



PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

Serving Our Community

Our Ref: WS:km (DWS No. 1448645)
Contact: Walter Sinnadurai
Telephone: (02) 4732-7721

10 JUL 2007

5 July 2007

Dr Michael Keating AC
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
Level 2, 44 Market Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir

SUBMISSION TO CITYRAIL FARE REVIEW FROM PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

On behalf of Penrith City Council I would like to make a submission to the "CityRail Fare Review".

Penrith City Council does not support the increase in fares for outer suburbs of Western Sydney commuters without rectifying existing inequities such as trains adequately equipped with heating for the winter and air-conditioning for summer, patronage levels, frequency, and service levels.

Should you wish to discuss the issues raised in this submission, you may contact me on 4732-7573 or Council's Transportation Planner on 4732-7579.

Yours faithfully

Craig Ross
Design & Technical Advice Manager

attach

SUBMISSION TO IPART INTO CITYRAIL FARE REVIEW FROM PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

Penrith City Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the CityRail Fares Review. Council supports the concept of the Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal assisting the Minister for Transport in setting fares, which is a major public transport provider for residents in the region.

The importance of public transport has been recognised in State Plan and has been reflected in the State Government's transport planning documents "*Action for Air*", "State Infrastructure Strategy" and the "Urban Transport Statement". It was also recognised in the earlier document "*Action for Transport 2010*".

In the last 20 years, the Penrith LGA has experienced a significant population growth. This growth has been predominantly in the residential sector (as in other growth areas in the greater western Sydney Region) and has not been matched with employment generating developments.

The lack of local employment opportunities in the Penrith LGA, compared to the workforce, has led to a need for the workforce to travel long distances (beyond the City boundary). While the number of jobs in the Penrith LGA has increased over the last 5-10 years, the 2001 Census Data still identifies that over 63% of the local workforce commutes to employment centres in Parramatta, central Sydney, North Sydney, and generally to the centres in eastern and northern Sydney.

Council has been responding to this issue with strategies that will encourage greater use of public transport as an alternative mode to the single occupant motorcar. Council acknowledges the fact that improving public transport offers solutions to several major problems facing Penrith City.

Council has been responding to this issue with strategies that will encourage greater use of public transport as an alternative mode to the single occupant motorcar. Council's current four-year Strategic Plan (2005 to 2009) has re-emphasised the need to improve accessible transport to the City and has included in its Management Plan actions to secure improved regional and local transport links and services to accommodate existing and future urban developments.

Council has been faced with further burdens in improving public transport, given that the future release areas are all remotely located from major public transport nodes such as the Western Railway Line. This has highlighted the need for effective, efficient and attractive public transport services to provide the appropriate connections between these areas and the major nodes.

Council has reviewed the proposed fares increases by CityRail and does not support the increases proposed in the Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) submission.

SUBMISSION TO IPART INTO CITYRAIL FARE REVIEW FROM PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

Pricing CityRail Fares

This year CityRail has proposed a fare increase of 40 cents for a single ticket and \$3.00 for a weekly ticket, with further increases to 10 cents for child off-peak fares. The arguments and approach to fare increases in this year's submission to IPART demonstrate that CityRail and the NSW State Government's current approach to the pricing of public transport fares is ad hoc, with no developed transparent processes or objectives.

Rail Patronage Level

There is no argument presented by CityRail in their submission to justify the fare increase based upon the rail patronage levels. CityRail's rail patronage data for all the stations within Penrith LGA shows that there is a decrease of 2.6% patronage levels for the year 2006 from 2004. Council raises concerns that any increase in fares would further deteriorate the patronage levels.

Climate Controlled Carriages

No substantial arguments are presented by CityRail to justify an increase in fares when considering that commuters from the outer suburbs of Western Sydney are still enduring the lack of air-conditioning/heating for the majority of services. The lack of air-conditioning/heating on all train services is heightened by the fact Western Sydney experiences greater temperature extremes than the CBD and inner-city.

Rail Line Capacity

The argument presented by CityRail is to build up four existing six-car train services to eight-car train services to provide extra seats. Notwithstanding this, Council would argue that any justification to increase the price should address the existing constraints on the western line between St Marys and Penrith. Council considers that the request to quadruple the railway line between St Marys and Penrith should be brought forward to ensure that effective services can be provided from Penrith.

Other

There is no clear indication presented by CityRail in their submission to separate what percentage of costs are borne by the Government and what costs are borne by the user, as users and non-users need to know why a specific price is being charged. A clear and transparent pricing policy in relation to public transport fares, with clear objectives and outcomes, should be developed into the pricing policies.

Summary

Based on the above, Council does not support the increase in fares for commuters from the outer suburbs of Western Sydney without a rectification of existing inequities such as trains adequately equipped with heating for the winter and air-conditioning for summer, patronage level, frequency, and service levels for outer Western Sydney commuters.

Many challenges are being faced to improve the travel behaviour of Penrith residents. To achieve a mode shift to public transport, attractive services must be provided. Unjustified fare increases will be a major disincentive to public transport use.