



Trish Doyle MP

Member for Blue Mountains



02 4751 3298 | bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au | 132 Macquarie Rd Springwood NSW 2777

New South Wales Parliament Legislative Assembly

Blue Mountains Train Services

10 August 2016

I have spoken in this place about timetable problems, maintenance issues, track and signal failures, staffing shortages, Opal errors and inadequate infrastructure for the trains in the Blue Mountains.

Once again I thank the hardworking frontline staff at Sydney Trains, NSW TrainLink and Transport for NSW for their efforts. I thank them for their hard work in the face of funding cuts, incompetent ministerial direction and a Government privatisation agenda that seeks to work the staff ever harder and pay them less and less.

Instead of blowing millions of dollars on consultancy fees for rebranded stations and grey/orange polyester uniforms, the Minister should take the free advice of his workers.

My community relies upon the railway to commute, to do the weekly grocery shopping and to visit friends and family in the next town or in the city. Likewise, our local economy depends upon the tourist dollar. Day trippers who travel by train keep our local economy ticking. Our local businesses need efficient public transport to and from the city. I have said all of this before. I have said it in this place and I have put it in writing to the Minister, and yet nothing has been done.

Instead of repeating myself, I will read into Hansard some of the many comments that my constituents have provided to me about their experiences, in their words.

Cassandra, a regular correspondent to my office, wrote recently:

It is 7.15 p.m. The 4.51 p.m. Central to Mt Victoria service has been stuttering up the mountain for the past hour, with flickering lights and violent thrusts as the train starts and stops, starts then stops.

We are now stationary at Faulconbridge while they 'try and figure out what's wrong with the train'.

I have just returned from China, where the efficiency, cleanliness and modern system puts NSW Trains and infrastructure to shame.

And we are expected to pay \$8.70 for our "service"?

John from Mount Riverview emailed me the other night:

Once again I am on a late running train to the Mountains with no information on why it is late.

Why can't the guard inform people? Has Sydney Trains directed them not to?

The Government just don't seem to care about those who have long distances to travel home. I don't expect much to change especially with this non-entity timeserving rail minister. No doubt a fare raise will be coming soon too.

Mark from Hazelbrook vented by email, too:

The overcrowding on trains is immediately apparent to anyone who travels by train to work and it is ridiculous that train travellers pay a premium to travel in those conditions at so-called 'peak' times.

Today the train was over full, with passengers blocking the aisles and even sitting on the stairs.

It requires considerable agility, not to mention goodwill and patience to alight from the train. Sometimes I have missed my stop, being trapped in the crowd. This situation must make train travel for persons with a disability extremely challenging—even traumatic.

I suspect that the re-imposition of tolls on the M4 by this Government will only exacerbate this overcrowding on trains by discouraging driving to work on the motorway!

Earlier I mentioned the hardworking staff, who have put up with so much. A train driver and I were discussing his concerns recently. He told me:

Every weekend, a huge amount of passengers come up to the mountains for a day trip to visit our great area.

However, trains are packed, with standing room only from Sydney to Katoomba in the mornings and by afternoon on the way back to Sydney they are just as crowded.

The decision to provide four car trains instead of six or eight makes our railways look really bad to the public.

To make matters worse, over the school holidays there was no extra capacity provided, so you can imagine the extra overcrowding that occurred...

I am sick and tired of being yelled at and being told it is my fault passengers have to stand for hours at a time and asked to explain why there are not extra carriages provided at peak times on weekends.

It is completely out of my control.

So, Minister Constance, wherever you might be, listen up: You need to lift your game. You need to beat a path to your predecessor's office door—that of Treasurer Berejiklian—and demand the funding our train system needs to run efficiently and reliably.

Fix our train line, restore our services, support your frontline staff and get your act together.

The public transport system in New South Wales is falling apart at the seams and you have been standing around doing nothing about it for five years.

Stop making excuses and fix this mess.