

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to tender a submission to halt any increases in fares to RailCorp for the following reasons:

I have always travelled by public transport, mainly by train. I have also lived and travelled from Bondi, Hornsby, Pennant Hills and now, Picton to work in Sydney (St James or Wynyard Station). I moved to Picton 6 years ago, and have never seen a service go downhill so quickly - I chose this area to live because I could commute to the City in some degree of comfort (a trip of 2 hours each way, equalling at least 4 hours per day). Over this short time I have lived in this area the following has occurred:

The Menangle Bridge was closed because it had dangerous structural faults and coaches were provided for more than 1 month. These coaches were often late, or in some cases didn't come at all. Some drivers did not even know the route to take.

The fast trains from Central to the Southern Highlands were cancelled. These trains were heavily patronised and made for a more comfortable trip home. We now have more crowding of the ordinary rail motors leaving Campbelltown Station because people now have to use this train and elderly people or disabled now have to change trains twice.

The new timetable means we leave Picton Station earlier and arrive at work later, and we stop at more stations where there is heavy patronage - of course this means trains are packed.

The rail motors from Campbelltown Station look to have been cleaned ONCE in all the 6 years I have travelled on them, and that was last week (at least the seats were wet when we sat on them). They are filthy, the seats often broken and covered in stains, and there is only 2-4 carriages. Why then is it so hard to keep them clean? There is a toilet on this long distance train and on occasions it has leaked and the stench in the carriages is remarkable. This occurred only 2 weeks ago, and we were herded onto this train with no windows which opened - and this train is PACKED. Not only horrific in hot weather, but surely a health risk. When the connecting trains were late the rail motor was consistently held back - up to 30 minutes at a time. Although we are supposedly no longer a "connecting train", only last week we were held back for late running trains to connect.

There is no announcements on the trains regarding any problems with the rail motors, and when we have a conductor who wishes to let passengers know something important, the speaker phone never seems to work, which means they have to yell into the carriage and hope everyone can hear the announcement. Of course, they make very few announcements.

During the hottest day a few weeks ago, we travelled from the city in one of the worst carriages - the ones with the windows which open slightly only from the top - these are the ones we mostly receive (I leave the City at 4:20). An hour of this travelling in the heat and then disembarking at Campbelltown to find the rail motor waiting - hoping for some relief - NO - the airconditioning was NOT working on this train. We were NOT told anything about this, and we travelled in this train with no windows or doors open and in 40 degree heat (and the doors were LOCKED) without any relief. Why were buses not provided - why were conductors not warning the public - why were doors at least open? Cattle travel better than this!

The Southern Highlands Line always seems to be the "forgotten" line - the commuters on this line are treated as second class citizens - we know the freight always comes first, and a couple of weeks ago one of these container freight trains lost 2 of its carriages. Most of us travel 5 hours every day to work (some 6 hours).

I think it's about time the commuters on this line were at least given some relief because of the travelling time undertaken - we make the effort and leave home around 5:00am each morning. When do we get some SERVICE, and how could a fare increase be justifiable taking into account the above facts?

Yours sincerely

Joan Paterson