

# Rail cuts are 'unwise'

EX-TRANSPORT COP DEFENDS STATIONMASTERS

By Murray Trembath

A FORMER policeman who headed the commuter crime unit at Cronulla believes CityRail is on the wrong track with its plan to axe a large number of stationmasters.

Garry Beattie, who retired in 2007 after 35 years in the police force and regularly commutes from Woollooware railway station, said acting station manager Brian Chan was an example of how the job should be done.

Woollooware, Como, Kirrawee and Loftus are among Sutherland Shire stations that will be managed from other locations.

In the St George area, Arncliffe, Banksia and Carlton will lose stationmasters, with decisions still to be made about Bardwell Park, Beverly Hills, Bexley North and Narwee.

Mr Beattie, who first voiced his concerns in a letter to Cronulla MP Malcolm Kerr, said Mr Chan was dedicated and enthusiastic.

"He not only manages all activities at the station, but makes commuters' lives bearable through his genuine care about the public and the station," he said.

"I have often seen him cleaning up and painting over graffiti, which I am sure would not be part of his job description.

"The State Government should be congratulating Brian for the job he does, rather than transferring him to save money."

Mr Beattie said the same could be said for other stations. It was better to have an on-site manager who felt "ownership", took responsibility and could make quick decisions.

CityRail's acting general manager - customer service, Marshall Craddock, agreed Mr Chan was outstanding.

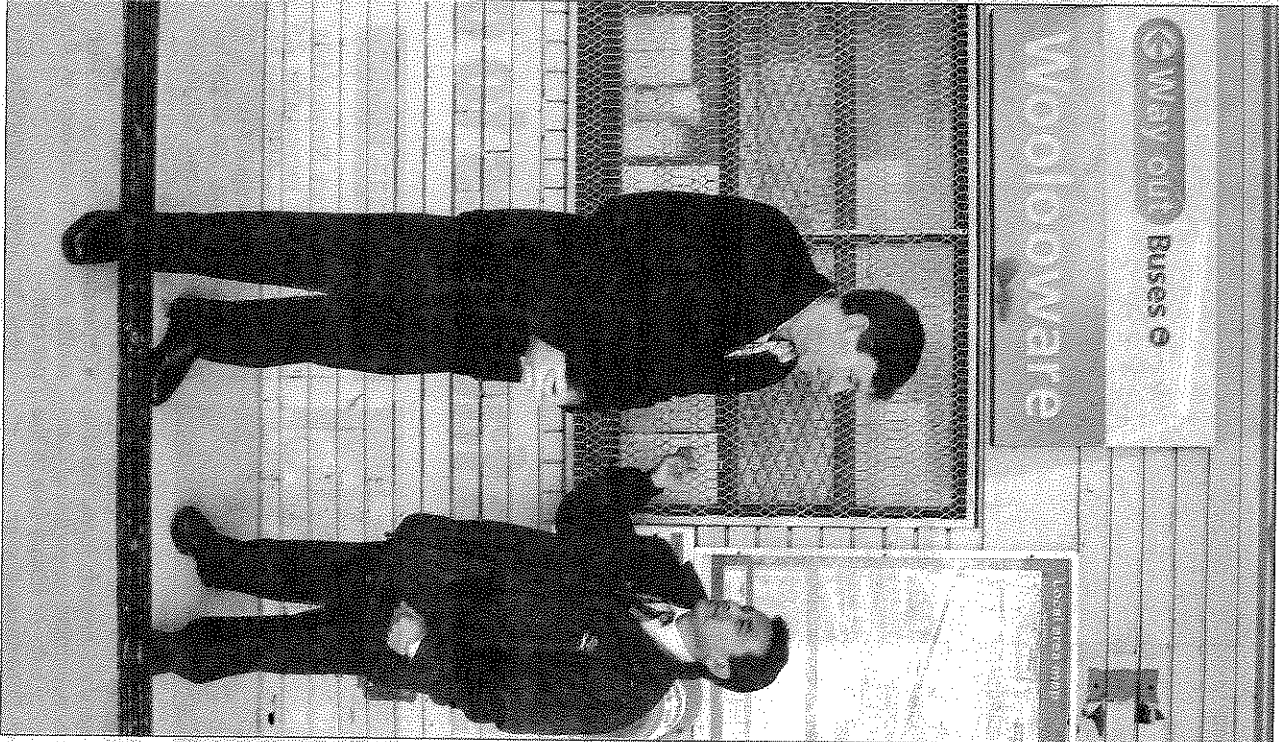
"CityRail has many more people like Brian equally dedicated to customer service," he said.

"This station staff review simply aims to better match our staffing arrangements with passenger movements and needs.

"I can assure customers who use Woollooware station that it will continue to be staffed during the same hours on the same days of the week."

Transport Minister David Campbell reiterated that no station staff would lose their jobs. He said the changes were part of a collective agreement with the rail unions, which included wage increases, and accused the Opposition of spreading fear.

"This review is about ensuring station staff are positioned where they are needed most," he said.



Masterful job: Garry Beattie (left) with Brian Chan, the stationmaster "who makes commuters' lives bearable".  
Picture: Simon Bennett