

**John Vergara**  
30/03/2006

Att. Transport  
IPART  
Level 2, 44 Market Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

## **CITYRAIL FARE REVIEW**

To whom it may concern,

In reply to the call for submission on the review of fare increases, I submit to you the following. I do not agree with the fare increase. I have viewed Cityrail's proposal and fail to see a valid and accurate reason to justify an increase.

Cityrail cite improvements to service as one of the reason to justify the proposed increase. As a commuter for over 12 years, I have only seen deterioration in the service, not an improvement.

The last timetable change increased my journey by 15 minutes in the evening and 5 minutes in the morning. Also, it should be noted that the train stops at Gosford station for approximately 7 minutes, while the passengers just sit there wishing they could get home to their families.

The trains are more crowded. When you travel for over an hour and a half (actually with the new timetable it's now an hour and fifty minutes) you expect to get a sit. This is not the case. Normally you get to stand in a crowded train, some times for a quarter of the journey or on the odd occasion even longer. When you get a sit, you notice that the sit you pay \$52.00 a week is filthy. Granted that late in the day, after the train has been used it does get dirty. But at 6.00 am on a Monday you would expect a train to have been cleaned over the weekend. You normally have to search for a clean sit. Dry cleaning is expensive. I have even had the indignity of sitting on a sit where some one had soiled themselves. My complaint to the Minister's office had not impact and my dry cleaning bill was not reimbursed. I did, however, receive 3 day passes from Cityrail. Of course this is beyond the usual newspapers, cans of drink, food, chewing gum and other rubbish, which the "phantom" cleaners miss.

It is not easy to see how Cityrail can say that the trains are running on time. Often, when trains are running late, they are cancelled, which as I understand does not register as late. Tell that to the people who are inconvenienced.

There certainly is more security on the trains, although not always there. And when they are on, their manners are below par. Sometimes it's more like harassment.

One other point being claimed by Cityrail is the need of this increase for improving the service. My argument is – how come this hasn't been done before? Why should we believe that this time is different? Every time we get a fare increase, we are told the service will improve. I have seen no signs of improvement since I started commuting. I have given up complaining as no one on the complaints line seems interested in listening. Sometimes they don't even provide an incident number. They are very quick at trying to finish your call.

Staff at the station often don't know if the trains are coming or not (or when), they often make wrong announcements and the computer display boards, well trains often go from being 10 min away to 3 min then 6min in a matter of seconds. Connecting trains to Newcastle, at Hornsby station, don't wait for passengers to alight from trains from the North shore line. Often the Newcastle train leaves as the doors open on the North shore train.

City rail also argue that our fares are below that of world standards. Perhaps if they improve the service, cut running times, provide clean trains, then it would seem reasonable to increase the fares. May be if you are travelling around the CBD and you can jump on any train that comes along, but when your journey takes over an hour, then you have to provide a reliable service.

As you can see, I cannot see the proposed fare increase as fair and reasonable. The rail service has continued to deteriorate since the last fare increase. Enough is enough. No more increases until there is an improvement in the quality provided, at present we are not getting value for our money.

Regards

John Vergara