
Sent: Wednesday, 5 November 2008 8:43 PM

Subject: Submission on Proposed Cityrail Fare Increase

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to offer a short submission on the current discussions that are occurring on the significantly raising the prices of NSW Rail Fares.

I have been a train traveller all working life. I did have a period between 1999 and 2005 when I was driving to my job at Mascot. I noticed a significant degradation of service when I restarted daily train travel in 2005.

The time I spend on the train every morning and night, the amount of stops, the morale of Cityrail staff, the frequency of failures, the ability to respond to failures, the amount of Graffiti left on the train carriages - all amount to a feeling that I am now getting seriously less value for my travel dollar.

I have not sat back in my dealing with many of these issues. I have spent many hours on the phone to the Cityrail "complaints line". Ironically the complaint process is a major area of concern. Once a complaint is lodged into their system there is no notification on the resolution of the issue when it is fixed or indeed IF it is fixed. If I have taken some of my personal time to lodge a complaint - I would have thought that Cityrail should have the courtesy to ring me back when the issue is resolved.

In one specific case I reported a major safety issue when someone was almost injured on a train due to the Guard's action. I demanded that I speak with someone from Cityrail - not a call centre. In that instance I did eventually get to speak with a Manager about my concerns. This is very much an exception. Delay times for trains to sit at stations for 5 minutes just to allow "One Time Running" is crazy. It is things like this that cause the system to "operate at capacity". If trains were not stopped in such a way us passengers would arrive at our destinations sooner and the system might even allow one or two extra train services an hour.

I want to speak out strongly on one proposal - the idea that some of the train seats will be removed to allow more people to stand. After a hard day at work I do not want to stand up on a train that is slowed down artificially once again to allow "On Time Running". Again an example of bad value for money in action.

I have been in my current job for around 3.5 years and have not received any pay rises during this time. Yet prices are going up and up. If train fares rise the extent published, hard working commuters will be massively out of pocket. I also believe that such significant rises will cause people back into cars, especially now that Petrol prices are lower (for a while at least).

If in spite of argument such as the above major fare increases are indeed forced upon us travellers, I would demand one thing - the ability to hold Cityrail accountable for their failures. The ability to have some kind of financial compensation in the case of certain failures. (Perhaps a discount on your next ticket). This sort of thing is in place for some industries such as Sydney Water.

Do not consider that a lack of submissions to you is in any way an approval of the way Cityrail is running the rail system or as passively allowing the idea of tremendous fare increases. People lead busy lives and probably do not consider it worthwhile to spend an hour at their keyboards like I have. I would love to be proven wrong here.

Please do not allow Cityrail to increase our fares. The service us commuters receive on a daily basis is not that good !!!