

**Sent:** Tuesday, 4 November 2008 11:07 PM

**Subject:** Review of CityRail fares from 2009 and regulatory framework

I am writing as a commuter and concerned citizen of Shellharbour to protest the recent recommendations to increase train fares, without improving services in this area.

Consider the following:-

The people of Shellharbour, particularly the young school leavers, are disadvantaged already due to poor public transport, and long distances to travel to work. A young person seeking work in the Illawarra area has little chance of finding employment close to where they live. The Illawarra region already has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in the state. To increase the cost of travel for these young people will reduce their chances even more. For a person living in the city of Shellharbour, without a car, travelling to Sydney and back is a minimum of four hours on a train plus the time it takes to get to and from the station. Add this travel time to their eight hour working days, and they will be spending over half their day commuting and working for very little money. How long do you think they will last?

Is it better to subsidise public transport and improve people's perception of the Government spending and assist young people to acquire work, or to pay unemployment benefits, and reduce our skilled workforce?

Now take the same scenario and consider the people living in Nowra and travelling to Sydney.

Many train stations between Sydney and Nowra are already isolated and often unmanned. To reduce services will increase the opportunities for vandalism, theft and crime, and do nothing to ensure people actually pay to catch the trains. Wouldn't it be worth considering manning all the stations, and making sure every person boarding a train has a ticket?

The economies of scale achieved by getting more people on the trains, and ensuring they all pay, would achieve the same economic result as putting up the fares.