

FROM COMMUTER COUNCIL TO IPART RE RAIL FARE ENQUIRY BY IPART

The Commuter Council thanks IPART for the opportunity to make a submission in behalf of Commuters.

After a period of considerable discontent by Commuters, firstly local commuter associations were formed from many areas throughout the greater Sydney areas in the late sixties followed by a central Commuter Council in the early seventies. One of the main issues was the excessive fare levels in the view of commuters. As a result the Government substantially reduced fare costs in the mid seventies. Since that time however, fares have been gradually increased in excess of general community CPI levels which has partly lead to rail reductions of modal share between rail and the private car.

After considerable debate in the Commuter Council, it has generally been agreed that the commuter train service provided in the Newcastle, Sydney Wollongong areas is inadequate, and in fact has gradually been getting worse.

Commuter require services that are safe, fast, frequent, comfortable and reliable. In general Commuters believe that services are too slow, infrequent and uncomfortable.

Furthermore, if the longer term objectives of NSW and public rail transport are to be considered and properly attended, then the following changes are essential.

1. The cost per passenger kilometre carried has to be reduced
2. The time taken per passenger kilometre has to be reduced substantially.
3. The manpower required per passenger kilometre carried has to be reduced.
4. The fuel required per passenger kilometre carried [particularly fossil fuels] has to be reduced.
5. The interval between services has to be reduced.
6. The cost to produce, sell, and enforce tickets per commuter has to be reduced substantially.

It is the considered opinion of this council that fares should not be increased to fund projected improvements, mainly because the projected improvements never seem to eventuate.

Any fare increases to pay for improvements should not be levied until the improvements have been actually introduced.

Fare increases should not be increased over and above improvements provided. For example, it would be acceptable to double fares if commuter trip duration was halved or it would be acceptable to increase fares by 10% if trip duration was reduced by 10%.

The Commuter Council strongly supports the existing discounts provided by weekly and periodical tickets, particularly for longer distance commuters. Any changes in this area would lead to some . commuters beng unable to afford to travel to work, as it

should be kept in mind that commuters from outer areas often comprise single breadwinner families.

The council believes that this is a most complex subject, and acknowledges that this submission does not deal in depth with the subject, but until adequate support staff are provided, it will be difficult to improve this standard.

Regards,

Kevin Parish OAM
CHAIR