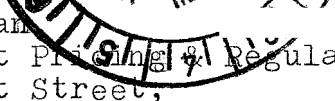


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The Chairman
Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal of N.S.W.,
2/44 Market Street,
SYDNEY, 2000.

Dear Sir,

It appears that the State Government has lodged an application to increase rail fares in N.S.W. Many people believe that any increases should be limited to the increase in the C.P.I. component of the present formulae. No doubt the Government will submit a case for any increase.

I am not so concerned about any increase in fares but that the present level of fares for pensioners etc. are out of kilter and are actually contributing to the decline in the rural population when compared to the population in the cities. The present arrangement is that a fare of \$1.10 covers daily travel by pensioners in the metropolitan area of Sydney. In effect this means that pensioners can travel by train, government bus or government ferry anywhere in the Sydney area.

This means that a pensioner or elderly person can travel from, say, Penrith, to Manly to Palm Beach and back to Penrith for \$1.10. In the area in which I live, the pensioner fare is \$2.20 and covers travel from Lithgow to the Sydney area mentioned above. But it still costs a pensioner \$2.20 to travel the short distance from Katoomba to Hazelbrook. And there is only a rail service in this area, no other form of government transport.

Very few people travel by public transport outside (and inside) the area covered by CityRail. If the present State Government is serious about increasing the population in the outer Sydney area they could do so easily if the following proposal was accepted.

Firstly the present city area should be divided into two sections. Possibly section 1 could cover all government transport from Emu Plains to the southern shore of Sydney Harbour, including North Sydney and the suburbs on the immediate north of the Harbour.

The second section would cover the area on the north side of the harbour but including Wynyard Station and suburbs immediately south of the harbour. Therefore a pensioner ticket from Wynyard to Palm Beach would still cost only \$1.10 but a ticket from Hurstville to Cnatswood would cost \$2.20.

The State could be divided into zones, each costing \$1.10 thus a journey covering two zones would be \$2.20, three zones \$3.30 and so on. At present Sydney has three means of Government transport, train, ferry or bus. Newcastle has two, train or bus, but other zones have just one form of transport, viz., train and, generally speaking, the train service is nothing much to write about.

The only location other than Sydney, where you will find Government buses, is Newcastle but the services provided are not frequent or extensive. There are frequent train services to the Maitland area but these are timed to connect with services to Sydney,

My view is that the Countrylink services should be continued as some people will not mind paying higher fares provided that the service provided is commensurate. Nevertheless I believe that smaller rail vehicles should be provided so as to enable people to travel to larger areas, excluding the Sydney metropolitan area.

Dubbo, for example, is a large city with a population of approximately 30,000. Yet there is no State Government services connecting Dubbo with numerous smaller establishments other than Countrylink bus services to Cobar, Bourke etc.. But these seem merely to enable people to travel to Sydney. My wife and I recently went to Palm Beach by bus, and I was very interested in the way the driver drove the bus, which was an articulated vehicle, in traffic as well as collecting fares.

The thought occurred to me that a similar type of light vehicle could be driven on railway lines and, if this was the case, steering would be a very easy task as the rails would do most of the work. In past years platforms were provided for passengers but the somewhat elaborate facilities that were provided are no longer necessary. All that is needed is a short platform with provision for adverse weather conditions.

Ticket issuing machines could be provided but a better idea would be, in my opinion, for an employee be provided on each rail vehicle to handle the issue of tickets. After all, if a bus driver can do this, why wouldn't a railway employee be able to do the same.

I do not know if the Government will improve conditions if an increase in the cost of fares is allowed but any increase, above the C.P.I. component could and should only be granted on condition that the Government improves train services.

Yours sincerely,,

(Mr.) A.J. Beeney.

P.S. I regret that this letter has not been signed and that some errors might have happened during typing. However I cannot write legibly with my right hand (and I am right handed) so I have to use a typewriter using just my left hand.