

For countless reasons, Cityrail should not be allowed to increase fares when services haven't really improved. Any fare rises should be coupled with stringent conditions to improve the system.

Reasons why fares should not be increased:

1. The statistics for on-time performance are unreliable. For example for the month of January, there were no Bankstown Line services, therefore reducing pressure on the entire rail system. Therefore January statistics do not reflect true performance. Also, the statistics for September would have been skewed by initial enthusiasm by staff. Staff commitment has since then declined. I don't have to mention the change in lateness from 4 min to 5 min.

2. The slashing of over 280 train services has allowed Cityrail to cut costs. These savings should also be passed on to customers since they now have less trains. The cost savings made by Cityrail also negates the need for a fare rise just 6 months into the new timetable.

3. Cityrail wants to increase offpeak fares by a drastic percentage. This is unjustified because off peak travel is now much more inconvenient. Off peak trains now arrive every half hour instead of 15 min. Off peak trains now stop at more stations, therefore increasing travel time. Some lines do not have services at all. I refer to the following examples. For a person wanting to travel from Liverpool to Berala, there are no longer any direct services during offpeak. The same situation applies for a person going from Parramatta to Liverpool. These services used to exist under the old timetable. For a person catching a train on the South Line, trains stop at an extra 2-3 stops - Flemington, Croydon, Petersham, and sometimes Burwood. Off peak trains now carry more passengers since there are fewer of them. This has resulted in reduced comfort.

It must also be noted that off peak travel is frequently interrupted by rail maintenance. It is unjustifiable for passengers to be paying increased fares to travel on inefficient buses while rail is being fixed.

4. Despite an increase in passengers, Cityrail has increasingly been using 6 car trains instead of 8 car trains. This has resulted in delays and reduced passenger comfort. Passengers are finding it harder to get a seat. This should not be rewarded. With the new timetable, some peak hour services were also cancelled. eg. 8.54am from Fairfield to City.

5. Passengers are increasingly dissatisfied with Cityrail staff providing information on late and cancelled trains. The practice of "manipulating" train due times should be abolished because it gives a false impression that trains are on time. Passengers should be provided information regarding what actual time the train is due to arrive on the Platforms. They should also be informed of whether the train is on time or late. This information should be provided by the train guards.

If Cityrail wants to increase fares then it should be forced into improving services. Suggestions include:

1. The reinstatement of Cumberland line services. Liverpool and Parramatta are now regarded as major cities under the Metro Strategy. Direct train services should be provided.
2. Reinstatement of Liverpool via Regents Park to the City services during off peak.
3. New standards of passenger information - guards should inform passengers

whether the train is ontime or late on approach to Central station.

4. The removal of 6 car carriages and turning them into 8 car carriages.

5. Improved measures for allowing passenger feedback on the Cityrail website. Cityrail deliberately places the feedback tab at the bottom of the page so that it is obscured.

6. Improved ticketing flexibility - more options for people buying longer term tickets. Children and concession holders currently can not buy Travel Pass Quarterly and Yearly Tickets.

Your Sincerely,

T. Vuong