

Dear Sir,

I appreciate that I, as well as other commuters, am given the opportunity to voice my view on the 18% train fare increase proposed by City Rail.

In principle, I am strongly against City Rail's proposal. Reasons being:

1. The proposed increase in fare vs. the quality of CityRail service provided to commuters

We pay premium prices for excellent service. But let's look at the service CityRail provides on a daily basis:

- longer intervals between train services
- dirty carriages (graffiti and rubbishes etc)
- unsafe and old trains
- less carriages for some train services which does not help to combat the increased volume of commuters.

Furthermore, the train service is consistently unreliable in extreme weather conditions i.e. hailstorms, thunderstorms or simply the temperature being too high etc. I heard numerous reports on trains being cancelled or major delays in such weather conditions.

The latest blunder is the electricution of passengers at Lidcombe station and many people still remember the incident happened at Turrella station where the door suddently opened while train was still moving. These incidents are not just about poor service. But they are about putting people's life at risk and in great danger.

What we see is sub-sub standard services and dangerous practices in NSW public transport. If you go to Asian countries, the service quality is far far better than what's happening in Sydney. Even looking domestically, what a huge contrast in the public transport between Sydney and Melbourne!!

It just can't be justified that we commuters be asked to pay a 18% fare hike for such poor services and at the same time remember that our lives are at risk - a risk I don't think people want to take on!

2. Rail Corp's incompetency in managing funds and projects

Rail Corp has a long track record of mismanaging funds and rail projects. Here are some examples that many of us experienced or read on the news:

- The upgrade of Turrumurra station:

The upgrade was originally scheduled for 2002 but the actual work didn't start until early - mid 2007. The upgrade was finally completed in mid 2008. I am sure that Rail Corp had all sorts of excuses why it was delayed for 6 years. But the delay caused a lot of inconvenience to elderly residents around the area. And as taxpayers, we are entitled to better services and this is what we get from the government after all?!

- The new train line between Epping and Chatswood:

It is such a publicised project and one that people do anticipate to finish on time. But Rail Corp didn't surprise us by delaying the project again and again with the current schedule of it being completed and put into use by the first quarter of 2009. There were various reasons why it was delayed such as the line was too steep so that the new trains would not be able to run on the line or climb the steep

slope which was not originally in the design. Well, there will be more dramas when the completion date gets close.

- Misconduct or even criminal conducts by some Rail Corp employees:

Those cases reported in the media just raise doubts about how Rail Corp can be trusted with more cash when its employees are or were being investigated by ICAC for bribes or taking kickbacks from contractors and misappropriating Rail Corp funds.

It is really sad to say that Sydneysiders are now used to such failed promises and media reports about Rail Corp and I would dare to make an assumption that most of the people don't believe what Rail Corp promises anyway.

3. Worsen macro economic conditions and family's already stretched budget

This proposed fare increase came at a time where we see a once-in-a-century financial crisis hitting every major economies in the world with the worst maybe yet to come in the next year or so. Families in Sydney and around the country are already on a very stretched budget. People are struggling to pay their bills, make their mortgage repayments while keeping all ends meet. RBA is adjusting monetary policy and along with the federal government, is pumping liquidity into the financial system. However on the other hand, people will potentially be facing a huge increase in their daily commute cost. CityRail has been steadily increasing the fare every year. Now the effort of CityRail ripping off every taxpayers just reached a new high.

CityRail has consistently failed in providing satisfactory services for a first-world country. They have consistently failed to keep their promises. They have been putting people's life in danger and not doing anything about it. They are now hoping that their fare increase proposal to be supported by the public and get through. I see no logic of people ever agreeing to such a proposal given CityRail's consistent bad performance. Instead, they should be looking into tangible things that they can improve on so that we, ordinary people, feel that we are getting what we are paying for.

I believe that the independent pricing authority will take taxpayers' view into consideration in relation to this CityRail fare proposal and make a fair and equitable decision.

Regards