

Commuter Council 6 <commuters@bigpond.com>
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The Illawarra Commuter Association discussed this issue at our March meeting, and subsequently developed this Submission.

ICA are referring to South Coast Line services where talk in geographic context.

Please find ICA objections, comments and suggestions below.

The Illawarra Commuter Association considers

- Increasing patronage will increase revenue
- The South Cost Line has a number service quality issues:
 - signal failures (consecutive Mondays around Penshurst earlier this year),
 - track eqpt failures,
 - standing to Helensburgh several times
 - snap withdrawal of V-set carriages due to largely foreseeable galvanic/wet area corrosion.

Unsuitable suburban carriages continue to be used

- The 2006 t/t reduces service quality in a number of aspects:
 - Slower than 36 years ago!
 - exacerbates the crawl from Cooks River into the city
 - Doesn't address extra South Coast patronage - peak and off-peak
- (Due to fuel prices and economic growth -NOT CityRail performance)

- Weekend trains are even slower and shifted, despite 8.58 am Sat train
Standing for 7 mins at Thirroul already, with further standing time at Wollongong a little later.

- Journey times don't reflect eased permanent and temporary speed restrictions, and changes to reduce congestion, eg around Mortdale.
- Protracted runs mean less productive use of crew and trains.
- The current ISC t/t has ample padding - 5 minutes has been made up between Sutherland and Thirroul on limited stop train.
- The "Waterfall Wander" (circuitous and slow routing through multiple points for down trains), has to become a rare event if RailCorp's customer focus is to be credible

Having 6.07 down SCL train cancelled on 9-3-06, and next service standing room only and ten minutes late, demonstrates "off-peak" evening and weekend performance should be measured and reported.

IPART may wish to consider what are "peak" periods, and where - The South Coast, the weekday peak is between 6-8 am.

While new Outer Suburban Cars are pending, it is yet to be seen if, and how much, better they are than the G-sets.

The Endeavour cars are getting tatty, and should have a half-life interior and mechanical refit (services should be maintained by redeploying freed Rail Motors from the Hunter).

- Are the number of complaints falling because people see no point complaining? Or has the changed phone menu put people off.

- "service" includes Frequency, Speed, Location, comfort and reliability elements. Current On Time Running focus has become counter-productive in our opinion.

- The Pensioner Excursion Ticket fare should also increase.

- Slashing the off-peak discount is NOT supported. Only minor change (eg one-off 5%) should be permitted. We note with Melbourne's "Sunday Saver Metcard, you can travel all day on Sundays across Zones 1, 2 and 3 for only \$2.50." (Metlink website) This is ~ 20% of the \$12.60 for a Daily 3 zone ticket.

- Another comparator is Barcelona's 5-day unlimited ticket for 20 Euro, + 3 Euro Postage when bought on-line. This is ~AUD

We believe RailCorp has previously announced initiatives outstanding, which should have substantial progress for Rail Corp to be rewarded with significant fare rise. These include:

- Progress on more direct alignment between Thirroul and Waterfall to reduce journey times and address single-track Coalcliff tunnel bottleneck.

- CityRail claim safety is a factor in the protracted journey times. What is the passenger Killed and seriously injured rate trend? And what is the estimated improvement CityRail is basing its decision on?

Why are Mondays worse? - 55 mins late on one day is NOT because of the timetable!

What is CityRail doing to reduce train queuing back to Tempe from the Eastern Suburbs Railway entrance at Erskineville Junction?

Comfort? Suburban Tangaras unsuitable for long distance use.

Passenger safety and dwell times can be improved by having platforms level and close to train thresholds; and by minimising passenger walk distances to exit platforms.

Longer journey times exacerbate rolling stock and crew shortages

OTR focus counter-productive - journey time, comfort, speed, information, service resilience are all other elements of service to be met.

Master Fare schedule used.

IPART should note extra 90,000 commuters CityRail's Media Release of 3 March refers to. If \$32 Red Travelpass is representative, this represents \$2,880,000 per week, or about \$144,000,000 per annum - on a 'back of envelope' estimation.

Some service comparisons should be made with recognised "good" systems - especially from non-English speaking countries.

p5 table: how much difference in OTR is due to redefining "late"?

- p15 I note the Old World services have substantial "non-suburban" rail services ie CityRail/Countrylink vs RATP/SNCF

- p31 extended station dwell times can also reduce safety, with people getting off for a smoke and people running for trains, and travelling by other modes. On the South Coast we already have a well-padded timetable, so extra quarter hour travel time, plus extra time away as have to catch earlier or later train for same time at destination, is unjustified.

-- are p20, p15, p41~tables "cherry-picking"~ comparisons? Are constant purchasing power exchange rates used (eg Big Mac index)?

- p29 "Customer Focus Strategic Plan" produced zero results when both CityRail and RailCorp websites searched. Not much "Customer Focus" when not available.

~this plan appears to omit, and ~should include IMHO,~ journey time standards (eg mean 60 kmh for limited stop Interurban trains), passenger comfort spatial and thermal comfort standards, and require platforms with fixed track to be level (in absolute and relative senses) and close to train thresholds.

- p33 I note there is no reference to slower services in the safety section. High Speed trains (TGV, AGV, Eurostar, KTX, Shinkansen, Acela, ICE etc) all have enviable safety records.

-p34 when and where will benchmarks be published?

- p41 off-peak fare discount is to encourage return travel, sell tickets from morning shift. Increasing patronage should be the major driver of revenue growth

- p43 "Master Fare" schedules should be used to determine price rises delivery and satisfy the 20 cent or \$1 minimum change thresholds.

~prefer to be 10 mins late 10% of the time, not 10 mins later 100% of the time.