

Hi,

I was disappointed to read in our local newspaper that you are going to approve an increase in rail fares from Jan 25 2009 by 7.9% and 25% in total over the next 4 years.

I think this is disgusting that these rail fares can be increased by amounts greater than the current cpi, especially as the NSW government is trying to allow increases in salary's to their staff of only 2.5%.

The last fare increase the NSW government's argument to justify the increase was the improvement to the running times and the new timetable.

The only time the trains have run on time was when Mr John Watkins the then transport minister rode the train to Wollongong. *Isn't it ironic that this could only happen when he was on the train as the normal for the 7.58am train I catch from Bellambi each morning is usually 2-4 minutes late every day.* Because of the new timetable I am always at least 5 minutes late to work each day.

The new timetable is also a joke because to try and make the above train run on time, this train now leaves Central station 7 minutes earlier than before and now arrives at 7.58am instead of 7.56am. As you can see this new timetable has an extra 9 minutes to try to be on time and it is not working.

If I miss the 4.22pm from Wollongong in the afternoon I have to wait around to 5.25pm, as the old 5.00pm train has been deleted from the new timetable. This train in the afternoon is always filthy with the carriage seats usually dusty and no one checks to see how much rubbish is accumulating in the carriages. Also this train of an afternoon is quite often running 5-10 minutes late or even cancelled.

The above are just some of the reasons I find it hard for the NSW government to justify such an increase to the train fares as the real reason why people are using public transport is the high cost of petrol and running costs for cars these days.

Hopefully, if you grant the NSW government a fare increase it should be kept to the same offer as to their staff of 2.5% as the 25% cannot be justified and will only force commuters back to using cars and they will need to build more motorway's to cope which will be a more expensive result.

Regards  
B Bush  
Daily commuter