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Submission to increase fares

Hi

I have been travelling City Rail since I arriving in 1989. In that time, the service has declined and the trains have stayed the same. City Rail has only just moved past the old red rattlers in my eyes.

I used to travel from Bondi to Chatswood; Edgecliff to Martin Place; Bondi to Wynyard; Edgecliff to Miranda, Blue Mountains, etc. As backpacker, I took jobs in every suburb and travelled up to 2 hours to get to places such as the Macquarie Centre from Bondi. Currently, I travel return from Concord West to Central and sometimes to Parramatta. I rarely get an air conditioned train. I rarely get a seat. I have left at various times from 7am to 10am. I have returned from 2.30pm-11pm.

In the last 3 years, I have been unfortunate enough to have a knee operation, sprain one ankle and break the other ankle. I have had to climb 300 stairs to and from work going between Concord West and Redfern. I can't believe that Concord West which is a station frequently used to access the Olympic Park still does not have a lift. Redfern should have had a lift years ago. London has had better access since commencement.

Disabled people should be able to access rail services. There is a lady who travels into the city from Concord West on her scooter. I have no idea how she returns to Concord West as there is no ground level access for the return journey. I can only assume that she must pass Concord West to go to West Ryde. Get out, go up in the lift, go down in the lift on the other side of the platform to catch the train going back to Concord West. As there are no staff on the platform, I assume that she probably has to use her mobile to get guards to be prepared for her arrival.

Redfern station is dangerous for passenger and the staff that work there. I saw station attendants allow drunken indigenous people carrying bottles in brown bags to jump the barrier in front of me. When I questioned the attendant, he said the transit officers would pick them up. The non-payers went to same platform as myself. I spoke with the attendant there, I told him about the non-payers. He told me that staff were bashed daily at Redfern station so everyone was afraid to approach them. City Rail should hire security to protect their staff and passengers. Staff should be provided with radios to alert other staff to potential problems. This is an obvious OH&S issue. Of course, there were never any transit officers on my train.

In fact, if we didn't have the Olympics, we would have never gotten lifts in Central, Town Hall, etc. Forget about anyone offering me a seat though I have asked on occasion. Why is it acceptable to pack people in like sardines on trains? If it is raining, put on another train. It has rained over the last 16 years. I can't believe that there is no contingency planning.

City Rail could offer some kind of incentive to those who forgo getting on a late train. That might ease the load.

My return journey home to Concord West from Redfern usually was with incident as this was before the electronic boards were put in place. Staff frequently pulled down the wrong sign and I would end up in Lidcombe or West Ryde and wait forever to get back. Luckily, I didn't get hassled by any ticket inspectors.

When the screens break down at Central station, it is chaos. Recently and frequently, at least 20 of us ended up at West Ryde due to an incorrect announcement. We tried to talk to the train guard, who was abusive and talked to the station master. Then we talked to the station master who didn't care.

Staff are ill equipped to deliver a minimum level of customer service. Please, thank you and I am sorry would go along way to stop the abuse that I know they cop from disgruntled passengers. In the past, I have lodged complaints with 131500, filled out the paperwork and never received a response. What is the point of lodging feedback? City Rail staff should be trained to put the customer first instead of pushing their way into the lifts or going the wrong way in the entrance or exit tunnels to the platforms.

All staff need training on how to speak into a microphone so that they can be understood instead of holding it so close to their mouths that the speech is muffled. I have lived here for 16 years and still find it impossible to understand the announcements which I assume are important.

Crowd control is an issue on the platforms at Central. You are supposed to stand behind the yellow line. Unfortunately, access to the platform in some areas is so narrow that when exiting the lift, I have to cross the yellow line so that I can get past waiting passengers to access the other end of the platform.

City Rail also needs to educate and inform their customers about courtesy to improve crowd control. For example, have ads on tv to show people to stand clear of the doors. Educate students to pick up their bags and offer their seats. I can't tell you how many times I have tripped on school bags which has further irritated my sore knees and ankles. I can't tell you how many times I have seen mums with strollers standing with kids and groceries while men sit with their legs open and their laptops get a seat. Disabilities are not always evident.

Getting off a train in peak hour at Town Hall is a nightmare. You almost have to stage dive to get off the train as people are so worried about missing the train. Guards should not blow the whistle upon arrival saying, "stand clear the doors are closing", when no one has even got off the train. Schedule the train times to cope with exiting and entering the carriages. I would be happy to have a 5-10 minute longer journey with some courtesy.

Recently, I visited LA and Chicago. I didn't pay more than \$3 return for a daily ticket. I got a seat in each direction. I admit the buses were standing room only.

I think that is up to the State Government to use our tax money to improve services, update trains with air conditioning, add more carriages, improve infrastructure and train staff. Don't charge the users who have never received a complete service.

Should you wish to discuss further, please call me on 02 9372 7624. Thank you.

Kind regards, Colette McCracken