

Andrew

On Sunday afternoon I caught a train from Auburn to Town Hall  
I noticed a clear sticky "liquid" substance on the seat  
At Lidcombe I rang 131500 option 5 and reported it requesting a cleaner with a wet and a dry rag to board the train and clean it. The trains have a timetabled stop at Strathfield and Central long enough to clean the seat without delaying the train. I gave the carriage number and said it was the upstairs two seat seat sixth from the front and I was sitting beside it. No one came at Strathfield. I later made a second call. No one got on by the time I left the train at Town Hall. I saw the guard who claimed transit officers had boarded the train - if they did why didn't they call out?  
More to the point did the 131500 record and pass on all the details I gave?

Frustrated that the system constantly fails to respond at Town Hall I went to the Station Master to explain why passengers loose confidence in the system. He came across as anything but proactive and made provocative comments such as " maybe he couldn't find the seat" That provoked an explanation of how to count to six! He just stood there dumbfounded. Is he stupid or is he frustrated that his Managers don't respond to him! I suspect the latter. I suspect he can't get responses either.

Who knows if the seat was cleaned.

No wonder most passengers switch off and treat Rail Corp with the derision to so successfully cultivates.

The major issues with Rail Corp Management are:

1. It is not proactive
2. It develops untested plans, policies, procedures and infrastructure on the run without consulting its own train crews and Station Staff and not the commuters.
3. It is defensive and dismissive.  
see email from Kim Stieme "is most important that customers provide their comments through the recognised channels." demonstrates that the Manager of Ministerial & Customer Correspondence doesn't understand the role of 131500 menu 5

It was originally set up as a hot line by David Hill to activate action when the normal channels of communication fail. Her email demonstrates she is more concerned to "capture" information than respond to the issues.

My reply to her is reprinted below. However I note that she used the general feedback email address so my reply/ submission/ plea for strategic reform did not go to her but will be read by a CSA not Management. She probably won't even see it.

4. those who care are powerless to make real change and frustrated

5. They are using 131500 to channel all complaints which becomes a "fob off" not a means activating improvements. It's degenerated into a "spin line" rather than a "hot line"

6. Rail Corp needs to facilitate information flow from passengers to platform staff and Station Masters who are there, on the ground and can often rectify matters themselves. They ought to be encouraged to organise a meeting with Line Managers and where there are significant issues organise a meeting between passengers and the line Manager or the appropriate Manager.

Rail Corp ought to facilitate communication with passengers and the guard and the Guard to Management. Guardsrds ought to be able to pass on real time issues by communicating with Station Staff ahead.

131500 in it's present form cannot do this, as by the time they contact staff it's all over

sometimes they contact the wrong staff. The CSA's who write responses come across as not understanding the system - or if they do they don't understand how to address passenger concerns.

or higher Management is so unresponsive they are themselves frustrated.

7. Rail Corp Management - Line Manages to the CEO needs to be more pro active more focused on service delivery. More accountable. More accessible to commuters raising issues which are Managerial by nature.

8. The Commuter Council needs to be taken more seriously by Rail Corp Management.

The CEO or Dept ought to be present at each meeting

The meeting time and place ought to be advertised in MX and open to observers

Each section of each line ought to have an ELECTED representative who should be given a Rail Corp email address which should be supplied by Station Masters, 131500, advertised on the Rail Corp web site etc

Nominations should be requested through MX and posters on Station notice boards

Finally I am requesting the email from Kim Stieme be used to illustrate my concerns noting her dismissiveness/ unwillingness to be available to communicate with passengers with issues of significance which demonstrate system failures in that she neither supplied her phone number (unlike me she is paid to spend time in the office) I have to go out to work where I am not contactable for most of the day, nor did she use her own email so my reply will be lost in the system I am demonstrating is ineffective and needing reform.

I have once again been denied the opportunity to discuss with Management issues which are Managerial.

Clearly Rail Corp is in need of Major Reform but NOT in the form of reducing much needed Station Staff and Station Managers (we used to call them Station

Masters) as they are needed to run the system and for safety and operational issues. During the Olympics the system worked because the emphasis was on adequate station Staff.

To conclude I have demonstrated a failure of Rail Corp to address passenger concerns

that 131500 has become ineffective  
Management are using 131500 to sideline

comuter concerns

That I find it necessary to document concerns to IPART in sheer frustration at the ineffectiveness of Rail Corp Management is itself proof that current systems and Managerial protocols have failed.

There is too much emphasis in using the right channels (the ineffective 131500) rather than Managers being pro active.

Yours Sincerely

Graham N L Guy

Graham N L Guy wrote:

>Kim

>

> 1. Please be asured that I ALWAYS in the first instance use 131500  
> option 5

>

>2. I only rang you because the response of 131500 was so ineffectual  
> that you need to know  
> how often the system fails

>

> it's so bad I used one inadequate email last year to sent to IPART  
> to oppose a fare increase

>

> It's so frustrating to receive an inadequate response from a CSA  
> who uses "ysl" as the email address

>

> there needs to be a means of escalating inadequate responses which  
> do not address the issue

>

> I am grateful that you have emailed me so I can document my  
> frustration and sence of powerlessness as a comuter who cares about  
> the system and attempts to care about the seats being in a clean  
> condition.

>

> 3. It was not that I declined to leave a telephone number but I  
> indicated I was going out and would not be contactable so I gave my  
> email address as the most efficient means of contacting me.

>

> 4. External Call Centres such as the one Steller runs promise

- > efficiency but make their money by Team Leaders pushing through Calls
- > at the expense of service and quality.
- >
- > Whilst the CSA's do their best and are generally helpful with
- > timetables and usually document complaints with a degree of accuracy
- >
- > being external their ability to activate a response in real time is
- > limited as I will demonstrate
- >
- > 5. On Sunday afternoon I caught a train from Auburn to Town Hall I
- > noticed a sticky licuid on the isle side of the seat
- >
- > I rang 131500 when the train was at Lidcombe at about 5.33pm I said
- > it is the sixth seat from the front and read the carriage number and
- > indicated I was sitting beside the mess and could point it out to
- > cleaning staff
- >
- > my train was going to Berora via the city
- >
- > I expected someone to clean the seat at Strathfield or Central as both
- > have more staff and longer timetabled stopping times
- >
- > no one came on at Strathfield or Central
- >
- > I rang again - no response
- >
- > When I got off the train at town Hall I noticed the guard was in the
- > next carriage and informed him
- >
- > he claimed transit officers had boarded the train - who knows where
- > and couldn't find the unclean seat
- >
- > a) did the 131500 staff correctly document the details as I clearly
- > read out the carriage number that I was upstairs in a two seat seat
- > sixth seat from the front
- >
- > If any Transit Officer did enter my carriage they did not ask if there
- > was an unclean seat
- >
- > b) It would appear to me that in instances where there is a cleaning
- > issue that 131500 staff ought to be able to ring the next major
- > station
- >
- > or an expeditator at Rail Corp
- >
- > I note that some carriages have a sign asking us to report cleaning
- > issues to 131500
- >
- > 6. outstanding issues
- >
- > a) For four years I have complained that it's difficult to get on
- > board trains from Auburn about 7.40 - 8am from Auburn and yet there is
- > standing room upstairs but inconsiderate passengers ride in the foyer

> all the way to the city making it difficult for others to board at  
> subsequent stations.  
>  
> We need transit officers at Granville to ask commuters to move into the  
> train and clear the foyer for others to board the train.  
>  
> b) Trains are being delayed at stations because disembarking  
> passengers face a wall of embarking passengers.  
>  
> the announcement "stand behind the yellow line" is one cause - they  
> form a wall all along the yellow line.  
>  
> I have suggested the announcement be amended to  
>  
> "stand behind the yellow line  
> and please leave a gap for passengers leaving the train."  
>  
> my suggestion, as with most is dismissed, ignored.  
>  
> c) I suggested - and I clearly recall via 131500 - a couple of years  
> ago  
>  
>  
> that when a train arrives at a station boarding passengers be  
> asked to wait BESIDE the door  
>  
> in fact I suggested the left hand side of the door  
>  
> and disembarking passengers be asked to disembark to their left  
>  
> I suggested signage to direct passengers to enter or leave on  
> their left  
>  
> this would make a smoother exiting and entry  
>  
> d) I recently noticed Town Hall in Peak hour has staff asking  
> passengers to stand aside to enable passengers to disembark I rang a  
> complement to 131500  
>  
> my suggestion in (c) about could refine the system  
>  
> e) I have from time to time expressed my concern that the more modern  
> carriages are sealed and in a black out there would be no air  
> circulating  
>  
> It is imperative that the carriages be modified to create an air flow  
> in an emergency or break down  
>  
> this could be achieved by either say two "slit opening windows" on  
> each carriage  
>  
> or vents each end - one sucking fresh air in the other sucking stale  
> air out

>  
> f) many carriages do not have an emergency button to contact the guard  
>  
> g) Last year I was saddened to hear a man stood on the tracks at  
> Burwood and was killed  
> an apparent suicide I knew one of his workmates  
>  
> I suggested to 131500 that Rail Corp might look at designing  
> technology to scan the tracks ahead to detect anyone on the tracks.  
>  
> Posters suggest this is a major concern for Rail Corp  
>  
> the shock and grief experienced by drivers must be overwhelming  
>  
> the response was dismissive and read as if a CSA had written a  
> response without passing on the suggestion to research and development.  
> Had this been done at some time in the future a device might be  
> invented  
> - saving lives and driver trauma  
>  
> I replied expressing my concern and did not receive a reply.  
>  
> I forwarded it to IPART because one gets the impression that  
> Rail Corp is ignoring / dismissive of suggestions from commuters.  
>  
> I am sad to say that the Ministry for Transport doesn't always  
> address issues raised  
> my Local Member and I were talking about such a response.  
>  
> If responses from the Minister are inadequate  
> If 131500 responses are inadequate  
>  
> is it any wonder we read daily cynicism in MX ?  
>  
> I am an optimist and trust that my email to you will activate  
> improvements.  
>  
> To give up would be intolerable and defeating for all concerned.  
>  
> I concur with your comment that Rail Corp needs to "capture this  
> feedback at a centralised point"  
> but once captured it needs to be adequately responded to  
>  
> either through investigation of complaints  
>  
> or considering suggestions  
>  
> It is my sad experience that all too often neither is done  
> adequately.  
>  
>  
> I do trust that my feedback will enable you to improve the  
> adequacy of Rail Corp responses.

- >
- > There are several matters I would request you to follow up on:
- >
- > 1. Email responses - many of us are NOT contactable during business hours once we start our shift
- >
- > ought to have an email address for escalations of the response
- > is inadequate
- >
- > 2. Real time issues - 131500 needs to be able to activate real time responses
- > such as arranging for a cleaner or Transit Officers
- >
- > 3. 131500 has too many menus
- > complaints are something like # 5 # 2 then # 1
- > very expensive from a mobile
- >
- > CSA's ought to distinguish complaints from real time issues
- >
- > 4. recently the Kiosk at Lidcombe was burnt down - I trust it will be rebuilt
- > and it's size reverted back to the pre turnback building area
- > sufficient for fast food we would like to be able to buy
- >
- > 5. When the turnback is operating passengers from the Beralla direction will be on peak hour terminating trains and they will be then attempting to board full city bound trains.
- >
- > I have raised this before but in the light of morning peak hour trains arriving at Auburn full
- >
- > Suggestion: have some trains commence their journey from a turnback in the Granville / Parramatta region
- >
- > 6. I re submit my suggestion that rather than the Parramatta to Chatswood line including an expensive link from the Carlingford line to Parramatta
- >
- > I have noticed that the Carlingford line leaves Clyde and passes a point a few hundred meters from what could be a turnback at GRANVILLE using what look like all or mostly Rail Corp land.
- >
- > the Carlingford line could be duplicated and continued to Epping
- >
- > this would enable commuters from the west commuting to Chatswood or St Leonards to bypass the city and increase capacity of the network
- >
- > 7. I was concerned to read in the press that Rail Corp Management is not backing up Transit Officers when they intervene in violent situations.
- >
- > Whilst I share the concern of those who at times felt the transit officers were heavy handed in their revenue protection role they were

> employed because comuters asked for increased security on stations and  
> trains.  
> I would hope they would be supported in their role of ensuring  
> pasenger safety  
>  
> 8. Transit Officers observe the network they work on and should be  
> encouraged to pass on suggestions. Sometimes passengers talk to them  
> and suggestions ought to be passed on.  
>  
> It's all about multiple levels of communication.  
>  
> 131500 is not always the best meand of collecting information/  
> suggestions / complaints.  
>  
> I have demonstrated that in its present form it is often found wanting  
> and is in need of reform  
>  
> I have made some suggestions how this could be achieved.  
>  
>  
> I trust I have demonstrated that my request to communicate with you is  
> justified as there are too many matters being raised and not addressed  
> and I therefore need to be brought to your attention  
>  
> Yours Sincerely  
>  
> (Rev) Graham N L Guy (B.A.; Th. Dip)