

30 Years since Electrification of the Riverstone to Richmond Line

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The first official train ready to leave Riverstone.

17 August 1991 was an important day for commuters on the Richmond Line with the commencement of electric train services from Riverstone to Richmond.

The service from Riverstone to Richmond had previously been provided by CPH Rail Motors and then two car Diesel Railmotors. The latter had become more unreliable which meant that service was often replaced by buses.

Even with electrification, due to limitations with the rail electricity supply, the service from Riverstone to Richmond was still to be a shuttle. The trains now being two car electric ones which were badged "L" sets. They were not new carriages and non air conditioned. For safety they had headlights added for night vision for the drivers, as the line still had several road level crossings along the length.

An official train, carrying dignitaries and special invited guests, departed from Riverstone for Richmond, where festivities were held including historic displays and band music.

Travel for the rest of the day between Riverstone and Richmond was free and many local took the opportunity to travel between the stations.



NSW Transport Minister Bruce Baird (centre of photo) holding the "Electric Trains Stop" sign.



1991. Morning commuters changing trains at Riverstone.

In 1992, the power supply was upgraded, and the Richmond line was fully integrated into the Sydney Metropolitan system. Passengers no longer needed to change trains at Richmond. The small "dock" section of track was filled in and became part of the commuter car park.

One thing that passengers would have missed was the Station Master's announcement each time the electric trains came in from Sydney, which went something like this: "All out all change please, this train terminates, terminating train on number one platform, all out all change. This train terminates and returns to the City. Passengers for the Richmond Line should board the train waiting in the dock at the western end of the platform. All out all change please."

Full electrification brought a more reliable train service for commuters on the Richmond Line. The final significant upgrade for travellers came with the introduction of the Eight car Waratah Class train sets which are all airconditioned.



18 June 1995. A four car Tangara train passing the former Meatworks site.

Photos: Rosemary Phillis