

**Stakeholder comment on:**

*Review of CityRail fares from 2009 and regulatory framework*

*Improving CityRail's accountability and incentives through stronger governance arrangement - Draft Report - October 2008*

I am a CityRail customer. I live at Arncliffe and travel to the city to work in a building opposite Central Station every day.

I work normal hours – 9.00 to 5.00 approximately, Monday to Friday. I have limited access to the opportunity to work from home, so I must get myself from Arncliffe to the city every day. Before work, I drop my children off at before school care in Brighton-le-Sands. I often pick them up from after school care at Brighton-le-Sands.

There are a number of problems with train transport for me:

**1. Lack of parking at major train stations**

Lately I have become so frustrated with the lack of parking within 200 metres of major train stations between Rockdale and Central (Rockdale, Wollie Creek and Sydenham), that out of sheer frustration, I have begun driving to the city and parking in a parking station near my building. Although this costs me about twice as much as a train ticket, the reduced stress level for me is wonderful.

Parking seems to be the role of councils, who clearly don't work closely with the State government to ensure adequate parking at major rail stations.

I envisage that if train fares are raised, I will have even more incentive to drive to work than I currently do, given that Rockdale Council has made it ever more difficult to find parking as it builds high-rise apartments on previous car parking sites, and makes on-street parking available only to residents of that street.

**2. Lack of frequent train service at Banksia and Arncliffe Stations**

On occasions I could walk to Banksia or Arncliffe Stations, and therefore wouldn't have to drive to a station, but the lack of frequent train services in peak hour (one every twenty minutes) precludes me from using those stations.

**3. Overcrowding on trains**

The Tangara trains have always been poorly designed. I made a long list of the faults of the Tangara the day that Nick Greiner went for a ride in a brand-new one and had a photo opportunity for his media release. The Tangara trains have plenty of standing room, but no safe places to hold on for much of this standing room. Getting on and off in peak hour traffic is a nightmare, as everyone congregates in the foyer of the trains, or on the stairs. I don't think

any politicians have ever ridden the trains on a regular basis, and they don't seem to be students of human behaviour.

I believe some attempts are going to be made to address the design faults of the Tangara and I applaud those if they are brought to fruition.

#### **4. Lack of information provided to passengers.**

While the provision of information to passengers inside the trains has improved markedly over the past ~~20~~ years that I have been riding Sydney trains, it is still patchy at best. I have also been treated rudely a number of times by station workers when I have asked questions about what happened to delay a train.

CityRail still has a very long way to go with customer service. Remember the Disneyland motto – if you provide information and distractions, customers will happily wait a very long time!

#### **5. Too much information provided on train platforms.**

The pre-recorded announcements on train platforms are incessant and annoying.

#### **6. General comments on IPART reviews**

I applaud the thoroughness of the two IPART reviews that I skimmed, and would support the recommendations in terms of increasing the governance of CityRail.

However, nothing in the IPART review documents will make me happier with the trains or decrease the number of times I choose to drive to work – only increased parking, increased frequency, better designed trains and increased customer service will make me want to use trains more.