



JANINE MYBURGH AND BRETT HERRON EXPERIENCE FIRST-HAND THE INHUMANITY OF TRAIN COMMUTING

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Suburban trains are packed way beyond their capacity. The conditions are inhuman and much worse than I could possibly have imagined.

Myself and Mr Brett Herron, the member of the City Council's Mayoral Committee responsible for transport, boarded an early morning train at Kraaifontein station to gain first-hand experience of what train commuters suffer every day in Cape Town.

You have to experience it first hand to fully understand it.

Seeing is not enough, I could not see anything as I was squashed in the middle of a carriage surrounded by much taller people.

At one stage I dropped a cool drink bottle but it never reached the floor. It remained wedged between the bodies.

On the whole trip into town I was able to see only one station name and that was Salt River because the crowd had thinned a little by then. It would be so easy to miss your station because you can't see the sign or you simply did not have enough brute force to get to the door.

The coach doors were forced open all the way which is extremely dangerous. I was told by the commuters that this was to prevent them from suffocating.

I spoke to commuters who told me they had to get up at 4 am to get to work and they did not get home again till 7pm. One man told me he had to appear at a disciplinary hearing because he had been late so often. He wasn't bitter and he said he understood why his employers were taking action but there was nothing he could do. He said it is what it is.

The physical and mental strains on commuters are incomprehensible and don't know how they survive the daily trauma of a train ride. The elderly, disabled and children would be risking their lives if they attempted to use the trains.



CAPE CHAMBER

OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

To make it even more frightening I was assured that it was a good day as the school holidays eased the pressure. I wonder what this is costing the economy in terms of lost productivity, pain and suffering. It must be millions of rands every week.

It's also clear that the problem is bigger than Metrorail. It's time we stopped pointing fingers and we need to work together to find an acceptable solution.

The cable theft and vandalism have damaged and destroyed many train sets and that is one of the causes of overcrowding and I think that's where we have to start. Metrorail desperately needs help from the police, the community, national, provincial, local government and business. We have to find a workable solution in everybody's interest.

Janine Myburgh

President of the Cape Chamber

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