

**COMMENTS ON THE SRA SUBMISSION TO IPART IN CONNECTION WITH THE 2002 FARE REVIEW RECEIVED FROM THE COMMUTER COUNCILS FARE REVIEW COMMITTEE AND FOWARDED TO IPART FOR CONSIDERATION.**

**3.2.2 Purchase of New Outer Suburban Rail Cars (Intercity Cars)**

Over recent years, there has been considerable growth in State Rail's customer demand primarily in the suburban and outer suburban areas of Sydney between Dapto, Springwood, Wyong and in the Sydney metropolitan fringe.

To meet this current and future forecast growth in demand, State Rail has commenced a process of competitive tendering for the design and build of new double deck passenger rolling stock to suit the needs of these outer suburban areas.

It is anticipated that at least 16 of the 40 additional cars will be earmarked for use on the Illawarra and South Coast Services.

The Tender calls for the design and construction of 40 Outer Suburban Cars (plus one spare car) with two subsequent options:

- Option 1 - 80 cars (plus one spare car); and
- Option 2 - 40 cars.

These options are included to allow flexibility in meeting subsequent growth and fleet replacement requirements between now and approximately 2008.

The estimated total cost for Stage 1 (40 cars plus 1 spare) is \$136.7 million. State Rail expects to award a contract late in 2002. Construction of the Rail Cars will begin shortly thereafter and be supplied from 2005.

**Comment. Central Coast Commuters Association. David Lord**

The current options 1 and 2 again indicate State Rail's total inability to plan for future growth and competitiveness.

Option 1 of 40 cars will provide an extra 5x8 car sets, less the carriages due for replacement and since no spare cars are to be included, we can expect at least 1 or 2 of these sets to be almost permanently out of service. In reality 3 extra car sets in service over the areas required is hardly worth the effort and again totally unacceptable in respect to improving the services and becoming competitive.

Option 2 for 80 cars plus one spare is again unrealistic. 1 spare car, presumable a driving car is on experience a ludicrous proposal. In reality, the rate at which Interurban and suburban cars are written off through accidents of one sort and another and a lack of spare parts, we can expect at least 2 or more of these sets to be out of commission at any one time.

When weighed against removing the time expired car sets that need replacement, and weighed against current needs, the proposals may bring about a status quo at today's levels of patronage, but will certainly not provide for the 2005 and beyond future growth of the outlying areas, nor will it provide a competitive environment to bring commuters back onto rail.

To put it bluntly, we have heard of all the improvement proposals before, and the system seldom improves much, (for longer distance travellers, comfort levels significantly decrease) so commuters eventually take to their cars.

Raise fares significantly again:

- The cost to the State and Federal Government will be increased road spending to alleviate bottlenecks and overcrowding of the roads
- Increased accidents due to overcrowding and driver tiredness will lead to increased medical and hospitals costs way beyond the revenue return levels predicted by State Rail.

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#### **4.1.2 No increases in fares for journeys of up to 20 kilometres**

In this proposal there are no increases to adult fares for journeys of up to 20 kilometres.

This has been proposed for three reasons:

- The minimum amount by which an adult single fare can increase is 20c. If this increase were to be applied to fares for shorter distance journeys then the percentage increase in these fares would significantly exceed the forecast CPI.
- Since the mid-1990s single fares in these distance bands have increased relatively more than fares in the longer distance bands. Therefore, to achieve greater long-term equality in fare increases, increases have been focussed on the longer distance bands.

#### **Comment. Central Coast Commuters Association. David Lord**

The use of ticketing equipment anomalies as a means of not raising fares in the cheapest bracket is a blatant cop out for the inadequacies of the automated ticketing system. Whilst the fare increase using a 20c increment may exceed the forecast CPI, the effect on the individual is small and insignificant when assessed against the proposed actual increases in the longer distance fare structure. i.e. a 20c increase is considerable greater than a \$2-00 increase, in fact, a 2000% increase for longer distance travellers. The SR system of using percentages tells only a small part of the story when considering fare rises. If the criteria of **4.1.2** is applied each year to the lower fare structure, these passengers will contribute less and less solely due to the inadequacies of the ticketing system, whilst the longer distance traveller will be effectively priced away from the rail system completely.

In respect to previous fare rises, the longer distance traveller has in the past experienced quite the opposite to the proposal. State Rail has been quite happy to slug the longer distance traveller a larger percentage rise than that CPI forecast because of the zonal system and the incremental structure of fare increase. Why the sudden change of heart by State Rail? It seems clear there is more revenue to be gained from the longer distance traveller than the short, an easy win situation for State Rail.

The tribunal should note that workers who travel long distances earn no more than those who travel short distances, so using percentage increases becomes discriminatory against the longer distance traveller whom have to pay larger fares in the first place.

#### **State Rail Submission to IPART: 2002-03 CityRail Fare Review**

- In recent years there has been a trend towards urban consolidation resulting in significant population growth in inner city suburbs. This has provided CityRail with an opportunity to expand its customer base. However, to

increase market share then CityRail must remain competitive against car and bus.

**Comment. Central Coast Commuters Association David Lord**

The increase in population through urban consolidation may have provided City Rail with an opportunity for an increased customer base by expansion. It is also interesting to note City Rail admission that it must remain competitive against car and bus.

If these same criteria are applied to the longer distance traveller, why is City Rail increasing fares over and over when it is obvious that City Rail is no longer competitive with car or bus from such outlying centres as the Central Coast?

Despite what City Rail indicate in their submission, the level of service against population increase has been significantly reduced.

- The comfort level on the trains supplied continues to decrease.
- The filthy condition of so many long distance trains turns patronage away.
- The lack of passenger information in general and/or communication when something goes wrong is endemic and totally unacceptable in today's technological world.
- The consistent failure of emergency procedures to provide passenger alternatives that work when the system fails or something goes wrong.
- The actual time keeping of trains at stations between those where on time running is actually measured is often woeful, passengers missing bus and train connections that cause passengers time delays often measured in hours, not minutes.

The significantly increased F3 Freeway patronage is the Central Coast Commuters voting with their cars in a manner that indicates City Rail is **not** competitive at current levels of service, timekeeping, cleanliness, comfort, and increasingly, security and safety.

The proposed fare increase for longer distance travellers within this submission by State Rail indicates it has given up the challenge of being competitive in the longer distance services.

**Conclusion**

There is nothing in the State Rail document that has not been heard before. The document is window dressing with words and proposals that seldom work or are never implemented. Those that are implemented are usually:

- not well thought out,
  - cost far more than the proposed savings
- these inefficiencies are passed onto the patronage in the form
- of increased fares,
  - lower security and safety,
  - lower comfort levels,
  - standards of operating conditions that would not be tolerated by OH&S principles,
  - dirty passenger compartments.