Monday 9th July 2007

RE: 2007 CityRail Fare Review

Dear Sir,

With regard to this current review, I would suggest that IPART and CityRail take on board the policy that was adopted by the NSW Liberal Party as they headed into the recent state election, i.e.: freeze fare prices for the next four years. I say this for the following reasons:

a) There was a fare increase only a year ago. It's too soon for another.
b) CityRail state they are currently spending record levels of money on improving the system. This may be true, but said spending has only come about because the system was neglected for so long, and the Government has been alerted to recent studies and disasters that have shown how antiquated, complex, inefficient, unsafe and unpunctual the network is.
c) The Millennium and Oscar trains have both been delivered late.
d) CityRail state that their on-time performance has improved markedly. This is hardly a fair statement considering that the timetable was "slowed down" in order to achieve this.
e) Incidents such as the two major mishaps on the Sydney Harbour Bridge throw serious doubt on CityRail, and cause commuters such as myself to wonder if the system has actually improved (as they claim it has).
f) We are still waiting for the T-Card to arrive. It has been coming for 11 years now. Cities such as London, Hong Kong, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth all have these cards which have brought with them tremendous benefits. How much longer do we have to wait?

Harking back to point e), the more recent Bridge incident on July 5th caused me to arrive home at 7:50pm, instead of my usual time of 6:15pm. I won't bother going into details, suffice to say that many people in Sydney would have shared the experience, and no doubt many of those would have had a much worse evening than mine.

I would suggest that IPART conduct another review in four years time, and then see if CityRail has really delivered on their promises and given us real improvements in infrastructure, rolling stock, on-time performance, incident reduction and an integrated ticketing system.

Regards,
Ben Zoffman.