

## OPAL transport card for seniors

In December 2012 Transport NSW introduced the OPAL card system, with the major roll out to all services being April 2014. On November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014, the new Gold Senior/Pensioner Opal Card was launched. At the time Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian, assured seniors that there would be a long transition period, before senior's Opal card became compulsory.

**The 'grace period' is over.** From Monday 1 August 2016, traditional paper tickets are no longer being sold or accepted on trains, buses, ferries and light rail within the Opal network. **Including the Pensioner Excursion Ticket (PET)**

Customers now have to be in possession of an OPAL card to travel on public transport.

From August 1, you will be able to purchase an **Opal single trip** ticket through single trip ticket machines at most train stations, ferry wharves and light rail stops, and from the driver on board buses.

Opal single trip tickets are only available in two fares: Adult or Child/Youth (aged 4 to 15 years old).

These single tickets will be the same as the old full-fare charge. Concession fares will only be available when travelling with one of the specific Concession Opal cards.

<https://www.opal.com.au/en/get-an-opal-card/opal-single-trip-tickets/>

### Why are concession single or return tickets no longer sold?

Transport NSW says the misuse of concession paper tickets is a major source of fare evasion, costing taxpayers \$22 million a year. To address the rorting activity where fare evaders buy concession tickets they are not entitled to, Opal top up and single trip ticket machines plus the new onboard Opal single bus ticket will only offer Adult and Child/Youth fares.

### What this means for you:

- 1) To retain the advantage and convenience of the \$2.50 all day travel, you will need to obtain a Gold OPAL card.
- 2) If you have not obtained a Gold OPAL card by 1 August 2016, you will be required to buy a single or return ticket for each leg of your journey. Multiple modes of travel may require you to purchase multiple tickets. For example: you will need to purchase two separate tickets if you need to travel on a bus and then on a train to reach your destination (if the travel requires you to only change trains to reach your destination a single ticket may suffice).
- 3) **ON YOUR BUS:** The only tickets available 'on-the-spot' will be :- Adult Single and/or Child Single (ie: *single one-way journey*)  
Currently: Travellers that have purchased (undated) Pensioner Excursion Tickets (PET) in advance for future travel on Pre-pay bus services and Government buses in Sydney can apply for a refund up until 30th October 2016. To apply for a refund for unused *MyBus TravelTen* and PET trips contact: Transport Information line on 131 500; or obtain 'Refund Application' packs from Transport Shops and Customer Service Centres. [https://www.opal.com.au/en/opal-fares/no\\_more\\_paper\\_tickets/](https://www.opal.com.au/en/opal-fares/no_more_paper_tickets/)
- 4) **ON YOUR TRAIN; FERRY; LIGHT RAIL; or NEWCASTLE BUS AND FERRY:**  
From 1 August 2016, paper tickets will no longer be sold or accepted and customers will need an Opal card or Opal single trip ticket to travel on public transport in Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Hunter, Illawarra and Southern Highlands. As with the *MyBus TravelTen* tickets, refunds will also be available for unused *MyFerry TravelTen* trips. Applications must be received by 30 October 2016.

## 5) How to apply for a Gold Senior/Pensioner Opal Card:

Applications can be organised over the phone or by going to the OPAL card website. You will need to verify that you are the holder of a NSW Senior Card or a Pension Concession Card, to qualify for a Gold Senior OPAL Card. You don't need a credit card to apply, as the card itself is free. Each individual will be required to order their own OPAL card. You cannot share it between 2 people. After registering, your card will be posted out to you within 5–7 days. Phone **13 67 25** or visit <https://www.opal.com.au/ordercard/?execution=e1s1>

- 6) To start using your new OPAL card, you will need to deposit some money into the account. You will need a debit or credit card to top up online or by phone, and the minimum top up is \$10. However, if you top up at a retail outlet, by cash or credit/debit card, the minimum balance you can deposit is \$2.50 (Conversely, one caller has recently complained that they could not pass through a ticket barrier after only depositing \$2.50 cash, when enquiring to Opal, staff claimed that there needed to be a \$5.00 balance on the Opal Card at all times).  
The maximum you can deposit at any single time is \$60. If your card is lost or stolen this balance can be transferred to another card. Notify OPAL card as soon as possible.
- 7) There are no fees for topping up your balance on-line or by phone or at OPAL card retailers using cash, but if you use your credit or debit card to top up at a retail outlet, they may charge a service fee. For a list of other OPAL card retailers in your area go to:  
<http://www.retailers.opal.com.au/?=carousel> or call **13 67 25**
- 8) Once you have credited your OPAL card you **must** activate it, by tapping it on a bus, train or ferry reader within 60 days, otherwise your deposit will be credited back to your nominated bank account. After this initial use your card will not expire for nine years. (That is 9 years without use for NSW residents). (**See 'Interstate Seniors' for conditions and application details**)
- 9) For the time being, the normal cost of a Pensioner Excursion Ticket (PET) will not increase from \$2.50, a daily charge of \$2.50 is the maximum you will ever pay, and some small trips may cost less with an OPAL card. If you take 8 trips within one week (a return trip counts as 2 trips), you will travel for the rest of the week (up to and including Sunday) **for free** – no matter where your journey takes you, within the OPAL card range. (**\*excludes: The Sydney Airport station access fee does not count towards your Daily Travel Cap**). Sydney Airport stations are privately owned by Airport Link Company (ALC). ALC charges an additional fee for access, called the Sydney Airport station access fee. This fee is \$12.00 Opal concession card holders. This charge is in addition to the relevant Opal train fare.
- 10) When using the OPAL card you can travel from Dungog in the north to Bomaderry in the south and out west as far as Bathurst, which greatly increases the scope and range of destinations now available. All using your one OPAL card.

**TIP 1:** When using buses, you must always tap-on using the front door of the bus, but you can tap-off when exiting by the rear or front doors

**TIP 2:** Every time you tap-off, your remaining balance will be clearly displayed on the card reader. Or you can ring **13 67 25** to check your balance.

**TIP 3:** NSW Transport has foreseen the possibility that a relative may offer to connect your Gold OPAL Card to their credit or debit card, which would eliminate the fuss and/or need for you to top up your card. This will be easy to arrange on-line or by phoning **13 67 25**

## Rural and Regional Transport:

The Opal electronic ticketing system is not available on regional services. You will need to purchase tickets for regional services. NSW TrainLink offers fare deals and concession travel tickets to a range of people, including students and seniors.

## Interstate Seniors:

The Gold Senior/Pensioner Opal card for interstate visitors is valid for 60 days from the date of issue – if you're in NSW for more than 60 days you should reapply as you need to before your Opal card expires. You should only submit your application two weeks before you need to travel, as your application will be processed immediately and your card will only be valid for 60 days from the date of issue. If you need to travel in NSW for longer than 60 days, you will need to submit a new application when your card expires and a new card will be mailed to you.

You can get a refund on your Opal card balance if you apply within 90 days of your Opal card expiry.

Download the Opal Refund Form [here](#) or call **13 67 25**.

**PENSIONERS:** Interstate visitors with a **pensioner concession card** can apply for a NSW Gold OPAL card prior to their holiday /visit in NSW. Apply [online](#) or call **13 67 25 (13 OPAL)** Allow 7 working days for delivery.

**SENIORS:** Visitors with only a state based senior's card are eligible for a NSW Gold OPAL card, but cannot apply on line or over the phone. You must apply in writing with the official application form. Allow 14 days to receive the card in the mail.

- An application form can be obtained from their website or call 13 67 25:  
[https://www.opal.com.au/en/about-opal/opal\\_for\\_interstate\\_seniors/](https://www.opal.com.au/en/about-opal/opal_for_interstate_seniors/)

Send the completed form with a copy (front and back) of your valid Seniors Card:

by mail to:

Transport Concession Office:

Locked Bag 5085,

Parramatta NSW 2124

OR

by email to: [concessions@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:concessions@transport.nsw.gov.au)

You don't need a credit card to apply and there is no fee for a Gold Senior/Pensioner Opal card, however, you do need to add value to your Gold Senior/Pensioner Opal card to commence travel.