



Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal  
Transport  
PO Box Q290  
QVB Post Office NSW 1230

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a regular train commuter on the Western Line. I would like to make a submission regarding CityRail's request to have fares reviewed and increased.

Key points in CityRail's submission to IPART is that the service has improved in safety, cleanliness, on-time running, and that there has been an increase in train patronage.

Since the new timetables were introduced late last year, a train can now arrive 5 minutes after the published arrival time, before it is classified as late, which was changed from the 3 minutes 59 seconds in place prior to July 2005.

One of the key points in CityRail's submission was that their on-time running had improved. CityRail's benchmark for on-time running is 92%, however figures on their website state that year-to-date, the Western Line's on-time running is at 83.8% up to 31 January 2006 (please refer to enclosed printouts).

I regularly catch the 7.31am train from Mt Druitt (mainly due to the 7.27am train being too crowded to get on), which is supposed to arrive at Wynyard station at 8.29am as published by CityRail. When the new timetable was implemented, my train regularly arrived at this time for the first month or two, however, it has since been arriving regularly at about 8.34am. Although it is late, it has been arriving within the 5 minute period so is therefore not classified as late.

This train has been further affected this week, which has lead me to submit this letter regarding the proposed fare increase. On Monday 6 March, my train was delayed by almost 20 minutes. On CityRail's website, the on-time running for this day in the AM peak was 85.6%. While I understand that there was a passenger at Westmead requiring medical treatment, and understand that delays were unavoidable, there was no mention of the incident from the driver or the guard that delays will be experienced and it was only by checking the CityRail website when I got to work that I discovered that this was the problem.

On my train home on 7 March, I was again delayed due at Strathfield station for almost 10 minutes as we waited for our driver to rejoin our train, after he/she had to leave to make an incident report. Again, we were not told of why we were waiting at Strathfield until a minute before our driver rejoined our train.

Today, however, is why I am writing this letter. Upon arriving at Mt Druitt station, there was an announcement that there was a signal problem at Penrith and that the trains were running late. Station staff advised all commuters that they should catch the first city service that arrived, but declined to advise when we could expect that train to arrive. At nearly 7.40am a city bound train arrived and the majority of commuters waiting on the platform boarded the train, which was a limited stops train stopping at most stations between Mt Druitt and Central. By Blacktown station the train was packed with people which prevented many people on stops after Blacktown from getting on the train.

Because of this signal problem, I arrived 30 minutes after I was supposed to and was subsequently later for work. The train trip was marred by commuter anger which caused some passengers to vent their anger with pushing, shoving and arguments, as other passengers tried to either push their way off the train or tried to board it. This against the backdrop of passengers calling colleagues and bosses apologising for being late and promising to be at their respective work places as soon as they could.

According to a CityRail press release, there are an extra 90,000 more people using the CityRail network which has led to overcrowding on many trains, especially those within the peak period.

Overall, we have more people using a service that is running fewer train services, which has led to overcrowding on trains. The system is also still experiencing delays although trains have longer to reach a station before they are classified as late.

Before CityRail qualifies for a fare increase, I believe that they should have to meet their on-time running benchmark for a period of time (eg 60 consecutive days). A fare increase should not be awarded until they have met this benchmark with not more than 5 or 10 days with the 60 day period falling below this benchmark. If they can meet these levels then I would be happy to pay more.

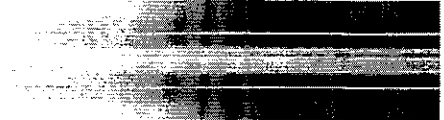
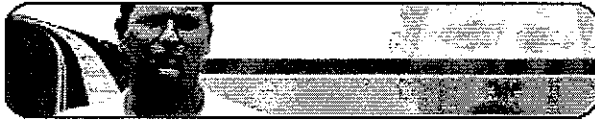
I also believe that to truly determine if on-time running has been improved, then the current times need to be measured by the 3 minutes 59 seconds that was in place before July 2005. Only by measuring the running times against this benchmark will we know how much the timetable has improved things. After all, the figures are improved somewhat by allowing trains an extra minute to arrive at their destination. Using this new benchmark doesn't necessarily prove that the system is any better.

I also believe that there needs to be more communication to those passengers who are already on trains. While passengers waiting on train platforms have the ability to know why a train is delayed, if a delay occurs while you are on a train, you rarely know what is happening. Perhaps it should be a standard that passengers are advised of delays longer than a minute, as it can be very frustrating to be sitting on a stopped train without any communication.

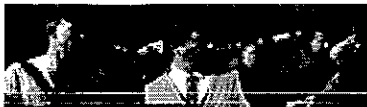
I also wonder if a survey can be distributed/displayed on a website for the majority of train users to complete and not just the 1000 or so commuters who were asked to participate in the last one that was conducted.

I hope this helps in your deliberation on whether fares should be increased. At the end of the day, all I want is to arrive at my destination at the time it says the majority of the time. Not for it to be a rarity as it is at the moment.

Kind regards



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### On-time running

Get more detailed on-time running and service reliability information [» more](#)

### More performance information

CityRail is committed to safe, secure, clean and reliable movement for our customers. Get more information about our performance in these areas. [» more](#)

## On-Time Running

Safe and reliable train services are important to everyone. CityRail has introduced a number of safety improvements over the past 12-18 months, resulting in a safer network. CityRail introduced a new timetable on 4 September 2005 to reflect the safer operating environment and improve on-time running.

The current performance targets are for CityRail to operate 99% of peak timetabled services, and to have at least 92% of those peak services arrive within the current on-time running benchmark.

CityRail records on-time running to a benchmark of five minutes for suburban services and six minutes for intercity services. This benchmark follows the findings of the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator (ITSRR) that CityRail had a different benchmark from most other interstate and international passenger rail systems, bringing CityRail in line with national and international practice.

CityRail works hard to meet its on-time running goals, however the performance of our trains can be affected by a number of factors. The NSW rail network is one of the world's most complex and the task of moving close to 1 million passengers each day presents a real challenge. Trains may run late or be cancelled because of:

- Train problems
- Signal, track, overhead wiring and points problems
- Vandalism
- Overcrowding in the centre carriages
- Passenger or train crew illness
- Fatalities
- Delays caused by slow-boarding passengers
- Severe weather conditions

Find out more about [what affects our performance](#) and discover how [you can help to keep our trains running on time](#).

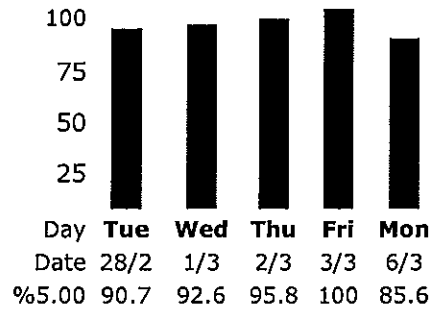
Sometimes our on-time running performance is affected by incidents beyond the control of CityRail, for example, storms, police operations, fatalities and bushfires. CityRail is focused on improving communications to our customers in these circumstances.

Timetable changes such as skipping stops may be made as a result of a delay to a service. These decisions are made to minimise the impact of the delay on following services and the majority of our customers. Most of these changes are reflected in the skipped stop statistic and this indicator needs to be viewed in conjunction with the on-time statistic. This is because passengers may experience a service skipping their stop yet see the performance for their line as 100%.

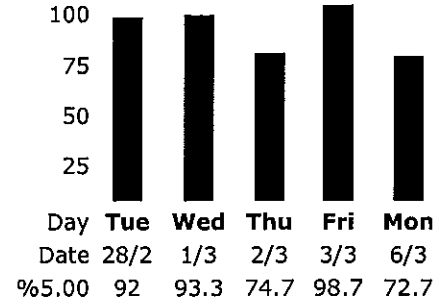
The graphs below track our on-time running in the suburban and intercity peaks for the last five business days. [More detailed on-time running information](#) is available on this website.

**On-time running**

**Suburban AM Peak**

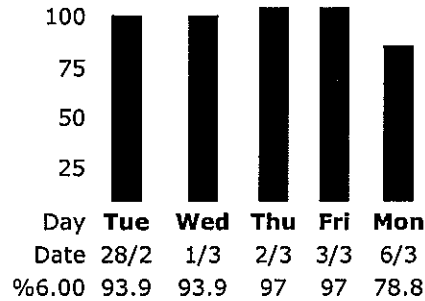


**Suburban PM Peak**

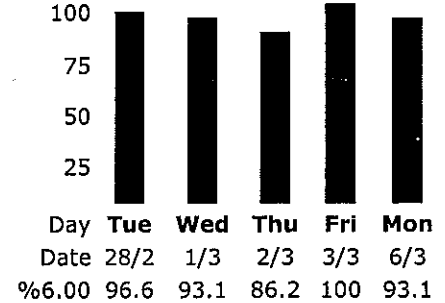


■ Arriving within 5 minutes

**Intercity AM Peak**



**Intercity PM Peak**



■ Arriving within 6 minutes

**Incidents under investigation (for causing 10 or more delays)**

**06 March 2006**

**AM**

- A person requiring medical attention at Westmead caused delays to 11 trains.
- An alarm activated at Westmead caused delays to 11 trains.

**PM**

- Essential track equipment repairs at North Sydney caused delays to 18 trains.

**03 March 2006**

No incidents caused 10 or more delays.

**02 March 2006**

**PM**

- An operational problem at North Sydney caused delays to 13 trains.

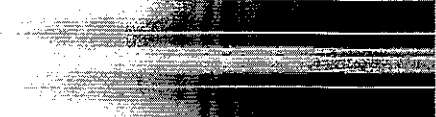
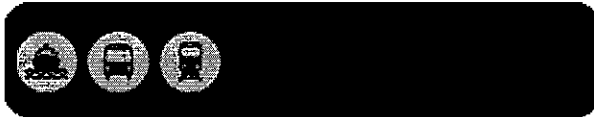
**01 March 2006**

No incidents caused 10 or more delays.

**28 February 2006**

No incidents caused 10 or more delays.

- [Click here for more detailed on-time running information](#)
- [Click here for other performance information](#)



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## On-Time Running and Service Reliability

The process for collecting on-time running data is a manual one, and as such has limitations. CityRail is undertaking a program to introduce electronic recording of on-time running to improve accuracy.

Click on **(i)** for definition of this measure

Click on underlined links for further information

	20/2 - 24/2 Week	January 2006 Month	July 2005- June 2006 YTD as at 31/01/2006
<b>(i) Peak On-Time Running</b>			
<b>(i) CityRail</b> [arriving at destination within 5min (after July '05), 3min 59sec (before July '05) of timetable]			
<u>Total CityRail</u>	<b>90.8%</b>	<b>93.3%</b>	<b>87.3%</b>
<b>(i) - Total adjusted for force majeure</b>		<b>93.3%</b>	<b>87.3%</b>
<b>CityRail</b> [arriving at destination within 10min of timetable]			
<u>Total CityRail</u>	<b>96.1%</b>	<b>97.7%</b>	<b>95.4%</b>
<b>(i) Suburban</b> [arriving at destination within 5min (after July '05), 3min 59sec (before July '05) of timetable]			
<u>Total Suburban</u>	<b>90.4%</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>87.2%</b>
<b>(i) - Total adjusted for force majeure</b>		<b>93.4%</b>	<b>87.2%</b>
<u>Eastern Suburbs Line</u>	81.9%	95.1%	89.2%
<u>Illawarra Line</u>	85.6%	93.0%	89.0%
<u>Bankstown Line</u>	93.8%	91.3%	86.9%
<u>Inner West Line</u>	94.0%	94.0%	88.2%
<u>Airport Line</u>	94.2%	92.5%	90.2%
<u>East Hills Line</u>	88.9%	90.0%	83.1%
<u>South Line</u>	93.1%	93.2%	85.2%
<u>North Shore Line</u>	94.8%	96.7%	88.4%
<u>Western Line</u>	92.6%	92.0%	83.8%
<u>Northern Line</u>	89.6%	92.0%	84.0%
<b>(i) Intercity</b> [arriving at destination within 6min (5min 59sec before July '05) of timetable]			
<u>Total Intercity</u>	<b>93.2%</b>	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>88.2%</b>
<b>(i) - Total adjusted for force majeure</b>		<b>92.7%</b>	<b>88.2%</b>
<u>South Coast Line</u>	83.3%	95.6%	90.4%
<b>(i) Southern Highlands Line</b>	94.3%	91.4%	91.5%
<u>Blue Mountains Line</u>	96.3%	91.6%	87.4%
<u>Newcastle &amp; Central Coast Line</u>	97.9%	91.4%	87.4%