

Rail group fouls free train travel

TRAIN travellers should travel for free one weekend a month to make up for the constant cancellation and disruption of Translink services, a rail supporter has said.

Web-based community group RAIL Back on Track organiser Robert Dow has called on Translink to make the first weekend and Monday of every month free travel for all passengers.

Mr Dow said this would compensate the public in a small way for the constant service interruptions and cancellations that Citytrain commuters had endured.

Mr Dow said from July last year until June this year there were 903 cancellations. More than half that number were recorded in July this year with 470 cancellations.

"The south-east Queensland railway network is undergoing a widespread and critical expansion in terms of duplications, in triplications, some new lines and intensive maintenance of the track. This results in regular line



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closures at weekends and delays when buses are run in lieu of the normal rail services," Mr Dow said.

"Unfortunately, due to crew and equipment shortfalls, last-minute cancellations, particularly during peak periods, are also adding to Citytrain commuters' anxiety and frustration.

"It would be a marvellous gesture for the community to have free weekend travel with a bonus Monday once a month for the next year while work proceeds."

But Transport Minister John Michel said he wouldn't even entertain the idea of a free weekend of travel.

"Based on estimates it would cost between \$600,000 and \$700,000 a weekend or \$8.5 million for the year," Mr Michel said.

"Who would cover the shortfall and where do you cut the works?"



NO FARE: Train travellers deserve a free ride as recompense for service cancellations and disruptions a rail group spokesman says. Photo: File