



Reference: 18/16793/SydTrains/RH:DT

9th January 2018

Mr H Collins
Chief Executive
Sydney Trains
Level 20, 477 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Collins,

Re: Don't Blame the Drivers

I write on behalf of members employed by Sydney Trains who you decided to vilify in the media on Monday 8th January 2018 and blame for train cancellations on that day.

This reeks of management trying to cover up their own scheduling failures by putting the blame on the workforce and commuters.

The new Sydney Trains timetable has been shambolic since day one. The timetable was introduced without any consultation with the workforce and the result has been disastrous for commuters.

Gaps in driver coverage are a result of a failure to recruit enough drivers in advance of the new timetable, not qualifying all drivers for all sectors and traction and ignoring the issues raised by your employees and their representatives. Instead of addressing these issues, your management team decided to blame the drivers.

For example in the media you spoke about a "Train Driver who didn't show up to relieve his train". In reality this appears to have been a driver who was unable to take that train because of non-qualification for track or traction. Service disruptions arising from Drivers not being qualified for all tracks and traction is not a new issue. Your employees and the Locomotive Division have consistently warned of the impact that management's attempts at sectorisation would have on the network.

This seems to be part of an active and concerted campaign by Sydney Trains to purposely demonise and attack their workforce and provoke a reaction, so they can then use it to deflect from their own mismanagement at a time when we are in EA negotiations and the bedding down of a new timetable.

To falsely attribute blame to Train Drivers may leave our members exposed to criticism, ridicule and possible attack at the hands of frustrated Sydney commuters. This frustration should be directed at Sydney Trains and the NSW Transport Minister.

There is further evidence that this was not a result of worker activities but instead poor management as RTBU representatives were advised by management last Friday, 5th January 2018 that they were making plans to cancel services for Monday 8th, Tuesday 9th and possibly Monday 15th.

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We were specifically told:

'That owing to a driver shortage brought about by 'excess leave approvals' there will be service impacts on Monday 8th, Tuesday 9th and Monday 15th of January.

Starting on Monday 8th the following will occur:

- 82 service legs will be cancelled
- 35 outside of peak
- 18 inside of peak
- the remainder are 'empty car movements'

In order to overcome the shortfall on Monday 8th we were advised that the following would be put in place:

- 15 Driver Trainers will be removed from training to work services ('trainees will have to catch up the missed day later')
- Freelance will be returned to 'active service'
- Route Knowledge Diagrams will be cancelled and 'allocated service runs'

'Sydney Trains will review the outcomes of the plan for Monday 8th on the day in order to assess the requirements for Tuesday which Sydney Trains didn't believe will be as bad at this stage as they look like being 'only 50 odd short' and 'we can run the railway 50 short'?

Despite this lackadaisical approach to transport planning being a decision that was actively made by management, when the disastrous results of this planning: were known, it was drivers who management chose to blame. The hard-working Train Drivers of the Locomotive Division are incensed by these actions. A simple review of the days' rosters would seem to indicate that less than 40 Drivers called in sick across the network, which we believe is the normal average. The Locomotive Division formally requests that you provide evidence to support your claims as without evidence these claims are considered false and vexatious.

Driver morale is already at an all-time low. They are constantly being expected to do more. They are routinely asked to work excessive hours and shifts to keep the system running. At times they are expected to work without meal breaks, have to ask to go to the toilet or are scheduled for shifts that have insufficient time for toilet breaks.

Instead of working with drivers and their representatives to address the real issues, management decided to blame the failing service on excessive leave approvals, reduced customer demand, track work, the weather before ultimately ending with the old Railway chestnut of blaming the Drivers.

The Locomotive Division believes your comments constitute a breach of Clause 2.5 of the Sydney Trains Enterprise Agreement 2014. Sydney Trains as the Employer has an obligation to – "Ensure that all Employees are treated with trust, dignity and concern for their rights and individual needs", which they have failed to do.

Additionally we consider your statements to be inconsistent with "Our Code of Conduct" (Transport for NSW); a document to which you are a signatory. Attribution of blame to Train Drivers in a public forum does not promote or demonstrate Agency values of ethical conduct, fairness, impartiality and integrity.

Management are creating an unsafe, morale destroying and hostile working environment for Drivers and all front line employees. It is seen by our members as Sydney Trains failing to fulfil its Duty of Care obligations.

It is with the above in mind that I advise that a Notice of Dispute will be issued in regards to what our members and your employees see as a clear breach of Sydney Trains Code of Conduct and EA obligations.

I also advise that this correspondence will be forwarded to all of our Delegates for the information of members.

I look forward to your response to the above and place on record our preparedness to meet with Sydney Trains to discuss not only the above but other ongoing managerial decisions which are seen by the Locomotive Division and its members as part of a concerted management campaign to attack the professionalism and long standing dedication shown by Drivers.

Yours Sincerely



ROBERT HAYDEN
LOCOMOTIVE DIVISIONAL SECRETARY