# Sydney impedimenta Deo contraria (God opposing Sydney trains)

Dateline Mexico City 22 June 1986. Estadio Azteca, capacity 110,000. England desperate to relive the glory of ’66 up against the Argies who had the world’s best player wearing no 10.

The blue and whites in the penalty box, England’s great keeper unable to stop the shot. Was Diego onside? The flag stayed down. Goal! A week later, the World Cup headed to Buenos Aires.

Then a confession: the goal was

*"a little with the head of Maradona and a little with the hand of God".[[1]](#endnote-1)*

Isn’t God an Englishman?

Thirty-one years later, on the other side of the world, God is said to have struck again. Sydney trains, led by a renowned railwayman from England – the Peter Shilton of trains if you like - suffered consecutive meltdowns in early January.[[2]](#endnote-2)

According to the Minister for Transport, the Hon. Andrew Constance MP, these collapses were due to ‘acts of God’.[[3]](#endnote-3)

The Minister asked the head of Sydney trains and the Secretary of the Transport Department, who had led the Metro build, to investigate how to mitigate the wrath of the Almighty – how Sydney trains can better recover from major incidents.[[4]](#endnote-4)

The media release helpfully outlined what the forthcoming report is likely to include. The timetable was not mentioned in that regard. Nor were the consequences – strategic, resource, cultural - of his Government’s preference to invest in Metro at the expense of Sydney trains, along with comments that Metro trains do not need drivers. Also ignored is potential for Metro meltdowns. Perhaps, like lightning strikes, these are thought to be works of the divine.

It would be premature to go into causes of and solutions for the rail chaos that emerged post the November 2017 timetable before the investigation is completed. The beagle intends to hold off comments until the investigation, due before the end of next week, is published.

In the interim, the beagle has asked for a retraction of a comment made before the new timetable:

‘*At the operational level things are going reasonably.  The Government deserves credit as it is no easy thing in Sydney’.[[5]](#endnote-5)*

Consider that retracted and replaced by:

*Sydney Trains punctuality etc. is supposedly at risk from the new timetable. The timetable reduces ‘recovery’ time; delays will cascade through the network and continue for long periods of time.*[[6]](#endnote-6)

Hopefully the Almighty will have a change of heart and stop opposing Sydney trains. Or maybe the fiascos weren’t the work of the Lord at all?

Happy new year!

J Austen

15 January 2018

1. <http://www.goal.com/en/news/diego-maradona-the-hand-of-god-the-most-infamous-goal-in/15sev9f2t2sn814f2n8d2ah3zc> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. For example: <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/anatomy-of-sydneys-train-meltdown/news-story/05a8f9172502d77e1f7faeca3c4f8dff>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-11/sydney-trains-delays-blamed-on-range-of-reasons/9319638> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-10/sydney-trains-issued-with-please-explain-over-network-meltdown/9316860> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/media-releases/sydney-trains-report-into-major-incident-recovery> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <https://johnmenadue.com/john-austen-trouble-in-infrastructure-paradise-nsw/> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.thejadebeagle.com/paradise-revisited.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)