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For Campbelltown and Districts Commuter Assoc.

The Chairperson,
IPART

CITYRAIL FARE REVIEW

Dear Sir/Madam,

PREAMBLE

I have been given the task by my association to present you with a case for consideration. The case for public transport is very bleak without the support of Governments. Yet Governments are readily able to give support and funding to roads. Not only that, Departments of Transport are becoming Government arms of multinationals. Indeed, organizations such as the RTA represent more and more the interests of those organizations. It must be realised that nearly all cars are imported, most tyres and 60% of fuel is imported as well as most spare parts are imported and owned by foreign multinationals. What small portion of cars, spares and tyres that are made here are mostly owned by foreign interests!

Public transport is being marginalised and starved of funding in many quarters. Where road projects come in over budget and ahead of schedule, in comparison, public transport capital improvements are being further delayed and their funding is being diverted to roads. Take the Chatswood – Parramatta rail link - \$300 million is being diverted to the improvement of Windsor Road!

This type of operation is founded in the US, prior to the Second World War. Car manufacturers were not able to sell cars to more than 10% of people in their cities. As a consequence, General Motors went and investigated why this was so. This is the beginnings of Market Research. They found that people did not need cars! They had the transit systems that were fast, smooth and cheap and went where the people wanted to go. What was their answer? They bought up the transit systems, closed them down, put on smelly diesel buses that went on circuitous routes and the people said “I’ve had enough of this! I’m going to buy a car!”

It is plain to see that cars, tyres, fuel and spare parts cannot be sold in such a large amount where there are good transit systems!

With the constant congestion, pollution, infrastructure excesses and the misery of a death and injury rate of a medium sized war on the roads, decent public transport is a salvation for the traveller. One can read, sleep, play cards with friends, or just relax and look out the window. In my case, for a 200-day working year for 12 years, 2 hours a day, Telstra received 4800 hours of software production for free!

The thought that the car is a godsend is false. Time is taken to drive yourself, absolute concentration is needed, fuel and the vehicle must be paid for and that is a limiting factor in the Western part of Sydney. In many places, public transport does not exist or is so infrequent and expensive it is not an alternative! Those that travel on public transport out here aim to get a car with their hard earned cash “to get out of the public transport syndrome!”

ATTITUDES MUST CHANGE.

There are a number of reasons we should be placing in more and better public transport.

- **Trade Balance.** If better public transport is provided for people that now use cars, less imports of cars etc will be needed reducing our deficit.
- **Reduced fuel needs.** Some basic statistics.
 - The world uses 24 billion barrels per annum or around 3.8 cubic kilometres of oil.
 - The US uses ¼ of the world's oil.
 - Less than 6 billion barrels per annum are now being found.
 - Since 1980, we are drilling 10 times more wells and decreasing returns.
 - Australian peak of production was mid 1999.
 - World peak of production was last year.
 - World demand is rising by 2.5% per annum.
 - We import 60% of our needs at present.
 - We will be importing almost all of our oil by 2010.
 - Demand will exceed supply in less than 5 years.
 - (Colin Campbell, Petroconsultants)
 - We use 22,000 tonnes of road fuel per day in Sydney.
 - Public transport can move people with a greatly reduced energy need, especially rail systems.
- **Many people cannot use cars.** These are disqualified drivers, the elderly, youth, and people that cannot afford a car. With 50% of the population over 50, it would be in our best interests to foster systems to get people out of cars to reduce the injury rate.
- **Bus ways** I hope will not be replicated beyond the Parramatta – Liverpool system. It appears to be a dismal failure. It is probably the most expensive bus route in this country indeed the world!! This bus way cost \$280 million, did not include the cost of the buses, ticketing machines, street lighting, a share of the terminal in Parramatta or the Camellia layover area. Where light rail at the DOT price of \$350 million included the vehicles, the ticketing machines, overhead lines and lighting, did not need a terminal in Parramatta or layover area and included a workshop and storage area. It did not need additional land purchases because the original reserves for the light rail were too narrow for the bus way! Where figures quoted for the bus way of up to 7,000 per hour in the peak, light rail installations in other parts of the world in similar urban, industrial and commercial paths would reduce car use by around 60,000 per day.
- **Funding** usually gives preference to roads. Where new rail systems are examined and proposed, they include maintenance costs for a 10 to 20 year period. Where road projects are placed in, costs do not include maintenance at all.
- **Private toll roads** are the best equity generator for investors. You must realise this: **it will cost the private operator nothing to construct!** We the users will pay for it! Whether government or private – **we will pay for it!** Private roads will reap 1400% profit in their 30 years. Government operations merely have to pay their way at best. They already belong to us! They don't have to make a profit! This is why government public transport is cheaper than the private buses in the west. Government roads are cheaper to construct and operate than BOOT systems of the private roads because we pay the equity to the private company in tolls for an excessive time. The SLR is similar with their inflated fares.
- **Unfortunately,** Cityrail is only a core operation. At present levels of patronage, it cannot pay for its operations. It has had other profit making operations stripped from it such as food services, small parcel operations and property control.

HOW CAN WE HAVE BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

The Government's answer is to increase fares. The STA and SRA say the same thing. But with increased fares, less people use the system each time a fare rise happens. Just when patronage begins to rise, up go the fares! Is this done deliberately as another way to reduce public transport patronage? It would be better if these instrumentalities got together and sought an answer. Considering we have private buses in Campbelltown which IPART has little or no control over, this submission will concentrate on the rail services.

Sydney is increasing journeys by about 5% per annum. If Cityrail is getting a 5% increase, it is losing market share by around 5%. So to have a 5% increase in market share, Cityrail needs a 15% increase in patronage per annum. This must be maintained for several years to make a considerable impact realising only 8% of people go to work by public transport in the West at present. This in contrast where Cityrail concentrates on the CBD, 70% of workers use public transport.

Unfortunately, Cityrail's mentality is that it can carry as many people on an 8 car train every 30 minutes as it can on a 4 car train every 15 minutes. The answer to getting an increased patronage is not giving a minimum service but supplying convenience and service quality to the customer. With a 30 minute off peak service for example, it is not very convenient to the user. With long waiting times for missed trains, long waiting times for connections, isolation with few companion travellers, lonely and uncomfortable platforms, this is not conducive to retaining those new customers. All the paint and paper on platforms, clean trains, information systems, security guards etc will not make up for a this poor frequency. Trains not arriving will not help. The rule for convenience is twice the frequency. For example, if a 30-minute service "skips" your platform or is cancelled, the next train is an hour wait!

With increased patronage, doesn't this mean an increased income? In common language, more bums on seats means more bucks! With the passive marketing of Cityrail, and the attitude of maintaining a minimum quality service as does the private buses out here, they will not get the level of patronage to pay for operations with present strategies.

- **Basic and cheap infrastructure improvements** like a triangle at Glenfield enabling trains to operate in circles. This increases moving vehicle track time per hour and hence increases the productivity available from that vehicle. The trains don't have to be terminated and returned consuming possible track time.
- **Signalling spacings** need to be smaller in the outer areas to allow trains to get closer reducing delays in congestion or failure times.
- **More frequent trains** permitting reduced waiting and junction times.
- Cityrail needs to be made into a **Sydney wide transport system** not merely to get people to the Sydney CBD.
- **More lighter and appropriate vehicles** are needed. The single decker "red rattlers" could move more people than the present double deckers. This is because they had a smaller loading and unloading time and could be run more frequently. With smaller dwell times at stations, transit time for journeys in the peak period could be reduced by 30 seconds per stop. With more frequent services to each destination, the City Circle would not have the platform congestion with frequent clearings of patrons. Double-decker trains only move a maximum of 24,000 people per hour compared with the "red rattlers" that regularly moved 40,000 people per hour through the City Circle. These could be used on the East Hills and Bankstown lines which could be made into circles. Lighter vehicles mean greatly reduced energy needs.
- **Ticketing systems** need to be made convenient to all users, especially casual users. With the prospect of the "smart card" in the future being the only method of public transport use, visitors to our city will not be able to use the systems. Also, many of the conveniences of the rail system (i.e. return overnight or across weekends) were

taken away prior to the introduction of the electronic system. Electronic ticketing systems are supposed to be flexible and should be able to create flexibility for the customer instead it has been inhibited.

- **Fares are cheaper for the STA.** Western bus travellers must also travel longer distances due to fewer rail lines – there is no other option for them without buying and using a car. Their travel patterns are not necessarily to travel to the CBD. The traveller that uses a bus to a rail station most probably will be travelling to the Sydney CBD. This incurs a cost of double that of merely travelling by rail. It is interesting to note that around 70% of jobs are west of Lidcombe. Most industrial and many commercial centres are not located near a rail line. Fare discounting is limited to only a couple of private operators. These are the ones with electronic purse systems.

TRAVEL ON A PRIVATE BUS IS RELATIVELY EXPENSIVE.

I must include some comments around travel by bus for us out here. If a person in the Western Suburbs catches a train, they will probably use a private bus and a considerable additional expense in excess of the Government STA operations in the Easterly suburbs. The combined bus/rail journey time can be twice as long as the train portion in some cases. An example for you.

- Bradbury to Camden South is around 25 kilometres, \$6.30 per trip, \$63 per week and includes a change of bus.
- Compared with a new car of 6.5 litres/100Km, purchase/running cost of \$100 per week and fuel/week would be \$13.50.
- The example travel time is around 1 hour compared with 13 minutes by car.
- It would be a lot longer except travel this way is in the contra peak.
- The car allows other journeys as well; especially after bus operations go off peak or stop altogether.
- **Most people don't use buses.** They have 3 to 5 cars per family. Buses are for the poorer people or those that don't have a car. They get charged top dollar. The bus company must make a profit to keep its shareholders happy.
- More cars, more roads, more pollution.
- Buses get caught in other road traffic and proceed at the same pace.
- Buses go on circuitous routes to arrive at their destination.
- Travel time is slower. For example, 1 hour in the above example, 13 minutes by car.

Private operators are not service oriented. Although they are a supplier of transport, in most cases shareholders are more important than customers. There is a large market but there is no incentive to capture any more. This would mean extra buses needed to be purchased which means fewer dividends to the shareholders. It is pretty obvious that if these operators did not get the fees in the form of a yearly ticket for carrying school children, many of their marginal operations would not be in service. This is a form of subsidy. Yet these operators say that they do better than public operations (STA) because they can run at a profit!

The reality is that poor bus operations in the West of Sydney add to the social impact. Some of the problems encountered are summarised as:

- \$5000 per year per person on cars (driver).
- Under 16 and over 60 are left out of the Australian dream – social inequity.
- Isolation and loneliness is rife amongst the socially poor.
- Large transport arteries separate towns and parts of the city.
- Suburban sprawl is encouraged.
- Food producing land is consumed on the outer rim and is relocated further afield, which adds transport costs to the final product and more freight movements as well.

- Energy consumption is excessive (around 20,000 tonnes per day for Sydney).
- Pollution is excessive.
- Roads kill and maim more than a medium sized war.
- Public space deteriorates or disappears. This can be seen in the M5 East construction and the proposed M6 or Windsor Road or Sunnyholt Road.
- We are experiencing a crisis of mobility because of choked roads.
- Public transport is not reticulated to new estates like gas, water, electricity and communications.

A lot of this is because

- Private bus operators will not allow others in to take their share of possible patrons as laid out in the PTA.
- Private operators will not provide sufficient transport for the masses. This can be seen where travelling commuters and school children coincide in the morning peak.
- Minimum numbers of users mean maximum fares under the guidelines of the PTA and permitted by IPART
- Because they are private, shareholders and profits are the major interest.
- It is only because of legislation or government action that these operators have been influenced to begin to upgrade their operations.

CLOSING COMMENTS.

As you can see, people in the Western part of Sydney are disadvantaged by successive State Governments permitting these poor quality public transport services to continue. Are we second-class citizens in the Western part of Sydney? In many cases, it is a great disadvantage to even consider travelling by rail for us. I consider that increasing the fare box share for Cityrail users is a copout by authorities and Governments who are unwilling to spend the necessary funds on this essential infrastructure. Too much money finds its way into roads instead of schools, hospitals, social needs and public transport. I would like to see Government Members again become statesmen and look after their charges and not merely become legislators.

We hope you will find this information useful in your determinations.

Yours sincerely