

Sent: Tuesday, 4 November 2008 12:38 AM

Subject: Public Submission - Review of Cityrail Fare 2009 - 2012

RE: Review of Cityrail fares, 2009-2012

Dear, IPART, I wish to make a anonymous submission relating to the review of Cityrail fares for the period 2009 - 2012. My comments and observations are made below.
I am a Cityrail passenger who uses trains & buses 5-6 days a week from the Kogarah and Rockdale region.

In my opinion, the review of fares has not taken many things into consideration in relation to it's fares review outside of appropriate revenue generation and funding.

* Failure of Cityrail to adequately police fare evasion. On a weekly basis (not overstate, but understated), I witness, at Rockdale and Kogarah station, during peak periods (when staff are the most likely to be present), passengers who have not paid moving through ticket gates undetected. This happens in full view of staff and often non-fare paying passengers follow other paying passengers through the gate, including myself. I experience or see this on a weekly basis. This devalues the fares that paying passengers have paid for and can encourage once loyal paying passengers to consider Cityrail's inaction needs to result in their own action of not paying for fares.

* Failure to improve travel times. This is evident in the charts provided in Cityrails own report. A fleet, of <15% of train carriages being new, which has slowed down travel speeds, changed the definition of on-time trains, and then considers this valid evidence for increasing prices. Cityrail services should be moving forward into the future and improving, not being slowed down and then considered modern.

* Failure to improve train quality. In the ageing fleet of Cityrail many things are not upgraded or maintained adequately. PA systems on trains do not function properly and are either too loud, non-audible, or staff ill-trained to provide adequate messaging. Temperature control in train carriages is not-adequate. Air-flow in trains are not adequate. Ease of entry and exit is not adequate. Trains constantly jolt on starts and stops and reduce safety. Failure of doors to function.

* Failure of Cityrail to maintain appropriate platform access and spacing. Many of Cityrails platforms (Town Hall requires a special mention) provide awful access to the platforms and trains. Passengers are not able to spread and move onto and out of the platform to access the train and all its carriages appropriately. This reduces safety, reduce on-time trains, reduces health, reduce Cityrail's staff ability to move and advice passages about boarding, reduces ability to exit trains, reduces emergency access/exit.

* Failure of Cityrail to implement appropriate electronic ticketing system. To put it simply, there has been a wide and broad failure to implement and adequate ticketing system, either through bad project management, red-tape, poor costing and estimate, etc. etc. etc. This has increased the maintenance of existing ticketing system, increased the stress on the system as passengers are unable to purchase tickets efficiently outside of peak times, increase passengers at certain peak times.

* Failure of Cityrail to connect with other services. Often, connecting to other types of services from Cityrail trains results in people just missing other services, having to wait too long, or being unable to safely and effectively arrive at Cityrail stations outside of peak times (and peak times). Cityrail should be working closer in hand with bus, ferry and other services. Many passengers are unable to effectively arrive at stations outside of peak hours, yet, the new pricing structure would like these passengers to pay more.

* Failure to establish appropriate travel hubs. There are many busy stations on the Cityrail network. Some include Town Hall, Wynyard, North Sydney, Burwood, Kogarah, Hurstville, and so on. Many of these station have not been adequately established as appropriate travel hubs. What does this mean?

Access to the station is difficult via bus, ferry or motor vehicle. Depots have not been established for connecting services and local streets and important roads are clogged with connecting services trying to bring passengers in and out of the stations. Safety outside and near the stations is questionable either outside of peak times or due to heavy traffic during peak times. There is a non-existent services between many of the travel hubs, or, at best, a slow service.

* Failure to deal with so-called low patronage. In the report, supposedly only 177,000 passengers use the services 5 days a week. Are we supposed to believe this when you can go onto any line during peak hour and realise how crowded trains are and how difficult it is for Cityrail to deal with this peak?

* Failure to establish wider regional services. Quick service between Sydney, it's regional cities and between regional cities is poor or slow. Cityrail should be working hand in hand with government to establish regional services also. This would increase passengers across a wider network and encourage use of public transport. I don't see communication of any sort of how Cityrail is trying to establish effective processes to build services (and revenue) via expanding its network.

These are just some of the major points again increasing ticket prices independently of deliverables. Fare price rises and structure change (resulting in some rises) should only be considered in conjunction with other changes in hand. For example, moving to distant based fares should, initially result in equivalent or slightly lower fares to those currently. Why? After effective implementation of certain goals, for example electronic tickets, prices should be adjusted fairly, after improvements can be measured.

The essence of the IPART report, put simply, is trying establish a case for fare increases so that 30% of costs are covered by ticket revenue. Fare increase are not independent of appropriate service levels or improvements, all of which should be measurable and noticeable to the everyday passenger.