

To whom it may concern:

IPART's recommendation for a new fare structure is a flagfall plus a distance based levy, whereby the distance based levy is calculated just on the distance without any discount for customers living further away.

Currently, it is argued, commuters living further from the city gain an unfair advantage since their Rail Weekly tickets receive a larger discount than those of people closer to the city. The difference, however, is that service levels are by no means comparable. There are **substantially less trains** to further away destinations, reducing flexibility for customers who live there. The South Coast line in particular is badly served when compared to other lines. Given time and flexibility are precious commodities this is an important factor.

Furthermore, the discount that is so generously given is calculated on a 5-day week. How many commuters from Kiama do you expect to be on the train to the city on Saturday or Sunday (or any evening)? They will hardly volunteer to spend another 5 hours on the train, even if there is an interesting entertainment feature happening. From Kogarah? No problem, hop into town for a bit of shopping or go down to the harbour. IPART agrees that customers who live closer to the City may in fact receive a bigger discount but argues electronic ticketing will eventually take care of this.

My suggestion is to leave the bigger discount for long distance commuters in place at least until electronic ticketing is actually being introduced (or close to it).

Train delays or cancellations also have a much more severe effect in further out areas since there are fewer or no alternative means of transport available.

Recommendation: In summary, I hope you will see that giving long-distance commuters the current discount is by no means unfair but entirely justified by the respective service (or lack thereof) levels.

Quote: In addition, it will begin to transition CityRail's fare structure towards one that will facilitate electronic integrated ticketing.

In the context of the failed Tcard implementation the multitude of different fares is sometimes quoted as a reason for the faltering of the project. How can that be? There are many countries in Europe, where you can buy a ticket from any train station to any other train station in that country from a machine at every station big or small (or of course online). Why can that not be done here? With the capacity of modern computers that surely can not be a limiting factor, even if the number of different fares was increased by a few orders of magnitude.

Quote: To further understand capacity of off-peak discounts to shift demand from peak periods, in August CityRail commenced a two and a half month trial of a 50 per cent discount off-peak "Smartsaver" fare for the Western and Richmond lines only. This trial restricts the use of off-peak return tickets in the afternoon peak – between 4 and 6.30pm. RailCorp intends to provide a report on the outcomes of the trial prior to IPART making its final determination.

A discount of 50 % compared to single tickets should certainly be able to shift passengers from peak services to off-peak services if their workplace is flexible enough. CityRail seems to have concluded that its recent trial did not support that notion. It can, however, be argued that this CityRail trial was not designed to be successful. A commuter has to queue up every morning to get an off-peak return ticket. If one compares the price of 5 of these tickets to a RailWeekly then the saving may only be in the order of \$10. Given the time it takes to queue with un-reliable machines and long lines at ticket windows that seems hardly worth it. It is certainly unrealistic to expect a

large number of commuters to take up these off-peak fares (leading to even longer waits) unless the rules are changed.

If one is really serious about making this off-peak trial a success the effort has to be comparable and money still saved, i.e. the off peak ticket should also be sold as a weekly with the appropriate frequency discount.

The recent CityRail trial failed by design and one isn't sure whether or not that was deliberate.

Recommendation: The 50 % off-peak discount should be introduced, but there should also be a frequency discount associated with it. It should be possible to buy off-peak tickets at any time.

General Service levels:

In general terms any increase in price above CPI should come with a corresponding increase in service levels. IPART's recommendations suggest that the opposite is true for CityRail.

1) Over much of the last year an increase in patronage on many lines has been discussed. Due to CityRail's inability to increase capacity (some of it connected with poor maintenance of its rolling stock) trains have become more and more crowded. This equates to a fall in service levels and should be accompanied by a fare reduction not an increase. One may ask the question: What has happened to all the additional revenue?

2) The efficiency of CityRail services and their appropriateness for the 21st century should also be taken into account when deciding on appropriate fare levels.

A couple of years ago trains on the South Coast line were slowed down by about 10 minutes in order to improve on-time arrivals, i.e. a train may be 10 minutes late leaving Thirroul but still make it to Central or Redfern on time (this happens frequently). IPART and CityRail might classify that as a success since after all the train is on time at its destination, but I, respectfully, disagree. What it means is that no matter whether this train is on time or not it uses up at least 10 minutes more of my time than it should (either by being delayed or by going slow). This adds up to 1 hr and 40 minutes every week for a typical commuter. Now multiply that by the average number of commuters and estimate the huge cost of these slow/late running trains. In addition, this keeps us necessarily, but unnecessarily, away from our families and contributes to a general feeling of despair, which is well known to increase with every 5 minutes of additional commuting time.

This is hardly a service level one can be proud of and it should not be rewarded with fare increases and certainly not disproportionate ones for passengers directly affected.