

Graeme Kirkwood
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To IPART

RE:CITYRAIL submission against a Fare increase

I am writing to object to the submission by CityRail for an increase in fares.

I live in the north of Wollongong and for the last 13 years have been travelling regularly in CityRail trains, to Hurstville and Sydney city during this time.

CityRail may be finally doing or attempting to make some changes to the service, however, this was only after the system fell in a heap completely.

Commuters from the South Coast were promised in 1998 an improved service and a faster service as a minimum by 2010. This promise kept the government through 3 election campaigns until a feasibility study was undertaken and the original "guess" was found to be much greater than the original suggestion of cost.

Now the CityRail system fell over and we struggled to have any trains run on time. We now face

Longer trip when the new timetable is introduced in May 2006.

Reduced services in the morning and afternoon peak periods. Services that are used by commuters will become services for the commuters on the Illawarra line instead. Examples are 6:25am from Thirroul will become 6:28am and the stopping pattern becomes a suburban style from Helensburgh, where it will wait for 17 minutes, to allow the next Express to pass through and we are supposed to change, at least this was the suggestion by CityRail when the draft timetable was issued in November 2005. The same applies to the 6:59am from Port Kembla stopping for 17 minutes at Helensburgh to allow another express to pass it.

The 6:25 service allowed me to travel from Thirroul to Town Hall without changing trains and this was only a few minutes longer than the earlier express.

In the afternoon the 4:16 pm and the 4:46pm train from Martin Place disappear from the South Coast Service to become Cronulla Sutherland services. This is despite the fact that any slack on the service was absorbed already by the travellers to Hurstville, and Sutherland. The current timetable provides about 9 services to Sutherland between 4pm and 5pm, which is at least double the available services to the South Coast.

CityRail on the basis of the reduction of the services does not in my opinion account for the requested price rise or any price rise at this time. I pay \$47 per week or \$16 per day to travel on the roulette system that is provided.

Services are moved from Martin Place at the drop of a hat or whenever there are any problems on the Illawarra line to Bondi Junction. This also is despite the propaganda we were fed last year about the work at Bondi which allow more trains to turnaround, we were not advised that when it was fixed our service would be reduced.

Hopefully the sick passenger at Berowra will be better by 2010 or retired and stop delaying the trains at Sydenham.

Our current service includes the regular use of the inner city carriages which have no toilets and those who use the service are often stuck for the entire trip with no access to a toilet (1 hour and 20 minutes or more). Apart from this they are uncomfortable seating with fixed backs that are lower than the intercity Tangara sets. The reason for the use of the 'dodgy' carriages is because they have discovered the rusting carriages and have removed them from service. CityRail still runs the intercity carriages on the 3:40 to Blacktown each day, which is a much shorter journey than the trip to Wollongong.

Again the price increase should be rejected because of the poor service for travelers on the South Coast.

131500 – Just last week where there had been a problem on the line and I checked the web site **at 5 to 4:00** and it said in the afternoon that delays may still occur, so I contacted 131500 and was told the trains were all ok so I went to Martin Place at 4pm to find that the 4:16pm train was cancelled completely and the staff at the station had known this for 45 minutes.

Last year I sent a written complaint the Minister and I had to contact the office again 10 weeks later to try to get a response, only to get a call as I was boarding a train and told the ministers staffer that it would be better to call back as I would lose the signal through the tunnels and have not had any further contact since. Communications are well at City Rail.

I note also on page 16 of the CityRail submission at 2.1 "*as our performance improves, so does customer satisfaction*" .. yet the survey says of the 11 people out of 1060 people (from South Coast) only

So in closing I do not believe that the CityRail fares should be increased at this time, why can't they cancel the PPP, mentioned on page 6 of their submission, if it is anything like the tunnel fiasco the government could probably save more than enough to replace the fare increase.

If the increase, regardless of the level, is approved for the South Coast line it will be a reward to CityRail for providing less trains, that are more crowded, morning and afternoon, uncomfortable, unsuitable carriages for the trip, with a vague further promise of new carriages, sometime. A trip that will become almost as slow as the pre-Electrification trip when I first traveled back in **1982!**

Thank you for your time
Graeme Kirkwood