

Mark Edwards
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Submission regarding proposed City Rail Fair increase

As a regular commuter on the Illawarra line, I provide the following information to be considered when deciding on whether City Rail should be granted the right to increase fares.

Since the new timetable, which was implemented to improve on time running, I have experienced regular delays and cancellation of services.

As a typical example, in this week alone commuters endured the cancellation of the 6:51am train on Monday from Jannali to the city. On Wednesday both the 6:51 and the 6:55 were cancelled and the 7:06 arrived at 7:12am. It is obvious that when this occurs, commuters that would normally travel on 3 trains are crammed onto one. Due to the overcrowding, stops at each station are prolonged as commuters struggle to squeeze past other passengers to alight or board the train. Subsequently the journey is considerably prolonged and the train arrives much later than timetabled.

In the afternoon peak period, crowding is so regular that when trains stop at a station, commuters are afraid that if they get off to assist other passengers alighting, they won't be able to get back on. I have witnessed passengers travelling home on the steel couplings between the carriages on the non air-conditioned silver trains due to overcrowding and hot weather. This is simply dangerous - in fact it is third world standard.

In an era where consumers are supposed to have rights, City Rail is the only enterprise that I know of that treats its customers with utter contempt. When things go wrong, which happens regularly, there are inaudible PA announcements made by people who's English is less than clear, and when interpreted, the announcements tend to be inconsistent in their content when provided by various station staff and guards.

When commuters are caught up in City Rail's regular service disruptions, they have many and varied outcomes, some of which I list below:

- Missed bus connections - therefore running late
- Missed appointments - some Dentists have tried to charge people I know for appointments missed due to Train delays.
- Penalty charges from Child Care centres due to the child being picked up late
- Needing to catch a taxi to make up for lost time due to late train
- Late to recruitment interviews - which makes a great impression for prospective employers

With one exception, City Rail has never offered compensation for failed service delivery in the form of discounted tickets following a disruption.

In my opinion, if the train I intend to catch is cancelled "for today only" or if I am subjected to travelling in a carriage which is packed like a sardine can, then there should be some discount provided for the sub standard service I have been provided. I purchase a ticket in good faith of

the journey I intend to make - only to find that I am expected to suffer sub standard service with no opportunity for a refund or discount for poor service.

What has City Rail done for the commuters to warrant a fare increase? They have reduced services - not increased them. They have increased overcrowding, not reduced it, and they have not improved the on time running from a commuters perspective - they have simply juggled the way they measure it to make it seem better.

City Rail Ticketing remains in the dark ages. There has been no innovation or improvements in this area of their business as we witness in overseas countries and on Sydney buses as in the Metro 10 tickets. I travel to the city only 4 days per week as I have to travel to another work location on the other day. I purchase weekly ticket and am only able to use it on 4 days. Why haven't they delivered ticketing that facilitates a ticket for a specific number of journeys. The working week has changed for everyone - but not for City Rail. Again, until they can demonstrate improvements for commuters in ticketing options - there should be no Fare increases.

In conclusion, I would like to state that the only way City Rail will improve service to their customers is to have more frequent trains. They have had no impact on improving services to commuters since the last fare increase and consequently should not be entitled to increase fares. IPART has the mandate to ensure that they deliver the improvements BEFORE they start charging for them.

Where are City Rail's performance indicators? Where do they publish their performance record for each line for each month? There is no such information available to the public. Until there a metrics published and a performance standard is set and achieved, there should be no fare increases.

If City Rail are granted a fare increase, I can only assume that I have wasted my time or that this document was not read. To alleviate my concern that the request for submissions regarding fare increases is just a Government charade, I would appreciate acknowledgement of receipt of this e-mail.

Thankyou.

Mark Edwards