

Grant Robinson

31-Mar-2006

## Submission to IPART enquiry—proposed CityRail fare increases

Dear Sir/Madam,

I do not object to the proposed basic fare increases. They are in keeping with consumer price movements.

This is not to say that I consider CityRail services good. The 2005 timetable has led to a reduced frequency of services, slower services which are still often late, but the worst impact is increased crowding. Just last night (Thursday 30 March), the Fish—17:24 from Central—left about 5 minutes late and was 25 minutes late to Springwood. There were insufficient seats to Emu Plains, yet the service was largely empty beyond Springwood. In general the new timetable has made no difference to reliability of the services I regularly catch between Springwood and Parramatta.

Morning services are excellent but evening services are 5 or more minutes late 20% of the time. The new interchange at Parramatta is a major disaster. If two trains arrive at once, ticket machines become a major bottleneck. Walking routes to the south east of the station are significantly longer. The need to walk through congested bus waiting areas to reach the station makes station access far more difficult than prior to the renovations.

The combined effect of the 2005 timetable and new interchange has increased my time away from home by **45 minutes per day**. Why should I have to pay more than the CPI increase for that privilege?

I consider that the proposed off peak fare increases are unacceptable. The current situation is:

- scheduled services are several minutes slower with the 2005 timetable
- services which operate express in the mountains have been all but eliminated
- services are less frequent—with some three Mountains services curtailed in the 2005 timetable
- regular interruption of weekend services. If you turn up to catch a train and discover track work is scheduled, journeys from Springwood to the city often take 60 minutes more than scheduled. On days of track work, train services regularly run 30 minutes later than advertised in the timetable. The net result is that weekend travel by rail is totally unreliable.
- crowding is exacerbated in the 2005 timetable through less suburban services to Penrith accompanied by relatively empty trains run beyond Springwood in the peak hours. Yet off-peak patronage during the day remains high on Mountains services.

With these unreliable factors more and more people do not see off-peak rail as a viable form of transport.

For these reasons I argue that the increase in off peak fares should be limited to the increase applying to normal single and periodical fares.