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22/03/2006

Attached is my submission regarding proposed fare increases by RailCorp.

May I point out that your website does not provide information on *how* to lodge submissions, *where* to lodge them, or who to contact (or if it's there it's well hidden). I had to call the department and at 4:30 was told most people had gone home.

I was assisted by a lady whose name I didn't catch, and she gave me the email address.

This is something that should be addressed as a matter of urgency, given the short time allowed for submissions to be lodged. It is highly probable that many people who would like to put in a submission will not be able to do so.

Kind regards

## **1.1 Response to RailCorp's key arguments for rail fare increases**

The key arguments for the proposed fare increase and changes to the off-peak fare structure are as follows:

- RailCorp has to date absorbed the cost of fares not increasing in line with inflation since **the last review due to past poor performance**, which has increased the burden on NSW taxpayers who do not access the rail system;

RailCorp fails to take into account the documented and significant increase in patronage, with commensurate increase in revenue.

RailCorp also fails to make mention, in its submission to IPART, its public statements that it is acceptable for trains to run at 135% capacity. Whilst this may be acceptable to RailCorp, it is unacceptable to commuters. But it does give RailCorp a 35% increase in revenue, on top of the added revenue of increase patronage.

It also fails to adequately address the fact that its last review was due to poor performance which in no way has improved but rather worsened.

Whilst it is true that rail fares have not kept up with inflation, this does not equate to reduced revenue, as implied by RailCorp's claim.

This line of argument is invalid. The problem is past and present poor performance.

- RailCorp has put in place a KPI measurement framework to drive future efficiency gains and, consistent with the Parry Report recommendation, should be granted an increase in fares to compensate for movements in the CPI index;

Whilst it may - or may not - be true that 'RailCorp has put in place a KPI measurement framework to drive future efficiency gains', this does not in fact equate to present efficiency gains.

What, if any, are these? This does not constitute a valid claim for a fare increase.

- RailCorp's cost base has increased at a faster rate than the CPI (our input costs include items not measured in the CPI, such as steel and labour, which have experienced stronger price growth than the CPI);

As already stated, RailCorp fails to take into account the documented and significant increase in patronage, with commensurate increase in revenue.

This line of argument is invalid. RailCorp's problem is not a decrease in revenue, but mismanagement in its use of funds. More funds will not be better managed, on the contrary, we can safely expect grater mismanagement to result from increased revenue.

- RailCorp has achieved significant improvements in service quality (including safety, security, cleaning, on-time running, cancellation and skipped stop improvements) and is committed to further improvements; and

There is no basis for any claim of 'significant improvements in service quality'. I cannot comment on safety or security since I do not have relevant crime figures. However, as a daily train commuter I can comment on the following:

- Cleaning - train carriages are increasingly dirty. Rubbish, bottles, left-over food, etc. are to be found on most trains, and railway stations are increasingly filthy. Whilst I acknowledge that there are maintenance staff who go through trains collecting rubbish, this is totally inadequate.

Furthermore, I have observed a direct correlation between the disappearance of rubbish bins from stations and the increase of rubbish at both stations and trains. It is not true that a lack of rubbish bins makes stations safer from, say, bombs. This is rubbish (excuse the pun). Would-be terrorists do not need rubbish bins to hide bombs in, they can operate with perfect success without bins. If this is any part of the 'improvement to safety' referred to above, the claim is invalid.

The removal of rubbish bins from stations may well save some funds in cleaning, but ultimately this is overtaken by an increase in rubbish everywhere else. Personally I do not discard rubbish on either trains or stations, but it is often extremely inconvenient, not to mention irritating, to have to cart rubbish from the city to my kitchen. Many people cannot be bothered to do this and the result is filthy trains.

RailCorp's claim of cleaner trains is false.

- On-time running - RailCorp's claim of 'on-time running' is only made on the basis of redefining the meaning of on-time. The dictionary definition of *on time* means "According to schedule; punctual or punctually". The dictionary definition of *punctual* means "arriving exactly at the time appointed; prompt" "Precise; exact".

This does not correspond with RailCorp's definition, which means anything from about several minutes early to five minutes late. While this may not seem like much, it is definitely not 'on time', and it makes all the difference between catching or missing a train.

This is particularly the case when connections (other trains or buses) are necessary, but even without that I have been known to miss my morning train, or have to run to catch it because it comes early quite regularly (ironically, only to wait as long as it takes to leave on time from Bankstown station: it just waits there longer).

RailCorp's claim of on-time running is false.

- Cancellations and skipped stops - there has been some improvement to cancellations and skipped stops, but not sufficient to warrant an increase in fares. Recent disarray to train timetables in both February and March (21 March for example) bear testimony to this.

RailCorp's claim of improvements to cancellations and skipped stops is only partially true, some of the time. There has been NO CONSISTENT improvement.

- the off-peak fare discount needs to be reviewed to assist in improving cost recovery with respect to off-peak fares.

Off-peak discounted fares are used by pensioners and people who do not work - they are the least able to fund 'cost recovery' in an ill-run and chronically inefficient government department. I find this particular claim not merely outrageous, but offensive.