

**Skills, Training & Resource Service <stars@4cs.org.au>**  
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Review of fares for CityRail NSW 2006 - Submission

Review of Fares for CityRail in NSW 2006

I am the Coordinator of a service called STARS (Skills, Training and Resource Service). We recruit and train volunteers, and refer them to Home and Community Care, and other not for profit services to carry out valuable voluntary work.

I am greatly concerned about the impact that the proposed fare increase for City Rail will have on the ability of many of these volunteers to continue to participate.

Many volunteers are on low and/or fixed incomes. There are representatives from the retired community. Some are working part-time or casually. Some are students or parents not in the paid workforce.

All will be adversely affected by the proposed increases in CityRail fares.

Volunteers make an enormous contribution to our society. In economic terms alone, their contribution is estimated to be between \$31 and \$42 billion annually (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2000) "Unpaid work and the Australian economy" p 43; Ironmonger, D "Measuring volunteering in economic terms," in Warburton, J and Oppenheimer, M (eds) *Volunteers and Volunteering*.)

Not for profit agencies providing services to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in our society would not be able to offer the level of services that they do without the contribution of volunteers.

Volunteers, by very definition, receive no remuneration for the services they provide - the rewards are intrinsic and derived from the pleasure of doing something worthwhile.

Service providers hoping to attract volunteers to their own service need to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteering with the service. Travel costs often present such a barrier, and this proposed substantial increase may just tip the balance unfavourably for many volunteers.

While some services offer reimbursement of travel expenses to their volunteers, many do not like to accept. Many community services are also operating on shoestring budgets and unable to absorb the proposed increases. There would be a no-win situation all round.

Sincerely

Gillian Whalley-Okafor  
STARS Coordinator  
Canterbury City Community Centre