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Submission: Dear IPART

I am pleased that IPART is reviewing rail fares, and agree that there should be improved cost recovery. However, I consider that fares should not increase for a City Circle train trip between adjacent stations, and that the station access fee at airports is too high.

Sydney train cost recovery at less than 25 % compares unfavourably with Auckland where it is some 44 %. However, increasing rail fares too quickly may result in adverse effects as was the case in Brisbane several years ago.

It is submitted that an increase in Sydney train fares needs attention to road pricing, as noted by the Parry Report many years ago. See attached older 2007 submission to IPART re this one RailCorp submission on page 12 notes: The 2003 Parry Report explicitly stated that "CityRail fares should increase modestly in real terms to help fund better services. Significant capital expenditure has and will be undertaken to improve current and future customer service, and some of this expenditure needs to be recouped from users of the service."

The NSW Government and IPART would do well to revisit all the recommendations of the 2003 Parry Report.

NSW Trains are dealing with many more passengers Between the 2011 and the 2016 Census, Greater Sydney's population grew to 4.82m with a big 10 % growth. During these five years, rail patronage on the Sydney and intercity network increased to 367m with a stronger 15 % growth.

Seniors are briefly mentioned in the draft 2020-24 report. As per the 2003 Parry Report, there is scope for an increase in the \$2-50 fare, particularly for travel in peak hours.

There is a need on the South Coast line for more trains, and faster trains. There is also a need for faster trains between Sydney and Newcastle (as recognised by the 2012 Infrastructure NSW report, two hours is a good target). Plus more and faster trains between Sydney and Canberra, and Sydney and Orange.

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*Submission to the New South Wales Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
re Review of fares for CityRail in NSW 2006*

Dr Philip Laird, University of Wollongong August 2007

(Edited, appendices available on request)

1 Introduction

This submission will draw on research conducted at the University of Wollongong. However, it does not necessarily reflect the views of the University organisation. The submission draws on earlier submissions to Government, including IPART in its review of Rail Fares in 2003 and 2006, and on various publications of the writer.

RailCorp in its submission in summary notes that it is currently of the view that the following changes to the CityRail fare structure are warranted:

- a fare increase of 2.9% to compensate for 2005/2006 inflation, effective from 1 July 2006; and
- reducing the current off-peak discount from 39% to 25%.

No changes are proposed to current concession discount levels. The revenues generated from the additional farebox revenue would be applied to improving cost recovery.

The support extended in 2006 for an increasing in fares is now qualified with the exception of Senior/Pensions card concession, that South Coast services should have no increase in fares until four conditions are met.

A. Sufficient new OSCAR sets are introduced so that all suburban Tangara sets can be removed from the South Coast line.

B. The train timetables is speeded up to at least pre May 2006 running time standards.

C. Effective efforts are made to stop the number of extensive train delays between Waterfall and Thirroul due to signals going to red in wet weather.

D. A study is completed to asses the adequacy of track capacity on the existing South Coast line to support additional Cronulla - Sydney, South Coast passenger services and freights trains. Such a study should examine potential improvements to Waterfall – Thirroul track alignment and triplication of Hurstville Mortdale along with the benefits and costs of completion of the Maldon Port Kembla Railway.

There is no doubt that persons living in Sydney's North Shore and community to the Sydney are getting a good deal, and should pay the modest increases sought by RailCorp for their train services. These services are likely to improve with the introduction of 2008 of Epping Chatswood trains. Some other areas of Sydney are also well served with trains. However, South Coast train travelers deserve much better that what us currently offered.

With reference to the proposed four conditions:

A. Urban Tangara trains without toilets were never intended for inter-urban trains services. Yet South Coast train travellers have had them scheduled on some services for years.

B. The present timetable that goes back to May 2006 is simply too slow.

In regards to train running times, the 5.12 pm weekday train from Central to Thirroul takes 84 minutes. In 1980, the 5.06 pm non-electrified train from Central to Thirroul took 75 minutes. This journey is some 70 km in length.

By way of comparison, in Victoria under the new Regional Fast Rail (non-electrified) the length of the Southern Cross Stn (SCS) to Geelong railway is 72.567 km long, the average peak hour transit time for the Geelong line is about 60 minutes Geelong to SCS (AM peak) and 56 minutes from SCS to Geelong (PM Peak). Moreover, there are about four such city bound express trains per hour during the morning peak hour.

In Queensland, express trains from South Brisbane to Nerang trains - about 70 km - take about 60 min, two such trains per hour in peak hour. The track is currently being upgraded to put on more trains, and an improved timetable is due in March 2008.

C. Regarding extensive train delays (some over 40 minutes) between Waterfall and Thirroul due to signals going to red in wet weather, the Tribunal is referred to the Editorial of the June 2007 issue of Railway Digest, “‘View from the Signal Box’ the NSW South Coast Line – Where Does the Buck Stop?”

The salient points from this article are that there has been a problem for some time when wet weather may lead to signal malfunction. It would be appreciated if you could make inquiries to see what efforts are now underway to stop the number of extensive train delays in wet weather.

Other problems of note from this article include ‘The slow and winding section between Waterfall and Thirroul’, with the comment that the infrastructure is largely unable to cope with the demand placed on it now let alone the traffic levels anticipated as the population grows. In short, this assessment would warrant an Engineers Australia Infrastructure Report Card rating of F being ‘Inadequate for current and future needs.’

D. The NSW Government noted (page 36) in the 1998 NSW Government’s Action For Transport 2010 statement that ‘The State Government will ensure that a high speed rail link is built between Wollongong and Sydney prior to 2010.’ This was to reduce journey times by 15 minutes. Instead, journey times have been padded out over the years.

This statement also noted completion of the Maldon - Port Kembla Railway subject to “the private sector or the Federal Government finding additional funds” with \$37 million in potential funding.

In place of a new high speed South Coast line by 2010 and the forthcoming

expansion of imports through Port Kembla; it would appear that something needs to be done to improve rail capacity and/or reduce train journey times. This would suggest eventual completion of the Maldon – Port Kembla Railway and/or to make improvements to Waterfall – Thirroul track alignment etc.

It would be appreciated if you could support obtain completion of a study to assess the adequacy of track capacity on the existing South Coast line to support future additional Cronulla - Sydney and South Coast passenger services along with more freight trains. Although there is a case for private and or federal government AusLink funding for the Maldon - Port Kembla Railway, the least that the NSW Government could now be doing is:

- 1) Recommitment of the \$37m, preferably inflation adjusted – now about \$50m.
- 2) Acquisition of any remaining land needed to complete the railway.
- 3) A supplementary Environment Impact Statement (EIS) to ensure that the 1983 EIS meets current requirements.

1.1 Southern Highlands services

There is also a case for train fares on the Southern Highlands to be frozen, until more through running trains to Sydney are reinstated. Douglas Park is some 73 km from Central Station. Yet, the minimum peak hour transit time appears to be 87 minutes, with most such services requiring a change of train at Campbelltown (or Macarthur). Trains from Picton (85.2 km), Bowral (136.2 km) and other Southern Highlands stations also have unduly long transit times to Central.

1.2 Short North services

There is a need for commitment by both the NSW and Federal Governments to improve Strathfield - Broadmeadow operations. The objectives to be considered include:

1. Increasing freight capacity (now around 22 paths each way over some 14 hours of the day - there is a need for up to 50 paths over 22 hours or more per day);
2. Shortening running times for all trains;
3. Reducing grades for freight trains (irrelevant for passenger trains); and,
4. Providing reliability for all trains on the upgrade of the Cowan Bank.

A third track combined with curve easing on the Cowan Bank could be coupled with a ridge top passenger line. This line could use steep grades and short tunnels to get a high speed alignment from north of Cowan to south of Mt Kuringai (able to be used by all passenger trains). This should be a substantially lower cost solution to these challenges than an Mt Kuringai – Hawkesbury River tunnel earlier proposed within the NSW Government or an outlay of \$1127.60m as noted in the North South Rail Corridor Study (NSRCS- (page 6-56).

People who use the trains between Sydney and the Central Coast/Newcastle/Hunter Valley need a much more positive view of further upgrading to follow the present work as was noted in Chapter 1 of the NSCRS (page 1-16) re the Coastal Sub-Corridor *Infrastructure Requirements*

"Further infrastructure investment beyond the current ARTC program does not indicate substantial additional benefits in terms of either significantly reduced transit time or greater demand. The Study Team analysis suggests that the current problems associated with congestion north of Sydney can not be easily or cost effectively addressed."

2 Brief comments

The RailCorp submission on page 12 notes: The Parry Report explicitly stated that 'CityRail fares should increase modestly in real terms to help fund better services'. Significant capital expenditure has and will be undertaken to improve current and future customer service, and some of this expenditure needs to be recouped from users of the service.

The same quote from the Parry Report ("Challenges to Providing a Sustainable Transport System for NSW" 2003) was made by RailCorp in its 2006 submission that noted (page 6) *"CityRail fares should increase modestly in real terms to help fund better services"*.

The increases requested are very modest and with the exception of the South Coast line should be approved with the proviso (as per the Parry Report as cited above) that the additional revenue will be invested to improve customer service. This includes an improvement in transit times from the current timetable.

Moreover, the NSW Government should all of the revisit the recommendations of the 2003 Parry Report. In addition, RailCorp, whilst continuing to improve services to the traveling public, should make a stronger case for further fare increases in 2008.

The current Seniors Card concession is too generous, and the interim Parry Report recommendations were a reasonable compromise between discounted travel and improving revenue.

RailCorp remains as a system where much further investment is needed to keep past with Sydney's past growth. The 1998 Action for Transport 2010 proposals should be revisited, along with the 2001-02 report of Mr Ron Christie. Any suggestion that Sydney's rail system will be adequate once Epping - Chatswood is built and the "Clearways" programme is completed should be questioned. The need for improvements from Hornsby to Warnervale (initially promised for 2007) remain. The section of track is now the most congested double track in Australia.

It is noted that the Australian Rail Track Corporation's \$192 million South Sydney Freight Project and related work will improve separation between freight and passenger trains. However, there is a need to look to the next stage. This could well include completion of the Maldon Port Kembla railway to get some freight trains out of the inner west and off the Hurstville - Sutherland (another congested double track section, and with steep grades).

The price of a poorly performing urban rail system is high. It includes increased road vehicle usage, with increased road congestion, air pollution, and road trauma.

Increased oil prices since the last determination, and positioning RailCorp to cater with the likely expected demand if oil prices continue to increase, also require addressing.

3. The need to improve and expand the rail system

In the late 1990s and early part of this decade, Sydney was experiencing strong growth. Its rail system has failed to grow. In 1998 NSW Government statement *Action for Transport 2010* lists a number of rail projects for completion by 2010. These include:
Parramatta Rail Link by 2006

East Hills line Quadruplication (to Kingsgrove by 2003)
Newcastle to Sydney- High Speed Rail Link Stage 1 Hornsby - Warnervale by 2007
High speed rail link - Thirroul tunnel prior to 2010
Completion of Maldon Port Kembla railway (subject to some Federal/private funding)
Epping to Castle Hill rail by 2010 (underground - 7 km - \$350 million)
Priority freight line from Macarthur to Chullora and to Cowan.

Action for Transport 2010 notes studies to be undertaken for a Fassifern - Hexham rail bypass, and a rail tunnel under the Little Liverpool Ranges.

Clearly, Stage 1 of a Newcastle to Sydney- High Speed Rail Link completed by 2007 is now out of the question. However, since 1998, the Western Sydney Orbital was planned, constructed and opened in December 2005 ahead of time. Yet planning on the Waterfall Thirroul and Newcastle rail projects is yet to proceed to land acquisition and environmental impact assessment.

In addition, *Action for Transport 2010* notes plans for new rail lines between 2010 and 2020 as follows:

Complete Stage 2 Hornsby to Newcastle rail upgrade
Complete the Hurstville to Strathfield line
Northern Beaches line from Chatswood to Dee Why
Southern Beaches line from Bondi Junction to Maroubra
North West line extension from Castle Hill to Rouse Hill

The need for augmentation of track capacity within and near Sydney would appear to include; in addition to those items listed above

- A. Chatswood – Wynyard quadruplication; involving taking over two lanes on the Eastern side of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.
- B. A Sydney rail freight bypass;
- C. Hurstville – Mortdale (- Sutherland) triplication;
- D. Waterfall – Thirroul new routes (need identified in 1990, reaffirmed *Action for Transport 2010*, detailed planning work still to start) and or Completion of the Maldon Port Kembla Railway
- E. Hornsby – Gosford track straightening.
- F. Quadruplication of the line to East Hills.

As recognized by many submissions to the 2002 AusLink Green Paper, some Federal funds will be needed to improve urban rail systems in Australia. This view was reaffirmed by the Senate Standing Committee on Transport etc in its 2005 report on AusLink, and, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and

Heritage in its 2005 report 'Sustainable cities' (which had 7 recommendations on transport, some of which could be adopted by State Governments).

3.1 Campbelltown - Goulburn

There is a need to improve access between Sydney and the Southern Highlands for CityRail and other services. A direct Menangle to Mittagong route to run alongside the Hume Highway was proposed by Bill Wentworth as far back as 1991. The Wentworth route will shorten point to point rail distance by nearly 20 km and cut time for all trains. The 2001 ARTC Track Audit estimated its cost at \$218 million for single track. Double track is a better option.

The Hume Highway was diverted to its present route as far back as 1980. The railway still winds around hills, instead of cutting through them. The extra distance and slow running forced by steam age alignment encourages people to look to driving cars on roads.

3.2 Short North line

Getting faster trains between Sydney's Central Station and the Hunter region is a major challenge. Although some detailed preliminary work was done for Hornsby-Warnervale track upgrading (with a 2001-02 \$1 million NSW budget allocation for planning), no further work has been done (or communicated to the public).

Failure to complete a Newcastle High Speed Line for passengers will result in increasing pressures to augment the Sydney - Newcastle freeway from 4 to 6 lanes (and, in another decade, from 6 to 8 lanes). Clearly, full Federal funding of the Sydney - Newcastle freeway with the absence of road tolls, and no Federal funding for the Sydney - Newcastle railway, has resulted over time to a major distortion in travel choice.

The nature of track upgrading between Hornsby and Hexham will have implications for improving both Sydney-Gosford-Newcastle CityTrain services and high speed intercity rail services. With increasing traffic density, it is desirable to make provision for future separation of freight and passenger trains between Hornsby and Gosford. In this case, on the Cowan bank, it would be possible to construct a passenger line with steeper ruling gradients at much less cost than a passenger line with easier gradients that is likely to require extensive tunnelling.

The construction of a Fassifern – Hexham bypass would also improve future separation of freight and passenger trains near Newcastle.

3.3 Maldon Port Kembla Railway

The final report of the State Development Committee in relation to the Inquiry into Port Infrastructure in New South Wales released 17 June 2005 noted, inter alia, comment for and against completion of the Maldon-Port Kembla railway, and the option of tying it in with the "Wentworth" rail deviation from near Menangle to Yanderra or Aylmerton. The NSW Committee made two related recommendations:

Recommendation 12. That following the anticipated transfer of general cargo stevedoring

to Port Kembla in 2006, the NSW Government re-examine the freight task out of Port Kembla to ensure that the anticipated increase in freight traffic is supported by the necessary improvements in road and rail infrastructure.

Recommendation 13. That the NSW Government consider the feasibility of expanding rail infrastructure into Port Kembla, including consideration of the Maldon to Dombarton line, in conjunction with the AusLink program.

The NSW Government response to these recommendations was less than positive, however, the need remains to reduce rail congestion with Sydney and to ensure that as Port Kembla expands, the rail system can move increasing freight tonnages. The Maldon-Dombarton rail link is a 35 kilometre partly completed link. It was started, with enabling legislation, in 1983 by the Wran Government to improve rail access to Port Kembla. During the 1980s, the following work was done:

- a. Environmental impact assessment plus design and documentation.
- b. Construction and ballasting of over 25 kilometres of right of way from west portal to the boundary of Water Catchment near Wilton.
- c. Construction of approach viaducts in 1984-85 to Nepean River Rail Bridge.
- d. Installation of plant and site works, environmental control measures, start of tunneling at Avon tunnel on east portal and construction of west face of portal. The Avon tunnel contract was cancelled by the Greiner Government in mid 1988.

In considering completion of the Maldon Port Kembla Rail link, the following factors are relevant:

The growing rail congestion in Sydney metropolitan region, with freight train curfews.

The planned expansion of Port Kembla.

It could be used for passenger trains.

The slight risk of potential failure of the Waterfall -Thirroul line.

The somewhat slighter risk of potential failure of the Moss Vale - Robertson line.

The rail project is half completed.

Easier paths for coal and other freight trains.

Support of the Port Kembla Coal Terminal, and (qualified) Illawarra Coal (BHP Billiton)

It would tie in well with the Wentworth Route as outlined in 3.1 above, or parts thereof.

Re coal trains - the Maldon Dombarton Rail Link would provide significant distance savings for Tahmoor Coal to Port Kembla with a rail distance of 72km. This compares with 118km via Moss Vale, or 175km via Enfield.

The movement of coal trains from Lithgow on the Western line proceeding through Enfield is congested and subject to curfews. As well, loaded coal trains bound for Port Kembla have to climb the steep Como bank to Sutherland with a distance of 101km from Granville to Port Kembla. With completion of Maldon - Dombarton, by use of the triangle with the flyover at Granville the distance from Granville to Port Kembla is 109 km. Such movements would be further facilitated by construction by 2009 and now under way of the South Sydney Freight Project by the Australian Rail Track Corporation at a cost of \$192 million.

3.4 NSW Government's Freight 2010 strategy

The report *Action for Transport 2010* noted that "The NSW Government's *Freight 2010* strategy which will follow this Plan sees road and rail as complementary as well as

competitive. Despite being prompted by a Legislative Council Committee report in December 2000 calling for release of this Strategy, the promised NSW *Freight 2010* strategy is still to be released. Expanding ports at Newcastle and Port Kembla will place more demands on the rail and road system.

4 Comment on external costs

RailCorp's 2006 submission has a single table and the following brief comment.

4.5.4. Environmental Protection There are additional environmental benefits to the wider community in using rail. For example, if the 180,000 daily rail passenger trips to the CBD were to transfer to car, around 160,000 additional car trips would be required. It is difficult to estimate the additional vehicle effect on an already congested road network, but it could be estimated to cost in the order of \$360m annually for the morning peak 66, and doubled if repeated in the evening. These increased road trips could also be expected to lead to higher road accidents, costing around \$50m annually.

"Furthermore, there would be environmental costs involved in the extra mileage of between \$1m and \$2m annually. Any CityRail fare increase would enable RailCorp to provide better services, increasing the number of passengers over time, with corresponding environmental benefits."

This comment is very limited. The IPART website has Subsidies and the social costs and benefits of public transport - Prepared for IPART by CIE. However, this is dated March 2001. The Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics (BTRE) in a 2005 Working paper *Health Impacts of transport emissions in Australia: Economic costs* gives a mid-range estimate of the annual health related costs from air pollution from motor vehicles in Australia's capital cities at \$2.33 billion for the year 2000. This comprises \$1596 million from the estimated cost of mortality (premature death as a result of air pollution), and \$735 million for morbidity (quality of life and/or productive capacity of victims impaired or reduced as a result of air pollution; and, this estimate is appreciably lower than a 2003 BTRE estimate). Following a European approach (Kunzli N, Kaiser R and Medina S, Public health impact of outdoor and traffic related air pollution: a European assessment, *Lancet* Vol 356, Sept 2 2000) the BTRE effectively attributes air pollution costs to PM10 (particulate matter of size less than 10 microns) levels.

In a further 2003 BTRE paper (*Urban pollutant emissions from motor vehicles: Australian trends to 2020*) estimates are given of both PM10 emissions in Australia's capital cities and the kilometres driven for various types of motor vehicles. Analysis of this data shows (Laird, *Revised Land Freight External Costs In Australia*, Australasian Transport Research Forum 2005), in part, that the average health cost of air pollution from operations of cars (and other small passenger vehicles) in Australia's capital cities is 1.3 cents per vehicle kilometre. The average health unit cost for within Sydney is 1.6 cents per vehicle kilometre.

As part of a submission from this writer to the Productivity Commission during 2005 re its inquiry into energy efficiency, the value of electric urban rail services includes reducing road congestion, air pollution in capital cities and conserving imported oil. Take for example, the Sydney City Rail task, reported to be moving over 270 million passengers each year. Assume that the metropolitan part of this task (over 250 million passengers) is about 5 billion passenger-km (average length of journey being almost 19 km), and that on a hypothetical closure of the service, an extra 4 billion passenger-km of car travel is

generated with a higher than usual occupancy rate of 1.25 passengers per car (cf the BTRE's estimate of the average vehicle occupancy rate in Australia of around 1.1 persons cited on page 11 of *Greenhouse policy options for transport 2020* Report 105, 2002). This would result in an extra 3.2 billion car km per year. On an ABS average petrol use of 11.0 litres/100km (ABS SMVU data for 2003, Table 5) this results in an extra 291 million litres of fuel used per year. The increase in external health costs due to the extra air pollution (with the unit cost of 1.6 cents per passenger vehicle km) would be \$51 million per year. There would undoubtedly be an increase in road trauma as well.

More comment re external costs from an earlier submission to IPART appears in Appendix B. It is suggested that ***IPART consider recommending to RailCorp that they seek updated estimates on both road and rail passenger external costs in time for the next application for fare increases.***

5 More on pricing

The Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics (BTRE) in its 2002 Report No 105 *Greenhouse policy options for transport 2020* considered land transport, with some 11 groups of measures to reduce vehicle kilometres traveled. Optimal road pricing was held to offer the best way forward.

This view was shared by the Parry Inquiry (NSW Ministry for Transport, 2003) that noted, inter alia (p72) "*The thinking underlying the support for road use pricing is that road access is currently 'too cheap' (as distinct from the general cost of motor vehicle use), as motorists are not directly bearing all of the costs associated with their decision to make a journey. For example, driving a vehicle is associated with costs such as congestion, road wear and tear, pollution and accidents.*"

The Parry Inquiry (loc.cit, p 74) also noted "*Currently, public transport is disadvantaged compared with private transport by a range of taxation (for example, the fringe benefits tax), expenditure and other policies that encourage private transport use. As a separate issue, and irrespective of the decision made regarding road use pricing, those policies that distort decision making in favour of private transport should be reviewed to ensure that public transport is not disadvantaged.*"

Improved road pricing to remove large hidden subsidies from motor vehicle operations (cars in major cities during peak hours and articulated truck operations) is necessary to improve demand management. One approach is given by the Railway Technical Society of Australasia (Submission #186 to the House of Representatives Environment and Heritage Committee's inquiry into Sustainable Cities whose 2005 report and seven transport recommendations are commended) which proposed a ten point transport pricing plan along the following lines.

- i. Re tolls
 - A. remove toll rebates in Western Sydney, which is a costly scheme to administer.
 - B. reinstate tolls at Berowra and Waterfall, with the proceeds being used to expedite long-overdue improvements of both the Pacific and Princes Highways.
 - C. ensure that the Mitcham - Frankston motorway is built as a toll way.
- ii. Remove the Queensland Fuel Subsidy Scheme, at least from South East Queensland.

- iii. Impose a congestion charge for access to the Sydney and Melbourne CBDs. It works well in London. And/or impose an environmental fuel levy for motor vehicle use in the Greater Metropolitan Areas of state capital cities and Canberra.
- iiii. Restore fuel excise indexation, with the additional revenue going into improved transport infrastructure. To ensure best use of funds, replace road funds (as enjoyed by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority) by transport funds (as per Western Australia, New Zealand and as proposed under AusLink).
- v. Ensure that the further determinations of heavy vehicle road user charges by the National Transport Commission recovers - at least the populous zone - the full road System costs from heavy articulated trucks, B-Doubles and road trains. At present, these vehicles are cross-subsidised by other road users. Ensure that additional revenue is directed towards not only National Highway System maintenance (to compensate for changes under AusLink), but rail track and improved intermodal facilities.
- vi. Increase annual registration fees for the heavier four wheel drive vehicles.
- vii. Support the recommendation of the Productivity Commission from its 1999 Inquiry into Progress in Rail Reform into an inquiry into road provision, funding and pricing. Also have the Productivity Commission examine urban transport.
- viii. Increase rail fares, with all proceeds going into a better rail system.
- ix. Improved land transport data, with publication of accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date information on all modes of transport, with details of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.
- x. Ensure that major airports and seaports are not in receipt of hidden subsidies.

6. Airport link services

One area of service where appreciably higher Sydney urban fares are now under trial is travel involving the use of any of the two airport stations and two nearby stations (Mascot and Green Square). The higher fares, coupled with other factors, have resulted in patronage being well below expectations. Other factors include:

- a) The lack of purpose built 'user friendly' rolling stock to operate between the two airport and nearby stations, and, central and city loop stations.

By user friendly rolling stock is meant single decker carriages with luggage platforms near doors.

The use of such trains, together with the option of using regular East Hills/Macarthur trains (albeit packed with people at peak hours) would assist in building patronage. The cost of two or three such four car sets would be small compared with the costs of the new stations.

- b) The relatively limited and small signage at both airports be changed to indicate that there is a train option, how good it is, and where it is. How good it is would include guaranteed maximum waiting time (eg. trains every ten minutes or in the case of the Brisbane line, every 15 minutes for much of the day).

c) The limited and small signage at Central and City Loop stations; with lack of active indicator boards at each station that would say:

Re Wynyard station: Do all trains for the airport leave Platform 6 at Wynyard?

The present signage suggests this. However, not all trains leaving Platform 6 at Wynyard go on the Airport Line.

d) At Central, it is suggested that Platform 23 be a dedicated "air train" platform, with special signage and murals. All other suburban platforms including Platform 22 could have signage saying change here for the air train.

e) There is no encouragement for people from the South Coast and Cronulla lines to use the train to the airport, because most trains from these lines do not stop at Wolli Creek.

Pending introduction of measures such as above, and boosting of patronage to the new stations, it is recommended that the fares to the special stations be lowered by at least two dollars, and a publicity campaign be launched to induce:

A) people who have not tried the new service to try it;

B) people who have already tried the present airport line service and been "turned off" it to try again.

7. Summary

This submission suggests that RailCorp's request is a modest one that could well be approved, also urban rail fares and the perceived cost of using cars are too low, and that a quantum increase of investment in urban and intercity rail track is required to maintain a functional rail system.

However, it is also submitted that there should not be a marked increase in fares and road pricing until there is a demonstrated commitment to improve urban public transport and upgrade and extend rail track as well as addressing the important issue of road pricing. IPART could contribute to improving the public's knowledge of road vehicle external costs and lifting the level of debate on road pricing.