prices are determined by distance travelled only, not the mode of transport used.

Author name: L. Loch

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 September 2024

Your submission for this review:

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The Rozelle Interchange Community Oversight Panel comprises a group of residents appointed by the Inner West Council Mayor to advise on transport issues stemming from the opening of the Rozelle Interchange in November 2023. One of the issues of concern identified by the Panel is the high cost of ferry fares relative to other modes of public transport. Many residents in the Inner West rely on ferries as a mode of public transport to commute to and from Sydney CBD and North Sydney. Key waterborne corridors include: Balmain and Balmain East to the lower north shore (F4 and F3 lines) Birchgrove, Balmain and Balmain East to Circular Quay (F8 and F4 lines) Balmain East to Barangaroo (F4 line) Glebe to Barangaroo (F10 line). An extension of this line to include another stop at Annandale has been promised by the NSW Government. For many residents in the catchment areas of these wharves, ferry transport is the only practical option available to reach their travel destination. The alternative of bus travel is either not available (eg Thames Street Balmain) or requires a circuitous and traffic affected journey of up to 25 minutes in peak periods (from Balmain East and Glebe). Longer travel times and transfers to other services are needed for journeys to the north shore. The Panel is concerned that the current draft recommendations by IPART continue and widen the differentiation between fares for ferry travel and fares applying to other modes. The minimum Adult Ferry single fare is currently \$7.13 (including GST), which is more than double the equivalent bus peak fare from Balmain to the CBD and more than three times the off peak Adult bus fare. The minimum Adult ferry fare is only 10 cents more than the off peak Adult train fare from Central to Newcastle. The draft IPART recommendations propose a further price penalty for ferry users. While most bus fares are recommended to stay at the same in real terms, a rise in Sydney Ferry fares in real terms of between between 3.2% and 3.9%, depending on distance travelled, is now proposed by IPART . In most jurisdictions around the world where integrated smart card technology is available for all public transport, including Melbourne and Brisbane, fares are based on either distance travelled or time, not the particular mode or combination of modes which passengers are able to access. The lack of mode differentiation in the fare structures adopted in other cities is a recognition that: It is not passengers who decide which mode operates on which corridor, or the level of service provided . Those decisions are made by Government. Government decisions on the type of public transport service to be provided is not based on the aggregate or average measures of mode efficiency adopted by IPART. This is because aggregate measures are meaningless in decision making about individual corridors. Construction costs, environmental issues, geography, social and economic impacts and many other issues which relate to the particular location need to be considered. One transport technology could be more suitable (efficient) for one corridor, but not for another. In most cases there is (at best) only one practical option available to passengers to reach their destination and that single option may unavoidably include intramodal transfers (eg feeder bus to train station or ferry). In these cases, passengers do not have a genuine choice of modes. Panel Recommendations The Rozelle Interchange Community Panel recommends that IPART adopts a new Opal fare structure where prices are determined by distance travelled only, not the mode of transport used.