

Sent: Tuesday, 4 November 2008 2:39 PM

Subject: Rail fare increases

To whom it may concern,

I Currently spend \$51.00 per week, representing just under 10% of my net wage. I am a sales assistant, earning the award wage, living on the Central Coast and commuting five days per week to Wynyard. An increase in my rail fare to \$59.00, which is an increase of nearly 15% is in excess of inflation and award wages growth which has been 3%. This will therefore make my real cost for transport about 11.5% of my entire earnings. The report from IPART was tabled prior to the current world economic crisis, which means a review is necessary to take into account the changing finances of the world and the circumstance which will affect train commuters from lost income and increased costs elsewhere.

This is at a time when the retail trade is declining and full time roles in the retail industry are being lost due to the decline. If my hours were cut to 32 hours but still over the five days (a very real possibility in this climate), my transport costs would be increasing to 13.5% which would make it untenable to use public transport and therefore force me to resign my employment. This would then have a further implication in being able to pay for food and rent and not being able to afford travel for any other role either. This would increase the levels of unemployment and underemployment and lead to a worsening of morale, a lengthening of the current economic crisis and a possible swing politically away from the incumbent government. According to the NSW electoral commission, nearly 70 % of my State electorate are earning under \$1000 per week, meaning it may well cripple the chances of my generation finding full time employment locally or within a reasonable distance. Unemployment in my electorate is near 10% currently, and this will only exacerbate the situation by pricing people out of affordable transport.

The train system we currently have is not so fantastic that I would want to pay more for it, even if I could afford it. Trains are late (for no apparent reasons) up to 30% of the time; delays from transport need to have my hours made up at work, forcing me to spend more time away from family; trains are cancelled at the last minute without warning, train delay warnings on www.131500.com.au are insufficient or not timely; track repair is carried out on weekdays during school holidays, forcing the use of buses, increasing travel time again; The trains are not cleaned efficiently or sufficiently for the numbers of commuters; Trains are not well kept, with ripped seats, vandalised windows, graffiti etc; train comfort levels are severely lacking, with a lack of heating in winter and a lack of cooling in summer; There is a lack of security at Narara station, which forces me not to leave my car there anymore due to risk of damage, theft or vandalism; lighting is inadequate for the winter journeys when it is dark early at night and later in the morning and this increases the threat of assault, bag snatching etc.

I therefore implore IPART not to allow the proposed increase in train fares until such times as there has been a better value for the service that should be provided. There is a great deal Cityrail can do to ensure a value for money for the services provided.