

Sent: Wednesday, 5 November 2008 4:32 PM

Subject: Re: Submission on the Proposed Fare Increase of Over 17 Percent.

To Whom It May Concern:

I will rush into making this submission just before the deadline on a case against the proposed train fare increases by City Rail. I commute daily on the weekdays from Doonside to the City Townhall station and back to attend my workplace. Hence, my submission is purely based on my observations and my experience of traveling on trains for over 13 years. Though not as comprehensive and cohesive but my main message is there.

The fare increase is too severe at the time when the whole world is suffering from the economic downturn and there is no guarantee that the fare hike will improve the train services. Fares should only increase over the CPI once the goods in terms of services are delivered.

If the fare is increased then it should guarantee that all trains will come on time and that no train should be cancelled and if so, an alternative train should accommodate the waiting passengers. Further, as commuters and customers, we should be able to sue and take up a case with the Department of Fair Trading against City Rail should we be deprived the customer satisfaction such as not getting seats to sit on longer journeys and sardined in carriages without any air conditioning and so forth. Also the cut back of "off peak" services to and from Doonside and Rooty Hill train stations to be fully restored. All Springwood trains to recommence stopping at Blacktown to be able to change for Quakers Hill trains - for commuters to UWS Nirimba Campus. Further, all slow trains to recommence go further stops from Blacktown to Mt Druitt as it will continue to move passengers out of the Townhall Station. A lot of us just want to move out of Townhall Station even on slower trains as long as seats are available for us to quietly sit and read. Changing at Blacktown station is not an option due to the distance between the changing platforms as even if one would rush, most of the days we would miss the next train on platform 6 and 7 and then there is another 25 minutes wait.

In the last year, since the new train timetable commenced, in the afternoons out of the 225 days I attended work, I only got seats from Townhall Station only about 25 days or less. Over 200 days, I had to stand up to Doonside - a miserable over 55 minutes travel, sardined and deprived of Oxygen most of the days.

Further, I try not to travel on earlier or after the peak hour train services to the City as the Doonside trains now run every half an hour instead of every 15 minutes, which was the case previously. So no matter what, I have to catch the peak hour trains. Whenever, I have to drop my children to school or to take them to doctors, dentist or for any other reasons, I have to catch the trains after 9.00 am and at least 6 times during the year the trains were cancelled so I had to wait another half an hour. A 60 minutes wait and yet I am to pay another \$7 for my weekly train tickets.

Similarly, when I am attending an afternoon training or I had been working late, I have to catch trains after 7.00 pm, after which time the Doonside trains arrive every half an hour. No wonder, almost most of the commuters are forced to travel during the peak hour, which jams up the whole system.

Previously, I had been travelling to Edgecliff and changing trains in Town hall. Those were the good 5 and half years of commuting by train and I always enjoyed the company of lively, bubbly and friendly people. Now the times have changed and thanks to City Rail, with most of the people fighting for seats, sulky, depressed, angry, aggravated, agitated and always ready to take out their frustrations and anger on somebody

else. This is that changing face of Sydney commuters and the Sydney siders, happened once the City Rail adopted the new timetable. The trains are still being cancelled, still runs late and so forth as they were in the last 10 years, only this time the measuring stick used by the City Rail has changed for political reasons to look good.

In the good old days I used to catch the 7.37 am Train from Doonside to Edgecliff and would arrive at work most of the days before 8.30 am daily even after changing for the Bondi Junction train at Townhall. Now, on the 7.37 am from Doonside, I arrive at Townhall station 8.35 am to 8.45 am. More and more times are spent in commuting in overcrowded trains.

If the new timetable was adopted due to the Waterfall disaster, then I am sorry to say that, more lives are lost now than in any disasters. There are implied and flow on effects of family break ups, loss of productivity at workplace, tantrums and loss of temperaments at workplace and at home, students travelling by trains performing poorly as they are losing study times due to increased waiting times for trains or unable to get seats, hooligans loitering in train stations and up to some mischief whilst waiting for trains, commuters clogging Town hall Station whilst waiting for trains as now there is longer waiting period and hence it takes longer to get off and on the trains and so forth and probably more commuters becoming suicidal as a result. I know there has not been a detailed study done, however, it has been my observations whilst chatting with others in the same boat as myself.

I do not only feel sorry for others but for myself as well as at times also I take it out on my kids once I arrive home raging with anger. I will ask the politicians making decisions on our behalf to try standing on a packed train for about an hour almost every afternoon. As a commuter we can see what has gone wrong, which the politicians cannot see and yet millions of dollars are wasted on professional submissions from Australian and Overseas consultants. In fact, the City Rail should run lottery type submissions from the Sydney train commuters who can suggest the better and the best solutions.

Further due to the cuts in the off peak and peak hour train services, the property prices in Doonside and Rooty Hill were the hardest hit at the time - it has not improved to date.

Please adopt the pre-Waterfall disaster train timetables and get on with the job. Restore the trains every 15 minutes even for the off peak services for Doonside and Rooty Hill Train Stations as more and more people and even Blacktown people are catching trains from Doonside due to shortages of commuter parking in Blacktown. It will give better choice to travel outside the peak hours rather than the discounted fares once adopted, which was bound to fail. And the Blacktown only trains to go further to at least to Mt. Druitt. One should see the increasing number of commuters now getting on and of the peak trains to and from Doonside train station. Further, to recommence the Springwood trains to stop at a Major Inter Change Station at Blacktown. Yet, a lot of our trains now stop at Clyde, which is only about 600 minutes away from Granville.

Hence, based on the lesser and inferior services, it would not be justifiable to increase train fares by over 17 percent. A modest inflationary increase would be welcome.

A Concerned NSW Tax Payer and Train Customer,