

Re Fare Increase for CityRail

I wish to lodge a formal protest to the application by CityRail to increase fares. The increase is not justified on the following grounds.

Prior to the new timetable the train I used to catch was invariably air conditioned and contained eight carriages and although it was **always late**, you usually had a degree of comfort travelling home. Since the new timetable, the train has been reduced to six carriages and is not air conditioned (which in the heat we have been having has been unbearable).

Whenever CityRail is asked about the train system, they don't want to go any further than to spruik how it is running 92% on time. These figures are false as the timetables I have included as attachments will indicate (the train I now catch is the 4.16 to Richmond, it used to be the 4.21. You will see by the timetables that there is a discrepancy of 5 minutes and this is how they manage the 92%. They linger at stations needlessly so that they have time up their sleeve and when they are late, they stop only long enough for the passengers to get on and off and therefore reach their destination on time and is therefore classed as an on time train. If it wasn't for the extra minutes it would be late most days (and I assume they are doing the same for all other lines).

Trains are starting to run late and I have noticed cancellations creeping in (for other lines but not mine **yet**). Make no mistake there has been no improvement in service and in fact I would not call reducing eight carriage trains to six and thus cramming people in even more being an improvement (cattle going to the Middle East would be more comfortable). This is not only happening to my line, I noticed a six carriage train on the Campbelltown line in Peak Hour for crying out loud.

I believe we are already paying too much for the service we get. CityRail are losing money because of mismanagement. I have noticed six transit officers on the one train and this has not been an isolated incident, wouldn't two be enough?

I do not live in Cairo or New Delhi, I live in Sydney, Australia and therefore do not expect a third world transport system. I have included attachments for your information of various things I have been doing regarding CityRail's poor performance.

Regards,

Ray Burns

Watkins backtracks on ticket price rises

Matt Sun

The State Government has broken a promise not to seek train fare increases until commuters are satisfied with RailCorp's services.

Transport Minister John Watkins wants commuters to pay an extra \$30 million via a 3 per cent rise, in line with inflation, and a reduction of the 39 per cent discount on off-peak tickets.

The State Government announced on Friday afternoon that it would ask the Independent Pricing And Regulatory Tribunal to consider the rises.

Poor service has meant fares have not been increased since September 1, 2003.

Watkins said improved performance justified seeking a rise, with on-time running moving from 61.7 per cent for the last third of 2004 to 91.5 per cent during the same period in 2005.

But on September 5, 2005, the first weekday of the new timetable, Watkins told mX fare rises would not be linked to improved services.

"On-time running is just one test. What really counts is customer satisfaction. Until that improves I won't be satisfied," he said.

"There will be no increase in rail fares until we get on-time

running correct and we deliver a rail system that satisfies the needs of the travelling public."

A recent RailCorp customer survey found commuters were most dissatisfied with train punctuality, delays, cancellations, crowded peak-hour carriages, train frequency and PA clarity.

An analysis of on-time running figures by mX found while the percentage of trains arriving on time increased under the new timetable, RailCorp was repeatedly failing to reach its 92 per cent benchmark.

Morning and afternoon peak trains failed to meet the benchmark on 56 of 116 days.

Multiple services were delayed or cancelled 7617 times between June 2004 and January 2006 due to breakdowns.

Cancellations in the five months since the new timetable have dropped from an average 2 per cent to 0.8 per cent a week.

Many peak-hour trains are at 100 per cent capacity, carrying 900 people each, with RailCorp unable to add more services.

Watkins compared the rise being sought to London, "where the cheapest single rail ticket has been set at \$7.11".

CityRail's cheapest single ticket is \$2.20, he said.

■ Have your say, PAGE 2.

SLOW UPTAKE: I give up on CityRail and its "service". A snail would make it quicker from North Sydney to Wynyard in the afternoons this past month.

- Jim, Fairfield

But it's the same train

Brett from Narellan (mX, Monday) needs to get his facts right. Some trains on the North Shore line go to Penrith and Richmond – aircon or not. It's the same train.

– T.S., city

HOT ISSUE: Brett, if you don't live on the North Shore, how do you know we get the airconditioned trains? Last week four of my six trains were sweat boxes

– Maz, Hornsby

SO RUDE: School kids can be so unnecessarily rude on trains sometimes. And guess what. I'm not some grumpy old person. I'm a school kid, too.

– Minnie, Greenwich

VENT YOUR SPLEEN


STILL BAD: Doug (mX, Monday), just because the trains used to be worse doesn't mean they are acceptable now.

– Kristen, Croydon

SLIPPERY SLOPE: City-Rail, if you know these tactile platform tiles are slippery when wet, a sign won't stop legal action when someone slips in front of a train.

– Di, Tempe

■ SMS 'VENT' and your letter to 1999 4488. Include name, suburb. Calls 55c inc. GST.

TEXT powered by 

Head north on hot trains

I'm a daily North Shore commuter, and sick of people telling us we get all the air-conditioned trains.

This is totally wrong. Catch the line for a week and tell me how often we get them.

I had to wait through three hot trains on a hot day in

peak hour, until I gave up and caught the fourth sweltering hot train home. Other lines seem to get the Millennium trains every now and then, which we on the North Shore have not seen once.

– Phil, Waitara

Mx Newspaper 22-2-06

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Timetable trip-up

Mx Newspaper 1-2-06

Railway survey off track

Matt Sun

A survey used by the State Government to claim commuters are satisfied with RailCorp services interviewed people whose new timetable had not been introduced.

And just 11 people in Wollongong and 40 each from the Central Coast and Blue Mountains were interviewed.

Only 54 per cent of the 1006 people surveyed said they used trains to travel to and from work.

The survey results will be used by the Government to justify a push to increase fares.

The Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator survey found a "surprising" drop in the number of disgruntled Eastern Suburbs & Illawarra line users.

"These decreases may be considered surprising given that Sector 1 train users had not had any change in timetable between the two surveys," the report said.

"It is also possible, given the publicity given to the new timetable, that they perceived CityRail to be providing a better service, even if they had not benefited from it themselves."

Transport Minister John Watkins released the results of the survey yesterday, claiming it showed a marked improvement in reliability and customer satisfaction.

It found services satisfied the expectations of 78 per cent of commuters, up from 40 per cent in a major survey in June last year.

Sixty-seven per cent felt the level of delays and cancellations was acceptable, up from 29 per cent.

Forty-five per cent felt the level of passenger congestion was acceptable, up from 41 per cent.

The poll, by Taverner Research, randomly selected people from the phone book who had used a train at least once after the new timetable was introduced in September last year.

"Analysis by region or by train line was not a focus," the report states.

An extra Penrith service from Chatswood via the CBD, departing Central about 6.30pm, will start in May when the new Eastern Suburbs & Illawarra timetable is introduced.

■ Do the survey results reflect commuters' day-to-day experiences? Email sydtalk@mxnet.com.au or SMS 1999 4488.

RailCorp lodges fare submission

Matt Sun Mx Newspaper 3-3-06

Off-peak train fares would rise by up to 70c for the cheapest return tickets if the NSW pricing watchdog approves RailCorp's application.

RailCorp today lodged its submission with the Independent Pricing And Regulatory Tribunal, a week after State Transport Minister John Watkins announced it would seek rises.

City Circle off-peak returns would rise from \$2.60 to \$3.30, a return ticket from Parramatta to Town Hall would jump from \$5.40 to \$6.60 while Penrith to Town Hall returns would rise from \$8 to \$9.90.

RailCorp said an off-peak rise should be granted as it would "improve the equity of the current off-peak arrangements with full fares".

It would "reflect the reality that off-peak tickets may, in fact, be used in the afternoon peak" and align fares "more closely with those offered by rail services in other Australian jurisdictions".

Off-peak trains were slashed under the new timetable, with many services only running every 30 minutes.

Opposition transport spokesman Barry O'Farrell said an off-peak rise would drive people away "at a time when the Government should be encouraging people to use rail".

RailCorp, however, said fares would not have "a strong impact on passenger numbers".

O'Farrell claimed the delay in lodging the submission had cheated commuters as they had a week less to make their thoughts known.

Commuters can read the submission at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au under the "Transport" and then "Passenger Transport" links.

London's system far better value

LETTER OF THE DAY

I wish to comment on the statement (mX, Monday) attributed to the Transport Minister John Watkins, in which he compares CityRail's cheapest fare of \$2.20 with that in London of \$7 (£3).

This is a very misleading statement.

While it is true that the cheapest cash rail single fare is \$3, he fails to point out that this is for a single journey over any distance within one zone, potentially allowing travel over a far greater distance than the 5km allowable for CityRail's minimum \$2.20 fare.

Furthermore, he also fails to mention that this \$3 cash fare is deliberately set high to encourage customers to use the Oyster (smart) Card, for which the equivalent single rail fare is only \$1, which (surprise! surprise!), at around \$2.35, is remarkably close to CityRail's 5km minimum fare.

And then there is the "small" matter of travelcards ... for the equivalent of



Travel on London's public transport is attractive even to Prime Minister Tony Blair.

around \$14.85 (\$6.30), the happy London traveller can travel all day after 9.30am (all day on weekends and public holidays) across all six zones of Greater London on the tube, all buses, all National rail services, Docklands Light Rail, Croydon Tram Link and, for a one third discount, on river services.

For the inner zones one and two, most commonly travelled by most tourists,

the cost is only around \$11.55 (\$4.90). Compare this with Sydney's miserable all-day ticket which, for \$15, consigns the user to a dysfunctional "system" of trains, ferries and some buses.

Private buses, the monorail and light rail don't get a look

in. This, and the far superior level of service, frequency, extent and range of services available in London, makes Watkins' meaningless comparison pale into the insignificance it deserves.

— RP, Waverton

Letter of the day winner will receive 2 games with shoe him anytime Monday to Thursday. Winner will be contacted by mX.

STRIKE BOWLING BOB

Send sydneysmoke@ozemail.nsw.au (no attachments, include name, address and day phone number)

Mx Newspaper 21-2-06

NOT FARE: Fare increases, no way. Why should we pay for such an inferior service that cannot even run on

time. I'll only pay if it gets its act together.

— Jen, Bundeena

TOO MUCH: There's no justification for CityRail to increase fares. We already pay too much for unreliable services.

— Diana, Emu Plains

Survey on trains is full of hot air

LETTER OF THE DAY



For some unknown reason, RailCorp seems very pleased with itself following so-called positive results of a survey on CityRail trains.

I can only conclude they surveyed a bunch of baboons in Borneo by mistake, not Sydney commuters, and certainly not the likes of me, who travels regularly on the Illawarra line.

I am tired of travelling in stiflingly hot tin cans professing to be trains.

Personally, I dispute RailCorp's claims that two-thirds of CityRail trains are airconditioned.

I would estimate that on the Illawarra line it is more like one-third.

RailCorp now claims that all trains will be airconditioned by 2010, still another four years away.

Is the State Government aware that airconditioning has been a standard feature in cars for years and years?

Commuters just want a comfortable, clean, efficient rail network, which is probably impossible with the current outdated rolling stock.

The system requires a complete overhaul to encourage commuters back and to get people out of their cars to avoid the daily gridlock, which will only get progressively worse.

Other larger cities manage it, why can't we?

The State Government



Readers are fed up with what they say is an overcrowded and inept train service.

appears to be pumping significant funding into roads, which is important, but not at the expense of an efficient public transport system.

— Simon, Oatley
(Simon wins letter of the day)

THE LONG HAUL

I have relied totally on public transport for nearly 20 years — no car.

With this new timetable, it now takes me longer to get to work from Bondi to Yagoona than it did years ago.

On weekends, there are fewer trains and the buses on the Bondi service are always full.

How dare the Government increase fares, or for that matter waste money on railway police hassling people over a ticket worth a few dollars, when the service is so bad.

They should let people travel for free until they

provide a frequent, fast, reliable, clean, modern service.

— Rob, Bondi

DISGUSTING TRIP

I have been commuting from Macarthur to the city for 20 years, and this is just about the worst it can get.

The night of February 28 was the most disgusting trip home imaginable.

The only announcement we got was about a passenger who was sick on a Peter-sham train. The whole train system seemed to shut down.

I eventually squashed on to an Airport line train at 6.32pm from Central.

There was no aircondition-

ing and people were squashed against the windows, nearly fainting.

They then decided to make this an all-stops train, but no announcements were made.

We couldn't even see out of the windows because of the crowds and consequently we had no idea where we were.

And they want to increase the fares?

If the system comes to a near halt with one passenger sick, where would we be if something really serious happened?

We, the commuters, are fed up.

— Barbara, Bradbury

Letter of the day winner will receive 2 games with shoe hire anytime Monday to Thursday. Winner will be contacted by mx.

STRIKE
SEWING MACHINES

Enter mxstrike.com.au (for shortcuts, include NAME, ADDRESS and day phone number)

RailCorp punctuality starting to slip again ^{mx 24-1-06}

Matt Sun

RailCorp's improved on-time running performance has started to slip again, just four months after the introduction of the new timetable.

While the number of morning services running to time has mostly remained above the 92 per cent benchmark, afternoon peak trains are struggling to be on time.

Last week, on-time running fell to 74.7 per cent on Tuesday when 21 trains were delayed by a power failure at Sutherland.

In the first week of December, 91.5 per cent of RailCorp's PM services ran on time, but progressively worsened as the CBD became crowded at Christmas.

Combined figures for December, which include the morning and afternoon peaks, show services on most lines ran at close to 90 per cent.

The worst-performing line last month was the East Hills line, where only 85.4 per cent of services were on time.

The Eastern Suburbs line, still operating under the old timetable, recorded 85.7 per cent on time.

RailCorp figures show there were 308 breakdowns in December that caused delays or cancellations.

Transport Minister John

Watkins and RailCorp CEO Vince Graham both warned commuters it would take some time for the new timetable to be bedded down.

The latest timetable, which was introduced on September 4, included several changes to improve the afternoon run home.

Crews now start from outer stations to prevent delays caused by staff being late to Central.

Trains are also kept in sheds closer to the CBD and carriages remain at stations longer to allow more passengers on board.

Opposition transport spokesman Barry O'Farrell said the new timetable had not placated commuters.

"As long as on-time running figures continue to fall short of CityRail targets, people will continue to ditch public transport in favour of their cars," O'Farrell said.

"Labor's public transport failure is evidenced by increasing gridlock across Sydney, as roads struggle to cope with people who are sick and tired of substandard train services."

■ What do you think of RailCorp's new timetable four months on? Email sydtalk@mxnet.com.au or SMS 1999 4488.

SUITABLE ATTITUDE:

To the four RailCorp "suits" on the train between Town Hall and Central yesterday laughing about reducing staff and bringing union reps to tears. I'm not as surprised at how this company treats commuters now that I know what it thinks of its frontline staff.

- P. Penrith

mx 3-2-06

Travelling back in time

I agree with Joanne (mx, Tuesday) about the new Campbelltown line timetable.

Not only has my travel time increased from 55 minutes to 1hr 10min, I now experience cancelled trains and long delays.

Coming home, the carriages are hot and overcrowded.

Recently, I have caught the 7.24am from Campbelltown,

arriving at Circular Quay at 8.45am.

This is the type of service we had in the '80's, before the "fast East Hills line".

We may as well go back to the old timetable because at least then trains ran on time and we had a chance of getting to work and back in an hour or less.

mx 2-2-06 - Barbara, Bradbury

Rail up to the old tricks ^{mx 31-1-06}

I live on the Campbelltown line. The new timetable means less frequent, slower trains, and when they do arrive they are not airconditioned and only six carriages.

After taking an hour and 40 minutes to go from

Central to Campbelltown on Tuesday night, another commuter said RailCorp was back to its old tricks.

And the State Government wonders why public transport is being abandoned?

- Joanne, Campbelltown

NORTH SYDNEY - RICHMOND/EMU PLAINS

MONDAY - FRIDAY

		pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
NORTH SYDNEY		4.06		4.09	4.12	4.15	4.22	4.24	4.27		4.38	4.40		4.42		4.51	4.54	
Mitsona Point		4.08		4.11		4.14	4.17	4.23	4.28	4.29		4.38	4.41		4.44		4.53	4.56
WYNYARD		4.11		4.14		4.17	4.20	4.26	4.29	4.32		4.41	4.44		4.47		4.56	4.59
TOWN HALL		4.14		4.16		4.20	4.23	4.29	4.32	4.35		4.44	4.47		4.50		4.59	5.02
CENTRAL	arr.	4.17		4.20		4.23	4.26	4.32	4.35	4.38		4.47	4.50		4.53		5.02	5.05
	dep.	4.18		4.21		4.24	4.27	4.33	4.36	4.39	4.45	4.48	4.51		4.54	4.59	5.03	5.06
REDFERN		4.19		4.22		4.25	4.28	4.34	4.37	4.40		4.50	4.52		4.55	5.02	5.04	5.07
BURWOOD						4.35				4.50					5.05			
STRATHFIELD	arr.			4.33		4.37	4.40		4.48	4.52	4.56		5.03		5.07	5.11		
	dep.			4.34		4.38	4.41		4.49	4.53	4.57		5.04		5.08	5.12		5.18
Flemington																		
Lidcombe						4.43				4.58					5.13			
Auburn						4.46				5.01					5.16			
Clyde						4.45	4.49			5.04					5.19			
Granville				4.43	4.47	4.51	4.50		4.58	5.06			5.13		5.21		5.28	
Harrie Park						4.53				5.08					5.23			
PARRAMATTA	arr.	4.40		4.45	4.49	4.54	4.52	4.55	5.00	5.09	5.07	5.10	5.15		5.24	5.22	5.25	5.30
	dep.	4.41	4.43	4.46	4.50	4.55	4.53	4.57	5.01	5.10	5.08	5.11	5.16	5.18	5.25	5.23	5.26	5.31
Westmead			4.46	4.48	4.52	4.57	4.55		5.03	5.12		5.19		5.27		5.33	5.33	
Westworthville					4.54	5.00				5.14				5.20	5.29			5.35
Pendle Hill						5.02				5.17				5.22	5.32			5.37
Toongabbie						5.04				5.19				5.25	5.34			5.40

Timetable pre September 2005

Seven Hills		4.51	4.54	4.58	5.07		5.09	5.22		5.24	5.28	5.37		5.39	5.43		
BLACKTOWN	arr.	4.55	4.59	5.03	5.12		5.13	5.25		5.29	5.32	5.42		5.43	5.48		
	dep.	4.51	5.00	5.04		5.04	5.07	5.14	5.27	5.18	5.21	5.30		5.36	5.44		
Marsyong			5.02									5.32					
Dundas Hill			5.05									5.36					
Schofields			5.10									5.40					
Riverstone			5.13									5.43					
Vineyard	UA		5.16									5.46					
Mulgrave			5.21									5.51					
Windsor			5.24									5.54					
Clarendon			5.28									5.58					
East Richmond			5.30									6.00					
Richmond			5.32									6.02					
Doonside							5.18	5.31						5.48			
Rooty Hill							5.21	5.34						5.51			
MOUNT DRUITT		4.57		5.10		5.13	5.24	5.37		5.27				5.42	5.54		
St Marys		5.02		5.15		5.18	5.29	5.42		5.32				5.47	5.59		
Werrington		5.04				5.20	5.31	5.44		5.34				5.49	6.01		
Kingwood		5.08				5.15	5.24	5.35	5.48	5.38				5.53	6.05		
PENRITH		5.12				5.16	5.28	5.38	5.51	5.31u	5.42			5.57	6.08		
Emu Plains						5.21			5.41	5.34				5.47	6.04		
Proceeds to						SGD				MVR				MVR			

North Sydney to Richmond or Emu Plains										Monday to Friday									
	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
Chatswood	3.27	3.34	3.42		3.48			4.00	4.03	4.11	4.15			4.27		4.33		4.41	
St Leonards	3.32	3.39	3.47		3.53			4.05	4.08	4.16	4.20			4.32		4.38		4.47	
North Sydney	3.41	3.48	3.55	3.59	4.02		4.11	4.14	4.17	4.26	4.29	4.32		4.41	4.44	4.47		4.56	
Milsons Point	3.43	3.50	3.57	4.01	4.04		4.13	4.16	4.19	4.28	4.31	4.34		4.43	4.46	4.49		4.58	
Wynyard	3.48	3.55	4.02	4.06	4.09		4.18	4.21	4.24	4.33	4.36	4.39		4.48	4.51	4.54		5.03	
Town Hall	3.51	3.58	4.05	4.09	4.12		4.21	4.24	4.27	4.36	4.39	4.42		4.51	4.54	4.57		5.06	
Central	3.55	4.02	4.09	4.13	4.16	4.23u	4.25	4.28	4.31	4.40	4.43	4.46	4.53u	4.55	4.58	5.01	5.09u	5.10	
Redfern	3.57	4.04	4.11	4.15	4.18		4.27	4.30	4.33	4.42	4.45	4.48		4.57	5.00	5.03	5.12	5.12	
Burwood	4.07		4.21				4.37			4.52				5.07				5.22	
Strathfield	4.10	4.16	4.24		4.30	4.37u	4.40		4.45	4.55		5.00	5.06	5.10		5.15	5.22	5.25	
Lidcombe	4.15		4.30				4.45			5.00				5.15				5.31	
Auburn	4.18		4.33				4.48			5.03				5.18				5.34	
Clyde			4.36				4.52			5.07				5.22				5.37	
Granville	4.22	4.25	4.38		4.39		4.53		4.54	5.09		5.09	5.15	5.23		5.24		5.39	
Harris Park			4.40				4.56			5.11				5.26				5.41	
Parramatta	4.26	4.29	4.43	4.39	4.43	4.49u	4.58	4.53	4.58	5.13	5.06	5.13	5.19	5.28	5.22	5.28	5.34	5.43	
Westmead	4.29	4.32	4.46		4.46		5.01		5.01	5.16		5.16		5.31		5.31		5.46	
Wentworthville	4.31		4.48				5.03			5.18				5.33				5.48	
Pendle Hill	4.33		4.50				5.05			5.20				5.35				5.51	
Toongabbie	4.36		4.53				5.08			5.23				5.38				5.53	

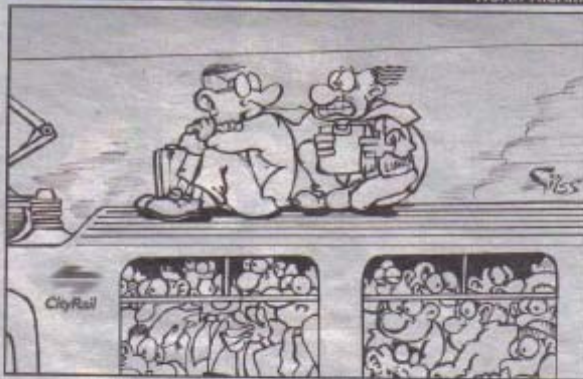
Timetable post September 2005

Seven Hills	4.39	4.38	4.56		4.52		5.11		5.07	5.26		5.22		5.41		5.37		5.56	
Blacktown	4.43	4.42	5.01	4.49	4.59		5.15	5.03	5.12	5.31	5.18	5.28	5.28u	5.45	5.32	5.41		6.01	
Marayong					5.02							5.31							
Quakers Hill					5.06							5.35							
Schofields					5.09							5.38							
Riverstone					5.16							5.45							
Vineyard					5.20							5.49							
Malgrave					5.23							5.53							
Windsor					5.26							5.55							
Clarendon					5.30							6.01							
East Richmond					5.33							6.04							
Richmond					5.35							6.06							
Doonside		4.46	5.05						5.16	5.39						5.45		6.05	
Rooty Hill		4.49	5.08						5.19	5.38						5.48		6.08	
Mount Druitt		4.52	5.11	4.56				5.10	5.22	5.41	5.25				5.39	5.51		6.11	
St Marys		4.56	5.17	5.00				5.14	5.26	5.46	5.30				5.43	5.56		6.15	
Werrington		4.58	5.20	5.02				5.16	5.29	5.48	5.32				5.45	5.58		6.17	
Kingswood		5.02	5.24	5.06				5.20	5.33	5.52	5.36				5.49	6.02		6.21	
Penrith		5.06	5.27	5.09		5.12u		5.24	5.36	5.55	5.39		5.43		5.52	6.05	5.58	6.24	
Emu Plains		5.09				5.14		5.26	5.39				5.45			6.00			

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• Left: 4.16pm service from Central to Richmond commuter Ray Burns on Monday's service, indicates the only ventilation on the train - the little pull down windows.

Things hot up on the 4.16

NORTH Richmond rail commuter Raymond Burns is furious about the 4.16pm train service from Central to Richmond and has called on CityRail and Parliament to improve it.

Mr Burns, who catches the train five days a week, said using the rail system had become "unbearable" since the timetable changes because the 4.16pm train is not air-conditioned and has been changed from an eight to a six-carriage service.

"These trains belong in a museum," he said. "I don't understand if they're cutting services, which they are, where have all the good trains gone?"

Mr Burns wrote a letter of complaint to CityRail asking whether the 4.16pm service would permanently have only six carriages and no air-conditioning.

A reply was sent acknowledging Mr Burns' complaints, but not providing any answers.

Since then, Mr Burns has contacted Hawkesbury MP Steven Pringle and requested the issue be raised in Parliament.

He has also contacted media personalities including John Laws, Mike Carlton and Steve Price to raise awareness of the issue.

Mr Burns said the train was "absolutely packed" in the afternoons since the timetable change and that regular commuters were getting off at other stations to try and catch a less crowded train.

"That's just going to have a domino effect for other trains," he said. "CityRail are just paper shuffling. They just don't care and that's what infuriates me."

Mr Pringle has submitted a written question about the Hawkesbury rail line to Minister for Transport John Watkins, and expects a response within 28 days or at the next Parliamentary sitting. "This (Richmond rail line services) is one of the most important issues Hawkesbury residents face," Mr Pringle said.

"It's one of the top 10 issues constituents come to my office about. The new rail timetable is just not doing enough."

Hot and bothered about bad service

LETTER OF THE DAY



While travelling on a train heading west on Friday night in 34C-plus temperatures, I was thrilled when I saw my train finally pull into Wynyard.

At last, I thought, an air-conditioned train - even though it is late at least I will be comfortable.

But, RailCorp had the last laugh. The airconditioning was not working. So, not only was it so hot I found myself sliding off the seat because of perspiration, but we couldn't open the windows.

We were left gasping for air and when finally the time came to depart the train, it was a pleasure to walk out into 35C heat to the sigh of "that's so much better".

It then occurred to me that if I left a child in a car in this heat with the windows up for



Mx Newspaper 22-2-06

It's hard to find much-needed breathing space on Sydney's crowded public transport system.

any length of time I would have the law to answer to and possibly a jail sentence.

But RailCorp can constantly get away with holding hundreds of people captive on trains and buses in unbearable glass prisons.

Give us a break Morris lemma, when will the Sydney

Letter of the day winner will receive 2 games with shoe hire anytime Monday to Thursday. Winner will be contacted by mX.

STRIKE DOWN THE STRIKE

(Email spitab@oznet.com.au for attachments, include name, address and day phone number)

public have better choices and services to get to and from work. The public transport system is uncomfortable, late, hot and my perso-

nal space is breached every day. The cost of driving to the city is unaffordable, so I am a captive to RailCorp.

- Fed up, Quakers Hill

GOING LOCO: Train drivers, please let us know why we are sitting motionless in a sweat box for 15 minutes. It might reduce our anger just a bit.

– Dan, Penrith

TOP JOB: R.P. from Waverton (mX, Wednesday). I think you should take over minister John Watkins' role ... you seem to know more than him.

– Liza, Mascot

LITTLE HOPE: The problem with expectations and CityRail is most regular commuters don't expect too much after years of cancellations, late running and rude service.

– John, Cronulla

Mx Newspaper 22-2-0

BAN PACKS: To the people who complain about overcrowding on trains, start a campaign to ban backpacks on trains then there will be more room.

– John, Budgewoi

YOU'RE RIGHT: Thanks Phuoc (mX, Tuesday), you just wrote what I had been thinking every time I see those ads on trains. CityRail will never improve – and now fare hikes.

– R.G., Parramatta