

Integrated Ticketing and Fares

Project Outline

The development and implementation of a smartcard-based automated fare collection system that enables customers to use the same smartcard on different modes, operates and services throughout the Auckland region.

The integrated ticketing system will include automated gates, smartcard readers onboard buses and ferries, and smartcard reload machines at selected rail and bus stations and ferry wharves. It also includes all computer hardware, software, networks and communications.

The system will be similar to London's Oyster system and Hong Kong's Octopus system. Core functions will be implemented initially with additional functionality progressively phased in.

London's Oyster Card smartcard was introduced in 2003 with the aim of keeping London's public transport system moving faster and more efficiently. It is described as a permanent reusable electronic ticket which is topped up from time to time by its owner. An Oyster card can be purchased online with the card posted to the recipient, or can be purchased from an Underground Station by filling in a form and submitting it to the ticket office. It can be recharged at touchscreen ticket machines at Underground Stations (which accept cash, credit or debit card payments), or online or over the phone.

ARTA is the lead organisation supported by the NZTA. The NZTA's approach to integrated ticketing is based on the use of open standards and interfaces. It is aimed at providing for a core centralised system that allows for multiple technologies and electronic ticket providers to connect to the central system provided they meet the technical standards defined by the NZTA. The NZTA is seeking to maintain options, choice and competitive tensions to ensure value for money and improvements in the effectiveness of public transport services.

Components of the system designed for Auckland will also be able to be used elsewhere in New Zealand, to avoid paying more than once for the same system.

Project Status

A consortium made up of the French electronics company, Thales, in partnership with the Bank of New Zealand and Transfield services has been selected by ARTA as the preferred tenderer. According to ARTA, Thales has delivered a proven multi-modal system in more than 100 cities around the world including Paris, Toronto and Oslo, and has over 40 years experience in the design and delivery of integrated fare and ticketing systems.

In conjunction with the NZTA, ARTA has been negotiating with the preferred tenderer.

Costs & Benefits

The smartcard will replace the current system where each public transport operator has their own multi-trip and concession tickets which cannot be used on another operator's services.

Boarding times will be reduced as fares will not need to be collected on board the vehicles. Instead passengers will swipe on/swipe off (also referred to as tag on/tag off) using automated ticket reading equipment. Faster boarding times will improve the productivity of the fleet by reducing journey times.

The smartcard will make transfers between different operators and services easier.

Customers will no longer need to carry cash or have the right change and will need only a single card.

Issues

Negotiations with preferred tenderer need to be completed.