

Sent: Wednesday, 5 November 2008 4:36 PM

Subject: Submission - Railcorp Fare Increase

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to lodge the following submission in regards to IPARTS Report - Review of CityRail fares, 2009-12.

I would like to begin by highlighting the flawed nature of the submissions process in regards to this review. Firstly to ask for submissions to a review that is 226 pages long with no clear summary of the implications of its introduction is foolish and shows a lack of thought to the consultation process. To expect user of the CityRail system to examine such a document to identify the particular impact it will have on their situation shows a gross lack of concern for the views of the public and is an obvious means to reducing the transparency and accountability of this process by deterring potential opposition submissions.

Another issue is the lack of information regarding what bearing does other Issues Paper produced by IPART have on this determination e.g. Deciding on the Structure and Level of City Rail's Fares.

A major objection I have in regards to this Issues Paper is in the impacts it has proposed for commuters traveling distances over 35km. As a resident of the Blue Mountains who uses CityRail services to travel to work I find this particular issue disturbing. This review has failed to recognise that rail transport should be assessed within the greater Transport portfolio. When considering fares IPART should take into account also the prevalence of other forms of transport available in a particular area and also the frequency of those services.

In the inner city areas of Sydney, train services are much more frequent than in regional areas. With the increased frequency comes an increased attractability and reliability of train services. IPART have not taken this into account when determining train fares. Users of train services from regional areas may be traveling for longer on the services but have a much smaller range of services to choose from and this should be taken into consideration when pricing fares. A further issue is that CityRail users from inner city areas often also have the choice of using alternative transport means including buses, ferries and light rail. Again residents of regional areas are without these choices and as such when determining travel rates within the greater transport sphere this should be taken into account. Basing fares purely on a flag fall and then a pay per distance means is an over simplistic and immature means of setting fare rates.

In terms of an increase in prices for CityRail services, I find this completely unfounded in any merit. I have never found that CityRail services even come close to meeting basic standards of comfort, cleanliness and reliability. For a fare rate increase to be justified, CityRail should be made to reach an acceptable level of service. Obviously by the recent review carried out by ITSRR, CityRail is not doing so. When the CityRail Customer Survey for 2008 finds that 55% of train users expectations are not met in regards to crowding on trains, and similar results are found regarding personal safety and cleanliness, a proposal to increase fares by up to 25% is an insult to train users. It basically amounts to making people pay more to use increasingly dilapidated and over crowded trains. Why would a person that owns a car and is able to drive to work want to make the switch to using CityRail public transport.

If this flawed and underdeveloped proposal to increase fares by such an exorbitant amount was to proceed it would serve as an insult to the users of the CityRail network who are all too often taken for granted. It is illogical to expect passengers to pay higher fares for less services and is in direct opposition to the Governments objective of increasing the percentage of users of public transport.