

5 November 2008

City Rail

Further Fare Increases

I am writing in regard to the possibility of fare increases to our train system in Sydney.

I travel from Windsor to St Leonards via the city each day at a weekly cost of \$48.00.

I leave Windsor at 6.27am each morning on old, non air-conditioned trains with unsealed, draughty windows which are extremely unpleasant in winter with temperatures regularly below 0 degrees at the time I leave. Added to this are seats which have long ago lost their springs and cause me extreme discomfort while sitting in them as I have arthritis in my spine. By the time I am halfway along my hour & a half journey I am usually standing as I cannot tolerate the pain in my back due to these uncomfortable seats.

The journey home used to be reasonably more pleasant due to the fact that 4 out of 5 trains was a Tangara, with seats that at least had a few springs still left in them, although the air conditioning was a case of pot luck whether it was working or not, and on the occasions when it was working the cold blast of air that was coming out was not always better than the weather outside. A couple of weeks ago we have lost the services of the Tangara and are now getting the same old rattletraps that we have to endure in the mornings.

I have had the occasional thought of using my car instead as parking is available for me at St Leonards and I can get there more quickly than using the train but I have been misguided enough to think that I was doing the right thing by catching public transport and saving on greenhouse gases, traffic congestion etc, etc. The cost of using my car is only marginally cheaper than using the train. Now with the news that train fares are going to be increased, I will definitely be using my very fuel efficient car, with air conditioning that I can control, seats that are far more comfortable than the relics I have been travelling in and I will have the option of listening to music of my choice rather than the several ipods of other inconsiderate passengers who insist on playing for the benefit of the whole carriage rather than just themselves. Even sitting in traffic has more appeal than putting up with the discomfort of the current trains.

I am at a total loss as to how CityRail can justify an increase in fares while the service they are offering is of such a low standard. On one trip home the guard had the audacity to blame the travelling public (over the public address system) for the late running of the train because they were too slow to get on at the stations. Have any of these City Rail employees had to force their way on to very overcrowded platforms, then wait on the platforms and tried to get on these trains that are so overcrowded that by the time trains get to the city stations it is almost impossible to resist being pushed and jostled into any opening that appears. It is all very well for announcements to come over that there is another train due in five minutes, but when you live as far out of the city as I do waiting another 30-35 minutes for the next train is not an option.

Dur to my work hours I do not have the option of travelling out of peak times. Not being a public servant I do not have the luxury of flexible hours, rostered days off or choosing my work times.

If and when fares do rise next year, it will be the car for me.

Yours faithfully