

20/03/2006 05:05 PM

Dear Sir or Madam,

Submission re - CityRail Fare Review

I wish to complain about the proposal to increase Cityrail Fare prices. I am an infrequent train commuter from the Central Coast to Parramatta - infrequent, because I find the service inconvenient, expensive and unreliable. Only two weeks ago a major morning peak train was "just cancelled", on a day that saw many extra children travelling on those trains because of a young leaders convention at Homebush - so not only did commuters have to squish two trains worth of regular commuters onto one train, but there were many extra "bods" on the trains - hence a large majority of commuters stood from Gosford to the city - not good enough. I know you cannot foresee some problems - but Monday morning peak trains should not be trifled with - a premium cost should provide a premium service.

Reducing the discount for travelling off-peak is going to reduce the incentive or perceived value for travelling outside peak times. This may result in more non-commuters travelling at peak times, reducing seating, reducing comfort for already weary commuters, in turn this will mean the off peak trains will be seen to be underutilised, leading to further cuts of service because less travellers are using those trains. It also makes driving the car a whole lot more attractive - shouldn't you be trying to have the opposite affect? Start making the service attractive to consumers (keep costs down and make them reasonable), start making the service more convenient for consumers (more trains available), and start making the service more reliable (provide well serviced and efficient trains). The submission also makes comparisons between various modes of transport, trying to highlight that cars are an expensive options - please take into account that if a car is carrying more than just the driver, then using the car does become a more attractive option than public transport. Again any price rise is going to make people think twice before using public transport, where a private car may be an alternative.

The submission states that the train service only provides transport for 5% of the total passenger market in Sydney. 5% - I can only imagine that that is not where Cityrail wishes to be in terms of capturing a passenger market. Any price increase, especially the large one intended for off peak travel, is only going to further reduce that percentage. A scheme is needed to encourage people back onto the trains - reduced cost, increased efficiency, safety and reliability - all good things which are not going to happen if this price increase is allowed.

Please think long and hard before agreeing to the proposal for the large increase in off peak prices. When more "bums on seats" is what is required, surely this is not the way.

Regards

Catherine Richards