

3 October 2008

Subject: Rail Fares comments from CADCA

Hi there,

As president of the Campbelltown & Districts Commuter Association, the same old rhetoric has appeared which I thought was dead and buried with the new culture. Fares increased, the need to cut costs, reduced services, vehicles late for delivery, R & S sets still used in the Western area with minus in the winter and 40+ in the summer without air-conditioning. This is merely getting people into cars in a time that we need to support our public transport systems.

With operating costs for an 8-car set at around \$4000/hour and with a seat occupancy of merely 15% on average for the day, I thought that there was plenty of opportunity to enterprise. Raising seat occupancy over the day to merely 30% which is around another 400,000 passengers and a fare of say \$5, this is around \$720 million per annum! Surely that is better for the community than cutting services, reducing staff and raising fares?

I ask you how fare dinkum is the government to solving our transport problems? How much influence is there from the RTA, TWU, car manufacturers, road lobby and the NRMA towards these decisions? Today the people travelling on the Harbour Tunnel and the Eastern Distributor did not have the option of another mode of transport - other than their car.

In our times of (I think) global warming normally mellowed to climate change should be taken seriously. This is the second year running that the Polar Ice Cap has disappeared - in only 100,000 years! We should be embracing the only transport system we have that can solve problems, not reducing it to being ineffective. Why? It is the only transport system we have that can get us out of the carbon fuel cycle. People should be encouraged to use it and not to shun it!

We in Sydney use 24,000 tonnes of road fuel per day. The M5 (F5, M5, Eastern distributor) uses 80 tonnes per hour. (20,000 cars on the road, 3,000/lane in and out, 55 kilometres, 6.5 litres/100km average.) The adjacent rail line can do the same transport task for 4.5 tonnes of coal - and can alternately in the future be powered by the earth's engine. (Each 8-car train consumes around 1 megawatt hour consuming 370 kilograms of coal and carrying 1200 passengers.) For \$1.5 million/day to erect a 1 megawatt wind turbine, Cityrail can be out of the carbon fuel cycle in less than a year! If getting 10% of cars off the road, Cityrail can save around 850,000 tonnes of road fuel being imported per year. This will be significant soon because world oil demand has exceeded supply. It will not be long before road fuel is approaching \$10/litre. I do believe that wind turbines are great aesthetically more than a coal fired power station!

We are not entering a war of survival - we are in it! If we are not careful, not only will there not be anything for our grandchildren, there will be no grandchildren! Next time you get in your car and start the engine, think about the other few million doing the same because their options have been taken away from them. This is the reason why we as a country should be embracing zero or low energy transport systems. You can help by maintaining and increasing patronage so that Cityrail has no treasury deficit. The Government and the management need the will and reason to do this though.

Best wishes,

Bill Craig
President, CADCA