



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

State and Regional Development Committee

REPORT 1/55 – MARCH 2014

INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

REPORTS
COMMITTEES

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LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY



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STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

REPORT 1/55 – MARCH 2014

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The motto of the coat of arms for the state of New South Wales is "Orta recens quam pura nites". It is written in Latin and means "newly risen, how brightly you shine".

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Membership

CHAIR	Mr Andrew Gee MP, Member for Orange
DEPUTY CHAIR	Mr Adam Marshall MP, Member for Northern Tablelands (from 10 September 2013, Deputy Chair from 23 October 2013) Mr Chris Spence MP, Member for The Entrance (until 10 September 2013)
MEMBERS	Mr Robert Furolo MP, Member for Lakemba (from 14 March 2013) Mr Daryl Maguire MP, Member for Wagga Wagga Mr Greg Piper MP, Member for Lake Macquarie (from 21 March 2013)
CONTACT DETAILS	Legislative Assembly State and Regional Development Committee
TELEPHONE	(02) 9230 3001
FACSIMILE	(02) 9230 3309
E-MAIL	stateregional@parliament.nsw.gov.au
URL	http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/stateandregionaldevelopment

Terms of Reference

That the Committee inquire into how inter-regional public transport can better serve the needs of regional New South Wales.

Particular issues for consideration include:

- (a) how CountryLink services can be improved;
- (b) how network linkages between CountryLink train and coach services can be improved;
- (c) the potential for CountryLink services to carry light freight;
- (d) how CountryLink can be better utilised to increase tourism in New South Wales;
- (e) how the amount of inter-regional travel undertaken by public transport can be increased;
- (f) the extent to which regional public transport networks are integrated and how they can be better integrated;
- (g) the role local councils can play in improving inter-regional public transportation networks; and
- (h) the type of buses and trains that will be required for the provision of regional passenger services in the future.

For the purposes of this inquiry, the Committee uses the term inter-regional travel to refer to travel between regional areas or between a regional area and a metropolitan area.

The Committee does not intend to consider the privatisation of existing government owned public transport, including CountryLink, as part of its inquiry.

Chair's Foreword

Public transport is a topic close to the hearts of people in regional communities.

It's a big state we live in, and isolation from metropolitan areas or other regional communities is a real issue.

In this regard inter-regional public transport is often crucial to providing access to medical services, education and employment. Finding ways to bridge the tyranny of distance also helps to encourage growth and prosperity in regional New South Wales.

The aim of this inquiry has been to examine ways in which inter-regional public transport can be improved.

As part of this inquiry the Committee has taken a large number of written submissions, held public hearings, and travelled all over regional NSW.

It is the hope of the Committee that its work is a constructive and meaningful addition to efforts to improve inter-regional public transport.

May I thank all members of the Committee and also Committee staff for their effort and hard work in contributing to this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Gee', with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Andrew Gee MP
Chair

Executive Summary

Key issues

The Committee examined a range of key issues related to the broad theme of how inter-regional public transport can better serve the needs of regional NSW. The key issues have been grouped in the report under the following categories:

- the role of inter-regional public transport in regional NSW
- equity of access to public transport
- service provision and timetabling
- ticketing
- tourism and
- future trains and buses.

The role of inter-regional public transport in regional NSW

The Committee examined the role of a reliable, functional, affordable and accessible inter-regional public transport system in regional NSW. The Committee heard stakeholder evidence that inter-regional public transport services made a significant contribution to the standard of living in regional NSW and were greatly valued by regional residents as a result. In contrast, stakeholders advised the Committee that a lack of adequate inter-regional public transport restricted residents' quality of life, constrained regions' potential for economic and social growth, and resulted in geographic and social isolation for vulnerable groups. The Committee recommended that Transport for NSW enhances the existing inter-regional public transport network wherever practicable, with priority being given to those regions that do not currently have access to the network.

Overarching strategies to improve inter-regional public transport

The Committee noted two of Transport for NSW's initiatives to make wide-ranging improvements to the inter-regional public transport network, the Fixing the Trains program and the Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy. The Committee also considered additional overarching strategies that could be employed to improve inter-regional public transport in regional NSW and increase the uptake of those services by regional passengers. Stakeholders suggested that patronage of inter-regional public transport services would improve if rail travel was actively promoted as an attractive travel alternative on the grounds of factors such as passenger safety and environmental impacts. Inquiry participants stated that inter-regional public transport would be effectively promoted by targeted public awareness/advertising campaigns, policy and financial incentives to use public transport, and disincentives to use private vehicles. The Committee agreed that inter-regional public transport could be better promoted and recommended that NSW TrainLink develops a marketing strategy promoting its rail and bus services to regional customers. Inquiry participants also stated that the strategic integration of land use and public transport planning (e.g. encouraging land use density around public transport hubs) would have the effect of making inter-regional public transport more

effective and increasing patronage. The Committee noted that the issue of land use and public transport planning was addressed extensively in the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan (*Transport Master Plan*).

The role of local governments in improving inter-regional public transport

The Committee heard that local governments can play a role in liaising between their communities and the agencies that provide inter-regional transport services; they have a role in educating constituents about existing public transport opportunities and the benefits of public transport over private vehicles; and they should also work with Transport for NSW to improve public transport infrastructure. Stakeholders from the local government sector stated that they had no standing means by which to consult with Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink about public transport issues. The Committee agreed that local governments should have an active consultative role and recommended that Transport for NSW considers the implementation of a process that enables local governments to consult with the agency in relation to public transport issues and promotes this process to local governments.

The role and effectiveness of Regional Transport Coordinators in improving inter-regional public transport

The Committee considered the role and effectiveness of Regional Transport Coordinators (RTCs) and heard that RTCs would be more effective if their role was expanded to incorporate assessing wider public transport needs and identifying appropriate means to address those needs. Stakeholders also suggested that the level of engagement between RTCs and regional communities was inconsistent and varied from one RTC to another. The Committee agreed that the role of RTCs should be expanded and that they should also have a role in facilitating consultation between local governments and Transport for NSW in relation to public transport issues. Consequently, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW conducts a review of RTCs to examine their role and develops strategies to encourage greater engagement between RTCs and local stakeholders.

In addition, the Committee considered that there may be value in a mechanism that facilitates consultation between Transport for NSW and frontline regional staff about issues affecting local areas, including staff suggestions for improved services. To this effect, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW, in conjunction with NSW TrainLink, develops a systematic mechanism for regional transport staff to have input into suggested improvements to the inter-regional transport network.

Equity of access to public transport

The issue of transport disadvantage amongst vulnerable groups such as older people, people with disabilities, people on low incomes and people with a mental illness was considered by the Committee. The Committee heard that transport disadvantage was particularly prevalent in regional areas and examined means to make inter-regional public transport more accessible to vulnerable groups.

Accessible vehicles, railway stations and bus interchanges, and service information

Inquiry participants advised the Committee that in terms of accessibility, trains were the preferred transport mode for older people, people with disabilities and people with mobility issues, and that measures should be taken to make regional railway stations and bus interchanges more accessible to these groups. Stakeholders also submitted that service

information, including information about train and bus timetables, should be made more accessible. The Committee noted Transport for NSW's wide-ranging actions to make inter-regional transport more accessible to vulnerable groups, but was concerned that there did not appear to be a minimum accessibility standard for NSW TrainLink's services. Consequently, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW conducts a full accessibility audit of NSW TrainLink's trains and coaches, its regional railway stations and bus interchanges, and addresses any issues arising from the audit.

Community transport

The Committee heard that community transport had the potential to provide flexible, responsive and integrated public transport to regional communities. However, inquiry participants advised the Committee that certain groups that are vulnerable to the effects of transport disadvantage do not currently have access to community transport. This concerned the Committee and, as a result, it recommended that Transport for NSW considers broadening the scope of community transport to provide services to all groups in regional communities experiencing transport disadvantage, and that it develops a community transport accreditation scheme as a matter of priority.

Service provision and timetabling

Frequency and reliability of services

Inquiry participants raised frequency and reliability of rail and bus services as being factors that limited NSW TrainLink's effectiveness as a public transport provider and restricted its capacity to attract and retain customers. The Committee heard that the structure and condition of the track on which passenger trains run, and competition for track with other networks (freight and the Sydney metropolitan network) both impacted on service frequency and reliability. The Committee acknowledged the extremely high cost of track upgrades, but considered that investment in NSW's track network would deliver substantial benefits for regional customers, the foremost of these being faster train journeys and more frequent and reliable services. The Committee therefore recommended that, subject to budgetary considerations, the NSW Government considers the provision of funding with the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) for projects to upgrade the existing track network to enable passenger trains to travel at faster speeds; and obtains advice from Transport for NSW and the ARTC to identify the priority areas requiring immediate action.

Timetabling

Many stakeholders expressed concern NSW TrainLink timetables not adequately meeting the needs of regional passengers, prioritising instead the requirements of metropolitan passengers travelling between major centres. Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink commented that factors such as the limitations of rolling stock and track condition and structure restricted the capacity to provide optimal timetables for regional passengers. The Committee concluded that, as a principal provider of public transport to regional NSW, NSW TrainLink should endeavour to timetable its services to meet the needs of regional passengers, particularly when service gaps have been identified. As a result, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink:

- identify areas where timetabling can be reconfigured to provide regional passengers with improved services, including same-day return journeys and departure and arrival times that complement business hours
- implement improvements to the timetabling of regional services where it is practicable and affordable and
- review stakeholder evidence to this inquiry which raises specific service and timetabling issues to assist with this undertaking.

Service integration and connectivity

The Committee heard that issues with service connectivity and integration between NSW TrainLink's train and coach services, as well as other public transport modes, meant that regional passengers often experienced long waits for connecting services in inadequate passenger facilities. The Committee also heard that regional passengers were frequently required to travel additional distances (e.g. to other transport interchanges) to access connecting transport modes. While the Committee understood that overcoming all service integration issues and undertaking a wholesale upgrade of transport interchanges was not feasible, the Committee sought to minimise the instances and impacts of inadequate service connectivity on regional passengers. To this effect, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW conducts a state-wide review of how connectivity between its regional rail and bus services can be improved; and that it undertakes an audit of inter-regional public transport services to identify where express services can be introduced to facilitate faster travel times. In addition, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW upgrades existing bus interchange facilities where those facilities do not meet the needs of regional commuters; and that it updates its website to include clear information about the connectivity of other public transport services with NSW TrainLink train services, including information about timetables and interchange facilities.

On-board services

Inquiry stakeholders spoke about the benefits of the implementing the following amenities on board NSW TrainLink's train services:

- Wi-Fi
- battery charging facilities for mobile phones, laptop computers and tablets
- seating that can be used as a work space
- entertainment systems for games, television and films
- special conferencing trains outfitted with tables, workstations and other conferencing facilities and
- improved facilities for carrying bicycles.

Stakeholders suggested that making more of these services available was an effective way of encouraging patronage and making trips more comfortable for existing passengers. While the Committee saw the great potential of enhanced on-board services, it was also mindful of the substantial investment that would be required to refurbish existing rolling stock for the

purpose. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that NSW TrainLink implements improvements to on-board services and amenities on its trains and coaches that can be achieved in the short-term and without significant cost; and that it gives consideration to the Committee's findings with respect to on-board services when acquiring any new rolling stock utilised for inter-regional public transport.

Services at railway stations and bus interchanges

The inadequacies of services and conditions at NSW TrainLink railway stations and connecting bus interchanges were highlighted by stakeholders. Issues identified included accessibility, bicycle storage and car parking facilities; timely, effective and accurate provision of information to customers; and passenger security. The Committee heard that Transport for NSW was aware of these issues and was providing ongoing support to improve passenger infrastructure in regional areas through the Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme and Transport Access Program. The Committee was of the view that the overall level of service offered to customers at regional railway stations and bus interchanges would be greatly enhanced by measures to make up-to-date information on timetables and connecting services more widely available. Consequently, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW implements practicable measures to improve the amount and timeliness of information available at regional stations.

Inter-regional bus services

Stakeholders submitted that bus transport had great potential for expanding the inter-regional public transport network as it is a low-cost, flexible and reliable transport mode. The Committee agreed that NSW TrainLink's coach network is an integral component of the inter-regional public transport network and viewed it as being complementary to the NSW TrainLink rail network. The Committee concluded that regional customers would be best serviced if the coach network is supported in this complementary role and recommended that Transport for NSW considers measures to broaden NSW TrainLink's coach network coverage; better integrate coach services with connecting train services; and remove unnecessary barriers to using coach services.

Ticketing

The Committee considered issues raised by inquiry stakeholders about NSW TrainLink's ticketing, including affordability and accessibility, and whether the ticketing system is sufficiently integrated to enable passengers to travel easily between the NSW TrainLink and the Sydney Trains networks. To address the issue of affordability the Committee encouraged Transport for NSW to continue to offer the lowest fares possible to transport disadvantaged groups.

The Committee also heard of stakeholder concerns about the vexed issue of fare differentials on the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks. In this regard, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW examines and reviews the cost of fares on the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks, with a particular focus on the fare structure concerning the nexus of the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks.

In relation to the accessibility of ticketing the Committee noted stakeholder issues with obtaining NSW TrainLink tickets, due to factors such as lack of internet access, ticketing facilities not being available at railway stations, and difficulties with meeting the costs of pre-

booking fees. The Committee encouraged Transport for NSW to consider the stakeholder evidence received to this inquiry should it examine the issue of accessibility of ticketing in the future.

The Committee noted Transport for NSW's introduction of the Opal Card, and expressed its hope that the Opal Card initiative would address calls for integrated travel and ticketing between the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks. Further, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW extends the coverage of the Opal Card to incorporate public transport in all areas of regional NSW, so that regional passengers may also enjoy the benefits of better integrated public transport networks.

The Committee also sought to address the issue of NSW TrainLink passengers having to wait for long periods of time at certain stops in order to take advantage of less expensive Sydney Trains fares. For this reason, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW investigates the matter of customers being required to disembark at the nexus of the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks in order to obtain Sydney Trains fares, in an effort to identify ways in which the current system can be improved.

Tourism

The Committee examined NSW TrainLink's current contribution to tourism in NSW, and how it might attract a greater share of the tourism market for its own benefit and for the benefit of tourism in regional NSW generally. The Committee considered stakeholder evidence about the effectiveness of NSW TrainLink's advertising and promotion strategies; how it collaborates with other government agencies and regional organisations to develop tourism initiatives; as well as new train and coach services that could contribute to growing tourism in regional NSW in the future.

NSW TrainLink tourism packages and events

The Committee found that tourism packages and tourism-oriented activities had great potential to increase patronage of NSW TrainLink's rail and bus services, and to grow regional tourism and businesses. The Committee concluded that there was scope to do more in this area, and recommended that Transport for NSW work with Destination NSW to expand its range of rail and bus tourism packages to and from regional NSW, with a particular focus on packages that support local festivals or events.

Travel passes

Inquiry stakeholders supported measures to extend the coverage of the Opal Card to more regional areas in NSW, and for NSW TrainLink to expand its current range of travel passes to incorporate certain features of travel passes available in other countries. The Committee also heard that the majority of NSW TrainLink's travel passes are only available to overseas travellers. In the interests of increasing rail and bus tourism to regional NSW, the Committee supported the extension of the Opal Card Scheme to incorporate public transport in all areas of regional NSW and made an earlier recommendation to this effect. The Committee also recommended that Transport for NSW considers introducing a comprehensive travel pass for domestic and international tourists that can be used across public transport modes; and that it makes all of its travel passes available to Australian residents in order to attract a greater share of the local tourist market.

Services and facilities to attract tourists

The Committee heard a range of suggestions from inquiry stakeholders about how NSW TrainLink could improve its services and facilities to enhance the traveller experience and attract more tourist customers. Stakeholders suggested that NSW TrainLink should:

- improve the timetabling of its services to better meet the needs of tourists
- implement measures to reduce the travel times of its rail services
- implement a more flexible booking system, enabling tourists to add-on extra services to the travel component
- promote local regional food and beverage specialties on board trains
- introduce services for children, such as a dedicated children’s car and complementary activity packs
- provide on-board amenities, such as Wi-Fi, battery charging facilities for mobile phones, laptop computers and tablets, and entertainment systems and
- improve tourism-related rail and bus infrastructure.

The Committee considered that an effective way to enhance inter-regional tourist travel would be for Transport for NSW and Destination NSW to work collaboratively to identify measures to improve the services and facilities that are provided to NSW TrainLink’s customers.

Consequently, the Committee recommended that NSW TrainLink and Destination NSW prepare a strategy focusing on short and long-term initiatives to improve the tourist experience of NSW TrainLink services, with the aim of encouraging more tourists to use these services; and that the strategy also addresses disincentives for tourists using NSW TrainLink services.

Carriage of bicycles

In order to take advantage of the growing bicycle tourism market, the Committee heard that NSW TrainLink’s rail and coach services should be better equipped to store and carry bicycles. At present, there is a limit of two bicycles per train, bicycles must be pre-booked, and bicycles must be partially disassembled and boxed prior to being stored in the luggage area. The Committee agreed with stakeholder views and recommended that NSW TrainLink considers enhancing its capacity to carry bicycles on its services and simplifies the procedure for using this facility.

Advertising and promotion

Stakeholders suggested that the visibility of NSW TrainLink’s tourism packages would be enhanced with increased promotion and marketing, and that this would result in increased tourist patronage. The Committee considered that there is scope for wider promotion of NSW TrainLink’s services, particularly to the international and domestic tourist market. Consequently, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW reviews and updates its current marketing strategy for promoting NSW TrainLink’s services to the international and domestic tourism market, with a view to increasing the visibility of its services.

Co-ordination between NSW TrainLink and other organisations

Inquiry participants called for increased collaboration between NSW TrainLink, Destination NSW and regional tourism organisations, as a means of identifying and creating new tourism opportunities in an effective and co-ordinated manner. The Committee agreed and concluded that the best way for NSW TrainLink to establish closer strategic alliances with regional tourism organisations is through Destination NSW, given the agency's existing close ties with the tourism industry. For this reason the Committee recommended that Destination NSW considers developing a strategy to enhance collaboration and engagement between NSW TrainLink and regional tourism organisations to identify and develop tourism opportunities.

Services for regional tourist destinations

The Committee heard that there were tourist destinations in regional NSW that were not adequately serviced by the NSW TrainLink network and that this had restricted the growth of tourism in those regions. The Committee noted stakeholder suggestions about possible train and bus routes that could create new tourism opportunities. The Committee recommended that Transport for NSW works with Destination NSW to determine existing services gaps and to identify new NSW TrainLink train and coach services targeted towards growing the regional tourism market.

Future trains and buses

The Committee examined NSW TrainLink's ageing fleet and the types of trains and buses that it may use in the future. In considering the fleet of the future, the Committee looked at the potential benefits to passengers, such as reduced travel times, increased comfort and enhanced accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities. Finally, the Committee considered the capacity of NSW TrainLink's services to carry light freight.

Future train and bus options

The Committee heard that the increasing age of NSW TrainLink's fleet and the condition of the track on which trains run has impacted on NSW TrainLink's capacity to provide optimal services to passengers. The Committee heard stakeholder evidence that options such as tilt trains, high-speed rail, upgrading the existing track network, smaller rail car sets and modern buses, should be considered when determining the trains, buses and related infrastructure to be used for the NSW TrainLink network in the future. Common across all stakeholder views was a shared call for fleet solutions that reduce travel times. Consequently, the Committee recommended that Transport for NSW, in determining the trains and buses to be used for the NSW TrainLink network in the future, purchases vehicles that reduce travel times, enhance passenger comfort and better meet the regional transport needs of customers. The Committee also recommended that Transport for NSW considers acquiring rolling stock that incorporates tilt train technology and using smaller rail car sets for NSW TrainLink services, with a view to providing more frequent services, where possible and practicable.

Potential for carrying light freight

The Committee heard evidence on both the potential benefits and the challenges of NSW TrainLink services carrying light freight, with a number of stakeholders giving in-principle support to the notion on the condition that it does not negatively impact on the core business of transporting passengers. Inquiry participants suggested that possible benefits included the reduction of heavy road freight traffic on regional roads and light freight transport being an additional revenue stream for NSW TrainLink. Inquiry participants also outlined some of the

main challenges to be considered, including the need to develop additional infrastructure at railway stations and the size limitations of NSW TrainLink's current train and coach fleet. The Committee concluded that carrying light freight on NSW TrainLink's services is something that should be considered given the potential benefits to NSW TrainLink and regional NSW. The Committee therefore recommended that Transport for NSW investigate the feasibility of carrying light freight on NSW TrainLink's services.

Report structure

Chapter one provides an overview of the inquiry process and the structure of the report, as well as a brief description of the regional public transport network in NSW and a brief overview of *Transport Master Plan*.

Chapter two examines the role of the inter-regional public transport network in regional NSW, and considers overarching strategies to enhance the existing inter-regional public transport network.

Chapter three considers the effects of transport disadvantage among vulnerable groups in regional NSW and measures to make inter-regional public transport more accessible to these groups.

Chapter four looks at the services provided by NSW TrainLink, as well as the timetabling, integration and connectivity of services, and how these can be improved to grow patronage and benefit existing regional customers.

Chapter five examines NSW TrainLink's ticketing, including affordability and accessibility, and whether the system is sufficiently integrated to enable passengers to travel easily between the NSW TrainLink network and the Sydney Trains network.

Chapter six explores the contribution that NSW TrainLink makes to tourism in NSW and considers suggestions from inquiry participants on how it could attract a greater share of the tourism market.

Chapter seven looks at the types of trains and buses that NSW TrainLink may use in the future and examines the potential for NSW TrainLink services to carry light freight.

List of Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1 _____ 14

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW enhances the existing inter-regional public transport network wherever practicable, with priority being given to those regions that do not currently have access to the network.

RECOMMENDATION 2 _____ 14

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW re-routes the NSW TrainLink Southern Coach services to incorporate stops at Jindabyne and Berridale.

RECOMMENDATION 3 _____ 18

The Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink develops a marketing strategy specifically targeting potential regional customers, and actively promoting the benefits of its rail and coach services compared to other forms of transport.

RECOMMENDATION 4 _____ 22

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW:

- considers the implementation of a process to liaise and consult with local governments in relation to public transport issues and
- promotes this process to local governments.

RECOMMENDATION 5 _____ 25

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW conducts a review of Regional Transport Coordinators to examine their role, including, but not limited to their role in the following:

- assessing public transport needs and service gaps in their target regions
- developing appropriate strategies to meet the needs identified and
- facilitating liaison and consultation between local governments and Transport for NSW in relation to public transport issues.

RECOMMENDATION 6 _____ 25

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW publicises the role of Regional Transport Coordinators to regional communities, and develops strategies to encourage greater engagement between Regional Transport Coordinators and their local stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 7 _____ 25

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW, in conjunction with NSW TrainLink, develops a systematic mechanism for regional transport staff to have input into suggested improvements to the inter-regional transport network.

RECOMMENDATION 8 _____ 35

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW conducts a full accessibility audit of NSW TrainLink’s trains and coaches, its regional railway stations and bus interchanges, and addresses any issues.

RECOMMENDATION 9 _____ 37

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW considers broadening the scope of community transport to provide services to all groups in regional communities experiencing transport disadvantage.

RECOMMENDATION 10 _____ 37

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW develops a community transport accreditation scheme as a matter of priority.

RECOMMENDATION 11 _____ 44

The Committee recommends that the NSW Government (subject to budgetary considerations):

- considers the provision of funding with the Australian Rail Track Corporation for projects to upgrade the existing track network to enable passenger trains to travel at faster speeds and
- obtains advice from Transport for NSW and the Australian Rail Track Corporation to identify the priority areas requiring immediate action.

RECOMMENDATION 12 _____ 47

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink:

- review each of the timetabling issues raised in Appendix 5 of this report
- identify areas where timetabling can be reconfigured to provide regional passengers with improved services, including same-day return journeys and departure and arrival times that complement business hours and
- implement improvements to the timetabling of regional services where it is practicable and affordable.

RECOMMENDATION 13 _____ 51

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW conducts a state-wide review of how connectivity between its regional rail and coach services can be improved, with a specific focus on remedying anomalies such as the Orange-Bathurst Bullet connection.

RECOMMENDATION 14 _____ 52

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW undertakes an audit of inter-regional public transport services to identify where express services can be introduced to facilitate faster travel times.

RECOMMENDATION 15 _____ 52

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW upgrades existing bus interchange facilities where these facilities do not meet the needs of regional commuters.

RECOMMENDATION 16 _____ 52

The Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink updates its website to include clear information about the connectivity of other public transport services with NSW TrainLink train services, including information about timetables and interchange facilities.

RECOMMENDATION 17 _____ 54

The Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink:

- implements improvements to on-board services and amenities on its trains and coaches that can be achieved in the short-term and without significant cost and
- gives consideration to the Committee’s findings with respect to on-board services in the acquisition of any new rolling stock utilised for inter-regional public transport.

RECOMMENDATION 18 _____ 57

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW implements practicable measures to improve the amount and timeliness of information available at regional stations.

RECOMMENDATION 19 _____ 60

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW considers measures to:

- broaden NSW TrainLink’s coach network coverage
- better integrate coach services with connecting train services and
- remove unnecessary barriers to using coach services.

RECOMMENDATION 20 _____ 64

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW examines and reviews the cost of fares on the NSW TrainLink and the Sydney Trains networks, with a particular focus on the fare structure concerning the nexus of the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks.

RECOMMENDATION 21 _____ 67

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW extends the coverage of the Opal Card to incorporate public transport in all areas of regional NSW.

RECOMMENDATION 22 _____ 67

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW investigates the matter of customers being required to disembark at the nexus of the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks in order to obtain Sydney Trains fares, with a view to addressing the issue.

RECOMMENDATION 23 _____ 72

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW work with Destination NSW to expand its range of rail and coach tourism packages to and from regional NSW, with a particular focus on packages that support local festivals or events.

RECOMMENDATION 24 _____ 74

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW:

- considers introducing a comprehensive travel pass for domestic and international tourists that can be used across public transport modes and
- makes all of its travel passes available to Australian residents.

RECOMMENDATION 25 _____ 79

The Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink works collaboratively with Destination NSW to prepare a strategy focusing on short and long-term initiatives to improve the tourist experience of NSW TrainLink services, with the aim of encouraging more tourists to use these services. The strategy should also address disincentives for tourists using NSW TrainLink services.

RECOMMENDATION 26 _____ 80

The Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink considers enhancing its capacity to carry bicycles on its services and simplifies the procedure for using this facility.

RECOMMENDATION 27 _____ 81

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW reviews and updates its current marketing strategy for promoting NSW TrainLink services to the international and domestic tourism market, with a view to increasing the visibility of its services.

RECOMMENDATION 28 _____ 83

The Committee recommends that Destination NSW considers developing a strategy to enhance collaboration and engagement between NSW TrainLink and regional tourism organisations to identify and develop tourism opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 29 _____ 84

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW works with Destination NSW to determine existing service gaps and to identify new NSW TrainLink train and coach services targeted towards growing the regional tourism market.

RECOMMENDATION 30 _____ 90

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW:

- in determining the trains and buses to be used for the NSW TrainLink network in the future, purchases vehicles that reduce travel times, enhance passenger comfort and better meet the regional transport needs of customers
- gives active consideration to the acquisition of future rolling stock that incorporates tilt train technology and
- gives active consideration to the use of smaller rail car sets for NSW TrainLink services, with a view to more frequent services, where possible and practicable.

RECOMMENDATION 31 _____ 94

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW investigates the feasibility of carrying light freight on NSW TrainLink's services.

Chapter One – Introduction

- 1.1 This chapter provides an overview of the inquiry process and the structure of the report, as well as a brief description of the regional public transport network in NSW and a brief overview of the NSW Government’s December 2012 NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan (*Transport Master Plan*).

CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

- 1.2 On 7 March 2012, the Legislative Assembly State and Regional Development Committee (the Committee) resolved to inquire into and report on how inter-regional public transport can better serve the needs of regional NSW. The full terms of reference are set out on page iv of this report.
- 1.3 For the purposes of the inquiry, the Committee used the term “inter-regional” travel to refer to travel between regional areas, or between a regional area and a metropolitan area. The Committee did not consider the privatisation of existing Government-owned public transport, including NSW TrainLink, as part of the inquiry.
- 1.4 Stakeholders had input into the inquiry through submissions, public hearings and site visits.

Submissions

- 1.5 The Committee advertised for submissions in the following newspapers between 20 and 22 March 2012, with a closing date of 21 May 2012:
- *Armidale Independent*
 - *Bega District News*
 - *Bowral Highlands News*
 - *Broken Hill Daily Truth*
 - *Casino Richmond River Express*
 - *The Daily Telegraph*
 - *The Land*
 - *Newcastle Star*
 - *Orange Midstate Observer*
 - *Wagga Riverina Leader*.
- 1.6 On 12 March 2012, the Committee issued a media release to all media outlets in NSW announcing the inquiry and calling for submissions, and also wrote to a broad range of potential stakeholders inviting them to participate in the inquiry process.
- 1.7 The Committee received 151 submissions from a range of stakeholders, including government agencies, local governments and regional organisations of councils,

industry representatives, advocacy and community groups, peak body organisations and private individuals. A full list of submissions can be found at Appendix One of this report, and submissions published by the Committee can be accessed at the Committee's webpage:

www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/stateandregionaldevelopment.

Hearings

- 1.8 The Committee conducted two public hearings at Parliament House in Sydney, on 15 October 2012 and 26 October 2012. Evidence was taken from 15 witnesses. A full list of witnesses can be found at Appendix Two of this report. The transcripts of evidence from the hearings can be found at the Committee's webpage: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/stateandregionaldevelopment.

Visits of inspection

- 1.9 A Sub-committee of the Committee travelled to Jindabyne on 3 December 2012, where it undertook a series of private briefings with stakeholders from the Snowy River region. Briefings were conducted with representatives from a community organisation, tourism operators, and from local governments.
- 1.10 A Sub-committee of the Committee travelled to Bathurst and Tamworth on 6 and 7 February 2013, where it undertook a series of private briefings with stakeholders from the Central West and New England regions. Briefings were conducted with representatives from the Business Chambers, local governments, community action groups, industry, as well as private individuals.
- 1.11 In Tamworth, the Sub-committee also met with Mr Kevin Anderson MP, Member for Tamworth, and local mayors.
- 1.12 A full list of stakeholders that met with the Committee during the visits of inspection can be found at Appendix Three of this report.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- 1.13 The structure of the report derives from the inquiry's terms of reference. The evidence and the Committee's corresponding comments have been categorised and presented in the following order:
- *The role of inter-regional public transport in regional NSW*
 - *Equity of access to public transport*
 - *Service provision and timetabling*
 - *Ticketing*
 - *Tourism*
 - *Future trains and buses*

BACKGROUND – REGIONAL TRANSPORT NETWORK

- 1.14 The remainder of this chapter provides background information on the State's existing regional transport network. The chapter concludes with a brief overview

of the *Transport Master Plan*, highlighting the relationship between the objectives of the *Transport Master Plan* and the Committee's report.

- 1.15 The *Transport Master Plan* describes regional NSW as having an extensive transport network that requires significant and ongoing maintenance to support local, regional and interstate passenger and freight movements.¹ The transport network is comprised of roads, rail, buses, community transport and air transport.

Roads

- 1.16 The Government manages 18,000 km of state roads, more than 5,000 bridges and nearly 3,000 km of regional roads. A further 145,000 km of roads are managed by local government.²
- 1.17 The *Transport Master Plan* states that a high quality road network underpins the economic viability and prosperity of regional NSW and Australia, chiefly because one third of the nation's road freight is transported through NSW:

Maintaining our roads in a sound and safe condition, and making sure that businesses across the State have access to an efficient road network, is fundamental to economic and employment growth in all parts of NSW.³

Rail

- 1.18 Regional passenger rail connections from Sydney are operated by NSW TrainLink, with services reaching more than 360 destinations across four corridors:
- Northern (between Sydney and Casino/Brisbane)
 - North Western (to Armidale and Moree)
 - Western (to Dubbo and Broken Hill)
 - Southern (to Canberra, Griffith and Albury/Melbourne).⁴
- 1.19 The rail services are supported by a network of coach services, which provide connections to train services at key points along the network. Outside Sydney, the length of the rail network is 3,450 km, and the track is, for the most part, managed by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) with passenger services operating on the same track as freight services. There are also approximately 3,000 km of disused rail lines and corridors across NSW on which trains no longer operate.⁵

¹ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, December 2012, p 226
<<http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/b2b/publications/nsw-transport-masterplan-final.pdf>>.

² Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 226.

³ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 226.

⁴ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 226.

⁵ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 226.

Bus

- 1.20 Bus services carry 5.7 million passengers every year in regional NSW, of which only one percent are journeys to work.⁶ Bus services in regional NSW, excluding dedicated school bus services, either operate under the bus contract system, whereby private operators are contracted by Transport for NSW to provide regulated timetable services; or they are privately operated, receiving no Government subsidy, and generally offer charter, school and inter-city services.⁷

Community Transport

- 1.21 Community transport services support regional and remote communities where regulated bus services are not available or do not adequately meet local needs. While often subsidised by State Government, community transport services are operated by local councils, volunteer groups, community organisations and service providers under the Australian Government's Home and Community Care scheme.⁸ In 2012, the Government provided \$49 million in grants to community transport schemes across the state, and 1.4 million journeys were made.⁹
- 1.22 Taxis provide an equally crucial service in regional areas, particularly taxis that are wheelchair accessible.¹⁰

Air

- 1.23 Approximately 30 air routes link regional centres directly with Sydney Airport, with 20 per cent of the flight slots being set aside for regional air services. Passenger movements by air on regulated and non-regulated regional services have increased only slightly since 2007/08, reflecting recent economic conditions. Regional air services are exclusively privately operated and do not receive any Government subsidy.¹¹

NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan

- 1.24 In November 2011, the Government commenced the development of a comprehensive integrated transport plan for NSW, encompassing land use planning and transport planning, planning for freight and passenger movements, and the identification of actions in relation to all transport modes, including road, rail, bus, ferries, light rail, cycling and walking.¹² The final *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* was released in December 2012.¹³
- 1.25 The two central objectives of the *Transport Master Plan* are as follows:

⁶ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 216.

⁷ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 226.

⁸ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 226, p 306.

⁹ Transport for NSW, 2012 Annual Report, December 2012, p 90

<http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/b2b/publications/annual_reports/tfnsw-annual-report-2012.pdf>.

¹⁰ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 226.

¹¹ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 226.

¹² Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 3.

¹³ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 3.

- to identify the challenges that the transport system in NSW needs to address to support the State's economic and social performance over the next 20 years, and to guide decision makers in prioritising the actions that will address the most pressing of those challenges and
- to identify a planned and co-ordinated set of actions, for example, reforms, service improvements and investments, that will best address those challenges.¹⁴

1.26 In terms of regional NSW, the *Transport Master Plan* has identified the following strategic priorities:

- deliver better transport links to and within the growing regional cities of Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast
- improve accessibility through a better mix of transport options across regional NSW
- provide convenient, reliable and safe travel in regional areas by modernising and making the best use of existing transport networks, specifically bus, rail and taxi services
- ensure that state roads in the regions support growing regional industries and contribute to lower business costs and higher productivity
- determine workable transport solutions that will preserve the vitality, amenity and character of small and medium-sized country towns by, for example, minimising heavy vehicle traffic through regional town centres, making walking and cycling easier, and providing customers with choice in terms of travel within their towns
- facilitate access to vital services for an ageing regional NSW population and people with disabilities and
- identify and preserve key transport corridors.¹⁵

1.27 The *Transport Master Plan* identifies a number of specific projects and strategies targeted at achieving the overarching objective of addressing transport challenges and improving the availability, reliability and timeliness of transport in rural and regional NSW, including:

- a series of rural highway upgrades
- the establishment of NSW TrainLink and the development of a Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy to improve regional NSW rail connections

¹⁴ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 9.

¹⁵ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 214.

- better bus services for regional towns and growing regional cities, with a focus on more frequent services, wider network coverage and better integration with other travel modes
- a renewed focus on improving and strengthening the community transport sector
- initiatives to move regional freight more efficiently, for example, the Bridges to the Bush program to replace and upgrade bridges to address constraints on Higher Mass Limits (HML) routes
- a program of town bypasses for regional centres to reduce heavy truck traffic through towns and
- the development of Regional Transport Plans in conjunction with local communities, and the integration of these plans with land use plans, so that transport services and infrastructure are provided when and where they are needed.¹⁶

Relationship between the objectives of the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* and the Committee's inquiry

- 1.28 Although there is some overlap in terms of the issues examined, the central objectives of the Committee's inquiry are distinct from those of the *Transport Master Plan*.
- 1.29 The *Transport Master Plan* seeks to identify major transport challenges to improving essential access for regional NSW, and to provide a starting point for developing long-term solutions (over a 20 year period) to address those challenges.
- 1.30 Given the capacity of Transport for NSW to undertake widespread consultation with regional communities in relation to specific region-centric transport needs, the *Transport Master Plan* is well placed to examine specific public transport service and timetabling issues that have been identified through the consultation process.
- 1.31 The *Transport Master Plan* also encompasses a broad range of transport issues, for example, those that relate to the network of roads and bridges in regional NSW, as well as private vehicles.
- 1.32 By contrast, the Committee's report does not attempt to examine public transport within regional areas, nor any issues that relate to the State's road and bridge network or private vehicles. Rather, the focus of this report is to comprehensively examine issues that relate to *inter-regional* public transport, that is, public transport between regional areas, or between a regional area and a metropolitan area.
- 1.33 The recommendations contained in this report are targeted towards making broad, but substantial improvements to the existing inter-regional public

¹⁶ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 213.

transport network that are achievable in the shorter term (as opposed to the 20 year timeframe identified by the *Transport Master Plan*) and will benefit existing and future inter-regional public transport users and the regional communities that they belong to.

- 1.34 In addition, the Committee's report examines and makes recommendations on issues that are not considered in any detail in the *Transport Master Plan*, for example, tourism and the means by which the inter-regional public transport network can be better utilised to grow tourism in NSW.
- 1.35 The Committee is also aware that as part of the *Transport Master Plan*, Regional Transport plans have been developed. The Committee views this as a very positive development and views this inquiry and report as complementing that work. In this regard the Committee is hopeful that many of the specific issues raised in this report will be of use during the implementation of the Regional Transport Plans.
- 1.36 In July 2013, NSW TrainLink was established to provide regional train and coach services which were formerly provided by CountryLink. All NSW TrainLink services are provided by the NSW Government through an overarching entity known as NSW Trains.¹⁷ Consequently, this report will make reference to 'NSW TrainLink', but also 'CountryLink', which was the term most often used by stakeholders. The report also occasionally refers to 'NSW Trains'.

Committee comment

- 1.37 The Committee would like to thank all the groups and individuals who made a submission, gave evidence, or spoke with the Committee during the visits of inspection, in relation to this inquiry.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

- 1.38 In the course of preparing the report of this inquiry, the Committee has been made aware of a set of undertakings and initiatives from Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink which address issues raised in the current report. The Committee also views this as a positive development, as it has been proactive in keeping NSW TrainLink abreast of its work and the issues raised in the course of this inquiry. The Committee may prepare a supplementary report in 2014 addressing any issues arising out of the implementation of these initiatives.

¹⁷ NSW TrainLink, viewed 2 October 2013, < <http://www.nswtrainlink.info/about>>.

STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two – The role of inter-regional public transport in regional NSW

- 2.1 Public transport is widely considered to be an essential service in the State's larger metropolitan centres. The Committee heard that regional NSW has an even greater need for a public transport network that is reliable, functional, affordable and accessible.
- 2.2 This chapter considers the role of a reliable, functional, affordable and accessible inter-regional public transport system in regional areas. It will examine overarching strategies to enhance the current inter-regional public transport network, the role that local governments play in determining public transport priorities and providing related infrastructure, and ways that the interaction between local governments and Transport for NSW could be improved. It will conclude with a discussion on the role of Regional Transport Coordinators in determining the transport requirements of the regional communities that they serve.

THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF INTER-REGIONAL TRANSPORT ON REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

- 2.3 Residents of regional NSW who wish to access essential services such as health, education, consumer and social services often face significantly longer journeys than their metropolitan counterparts. Those regional residents who do not have access to private transportation are at an increased risk of geographic, economic and social isolation.
- 2.4 The absence of a functioning public transport network may also constrain the growth of regional towns and centres and impact on tourism, business and industry.
- 2.5 The Committee heard a great deal of evidence from individuals, organisations and local governments, that inter-regional public transport services, particularly those provided by NSW TrainLink, made a significant contribution to the standard of living in regional NSW and were greatly valued by regional NSW residents.
- 2.6 The vital importance of CountryLink services was emphasised by Namoi Councils:
- It is accurate to say that there is widespread support in regional communities for the services provided by CountryLink. The service is valued by regional communities and is widely recognised as a vital public transport service for the regional community. The service provides reasonably cost effective access to the Newcastle Sydney metropolitan areas for individuals to connect with family, friends, business, health and education services, sport, recreation, tourism, arts, culture, connection to intrastate, interstate and overseas travel.¹⁸

¹⁸ Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 3.

2.7 Other stakeholders asserted that the lack of adequate inter-regional public transport services restricted residents' quality of life and constrained regions' potential for economic and social growth.

2.8 For example, Narromine Shire Council stated that inadequate inter-regional public transport to the Central West region constitutes a significant barrier to the region's potential for growth as an aged care community. This is largely because of the difficulties experienced by residents accessing basic government and education services:

Narromine Shire's population is not diminishing and has great potential for growth, as an aged care community, given its climate, shopping, medical facilities – an excellent health centre and hospital...

One of Narromine Shires barriers to growth is access to reliable public transport and access to government agencies such as Medicare, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), and higher education such as TAFE and universities.¹⁹

2.9 Similarly, Broken Hill City Council drew attention to the economic and cultural potential of the Far West region, but stated that the realisation of this potential was dependant on an appropriate, reliable public transport network:

Our region is unique – it offers a range of opportunities associated with mining, tourism, film, arts, sustainable energies, environment and events...

The vibrancy and prosperity of our region relies heavily on appropriate, reliable and affordable public transport services and infrastructure.²⁰

2.10 Illawarra Forum Inc focused on the social impacts of the inter-regional public transport currently available to residents of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions. They emphasised that this has resulted in geographic and social isolation of a range of groups:

The diversity of settlement and the vast distances has resulted in many people on the Illawarra and Shoalhaven experiencing geographic and social isolation. Among the groups most vulnerable to this isolation are:

- young people;
- people living with physical or mental illness or disability;
- people living on Centrelink benefits, pensions or low incomes;
- older people;
- carers of older people and people with a disability; and
- people experiencing an emergency or crisis.²¹

¹⁹ Submission 12, Narromine Shire Council, p 1.

²⁰ Submission 38, Broken Hill City Council, p 2.

²¹ Submission 114, Illawarra Forum Inc, p 2.

Case study: Snowy River Shire

- 2.11 At present, public transport services within the Snowy River Shire are very limited. Limited school bus services are available to the general public if there are vacant seats on the buses. Community transport is also available in the Shire. However, due to the scarcity of funding, the service is available only to people who are geographically isolated, have limited mobility, or are elderly.²²
- 2.12 No regular publicly or privately operated bus or air services operate to connect the Snowy River Shire to other regions during the summer months. While they are available during the winter, via privately operated providers, the services are geared towards the winter tourist market to accommodate the influx of visitors to the Snowy River region.²³
- 2.13 The closest year-round coach service for Snowy River residents is operated by CountryLink and runs between Canberra and Cooma (and on to Bega and Eden, along with other stops in-between). Travel time between Jindabyne and Cooma is approximately 50 minutes by car.²⁴
- 2.14 The Committee received a significant number of submissions regarding transport issues in the Snowy River Shire. Of the 151 submissions received by the Committee, 41 made reference to the fact that the Snowy River Shire is not serviced by a regular year-round CountryLink service.²⁵
- 2.15 The Committee notes the avid and active interest of the Member for Monaro, Mr John Barilaro MP, in this issue.
- 2.16 In its submission to Transport for NSW's 2010 'CountryLinkup' community consultations (referred to by Destination Jindabyne in its submission to the inquiry), Snowy River Shire Council stated that the current timetabling of the CountryLink Canberra-Cooma coach service has made this public transport option unworkable for many residents. The inherent difficulties of using the CountryLink Canberra-Cooma service were described by Snowy River Shire Council as follows:
- CountryLink has runs from Cooma to Canberra, Bombala and Eden, however, the scheduled times make this form of transport inappropriate and unworkable for most people to access medical or other appointments from Jindabyne. Jindabyne people would need to access private transport to get them to and from Cooma. If not, the only other option, school buses, do not run on return times so people would need to stay in Cooma overnight.²⁶
- 2.17 The wide ranging social and economic consequences of having no regular inter-regional transport network to the Snowy River Shire were identified in numerous submissions, including the Snowy River Shire Council, which identified the following social impacts:

²² Submission 89, Destination Jindabyne, pp 1-2; and Submission 122, Snowy River Shire Council, pp 4-5.

²³ Submission 122, Snowy River Shire Council, p 3.

²⁴ Submission 122, Snowy River Shire Council, p 3.

²⁵ See Appendix 1, submission 35; submissions 40-41; submission 51; submission 56; submission 58; submission 60; submissions 64-65; submission 73; submission 76; submissions 85-107; submissions 109-111; submission 122; submission 137; submission 147; and submission 149.

²⁶ Submission 89, Destination Jindabyne, p 2.

- social isolation for numerous groups within the community, including young people, older people, women and people with disabilities
- disadvantage for residents needing to use government services such as hospitals, Centrelink, housing providers and courts (these services are not available within the Shire)
- disadvantage for students wishing to undertake university or TAFE studies (there are no university or TAFE campuses located in the Shire)
- disadvantage for young people in terms of their capacity to connect with peers
- restrictions on older residents' access to essential health and social services located outside the Shire and
- disadvantage for people with disabilities, particularly those requiring accessible public transport to accommodate specific needs such as wheelchairs.²⁷

2.18 Destination Jindabyne and the Thredbo Chamber of Commerce stated that the lack of adequate inter-regional public transport to the Shire had serious adverse economic implications, for both individuals and the region. These include:

- many families being forced to operate two cars, which impacts greatly on the family budget
- many Snowy River Shire residents being unable to undertake full-time, year-round employment in Cooma and other centres outside the region
- limited capacity to attract permanent tourism industry workers to live and work in the region and
- limited capacity to grow the region's spring/summer tourism market.²⁸

Inter-regional public transport as an 'essential service'

2.19 Much of the stakeholder evidence to the inquiry detailed specific service gaps in the current inter-regional public transport network and the ways in which these gaps have impacted on the quality of life of regional NSW residents and the long-term growth and wellbeing of regional communities.

2.20 Stakeholders argued that the central role of the State's inter-regional public transport network should be to mitigate these impacts by providing all NSW residents, in both regional and metropolitan areas, with adequate access to reliable, functional, affordable and accessible public transport.

2.21 Some stakeholders further argued that suitable public transport should be considered an essential service for NSW and that the role of government is to ensure that this essential service is provided throughout the state, without

²⁷ Submission 122, Snowy River Shire Council, p 5.

²⁸ Submission 64, Thredbo Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Thredbo, p 1; and Submission 89, Destination Jindabyne, pp 1-2.

necessarily requiring that it be a profitable enterprise in strict monetary terms. For example, the Bungendore Public Transport Group and Palerang Local Action Network for Sustainability expressed the view that public transport is an essential service that must be provided by government, particularly for those in the community that are vulnerable to the effects of transport disadvantage:

Public transport is an essential service that governments must provide, particularly for the disadvantaged in the community such as the aged, the very young, the sick and the disabled and the poor. There should be no pressure for public transport to make a profit or even “break even”; it should run efficiently but remain subsidized. Perhaps this needs to be accounted for with a triple-bottom line approach so that the measure for ‘success’ of public transportation is more than just hard dollars.²⁹

- 2.22 Similarly, the Bathurst Business Chamber argued that it is the role of government to support and invest appropriately in the inter-regional public transport network, as doing this will ultimately benefit the State through its delivery of long-term social and economic dividends to regional communities:

The Bathurst Business Centre seeks a genuine commitment from government to promote, support and invest in regional public transport. The benefits to the people of NSW, both in terms of lifestyle, cost of living and economic development of towns and cities cannot and should not be measured simply in terms of dollars. The enhancement and attraction of investment and skilled staff to regional areas is essential to their continued growth, and taking pressure off the State’s capital for housing, roads and infrastructure.³⁰

Committee comment

- 2.23 The Committee recognises the challenges faced by many regional NSW communities in terms of access to adequate inter-regional public transport and the ways in which this impacts on regional communities where the geographic distance to essential services necessitates owning and operating a private vehicle.
- 2.24 The Committee understands that limited or no access to inter-regional public transport particularly affects the quality of life and wellbeing of the sections of our regional communities that are vulnerable to the effects of transport disadvantage, including elderly people, young people, people with disabilities, people on low incomes and people with mental health issues.
- 2.25 The Committee notes that the NSW Government is seeking to address the wide-ranging issues of inter-regional public transport in regional communities, through initiatives such as the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan (*Transport Master Plan*), Regional Transport Plans, the Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy and the Fixing the Trains program.³¹ The Committee also recognises that any substantial changes to the existing inter-regional public transport network will require significant investment from government to the existing infrastructure and rolling stock, which may not be practicable in the short-term given current resource and budgetary constraints.

²⁹ Submission 124, Bungendore Public Transport Group and Palerang Local Action Network for Sustainability, p 4.

³⁰ Submission 129, Bathurst Business Chamber, p 7.

³¹ Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 2.

- 2.26 However, the Committee was persuaded by the compelling stakeholder evidence which argued that inter-regional public transport must be regarded and administered as an essential service for regional NSW communities. It is the Committee's view that access to inter-regional public transport, as an essential service for regional NSW, should be comparable to the extent possible, to that which is enjoyed in the State's larger metropolitan centres.
- 2.27 The Committee considers that Transport for NSW should make a commitment to supporting and promoting the long-term viability of NSW TrainLink as the principal inter-regional public transport provider for regional NSW. The Committee therefore recommends that Transport for NSW enhances the existing inter-regional public transport network wherever practicable, with priority being given to those regions that do not currently have access to the network.
- 2.28 The Committee heard evidence of a recent success in connecting regional communities through public transport in the Wellington-Dubbo-Narromine bus route.
- 2.29 The town of Wellington had been isolated from its largest neighbour (Dubbo) for decades. The introduction of the service allows people from Wellington and Narromine to now access employment, and other services (including medical services) by reliable and inexpensive public transport.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW enhances the existing inter-regional public transport network wherever practicable, with priority being given to those regions that do not currently have access to the network.

- 2.30 The Committee was most concerned to learn that residents of the Snowy River Shire do not have regular year-round access to publicly or privately operated inter-regional public transport. Lack of access to transport places constraints on the region's potential for long-term growth, as well as increasing the risk of social and geographic isolation among vulnerable residents.
- 2.31 For these reasons the Committee considers that the Snowy River Shire should be connected to the NSW TrainLink Southern Coach services network. Consequently the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW re-routes the NSW TrainLink Southern Coach services to incorporate stops at Jindabyne and Berridale.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW re-routes the NSW TrainLink Southern Coach services to incorporate stops at Jindabyne and Berridale.

OVERARCHING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 2.32 A number of stakeholders made recommendations in relation to broad, overarching strategies that could be employed by Transport for NSW, NSW TrainLink and local governments to improve inter-regional public transport

services to regional NSW and increase the uptake of those services by regional passengers.

Transport for NSW initiatives

- 2.33 In its evidence to the inquiry, Transport for NSW made reference to two wide-ranging initiatives that it had put in place, which, amongst other things, were targeted towards making improvements to the current inter-regional public transport network. These initiatives are the Fixing the Trains program and the Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy.
- 2.34 In its submission Transport for NSW described RailCorp as being an agency which attempted to service both city and regional and intercity customers in a similar way, with the result being that neither metropolitan nor regional customers received the services they deserved.³²
- 2.35 The Fixing the Trains program commenced in mid-2012. It aims to address the challenges presented by RailCorp's organisational shortcomings and, ultimately, to deliver improved passenger rail services to customers across NSW.³³
- 2.36 A major component of the program was the dismantling of RailCorp and the subsequent establishment of two new specialist rail organisations to service the different needs of Sydney and regional/intercity rail customers:
- Sydney Trains – operating frequent and reliable trains in the greater Sydney suburban area and
 - NSW Trains – operating train services focusing on the needs of longer distance regional and intercity customers, and also looking after connecting road coach services.³⁴
- 2.37 Infrastructure Partnerships Australia commended the organisational reforms effected by the Fixing the Trains program, stating that the establishment of Sydney Trains and NSW Trains will enable the two entities to focus entirely on improving service provision and customer service:
- The restructuring of RailCorp to form two new entities – NSW Trains and Sydney Trains – achieves a number of welcome structural reforms to improve the value and quality of regional and inter-regional rail services. By structurally separating service provision and maintenance from infrastructure ownership, which remains a separate government entity, NSW Trains and Sydney Trains will be free to concentrate on service provision and customer services. Equally, by separating NSW Trains and Sydney Trains into distinct entities, the two organisations will be able to bring a renewed and dedicated focus to the improvement of urban and regional services.³⁵
- 2.38 Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, explained that the elements of the Fixing the Trains program that are aimed at improving the Sydney metropolitan train network would also result in flow-on benefits for

³² Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 1.

³³ Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 1.

³⁴ Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 1.

³⁵ Submission 136, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, p 1.

regional passengers. Mr Wielinga stated that new technologies were being introduced to bring metropolitan trains closer together and that this will improve the frequency and reliability of inter-regional trains going into and out of the Sydney metropolitan network:

Making the network work well inside Sydney will have a beneficial effect for those country trains that come into and out of that network. The technologies that we will introduce into the rail network generally to improve getting trains closer together and so forth will also benefit those country trains.³⁶

- 2.39 In parallel to the Fixing the Trains program, Transport for NSW is also in the process of developing a Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy, which is aimed at delivering efficient resourcing and customer services based on current and forecast future demand.³⁷
- 2.40 Transport for NSW further stated that the Strategy will outline market requirements, while recognising the constraints of various road and rail infrastructure and rolling stock, as well as competition between passenger and freight trains for access to rail track under the various track access agreements between NSW Trains, the Australian Rail Track Corporation and the Country Rail Network.³⁸
- 2.41 The Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy will also aim to provide context for the future planning of all non-private country passenger travel in NSW and adjacent states, and guidance for strategic decision-making in relation to inter-regional rail services, within the developing NSW TrainLink business model.³⁹
- 2.42 Moreover, Transport for NSW anticipates that the Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy will deliver shorter-term benefits in relation to the regional rail network, through prioritising improvements to existing rail services and better integrating NSW TrainLink-administered train and coach services:

The Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy will prioritise improvements in order to deliver better services across the future NSW Trains network. This will include a number of service options capitalising on opportunities to better integrate the existing train and coach networks over the short, medium and long term.⁴⁰

Committee comment

- 2.43 The Committee notes that Transport for NSW is reforming the existing inter-regional public transport network and the standard of services being provided by NSW TrainLink, through initiatives such as the Fixing the Trains program and the Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy.
- 2.44 The Committee encourages Transport for NSW to continue its program of reforms to NSW TrainLink in order to deliver ongoing service improvements for

³⁶ Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 9.

³⁷ Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 6.

³⁸ Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 6.

³⁹ Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 6.

⁴⁰ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, p 4.

regional passengers. The Committee may report on the issues arising from the implementation of the Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy in a supplementary report.

Promotion of inter-regional public transport

- 2.45 A number of inquiry stakeholders suggested that patronage of inter-regional public transport would increase if rail travel was actively promoted as an attractive travel alternative. Increased passenger safety and reduced environmental impacts were identified as benefits of rail travel.
- 2.46 The Northern Rivers Social Development Council, for example, stated that in the first instance, government should actively promote a cultural shift away from the entrenched notion that the best option for undertaking inter-regional travel is with private vehicles. The organisation suggested that this could be done, in part, through the use of incentives for using public transport along with disincentives for using private vehicles. Providing public transport services that are attractive to passengers is also important:

A cultural shift from car to public transport must be developed in tandem with efficient, flexible, affordable public transport and effective campaigns to promote public transport. The use of incentives for public transport, as well as disincentives for car travel plays a vital role in cultural change. Public transport must be cost effective, fast and pleasant and presented as an ethical choice.⁴¹

- 2.47 Similarly, Goulburn Mulwaree Council stated that the uptake of inter-regional transport would be increased if CountryLink more actively promoted the benefits of rail travel as an attractive alternative to private vehicles and air travel. Public awareness campaigns and financial incentives, in conjunction with policy initiatives to encourage urban densification around public transport hubs would assist with this shift:

CountryLink must educate its potential and current passengers about the benefits of rail as a viable alternative to road and air travel. This could be achieved through education (e.g. public awareness campaigns), financial incentives (e.g. government subsidy of rail) and policy (e.g. urban densification at railway stations).⁴²

- 2.48 Mr Charles Body suggested that effective promotion of rail as a viable inter-regional public transport alternative would highlight the safety and environmental aspects:

...I suggest that both CountryLink and the State and Regional Development Committee need to promote the benefits of rail over road, particularly for journeys between major regional cities and Sydney. These benefits include safety and the significant reduction in energy use and emissions.⁴³

⁴¹ Submission 49, Northern Rivers Social Development Council, p 1.

⁴² Submission 59, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 3.

⁴³ Submission 17, Mr Charles Body, p 1.

- 2.49 Dr John Ward also suggested that introducing and marketing a loyalty program, such as a program where you earn a free trip after undertaking a certain number of paid trips, would entice more passengers to use CountryLink's services.⁴⁴
- 2.50 Stakeholders further argued that CountryLink should conduct targeted advertising campaigns to actively market and promote awareness of its range of inter-regional public transport options and services. The Friends of the Northern Railway, for example, stated that the uptake of CountryLink coach services would be greatly improved if the agency conducted an awareness campaign that its coach services could be utilised for travel between regions and within regions, rather just being a shuttle service to and from train stations, and could therefore be used for shopping trips and medical appointments etc.⁴⁵
- 2.51 The potential benefits of this sort of targeted advertising, according to Action for Public Transport, are increased patronage and profits, which, in turn, would make improvements to public transport facilities and increasing the frequency of services more economically viable.⁴⁶
- 2.52 Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, stated that a recent policy decision to increase CountryLink advertising had been effective in increasing awareness of the brand and the range of products that it offered. The success of the advertising strategy was evidenced by increased patronage of CountryLink services since its commencement.⁴⁷

Committee comment

- 2.53 The Committee was encouraged to hear that patronage of train and coach services has increased in response to advertising conducted by NSW TrainLink. The Committee would like to see NSW TrainLink continue its active promotion of the brand and the services that it provides.
- 2.54 The Committee considers that there is scope to further expand NSW TrainLink's marketing strategy, to include advertising that is specifically targeted to regional communities. This advertising would promote NSW TrainLink's rail and coach services as a viable and attractive alternative to the entrenched practice of using private vehicles for inter-regional travel.
- 2.55 Consequently, the Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink develops a marketing strategy specifically targeting potential regional customers, and actively promoting the benefits of its rail and coach services compared to other forms of transport, and the range of services that it provides.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink develops a marketing strategy specifically targeting potential regional customers, and actively promoting the benefits of its rail and coach services compared to other forms of transport.

⁴⁴ Submission 10, Dr John Ward, p 1.

⁴⁵ Submission 78, the Friends of the Northern Railway, p 2.

⁴⁶ Submission 127, Action for Public Transport, p 7.

⁴⁷ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 12.

Land use around public transport hubs

- 2.56 Stakeholders raised the issue of land use and how strategic planning can increase the uptake of inter-regional public transport among regional communities.
- 2.57 The submission from the Planning Institute of Australia (NSW Division) asserted that an effective public transport system should ideally serve customers where they live, work, study and play. On this basis, the organisation suggested that land should be strategically utilised to provide sufficient potential patronage for public transport services, that is concentrated and within easy access to those services.⁴⁸
- 2.58 In terms of regional NSW communities, the Planning Institute of Australia stated that this objective would be achieved by encouraging land use density around public transport hubs. More specifically, local governments and regional councils should be required to explicitly address issues of land use density and utilisation of public transport when formulating planning and development schemes.⁴⁹
- 2.59 In a similar vein, Shoalhaven City Council supported improved integration of public transport services and infrastructure with strategic land use planning as a key component of effective regional planning and improved overall delivery of public transport outcomes.⁵⁰

Committee comment

- 2.60 There is potentially much to be gained from the targeted integration of land use and public transport planning, both in terms of increasing patronage of inter-regional public transport and improving services to regional communities.
- 2.61 In particular, the Committee sees merit in the proposition that land use density around public transport hubs should be encouraged as a means of achieving these objectives. The Committee notes that transport and land use planning is addressed extensively in the *Transport Master Plan*. Accordingly, the Committee makes no recommendation in relation to this issue.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN IMPROVING INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 2.62 A number of inquiry stakeholders made comments in relation to the role of local governments in advocating for the transport needs of the regions and communities that they represent, as well as the ways in which they might contribute to improving the inter-regional public transport network in the future.
- 2.63 The submission from Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils summarised the role of local governments and regional organisations of councils as identifying opportunities for improvement, developing strategies to increase the uptake of

⁴⁸ Submission 57, Planning Institute of Australia, p 1.

⁴⁹ Submission 57, Planning Institute of Australia, p 3.

⁵⁰ Submission 37, Shoalhaven City Council, p 1.

public transport, and assisting with the development and maintenance infrastructure around coach and train stations.⁵¹

2.64 Much of the stakeholder evidence put forward the view that local Governments and regional organisations of councils should adopt a strong advocacy and liaison role between the communities that they represent and the agencies that provide inter-regional public transport services. This is because local governments and local government organisations are in the best position to engage in ongoing consultation with their communities and to articulate these concerns to the relevant stakeholders.⁵²

2.65 This view was expressed by Namoi Councils:

Local Government clearly has the resources and capacity to articulate community opinion from within its local government boundaries and the wider regional community on major State Government policy and issues.

When developing plans and strategies for new public transport infrastructure and improved inter-regional public transport services, NSW Councils are well qualified to inform regional transport strategies and provide relevant input, comment and opinion.⁵³

2.66 Similarly, Action for Public Transport stated that while local governments were not in a position to have responsibility for the development of major rail or road infrastructure, they can advocate for the specific public transport needs of their communities:

Councils should confer with their community and undertake continued consultation as to the challenges faced as a result of inter-regional public transport services as well as proposed solutions.⁵⁴

2.67 The Southern Councils Group suggested that improved liaison and collaboration between local governments and Transport for NSW would help to avoid duplication of effort in addressing public transport issues and mitigate the risk of community 'over-consultation'.⁵⁵

2.68 In addition to advocacy and liaison functions, stakeholders stated that local governments should also take a proactive role in educating constituents about the benefits of public transport over private vehicles⁵⁶ and promoting the inter-regional public transport options that already exist in their constituencies.⁵⁷

2.69 Moreover, stakeholders asserted that local governments should be proactive in working with Transport for NSW to improve the infrastructure that supports

⁵¹ Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 12.

⁵² See for example, Submission 29, AlburyCity, p 5; Submission 44, Coffs Harbour City Council, p 7; Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 6; Submission 68, Central NSW Councils, p 4; Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 12; Submission 127, Action for Public Transport, pp 10-11.

⁵³ Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 6.

⁵⁴ Submission 127, Action for Public Transport, pp 10-11.

⁵⁵ Submission 112, Southern Councils Group, p 5.

⁵⁶ Submission 59, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 4.

⁵⁷ Submission 127, Action for Public Transport, p 11-12.

inter-regional public transport. Improving infrastructure would make inter-regional public transport more attractive to customers and uptake would be increased as a consequence.

2.70 Ogdens Coaches, for example, submitted that local governments need to actively seek funding from State Government to improve transport facilities in regional areas, such as bus shelters, better lighting and disabled access facilities.⁵⁸

2.71 Two regional organisations of councils drew attention to the fact that, in their experience, there was no ongoing liaison between the local governments that they represented and Transport for NSW and CountryLink. There was also no means by which local governments could consult with these agencies in relation to inter-regional public transport issues. This point was made by Mr Steven Green, Adviser, Transport and Infrastructure, Gosford City Council, representing the Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils:

There is not really a RailCorp office on the Central Coast. We have a lot of contact with the maintenance engineer who looks after the line for maintenance type issues, but there is no real partnership on the Central Coast.⁵⁹

2.72 The same issue was raised by Councillor Phyllis Miller, Chair, Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils:

I took note of the question about what relationship we had with CountryLink... There have been none; there is no such thing. It is a government service-end of story. We can yabber as much as we like, but the only way to get changes from CountryLink is to go directly to the Minister or someone in Transport for NSW. There are no relationships.

... That is the key reason that the public transport system in rural and regional New South Wales is not working. If we are going to get fair dinkum we need to set up a structure that allows for input from local communities.⁶⁰

2.73 However, Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, stated that Transport for NSW did consult with local governments on inter-regional public transport issues, through mechanisms such as regional forums:

We want to give them [local governments] an adequate opportunity to input. We had a lot of regional forums as part of the creation of the long-term *Transport Master Plan* and we are about to go into an exercise for developing 10 regional plans around New South Wales.⁶¹

2.74 Mr Wielinga also stated that Transport for NSW regularly received feedback from local governments in relation to issues such as the facilities provided at regional train stations. He stated that this was a good arrangement as local governments were in the best position to gauge community views about those facilities:

⁵⁸ Submission 34, Ogdens Coaches, p 1.

⁵⁹ Mr Steven Green, Adviser, Transport and Infrastructure, Gosford City Council, representing the Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 3.

⁶⁰ Cr Phyllis Miller, Chair, Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 8.

⁶¹ Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 3.

We have to work with them for each train station's facilities. They give us a good indication of the community feeling about those services that are being provided. They are very closely linked to those local communities.⁶²

Committee comment

- 2.75 The Committee agrees that local governments can play an active role in consulting with Transport for NSW to determine the inter-regional public transport needs and priorities of the regional communities that they represent. Local governments are well placed to relay community views back to Transport for NSW for appropriate action.
- 2.76 The Committee recognises that Transport for NSW has certainly initiated significant consultative mechanisms such as the *Transport Master Plan*, regional forums and local government input into the regional plans. However, this consultation seems to be stand-alone in nature and the Committee notes that there does not appear to be an established and ongoing means by which local governments are able to consult with Transport for NSW in relation to inter-regional public transport issues as they arise.
- 2.77 For this reason, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW considers the implementation of a process to liaise and consult with local governments in relation to public transport issues; and promotes this process to local governments.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW:

- considers the implementation of a process to liaise and consult with local governments in relation to public transport issues and
- promotes this process to local governments.

THE ROLE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF REGIONAL TRANSPORT COORDINATORS IN IMPROVING INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 2.78 In NSW there are eleven Regional Transport Coordinators (RTCs) located across the State whose role is to find innovative, local solutions to regional transport issues, and to mitigate occurrences of transport disadvantage in the regions that they service.⁶³
- 2.79 The RTCs seek to achieve this broad objective by:
- engaging with regional communities, through visits to regional areas and isolated towns

⁶² Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 9.

⁶³ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, p 5.

- educating regional residents about existing transport options that are available to them and
- developing local projects to address local transport challenges.⁶⁴

2.80 According to Transport for NSW, the RTCs work collaboratively with a diverse range of regional stakeholders, including private and public transport operators, and community organisations, such as those that provide community transport services. The RTCs also attend at least 270 regular forums and interagency meetings each year, which may include meetings with transport working groups, NGO sector meetings, youth service groups and emergency management meetings.⁶⁵

2.81 The Committee heard that the RTC program would be more beneficial to regional communities if the RTCs played a more active role in addressing the wider public transport needs of the areas that they service, as opposed to their current focus on addressing specific occurrences of transport disadvantage.

2.82 Mr Daryl Mellish, Executive Director, Bus NSW, explained that his organisation and other bus industry stakeholders had considered the possibility of establishing regional accessibility councils to examine broad public transport issues and identify region-specific service gaps, primarily because these tasks did not appear to be within the RTCs' area of responsibility:

We considered that when regional coordinators were appointed they would have a fairly active role in assessing the transport needs across all the areas that they operate in and make recommendations and look at ways of co-ordinating the services. We found they tended to just concentrate on transport disadvantaged services rather than all the services in a region. So through our Bus Industry Confederation we have been looking at piloting regional access committees to see if we can get key stakeholders together to see what services are needed in an area and the best way of providing them, whether they be community transport, taxi, bus or rail.⁶⁶

2.83 Mr Mellish stated that an additional issue with the RTC program was that, in his experience, the level and frequency of contact with RTCs was inconsistent and varied from one officer to another:

The individual operators [have regular contact] but it is very patchy. Some are very good at regular meetings, some are part of the local traffic committee. We try to meet with them once a year essentially but I think their resourcing was limited and they only come not very often.⁶⁷

2.84 The Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils also considered the level of liaison with RTCs to be inadequate. One representative stated that the last time she had met with an RTC was 'approximately four years ago', and the others

⁶⁴ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, p 5.

⁶⁵ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, p 6.

⁶⁶ Mr Daryl Mellish, Executive Director, Bus NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 27.

⁶⁷ Mr Daryl Mellish, Executive Director, Bus NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 28.

claimed never to have met with an RTC during their time working for the ROC.⁶⁸ Similarly, Mr Randall Walker, Chairman, Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, indicated that he had not communicated with the RTC in his region. In fact he was unaware that there was an RTC in his region.⁶⁹

2.85 By contrast, Transport for NSW stated that it believed the RTCs were well known in their particular regions and effectively promoted their services by activities such as attending public forums, cold calling community groups and offering their services when there are opportunities for strategic solutions to public transport issues.⁷⁰

2.86 Moreover, Transport for NSW indicated that it had received positive feedback from regional communities in relation to the RTCs' work and their accessibility to local communities in helping to resolve transport issues:

Transport for NSW often receives positive feedback from community partners about the quality of the Coordinators' work, and their ease of availability to the community to help solve transport problems. Local communities highly value having a 'local' face for TfNSW in their area with expertise that can be tapped as needed.⁷¹

Committee comment

2.87 The Committee regards the role of RTCs in identifying areas of transport disadvantage and providing solutions to the impacts of transport disadvantage as being of great importance. However, it would be beneficial for regional communities if the role of RTCs was expanded to incorporate proactive and strategic assessment of transport needs and gaps across the regions that they service, and identification of appropriate means to address those needs.

2.88 The Committee considers that RTCs could and should play an important role in facilitating liaison and consultation between local governments and Transport for NSW in relation to public transport issues that arise in the regions.

2.89 The Committee is concerned that there appears to be a disconnect between the experience of stakeholders in relation to access to RTCs and Transport for NSW's understanding of their effectiveness.

2.90 Consequently, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW conducts a review of Regional Transport Coordinators to examine their role, including, but not limited to their role in assessing public transport needs and service gaps in their target regions; developing appropriate strategies to meet the needs identified; and facilitating liaison and consultation between local governments and Transport for NSW in relation to public transport issues.

⁶⁸ Ms Jennifer Bennet, Executive Officer, Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils, Councillor Phyllis Miller, Chair, Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils, and Mr Garry Styles, General Manager, Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, pp 12-13.

⁶⁹ Mr Randall Walker, Chair, Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 24.

⁷⁰ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, p 6.

⁷¹ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, p 7.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW conducts a review of Regional Transport Coordinators to examine their role, including, but not limited to their role in the following:

- **assessing public transport needs and service gaps in their target regions**
- **developing appropriate strategies to meet the needs identified and**
- **facilitating liaison and consultation between local governments and Transport for NSW in relation to public transport issues.**

- 2.91 The Committee also recommends that once the review is completed, Transport for NSW actively publicises the role of RTCs to regional communities, and develops strategies to encourage greater engagement between RTCs and their local stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW publicises the role of Regional Transport Coordinators to regional communities, and develops strategies to encourage greater engagement between Regional Transport Coordinators and their local stakeholders.

Committee comment

- 2.92 The Committee considers that there may also be value in Transport for NSW developing a mechanism whereby regional staff (such as railway station staff) are regularly consulted about issues affecting their local areas, including their suggestions for improved services. Such frontline staff are in a unique position to comment on these issues and their input could prove valuable.
- 2.93 The Committee therefore recommends that Transport for NSW, in conjunction with NSW TrainLink, develops a systematic mechanism for regional transport staff to have input into suggested improvements to the inter-regional transport network.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW, in conjunction with NSW TrainLink, develops a systematic mechanism for regional transport staff to have input into suggested improvements to the inter-regional transport network.

STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
THE ROLE OF INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN REGIONAL NSW

Chapter Three – Equity of access to public transport

- 3.1 This chapter considers transport disadvantage among vulnerable groups in the community and the effects of transport disadvantage on those living in regional areas. It examines how the accessibility of vehicles, railway stations and bus interchanges affect particular groups, and the role played by community transport in providing transport to vulnerable groups and to regional communities in general.

TRANSPORT DISADVANTAGE

- 3.2 The *Transport Master Plan* considers that transport disadvantage exists where access to transport is unequally distributed, and where the groups that are affected experience increased geographic and social isolation, and reduced opportunities for employment, recreational and social activities.⁷²
- 3.3 The *Transport Master Plan* identifies factors that lead to transport disadvantage, such as limited or non-existent public transport services, limited access to private transport, the costs associated with accessing public transport, and difficulties with accessing public transport services:

Transport provides people with mobility and access. Without it, people can become isolated. Transport disadvantage stems from non-existent or infrequent public transport services, a lack of access to private transport, and transport services that are too expensive or that cannot be physically accessed by people with mobility difficulties.

Groups most likely to be disadvantaged are elderly people, young people, people with a disability, single parents, people with poor health and low income earners.⁷³

- 3.4 The *Transport Master Plan* also acknowledges that transport disadvantage is more acute in regional NSW, because long distances, small populations and difficult terrain all affect the viability of public transport. This results in regional communities being heavily reliant on car travel, which negatively impacts on those groups who do not have ready access to a car.⁷⁴
- 3.5 Inquiry participants identified the following groups living in regional areas as being especially vulnerable to the effects of transport disadvantage:
- older people
 - people with disabilities
 - people with a mental illness

⁷² Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 419.

⁷³ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 303.

⁷⁴ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 303. See also, Submission 44, Coffs Harbour City Council, p 6.

- Aboriginal communities
- younger people
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and
- low income families, including single parent families.⁷⁵

3.6 The NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., for example, described the disproportionate impact of transport disadvantage on people with a mental illness:

Transport disadvantage, or difficulty in accessing public transport and/or maintaining private transport, is an issue that disproportionately affects people with a mental illness. People with a mental illness often experience underemployment, live on limited incomes or are living in poverty which can restrict vehicle ownership. Others may have difficulty with driving due to the side effects of medication. These factors, along with living in regional and remote areas can make it difficult for people to get where they need to go, access the services they need and keep in touch with friends and family.

Not being able to connect easily with formal and informal sources of support can have detrimental impacts on one's wellbeing and sense of inclusion. It can also have a cost to the wider community that is felt in terms of lost social capital, productivity and economic costs (such as people accessing expensive crisis services rather than preventative care).⁷⁶

3.7 Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers stated that Transport for NSW must address the broad issue of transport disadvantage, firstly by acknowledging the 'real' costs of transport disadvantage to health, employment, education, training, business and economic development. The organisation recommended that Transport for NSW introduce measures to reduce the impacts of transport disadvantage, including measures to make public transport more accessible and affordable.⁷⁷

3.8 The *Transport Master Plan* has identified a number of actions that Transport for NSW will undertake to address transport disadvantage in regional communities. The first of these is a series of targeted regional surveys, which are intended to improve the evidence base for regional travel and will assist the agency's understanding of the nature of regional transport disadvantage as well as region-specific transport issues, travel patterns and needs.⁷⁸

3.9 Transport for NSW is also developing a Social Access Framework to enhance its understanding of the components of transport disadvantage for vulnerable groups. The framework will identify strategies to make better use of existing

⁷⁵ See, for example, Submission 12, Narromine Shire Council, p 2; Submission 43, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers, p 8; and Submission 44, Coffs Harbour City Council, p 6. See also, Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 325.

⁷⁶ Submission 77, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., p 3.

⁷⁷ Submission 43, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers, p 8.

⁷⁸ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 240.

resources, including community transport, and will improve transport planning for social access.⁷⁹

- 3.10 The *Transport Master Plan* further identified a number of actions to target specific areas of transport disadvantage. These include providing financial assistance to people with disabilities to help meet the costs of transport services, and making alternative transport options available to people who are unable to access mainstream transport services.⁸⁰

Committee comment

- 3.11 The Committee understands that transport disadvantage is prevalent in regional communities, and that its effects are particularly felt by vulnerable groups, such as older people, people with disabilities, people on low incomes and people with a mental illness.
- 3.12 Inter-regional public transport services should, wherever possible, minimise transport disadvantage among vulnerable groups, as well as the wider regional population.
- 3.13 The Committee notes that the *Transport Master Plan* has explicitly acknowledged the prevalence of transport disadvantage in regional NSW and identified a number of broad and targeted strategies to make public transport services more widely available to vulnerable groups. The Committee may further report on any issues arising from the implementation of Transport for NSW's strategies to address transport disadvantage in a supplementary report.
- 3.14 In this chapter, the Committee will supplement the *Transport Master Plan's* measures to address the broad issue of transport disadvantage with targeted recommendations to make public transport vehicles, transport interchanges and transport information more accessible to vulnerable groups.

ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

- 3.15 Numerous inquiry stakeholders submitted that the accessibility of vehicles used for inter-regional public transport was a significant issue for older people, people with disabilities and people with mobility issues.
- 3.16 Many of these stakeholders stated that trains are the only viable inter-regional travel option for these groups, as trains allow passengers to move freely around carriages; passenger seating is more spacious and comfortable; and trains provide access to on-board facilities like toilets and refreshments.⁸¹ For example, the Lachlan Regional Transport Committee Inc. observed that:

...train services provide a necessary level of accessibility which coaches do not. This is due to the needs of many people for easy access to vehicles, their seating and

⁷⁹ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 325.

⁸⁰ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 324.

⁸¹ See, for example, Submission 1, Ms Helen Weal, p 1; Submission 8, Mrs J Hawken, p 1; Submission 22, Mr John and Mrs Gayl Schmich, p 1; Submission 82, Lachlan Regional Transport Committee, p 2; Submission 83, National Seniors Australia, p 2; and Submission 150, Mr Kevin Anderson MP, p 2.

services like food and toilets. Relatively short distances in coaches may be manageable for many people but longer distances often are not.⁸²

3.17 Although the weight of stakeholder evidence advocated for trains as the preferred transport mode in terms of accessibility, CountryLink emphasised that its fleet of coaches is also disability compliant (wheelchair accessible). However, CountryLink explained that its coaches (and trains) are restricted in their capacity to carry wheelchairs and other mobility devices due to the dimensional limitations of the vehicles.⁸³

3.18 National Seniors Australia explained that, while CountryLink coaches exceed public transport Disability Standards, travelling on buses is still difficult for older passengers and passengers with mobility issues:

Although coaches used by CountryLink exceed current Disability Standards for public transport benchmarks, older travellers report that travelling by coach remains difficult for people with mobility impairments or medical conditions as they are unable to move around as freely as on a train and there is limited or no access to facilities such as toilets.⁸⁴

3.19 For the same reasons, the Physical Disability Council of NSW stated that it is not in favour of any measures to replace trains with buses. From the point of view of people with disabilities it is preferable to replace train services with community transport, if required.⁸⁵

3.20 The Centre for Disability Law also noted that, contrary to CountryLink's claims about its coach services being wheelchair accessible (provided 48 hours' notice is given), the services between Broadmeadow and Taree operated by Busways Coaches are not currently able to accommodate wheelchairs or motorised scooters.⁸⁶

3.21 The Southern Councils Group suggested that because much of CountryLink's future patronage growth will come from an ageing population, Transport for NSW should take into account factors such as accessibility, comfort design and storage space when considering options for rolling stock in the future.⁸⁷

ACCESSIBLE RAILWAY STATIONS AND BUS INTERCHANGES

3.22 The accessibility of railway stations and bus interchanges for people who are mobility, hearing or vision impaired was another issue raised in numerous submissions. For example, National Seniors Australia explained that factors such as lack of wheelchair access, lack of staff and inadequate facilities and infrastructure at regional railway stations and bus interchanges presented access issues for older people seeking to use public transport:

⁸² Submission 82, Lachlan Regional Transport Committee, p 2.

⁸³ CountryLink, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 29 November 2012, p 2.

⁸⁴ Submission 83, National Seniors Australia, p 2.

⁸⁵ Submission 134, Physical Disability Council of NSW, p 4; and Ms Jordana Goodman, Policy Officer, Physical Disability Council of NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 37.

⁸⁶ Submission 142, Australian Centre for Disability Law, p 2.

⁸⁷ Submission 112, Southern Councils Group, p 5.

Travelling by train also presents accessibility problems with limited train stations having wheelchair access points or offering assistance when boarding or alighting and numerous stairs at many stations.

...In addition, facilities at bus stops, such as toilets and cafeterias, are not always wheelchair accessible and walkways and footpaths are often inadequate.⁸⁸

- 3.23 In evidence to the inquiry, Ms Penelope Nelson, Chair NSW Policy Advisory Group, National Seniors Australia, estimated that only 40 to 45 per cent of railway stations in NSW comply fully with the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (Accessible Disability Standards).⁸⁹
- 3.24 Ms Jordana Goodman, Policy Officer, Physical Disability Council of NSW, similarly argued that many regional railway stations in NSW do not provide full or 'universal' accessibility for people with mobility impairments, and people with hearing and vision impairment. By way of example, Ms Goodman advised the Committee that 11 railway stations in the Blue Mountains alone are not fully accessible to these groups:
- Blue Mountains train stations do not provide access. There are 11 stations between Katoomba and Springwood and none of them provide access. In the city people would not have to go that distance before finding an accessible station. There are not many stations in the Blue Mountains that provide access and we recommend that it be considered a priority.⁹⁰
- 3.25 In contrast to the stakeholder evidence, CountryLink submitted that, by its own estimation, 85 per cent of railway stations at which CountryLink trains stop are adequately accessible for people with mobility impairments.⁹¹
- 3.26 To make regional railway stations and bus interchanges more accessible, the Physical Disability Council of NSW and National Seniors Australia recommended that sufficient numbers of CountryLink staff should be available to assist passengers with service information, boarding and luggage, particularly at those interchanges that are not fully accessible.⁹²
- 3.27 The Physical Disability Council also suggested that accessibility would be improved if CountryLink and bus operators liaised with local governments, through Ability Links NSW⁹³ to ensure that public transport infrastructure provides safe and convenient access to and from interchanges, including

⁸⁸ Submission 83, National Seniors Australia, p 2.

⁸⁹ Ms Penelope Nelson, Chair NSW Policy Advisory Group, National Seniors Australia, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 33.

⁹⁰ Ms Jordana Goodman, Policy Officer, Physical Disability Council of NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 37.

⁹¹ CountryLink, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 29 November 2012, p 2.

⁹² Ms Jordana Goodman, Policy Officer, Physical Disability Council of NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 37; and Submission 134, Physical Disability Council of NSW, p 5; and Ms Penelope Nelson, Chair NSW Policy Advisory Group, National Seniors Australia, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 34.

⁹³ Ability Links NSW is a Government initiative, administered by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, which has been created to support the disability service system in NSW. Ability Links NSW, viewed 22 August 2013, < http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/individuals/inclusion_and_participation/ability_links_nsw>.

enhanced pedestrian and parking facilities.⁹⁴ Moreover, Ms Nelson suggested that transport interchanges would be made more accessible if they incorporated dedicated parking/drop-off points, to allow mobility-impaired people to alight from vehicles safely and at their own pace.⁹⁵

ACCESSIBLE SERVICE INFORMATION

- 3.28 Stakeholders also submitted that service information, including information regarding train and bus timetables, should be made more accessible to the range of customers that use CountryLink's services. Coffs Harbour City Council, for example, suggested that some bus timetables are difficult to read and inaccessible to people with disabilities and people with English as a second language.⁹⁶
- 3.29 Northern Rivers Social Development Council submitted that there is a lack of accessible information about CountryLink services for customers without internet access, and that many customers find timetables and the information about train and coach connections confusing and difficult to interpret. However, the organisation acknowledged that CountryLink's service information will be made significantly more accessible by the expected expansion of the 131 500 Transport InfoLine to incorporate CountryLink services.⁹⁷
- 3.30 National Seniors Australia explained that many older passengers are reluctant to use the internet or digital tools such as the Transport Info App to access transport information. Rather, they rely on printed brochures and the provision of verbal advice from CountryLink staff. National Seniors Australia submitted that printed brochures were becoming increasingly difficult to obtain at railway stations, making it difficult for many older passengers to access current CountryLink timetables and track work schedules.⁹⁸
- 3.31 In order to facilitate better access to information about CountryLink services, National Seniors Australia recommended that transport information be made available to the public in a variety of media, including hard copy brochures, radio and television, as well as online.⁹⁹ National Seniors Australia further suggested that CountryLink make more staff available to give passengers verbal advice, either in person or via telephone, in relation to services, timetables and track work schedules.¹⁰⁰

MAKING INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT MORE ACCESSIBLE

- 3.32 In order to identify specific accessibility issues in respect of regional transport interchanges, as well as wider-ranging areas in need of reform, National Seniors

⁹⁴ Submission 134, Physical Disability Council of NSW, p 5.

⁹⁵ Ms Penelope Nelson, Chair NSW Policy Advisory Group, National Seniors Australia, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 34.

⁹⁶ Submission 44, Coffs Harbour City Council, p 5.

⁹⁷ Submission 49, Northern Rivers Social Development Council, p 1.

⁹⁸ Submission 83, National Seniors Australia, p 2.

⁹⁹ Submission 83, National Seniors Australia, p 3.

¹⁰⁰ Ms Penelope Nelson, Chair, NSW Policy Advisory Group, National Seniors Australia, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 36.

Australia recommended that Transport for NSW conduct a full accessibility audit of regional railway stations and bus interchanges.¹⁰¹

- 3.33 Ms Jordana Goodman, Policy Officer, Physical Disability Council of NSW, also supported a full accessibility audit of regional railway stations and bus interchanges, as well as CountryLink's trains and coaches. This would provide a common standard of accessibility across all the transport modes and interchanges that service regional NSW. "I would be in favour of it," Ms Goodman said, "because if we had an audit you would have some consistency and you would have a common minimum standard."¹⁰²

Transport for NSW's actions to make inter-regional transport more accessible

- 3.34 Transport for NSW detailed its current strategies and future actions to make inter-regional public transport more accessible to older people, people with disabilities and people with mental health issues. These are summarised below.

Accessibility for older people

- 3.35 Transport for NSW initiatives to make inter-regional travel more accessible for older people include:
- transport concessions for eligible seniors, for example, half fare concessions across all services; the \$2.50 Country Pensioner Excursion Ticket (CPE), which provides one-way travel on long distance, pre-booked CountryLink rail and coach services; and four free single trips per year on CountryLink rail and coach services, within NSW
 - 'Access and Mobility Days', to provide hands-on information to older travellers about local public transport options
 - providing grants, through the Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme (CPTIGS), to improve passenger transport infrastructure, including amenities and security
 - specific consideration of the needs of transport disadvantaged older people in the development of regional transport plans under the *Transport Master Plan*.¹⁰³

Accessibility for people with disabilities

- 3.36 Transport for NSW initiatives to make inter-regional travel more accessible for people with disabilities include:

¹⁰¹ Submission 83, National Seniors Australia, p 3.

¹⁰² Ms Jordana Goodman, Policy Officer, Physical Disability Council of NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, pp 37-38.

¹⁰³ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, pp 7-8.

- specific consideration of the transport needs of people with disabilities in a renewed Disability Action Plan 2012-2017 and in the development of regional transport plans under the *Transport Master Plan*
- procurement of new rail rolling stock that is accessible
- the inclusion of service requirements for customers with disabilities on the online booking service
- requiring contracted private bus operators to fully comply with the Transport Standards and to report on progress against accessibility targets, where applicable
- requiring contracted private bus operators to provide information on services (including accessibility) to the 131 500 Transport InfoLine and website
- introduction of a new standard bus timetable, including standard notation for accessible services
- providing grants, through the CPTIGS, to improve passenger transport infrastructure, including amenities and security.¹⁰⁴

Accessibility for people with mental health issues

3.37 Transport for NSW strategies to improve access to inter-regional travel for people with mental health issues include:

- awareness training, as part of disability awareness training, for front line service staff in relation to the provision of service to people with mental health issues
- discreet projects, such as the Riverina Mental Health Taxi Voucher Scheme – Riverina Murray Region, which is a taxi voucher system that assists young people with mental health issues in attending appointments and health services at Riverina Headspace
- providing chartered transport to assist people with mental health issues in attending mental health-related events, such as the Dramatic Minds Festival in Wagga Wagga and the Walking Feet Forum launch in Armidale.¹⁰⁵

Committee comment

3.38 The Committee commends Transport for NSW for its work to improve the accessibility of its vehicles, transport interchanges and the service information that it provides. Examples of this include the agency's measures to address accessibility issues raised in regional transport plans, its expansion of the 131

¹⁰⁴ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, p 8.

¹⁰⁵ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, pp 9-10.

500 Transport InfoLine to include NSW TrainLink rail and coach services, and its improvements to regional transport infrastructure through the Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme.

- 3.39 However, the Committee was concerned by the evidence from stakeholders that there is no consistent minimum standard of accessibility currently provided to NSW TrainLink's customers. The Committee considers that a full accessibility audit of NSW TrainLink's train and coach services is needed. An accessibility audit would provide an effective means of identifying both specific issues and wide-ranging areas for reform. This, in turn, would enable Transport for NSW to efficiently target its resources to addressing the individual and broad issues identified, and, ultimately, to establish and maintain consistently high accessibility standards across NSW TrainLink's services.
- 3.40 To this effect, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW conducts a full accessibility audit of NSW TrainLink's trains and coaches, its regional railway stations and bus interchanges, and addresses any issues.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW conducts a full accessibility audit of NSW TrainLink's trains and coaches, its regional railway stations and bus interchanges, and addresses any issues.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

- 3.41 As noted in Chapter One of this report, community transport services are operated by local councils, volunteer groups, community organisations and service providers under the Australian Government's Home and Community Care (HACC) scheme.¹⁰⁶
- 3.42 The Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils expressed the view that community transport has the potential to provide effective inter-regional transport to regional communities, because of its flexibility and capacity to integrate with other transport modes:
- Currently, the best chance of integration is achieved through community transport services because they can be ordered in such a way as to meet other transport services. Community transport is able to offer flexibility in its service delivery because it usually operates small buses or cars and transports only a small number of people at each time a service is provided.¹⁰⁷
- 3.43 However, due to inadequate funding of the service in the Riverina local government areas community transport is largely used by clients for travelling to and from medical appointments, rather than being a public transport alternative for the wider community:

Community transport is a heavily utilised service particularly in the LGAs outside of Wagga Wagga where there are no town bus services. These services are underfunded and as a consequence service delivery tends to be restricted to

¹⁰⁶ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 226, p 306.

¹⁰⁷ Submission 146, Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils, p 4.

transporting clients to health and medical appointments rather than for accessing transport to social activities. This can mean that those that are dependent on community transport as their major public transport solution are as a consequence unable to engage in a broad range of social activities, which can be an extremely isolating outcome.¹⁰⁸

- 3.44 Further, restrictive eligibility criteria for community transport mean that many people experiencing transport disadvantage are unable to use community transport. For example, Ms Ka Ki Ng, Senior Policy Officer, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc. explained that people with a mental illness are not eligible to access community transport funded through the Home and Community Care program:

...I think the eligibility criteria for community transport has to be looked at. At the moment many people are excluded, depending on the region and who gets contracted to provide community transport. For example, if it is only HACC services, many people with mental illness who do not fall within its categories will be excluded.¹⁰⁹

- 3.45 NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc. argued that additional funding and legislative change to broaden the eligibility criteria for access to community transport services have the potential to deliver innovative and efficient transport solutions to groups experiencing transport disadvantage, and to enhance existing public transport networks in regional NSW.¹¹⁰

- 3.46 NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc. also raised the issue of discrimination against people with mental health issues seeking to use community transport. The organisation stated that it was aware of numerous incidents where people with mental illnesses living in regional communities had been excluded from using community transport because they were deemed to be a 'risk', even though in most cases those people were not experiencing mental health symptoms at the time they sought to use the service.¹¹¹

- 3.47 Ms Ng noted that both the *Transport Master Plan* and a review of the State's passenger transport legislation proposed that an accreditation system be applied to community transport. Ms Ng indicated that NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc. fully supports this measure as it provides an opportunity to ensure that community transport operators fully comply with anti-discrimination requirements.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Submission 146, Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils, p 2.

¹⁰⁹ Ms Ka Ki Ng, Senior Policy Officer, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 27.

¹¹⁰ Submission 77, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., p 5.

¹¹¹ Ms Ka Ki Ng, Senior Policy Officer, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 27.

¹¹² Ms Ka Ki Ng, Senior Policy Officer, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 27.

Transport for NSW's actions to improve community transport services

- 3.48 In the *Transport Master Plan*, Transport for NSW indicated that one of its priority action areas in relation to regional NSW was a "...renewed focus on improving and strengthening the community transport sector".¹¹³
- 3.49 The *Transport Master Plan* stated that it would improve community transport services across NSW in the following ways:
- provision of additional funding
 - a comprehensive review of services to ensure consistently high standards of service delivery and efficient use of available resources and
 - the introduction of an accreditation system for service operators.¹¹⁴

Committee comment

- 3.50 The Committee considers that community transport services have the potential to provide flexible, responsive and integrated public transport to regional communities.
- 3.51 The Committee commends the work being done by Transport for NSW to improve the community transport sector. However, the Committee is concerned that some groups in the community who suffer from transport disadvantage are currently unable to access community transport.
- 3.52 Consequently, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW considers broadening the scope of community transport to provide services to all groups in regional communities experiencing transport disadvantage.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW considers broadening the scope of community transport to provide services to all groups in regional communities experiencing transport disadvantage.

- 3.53 The Committee was concerned to hear that in some areas certain vulnerable people, such as people with mental illnesses, have been excluded from using community transport. The Committee is of the view that the introduction of an accreditation system for community transport operators is necessary to ensure that operators meet their legal obligations when providing community transport services. The Committee therefore recommends that Transport for NSW develops a community transport accreditation scheme as a matter of priority.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW develops a community transport accreditation scheme as a matter of priority.

¹¹³ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 213.

¹¹⁴ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, pp 238, 404 and 407. See also, Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, pp 9-10.

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- 3.54 The Committee may report on any issues arising from Transport for NSW's measures to strengthen the community transport sector in a supplementary report.

Chapter Four – Service provision and timetabling

- 4.1 The benefits of improved service provision and timetabling for regional passengers include greater opportunities to commute for work; to travel for access to health, education social and other services; and to travel for social and lifestyle reasons.¹¹⁵
- 4.2 Frequency and reliability of train and bus services, timetabling of train and bus services, and integration and connectivity of train and bus services are considered in this chapter. Services provided by NSW TrainLink on board its trains and coaches and at railway stations and bus interchanges are also considered. Finally, the chapter considers the operation of inter-regional bus services.

FREQUENCY AND RELIABILITY OF SERVICES

- 4.3 The frequency and reliability of NSW TrainLink train and coach services were significant issues for inquiry participants. The Committee heard that this has impeded NSW TrainLink's capacity to attract and retain customers and hindered its overall effectiveness as a public transport provider to regional NSW.
- 4.4 This view was expressed by Riverina Eastern Organisation of Councils, which stated that the CountryLink rail network was consistently under-utilised because: services are not available in the areas that customers want them; services depart at times that do not suit customer needs; and services are unreliable, often running late.¹¹⁶
- 4.5 The Riverina Eastern Organisation of Councils stated that CountryLink's unreliability, in particular, has undermined customer confidence in the rail network. This, in turn, has resulted in fewer customers using the service for inter-regional travel:

The Service's lack of punctuality undermines confidence in its product which ultimately must result in fewer people choosing to use it, particularly those that can afford to pay a premium price for their ticket and have the choice of either flying or driving.¹¹⁷

- 4.6 Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, conceded that the unreliability of the railway network was a significant issue for customers:

Service reliability is the feedback that we get from our customers. Our customers do not like us cancelling trains; they do not like us putting them on coaches unnecessarily in place of a train service. It is these issues that we are working hard to

¹¹⁵ See, for example, Submission 59, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 1; Submission 68, Central NSW Councils, pp 1-2; and Submission 77, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., pp 3-4.

¹¹⁶ Submission 146, Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils, p 1.

¹¹⁷ Submission 146, Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils, p 2.

fix, again doing what we can within the scope of the assets and the resources that we have.¹¹⁸

4.7 The submission from Infrastructure Partnerships Australia also attributed the steady decline in patronage of CountryLink's train services to what it deemed to be the network's "declining reliability", as well as the relatively slow speeds of its trains. To illustrate this point the organisation referred to CountryLink's May 2012 on-time running statistics, which showed that its benchmark target of having 78% of services arrive at their destinations within 10 minutes of the scheduled time had not been achieved since 1 August 2011 (as at the time the statistics were published).¹¹⁹

4.8 Mr Coates attributed high levels of negative customer feedback to the late running of services:

CountryLink currently has an on-time target of 78 per cent. Until a couple of months ago in the southern region we were struggling to meet 10 per cent on-time running. We know that it is not acceptable to our customers and the level of complaint certainly told us that.¹²⁰

4.9 Noting that CountryLink's 2012 average on-time running percentage was only 59.9%, Action for Public Transport NSW recommended that CountryLink review the timeliness and reliability of its services and the causes of the service delays. The organisation suggested that resolving these issues would improve the network's overall efficiency, thereby making it a more attractive travel alternative for customers.¹²¹

4.10 The Riverina Regional Organisation of Councils similarly concluded that addressing the challenges of unreliability, speed and frequency of services would be the most effective means of improving the CountryLink rail network:

The two most important ways in which CountryLink services can be improved is in timing and speed. The service needs to regularly and consistently run on time and it needs to be quicker.¹²²

4.11 Mr Coates agreed with stakeholder views that CountryLink's customer base would expand if services were more reliable and frequent:

Yes, I believe it can be expanded. What will bring patronage will be reliability and frequency...Reliability is a big ticket item. Frequency of service is also an issue.¹²³

Factors contributing to unreliability

4.12 Inquiry participants identified two major factors that influence the frequency and reliability of CountryLink's services: the structure and condition of the track on which NSW TrainLink passenger rail services operate; and competition for track

¹¹⁸ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 11.

¹¹⁹ Submission 136, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, p 3.

¹²⁰ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 12.

¹²¹ Submission 127, Action for Public Transport NSW, p 5.

¹²² Submission 146, Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils, p 2.

¹²³ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 13.

with freight trains and trains on the Sydney metropolitan (Sydney Trains) network.

Track structure and condition

- 4.13 The issues of poor track condition and difficult track structure were highlighted by stakeholders. For example, Mr Charles Body suggested that the biggest challenge that CountryLink faces in terms of its capacity to deliver frequent and reliable services is the poor condition of the track on which trains run.¹²⁴
- 4.14 Rather than poor track condition Mr Coates identified the structure of the track, particularly the number of curves, as being the major factor constraining running times and the frequency and reliability of services:
- ...we are running on railway line that was constructed back in the 1800s and that is a significant constraint in terms of your capacity to increase your running times. If it was all dead straight track we would run 160 kilometres an hour every inch of the way between here and Melbourne and you would see a significant improvement in your running times but that is not the case.¹²⁵
- 4.15 This was a common complaint among inquiry participants, who saw track curve easing as being the key to enabling faster running speeds and improved services.¹²⁶ Lachlan Regional Transport was one stakeholder that expressed this view:
- Improvement in the infrastructure would benefit freight as well as passenger operations. If slow speeds are a problem, and there is obviously room for improvement in timetables, serious consideration should be given to raising track speeds and capacity...
- LRTC believes that all options for accelerating services should be examined. As has occurred in other states, this may involve either infrastructure (basically easing track curvature) or new equipment...¹²⁷
- 4.16 Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils recommended a number of improvements to the existing track infrastructure, which it suggested could be put in place to increase running times of the existing CountryLink fleet, including:
- sections of quality track capable of handling trains running at higher speeds
 - double tracks at critical sections and
 - passing lanes that can also be used as overtaking lanes where double tracks cannot reasonably be provided throughout.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Submission 17, Mr Charles Body, p 1.

¹²⁵ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 15.

¹²⁶ See, for example, Submission No. 24, Ogden's Coaches, p 1; Submission 81, Sustainable Living Armidale, p 2; Submission 82, Lachlan Regional Transport Committee Inc., p 2; Submission 112, Southern Councils Group, p 4; and Submission 115, name suppressed, p 2.

¹²⁷ Submission 82, Lachlan Regional Transport Committee Inc., p 2.

¹²⁸ Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 3. See also, Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, pp 1-2.

4.17 Both CountryLink and Transport for NSW submitted that although improvements had been made to NSW's track network, significant track issues remained that will ultimately hinder the capacity of CountryLink's rolling stock to travel at optimum speeds.

4.18 In relation to track curvature, Mr Coates advised the Committee that the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) had undertaken curve easing work to sections of the network, but that there were persisting issues, particularly in northern NSW:

The Australian Rail Track Corporation is doing some good work in what they call curve easing, so some of the tighter curves that constrain journey times are being eased out so we are able to travel the faster time but once you get up to the northern parts of New South Wales, the alignment up there is very slow and very snaky; it constrains running times significantly.¹²⁹

4.19 Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW also commented on the difficulties arising from the structure and managing the tracks. In particular, Mr Wielinga stated that recent work to upgrade main rail corridor tracks had improved overall running speeds of CountryLink services. However, the sections of the network managed by the ARTC were still experiencing maintenance issues, and significant investment would be required to resolve those issues:

... We are having some significant problems on the part of the network that is currently managed by the Australian Rail Track Corporation, particularly down south with some maintenance activity with mud hole problems down there. There are a lot more speed limitations on the network... But again, significant investment is needed to facilitate getting rid of those problems.¹³⁰

4.20 Transport for NSW also highlighted the size of investment needed to improve the existing track network:

Relative to road and air, rail travel times are generally uncompetitive. To reduce travel times for rail, significant expenditure would be required to realign railway lines and provide for trains that can travel at faster speeds.¹³¹

Competition for track with other rail networks

4.21 The second significant obstacle to improving the frequency and reliability of CountryLink's train services identified by stakeholders was competition with freight rail services for access to the track network.

4.22 The submission from Transport for NSW summarised the impacts of the current track sharing arrangements:

One of the major challenges for the rail network is that passenger and freight trains share the same track infrastructure. Freight is the major user of rail outside Sydney and the primary focus of many new rail investments. CountryLink timetables and

¹²⁹ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 15.

¹³⁰ Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 4.

¹³¹ Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 6.

travel times are constrained by having to share the rail network with freight trains in the regions and with CityRail trains on the Sydney metropolitan network.¹³²

- 4.23 According to the *Transport Master Plan*, under these arrangements, an increase in freight rail activities and passenger rail activities may not be possible without future network upgrades, such as longer passing loops and track duplication in some locations.¹³³ The *Transport Master Plan* outlines the ways in which freight trains inadvertently obstruct the quick and efficient running of passenger services, namely that they occupy a significant length of track and they generally run more slowly than passenger services:

Freight trains can be up to 1.8 kilometres long and generally operate at a lower speed than passenger services. It is likely that in the future freight trains will become even longer, creating further difficulties in co-ordinating freight and passenger services on the same track without new works.¹³⁴

- 4.24 Mr Coates agreed that the efficiency of CountryLink's train services was impacted by the track sharing arrangements. However, he also noted that CountryLink was working with the ARTC to ensure that passenger services get equitable access to the track network:

...we are subject to a lot of impacts as a result of freight trains and other services. We have been doing a lot of work since I arrived to improve the relationship with the Australian Rail Track Corporation and ensure that we get fair and proper treatment in terms of train pathing.¹³⁵

- 4.25 Inquiry participants made recommendations aimed at minimising the impacts of track sharing arrangements on passenger services. The Bathurst Business Chamber, for example, suggested that re-opening and maintaining existing unused freight lines from the regions to ports would increase the capacity of the track network and make more track available for passenger services:

Delays for commuter, restricted track capacity and the competing requirements of freight and passenger traffic need to be resolved. Alternate freight lines from regional NSW to ports should be re-opened and maintained, so as to increase capacity.¹³⁶

- 4.26 The Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, on the other hand, recommended that sections of dedicated track in priority areas should be kept exclusively for passenger services in order to avoid the logistical challenges associated with sharing track with slower freight services in those key areas.¹³⁷

- 4.27 The *Transport Master Plan* indicates that Transport for NSW intends to address the challenges associated with track sharing between regional passenger services, freight services and Sydney metropolitan services, chiefly by means of assessing and implementing reforms to the current regulatory access

¹³² Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 6.

¹³³ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 229.

¹³⁴ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 229.

¹³⁵ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 11.

¹³⁶ Submission 129, Bathurst Business Chamber, p 6.

¹³⁷ Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 3.

arrangements. According to the *Transport Master Plan* these reforms will alleviate conflicts between passenger and freight services and will ultimately support the development of a better integrated and efficient rail network:

We will assess and reform regulatory access arrangements that apply to the Metropolitan Rail Network, the Country Regional Network and interfaces with ARTC access undertakings for the metropolitan and regional freight networks. This will improve the management of conflicts between passenger and freight transport...and develop a more integrated and contestable national rail market.¹³⁸

Committee comment

- 4.28 The Committee agrees with stakeholder views that resolving the issues of frequency and reliability of NSW TrainLink passenger rail services are central to improving the overall service that is provided regional customers. The Committee is confident that improving services to customers will result in increased patronage, which will, in turn, make NSW TrainLink a more cost-effective and efficient provider of public transport to regional NSW.
- 4.29 Outside of the work that will be undertaken by Transport for NSW to reform the current regulatory access arrangements, the great weight of evidence, including that from Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink, indicates that significant investment of resources will be required to make the necessary improvements to the existing track network to enable passenger trains to travel at faster speeds.
- 4.30 While the Committee recognises that the Government must consider its priorities and budgetary restrictions when allocating funds to such large-scale activities, it was persuaded that investing in the State's track network would deliver a raft of benefits for regional customers, the foremost of these being faster train journeys and services that are more frequent and reliable.
- 4.31 An example that the Committee's attention was drawn to was the state of the track between Orange and Bathurst. The antiquated nature of the line is an impediment to faster rail services between those two cities.
- 4.32 The Committee acknowledges the extremely high cost of track upgrades. The Committee therefore recommends that, subject to budgetary considerations, the NSW Government considers the provision of funding with the ARTC for projects to upgrade the existing track network to enable passenger trains to travel at faster speeds; and obtains advice from Transport for NSW and the ARTC to identify the priority areas requiring immediate action.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Committee recommends that the NSW Government (subject to budgetary considerations):

- **considers the provision of funding with the Australian Rail Track Corporation for projects to upgrade the existing track network to enable passenger trains to travel at faster speeds and**

¹³⁸ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, p 293.

- **obtains advice from Transport for NSW and the Australian Rail Track Corporation to identify the priority areas requiring immediate action.**

TIMETABLING

4.33 Much of the stakeholder evidence indicated that NSW TrainLink timetables do not adequately meet the needs of regional passengers. A number of submissions argued that timetabling of NSW TrainLink rail services is geared towards meeting the needs of metropolitan passengers travelling between major centres to the detriment of regional passengers travelling between regional centres, or between a regional centre and a metropolitan centre.

4.34 The Northern Rivers Social Development Council stated that the perception among regional passengers is that the first priority of CountryLink timetabling is the needs of metropolitan passengers, with secondary consideration being given to regional requirements:

There is a strong perception in the community that CountryLink services are entirely Sydney-centric. Timetables are designed to meet the needs of metropolitan users and are based on travel between Sydney and Brisbane without much consideration for the travel patterns of regional users.¹³⁹

4.35 Similarly, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers argued that the current structure of CountryLink’s timetabling delivers limited benefits to regional passengers, largely because it is based on passenger convenience at the metropolitan end point of journeys. The organisation stated that CountryLink would need to reconfigure its timetables if it was to deliver improved passenger services to regional communities:

The CountryLink service is currently focused on servicing a train service between major centres and providing a mechanism to link regional communities to these metropolitan centres (e.g. Sydney and Brisbane). In its current delivery mode CountryLink provides limited benefits to regions, as timetables are based on convenience at the metropolitan end point of journeys and not on regional requirements. To meet regional needs, CountryLink services need to be reconfigured to improve flexibility, frequency and timetabling to meet the needs of regional users.¹⁴⁰

4.36 Mr Garry Styles, General Manager, Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils, argued that CountryLink timetables were inadequate because they did not cater to regional passengers who do not have a great deal of time available for travelling. By way of example, Mr Styles stated that the train service between Sydney and Bathurst makes it impossible for passengers to travel to and from Sydney in one day, requiring them to stay overnight:

With the CountryLink service, as highlighted in here, it’s effectively a service for people who do not have cars, pensioners or people who can probably afford a lot more time to get to and from Sydney, for arguments sake. It does not work very effectively from the perspective of other travellers. If you want to go from Sydney and back, and do some business or access medical services, or whatever it is, you are

¹³⁹ Submission 48, Northern Rivers Social Development Council, p 1.

¹⁴⁰ Submission 43, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers, p 14.

virtually committed to staying overnight because timetables do not work, or it is probably worse than that, staying overnight with a very long trip the next day.

...The timetabling does not work very effectively because it is very time-intensive by whoever uses it so that it tends to become only patronised, or largely patronised, by people who can afford that time.¹⁴¹

- 4.37 Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, stated that while CountryLink sought to improve its timetabling to better meet the needs of regional passengers, the limitations on the speeds at which trains are able to travel, imposed by factors such as the types of rolling stock operating and track condition and access, meant that the agency was already at its limits:

At the moment the timetable services we provide are really at the limit or scope of what we are able to do, in regard to the current rolling stock.¹⁴²

- 4.38 Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, acknowledged that there were significant challenges with CountryLink's timetabling. However, he also noted that the establishment of NSW Trains, which will encompass both regional and intercity services, would potentially alleviate some of the root causes of the timetabling issues, such as limited track access. Mr Wielinga stated that NSW Trains' timetabling structure would have to be re-designed to make better use of the improved track network access:

...One of the good things about New South Wales Trains with the intercity services and the regional services being combined into one entity is that the regional services can use the same track paths as our intercity services and that this helps to guarantee their access onto the network. So we have to design a system that facilitates that.¹⁴³

- 4.39 Inquiry participants submitted that train services to regional NSW would be greatly improved if CountryLink's timetabling was reviewed to enable regional passengers, where practicable, to undertake return journeys to metropolitan centres or other regions in a single day.
- 4.40 Stakeholders also suggested that regional train services would be improved if they were more flexible and responsive to increased customer demand during peak travel periods like Easter.¹⁴⁴

Committee comment

- 4.41 The Committee agrees with stakeholder views that, as a principal provider of public transport to regional NSW, NSW TrainLink should, wherever possible, timetable its services to meet the needs of regional passengers, particularly when service gaps have been identified.

¹⁴¹ Mr Garry Styles, General Manager, Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 9.

¹⁴² Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 11.

¹⁴³ Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 7.

¹⁴⁴ Submission 6, Mr Victor Isaacs, p 1; and Submission 25, name suppressed, pp 4-5.

- 4.42 However, the Committee also notes the comments from Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink about the timetabling challenges that the agencies face and compounding factors such as the limitations of rolling stock and the condition of the track on which trains run.
- 4.43 In the context of the anticipated improvements in efficiency and services resulting from the establishment of NSW TrainLink, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink identify areas where timetabling can be reconfigured to provide regional passengers with improved services, including same-day return journeys and departure and arrival times that complement business hours; and implement improvements to the timetabling of regional services where it is practicable and affordable.
- 4.44 In undertaking this task the Committee further recommends that Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink review stakeholder evidence to this inquiry which raises specific service and timetabling issues.
- 4.45 Examples of specific service and timetabling issues brought to the attention of the Committee included:
- (a) the need for an early train service from New England (including Tamworth) to Newcastle to link with Sydney, and a return service in the afternoon. The Committee notes the detailed submissions received from the Member for Tamworth, Mr Kevin Anderson MP, on issues concerning this inquiry.
 - (b) the need for a daily return XPT service from Western NSW to Sydney. The current service departs the Central West late in the afternoon requiring an overnight stay in Sydney and making the service inconvenient for any type of business travel.
 - (c) the need for more direct train services between Sydney and Broken Hill, and more frequent public transport services linking towns in the Central Darling Shire (e.g. Ivanhoe, Wilcannia, White Cliffs and Menindee).
 - (d) the need for improved timetabling and route planning of inter-regional public transport in the Riverina region and improved public transport linking local government areas in the region.
 - (e) the need for better timetabling of the NSW TrainLink coach service to and from Orange (e.g. the service misses connecting with the Bathurst-Sydney rail service by a matter of minutes) (see recommendations on connectivity in this report below).
- 4.46 A summary of the evidence can be found at Appendix Five of this report.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink:

- **review each of the timetabling issues raised in Appendix 5 of this report**

- **identify areas where timetabling can be reconfigured to provide regional passengers with improved services, including same-day return journeys and departure and arrival times that complement business hours and**
- **implement improvements to the timetabling of regional services where it is practicable and affordable.**

SERVICE INTEGRATION AND CONNECTIVITY

4.47 Another significant theme in much of the evidence was the integration and connectivity of NSW TrainLink train services with its coach services and other connecting transport modes such as local bus services.

4.48 Ms Ka Ki Ng, Senior Policy Officer, NSW Consumer Advisory Group, Mental Health Inc., stated that travel within regions and between regions would be made significantly easier for passengers if there was better co-ordination between the transport modes:

We would encourage making travel within regions and also between regions a lot easier by improving the availability and co-ordination of transport, including between different modes of transport.¹⁴⁵

4.49 Numerous stakeholders submitted that poor connectivity between the various transport modes in regional areas has meant that passengers are often required to:

- wait long periods of time for connecting services
- travel to separate interchanges to access connecting services and
- utilise passenger facilities that are not suitable for extended waiting periods, in terms of convenience and comfort.

4.50 As noted in this report above, an example of poor connectivity that the Committee's attention was drawn to was the fact that the NSW TrainLink coach service departing Orange each morning misses a connection with the new daily rail express service from Bathurst to Sydney by a matter of minutes. This recently introduced service has been well patronised and is an example of strong community support for improved inter-regional public transport.¹⁴⁶

4.51 Ms Jennifer Bennett, Executive Officer, Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils, gave the example of the long waiting periods involved with travelling to neighbouring regions from Lithgow railway station:

And then there is a model interchange between Lithgow with the train service coming in and to wherever it is going to go, and typically that does not fit with the bus. The bus may or may not be there in a reasonable amount of time so you have got children sitting in the dark in the cold in the winter in Lithgow so parents go and

¹⁴⁵ Ms Ka Ki Ng, Senior Policy Officer, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 27.

¹⁴⁶ Mr Andrew Gee MP, *Legislative Assembly Hansard*, 22 October 2013, p 24459.

pick them up. For example, a journey between Lithgow and Mudgee-I am another one who had kids at school in Sydney-it is hours to get between Lithgow and Mudgee. Again parents just used to go down and pick up all the kids. It is really not acceptable.¹⁴⁷

4.52 To remedy this, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers recommended that CountryLink be more proactive in attempting to integrate its train timetabling with its own coach services and connecting local public transport modes.¹⁴⁸

4.53 The related issue of inadequate geographic connectivity between CountryLink railway stations and local public transport facilities was also discussed by stakeholders. By this, stakeholders referred to situations whereby bus stops are not co-located with train stations, requiring regional passengers to travel additional distances to access connecting services.

4.54 AlburyCity identified Albury Railway Station as an example of a station that is poorly geographically integrated with local and other public transport services. According to AlburyCity the station is not serviced by the local bus network and passengers seeking to use local bus services must therefore travel 1 km to the nearest bus interchange. AlburyCity stated that even a relatively short distance like 1 km was problematic for passengers with mobility issues, younger children and tourists:

It should be noted that local bus services do not directly connect to CountryLink services, as local buses do not currently service Albury train station. To access local bus services in Dean Street requires a walk of almost 1km from the train station, which is an issue for persons with mobility issues or young children, as well as tourists with large amounts of luggage. Improving the connection between local bus services and CountryLink train and coach services would eliminate this issue, and this would require modification of local bus services.¹⁴⁹

4.55 Transport for NSW indicated that it was aware of the difficulties experienced by regional customers in relation to the integration and connectivity of NSW TrainLink services. A priority task arising from the *Transport Master Plan* is to develop improved connections between train and bus services, which would incorporate integrated timetabling and better responsiveness to customer needs.¹⁵⁰

4.56 CountryLink advised the Committee that given available resources, the current level of service integration was as good as it could be. The agency submitted that improving service connectivity would require additional funding:

I think the level of integration is sufficient to achieve the level of service currently provided to regional areas. Current routes and schedules are reviewed to optimise the service provided with the existing resource levels. If there was a desire to

¹⁴⁷ Ms Jennifer Bennett, Executive Officer, Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 9.

¹⁴⁸ Submission 43, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers, p 14.

¹⁴⁹ Submission 29, AlburyCity, p 2.

¹⁵⁰ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, p 3.

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increase the level of service this would require the commitment of additional funding.¹⁵¹

- 4.57 In the event of more funding being made available for this purpose, CountryLink suggested numerous ways in which connectivity could be improved. These include increasing the number of connections in the CountryLink inter-regional transport network, and upgrading existing coach stop facilities:

Linkages between train and coach services could be improved a number of ways from increasing the number of connections to that which currently exists to improving the amenity of coach stop facilities. Some initiatives may be best achieved in partnership with regional councils others would need additional funding from Government.¹⁵²

- 4.58 Like CountryLink, stakeholders such as the Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils and the Southern Councils Groups also stated that integration and connectivity of transport modes would be greatly improved if regional transport interchanges were upgraded with improved amenities and the capacity to service all of the different transport modes (including park-and ride facilities).¹⁵³

- 4.59 The submission from Ogdens Coaches, on the other hand, suggested that network integration and connections would be improved with the provision of more staff at interchange points during peak periods.¹⁵⁴

- 4.60 The strategic use of global positioning system (GPS) technology was suggested by Mr Karim Hussain, Chair, Long Distance Tourist and Charter Committee, Bus NSW. He suggested that using GPS technology would allow the operations staff of each of the transport modes to monitor where connecting services are located at any given time, which would then give them the capacity to co-ordinate the timetabling of their own services accordingly, and to provide real-time service information to passengers.¹⁵⁵

- 4.61 Another inquiry participant submitted that transport connections with CountryLink train services, via CountryLink coaches and other privately operated services, were not well promoted to customers. Because potential customers were not aware of the range of connections available it was suggested that they would be more likely to use transport modes such as air and private motor vehicles because they were considered more convenient.¹⁵⁶

- 4.62 The stakeholder stated that the issue of connectivity and integration of transport modes would be effectively addressed if CountryLink and private transport operators jointly marketed their services through an interface, such as a website,

¹⁵¹ CountryLink, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 29 November 2012, p 1.

¹⁵² CountryLink, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 29 November 2012, p 1.

¹⁵³ Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils.

¹⁵⁴ Submission 24, Ogdens Coaches, p 1.

¹⁵⁵ Mr Karim Hussain, Chair, Long Distance Tourist and Charter Committee, Bus NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 24. See also, Submission 24, Ogdens Coaches, p 1.

¹⁵⁶ Submission 115, name suppressed, p 3.

where integrated services could be displayed, including timetable and fare information, as well as a function whereby customers are able to purchase all of the required tickets for a journey (i.e. including tickets for privately operated services).¹⁵⁷

- 4.63 Other submissions focused on the need for improved express services to reduce travel times for travelling between regions. For example, Mrs Yvonne Glasson advocated a reduction in bus/rail travel times between the Central West of NSW and Sydney. Circuitous coach routes from the Forbes areas was a particular issue highlighted by Mrs Glasson.¹⁵⁸

Committee comment

- 4.64 Throughout the inquiry and this report, the Committee has endeavoured to make recommendations that will minimise the transport disadvantage experienced by regional public transport passengers. A lack of service connectivity and integration has an enormous negative impact on regional passengers. In particular, the length of time between connecting services, the distance between interchanges and the passenger facilities available while waiting all require review and remedial action.
- 4.65 While the Committee is aware that overcoming all integration issues and a wholesale upgrade to all interchange facilities is not feasible, we note that Transport for NSW has undertaken to improve the connections between its train and coach services in line with customer needs.
- 4.66 To assist with this undertaking, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW conducts a state-wide review of how connectivity between its regional rail and coach services can be improved, with a specific focus on remedying anomalies such as the Orange-Bathurst Bullet connection.
- 4.67 In addition, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW undertakes an audit of inter-regional public transport services to identify where express services can be introduced to facilitate faster travel times.
- 4.68 The Committee also recommends that where existing bus interchange facilities do not adequately meet the needs of commuters, those facilities are upgraded.
- 4.69 Further, the Committee also recommends that the NSW TrainLink website be updated to provide clear information about other public transport services that connect with NSW TrainLink train services. This should include information about timetables as well as geographic information about interchanges.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW conducts a state-wide review of how connectivity between its regional rail and coach services can be improved, with a specific focus on remedying anomalies such as the Orange-Bathurst Bullet connection.

¹⁵⁷ Submission 115, name suppressed, p 3.

¹⁵⁸ Submission 140, Mrs Yvonne Glasson, p 1. See also, correspondence received by Mr Andrew Gee MP from Mr Peter Bilenkij, dated 11 November 2013, in relation to the NSW TrainLink train service between Orange and Sydney.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW undertakes an audit of inter-regional public transport services to identify where express services can be introduced to facilitate faster travel times.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW upgrades existing bus interchange facilities where these facilities do not meet the needs of regional commuters.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink updates its website to include clear information about the connectivity of other public transport services with NSW TrainLink train services, including information about timetables and interchange facilities.

ON-BOARD SERVICES

- 4.70 Inquiry stakeholders spoke about the benefits of on-board amenities such as:
- Wi-Fi
 - battery charging facilities for mobile phones, laptop computers and tablets
 - seating that can be utilised as a work space
 - entertainment systems for games, television and films, similar to those used on airlines and
 - special conferencing trains, outfitted with tables, workstations and other conferencing facilities, to service the meetings, exhibition and convention market.¹⁵⁹
- 4.71 Stakeholders advocated making more of these services available on NSW TrainLink trains as a way to encourage greater patronage and make trips more comfortable for existing passengers. The need to improve facilities for carrying bicycles was also highlighted.
- 4.72 As well as specific suggestions for improved facilities, Action for Public Transport also advocated for the following improvements to customer service overall:
- a better awareness of passengers with special needs
 - improved staff visibility
 - improved on-board public address announcements

¹⁵⁹ See, for example, Submission 18, Mr Beade Ryan, p 1; Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 4; Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 3; Submission 112, Southern Councils Group, p 5; Submission 129, Bathurst Business Chamber, pp 5-6; Mr Marco Angolo, Special Projects Engineer, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 6; and Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 17.

- proactive management of difficult passengers and
- on-board staff being available to assist passengers with luggage at unstaffed stations.¹⁶⁰

4.73 Namoi Councils commented that the standard of on-board services provided by CountryLink staff was above average, but suggested that the agency should have an ongoing focus on improving customer service. Namoi Councils also suggested that the numbers of staff on board CountryLink trains should be increased to ensure that passenger carriages are consistently clean and well maintained.¹⁶¹

4.74 Mr Coates noted general customer dissatisfaction with CountryLink's contracted catering service and observed that he also was not personally satisfied with the standard of catering provided.¹⁶² He indicated that he was addressing this issue by conducting a review of the services provided by CountryLink's food and beverage contractor and the standard of food being provided to CountryLink's customers.¹⁶³

4.75 Mr Coates acknowledged the widespread support for improving facilities and customer service. However, he also advised the Committee that upgrading ageing rolling stock to provide all the services advocated by stakeholders would require significant resources:

...certainly our customers have indicated that these facilities would be desirable in our product and we are certainly supportive of that. Having said that, as mentioned earlier, the XPTs are some 30 years old and considering they were a design that were a few years old when they did arrive here in 1981, they are quite aged and the wiring in those trains will require significant refurbishment to facilitate things like 240 volt outlets and those sorts of things.¹⁶⁴

4.76 The push for improved on board facilities is not restricted to trains - Mr Mellish, Executive Director, BusNSW, advised the Committee that there was a similar demand for upgraded on-board amenities, such as Wi-Fi and entertainment systems, on inter-regional bus services. As with the trains, Mr Mellish pointed out the significant cost required to provide these services on buses.¹⁶⁵

4.77 In contrast to the general push for upgraded facilities, the Friends of the Northern Railway cautioned against including on-board entertainment systems on train services. The organisation suggested that entertainment systems could be an unwelcome intrusion to the ambience of train travel, and that the high cost of installing the systems was not justified by any potential benefits for passengers:

From time to time the issue of onboard entertainment systems is raised by commentators advising on increasing CountryLink patronage. Many of our members

¹⁶⁰ Submission 127, Action for Public Transport, pp 4-5.

¹⁶¹ Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 3.

¹⁶² Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 17.

¹⁶³ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 17.

¹⁶⁴ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 14.

¹⁶⁵ Mr Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, BusNSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p9 29-30.

think this is not a good idea. They believe that any such system would be an intrusive distraction from the relaxing ambience of the train carriage. The cost of installing such equipment, or requiring it in any new train design, would be unwarranted, particularly now that most people who desire such entertainment have their own personal devices which they program in their own preferred way.¹⁶⁶

4.78 Limited facilities for carrying bicycles was a particular issue raised by stakeholders. One stakeholder told the Committee that presently, CountryLink trains are only equipped to carry two bicycles per train. Bicycles must be pre-booked and must be partially disassembled and boxed before being placed in the train's luggage area. The stakeholder stated that these procedures rendered CountryLink's capacity to carry bicycles "...almost non-existent" and were a significant disincentive for passengers wishing to travel with bicycles.¹⁶⁷

4.79 Responding to the issues raised by stakeholders, CountryLink advised the Committee that in its view, the provisions for carrying bicycles on its trains were appropriate to current demand¹⁶⁸, and the restrictions on carrying bicycles were ultimately a consequence of the physical space limitations of trains and coaches. Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, also stated that strategic decisions in relation to capital investment were made by Transport for NSW and, at present, there were no proposals to increase the CountryLink fleet's capacity to carry bicycles and other larger items.¹⁶⁹

Committee comment

4.80 The Committee sees the great potential of on-board services, such as Wi-Fi access, battery charging facilities, workspace-appropriate seating, entertainment systems, and facilities for carrying bicycles, in enhancing the customer experience and adding value to the services already provided by NSW TrainLink. It is the Committee's view that the provision of these services will make the option of train travel more attractive to a wider range of customers, and that NSW TrainLink' patronage will grow as a result.

4.81 However, the Committee is also mindful of the significant investment that would be required to refurbish existing rolling stock for the purpose of providing these on-board services. It may in fact be more financially viable to purchase or lease new carriages than to retrofit existing ones. Balancing the benefits of improved services against potential costs, the Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink considers which of the improvements proposed by inquiry stakeholders can be achieved without significant cost, and implements those as a first step, while longer-term planning for more modern carriages is undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink:

¹⁶⁶ Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 2.

¹⁶⁷ Submission 25, name suppressed, p 2.

¹⁶⁸ Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, CountryLink, 29 November 2012, p 2.

¹⁶⁹ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 17.

- **implements improvements to on-board services and amenities on its trains and coaches that can be achieved in the short-term and without significant cost and**
- **gives consideration to the Committee's findings with respect to on-board services in the acquisition of any new rolling stock utilised for inter-regional public transport.**

SERVICES AT RAILWAY STATIONS AND BUS INTERCHANGES

- 4.82 The inadequacies of services and conditions at NSW TrainLink railway stations and connecting bus interchanges were highlighted by stakeholders during the inquiry. This section considers issues raised by stakeholders including accessibility, bicycle storage and car parking facilities; timely, effective and accurate provision of information to customers; and passenger security.
- 4.83 The Committee heard that regional railway stations were not always adequately staffed on weekends and that basic facilities on station platforms were often not available to customers. As an example, Mr Kevin Anderson MP drew the Committee's attention to the arrangements at Gunnedah railway station, whereby the station is not staffed on weekends due to an apparent lack of funding. Passengers wishing to travel on weekends consequently do not have access to basic services like toilets, luggage assistance and general customer assistance.¹⁷⁰
- 4.84 Mrs Elsie Beckhouse raised similar concerns in relation to Grafton railway station. Mrs Beckhouse submitted that passengers, who are often required to wait for long periods of time on the platform for connecting services, were not able to access the platform waiting room or toilets because both facilities had been closed to the public for some time.¹⁷¹
- 4.85 The Committee has already considered transport interchanges in respect to connectivity and service integration. Problems with facilities available at interchanges were also raised during the inquiry. Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils told the Committee that interchanges should ideally have the capacity to service CountryLink trains, connecting inter-regional coaches, local bus services, as well as providing 'park-and-ride' facilities, facilities for bicycles and optimal pedestrian access. Gosford and Wyong interchanges were identified as two examples of facilities needing an upgrade:

In order to enable Central Coast customers to move quickly from one connection to another, transport interchange upgrades and access improvements are required. The Gosford and Wyong Interchanges should be identified for upgrading to cater for the additional bus services now running through the interchanges and potential improvements as a result of the NSW Transport Masterplan and linkages with Country Link services.

The interchanges appear to have become outdated as they lack capacity for buses and clarity for commuters and tourists arriving by public transport, foot and bike or

¹⁷⁰ Submission 150, Mr Kevin Anderson MP, p 2.

¹⁷¹ Submission 26, Mrs Elsie Beckhouse, p 4.

seeking taxis or buses. Access improvements to transport interchanges should include pedestrian and cyclist facilities to address conflict with cars and buses.¹⁷²

- 4.86 Services that encourage passengers to use 'active transport' such as walking or cycling to the interchanges were supported by stakeholders. These services include bicycle racks, secure bicycle storage spaces, safe and accessible pedestrian paths and clear signposting. As well as encouraging more patronage, stakeholders highlighted the positive environmental impacts of supporting cycling and walking to and from interchanges.¹⁷³ Other stakeholders recommended that transport interchanges should provide adequate, safe and cheap parking or distinct 'park-and-ride' facilities, and functional all-weather pick-up points, for those who wish to drive to the interchange.¹⁷⁴
- 4.87 In its submission to the inquiry, Transport for NSW referred to the challenges in providing consistently suitable passenger infrastructure across NSW. Primarily, this is because this infrastructure is the responsibility of local government. Despite this, Transport for NSW did state that it was able to support actions to improve passenger transport infrastructure in rural, regional and remote areas under the Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme, worth approximately \$1.5 million per year.¹⁷⁵
- 4.88 Transport for NSW also stated that it was putting in place additional measures to deliver wide-ranging improvements to the State's public transport infrastructure, which are detailed in the *Transport Master Plan's* Transport Access Program. The aims of this program are to:
- set the overall direction for improving the management of interchanges across NSW and
 - facilitate a program of upgrades to railway stations, bus interchanges and car parks.¹⁷⁶
- 4.89 In addition to physical infrastructure and services at railway stations, stakeholders also raised concerns about the availability and accessibility of information in relation to the availability of services, timetabling and service interruptions. As the Committee has previously mentioned, not all CountryLink customers have access to or use the Internet to book tickets, so they may not be aware of service changes. Mr Kevin Anderson MP provided an example of one of his constituents from Gunnedah who was unaware that the rail service had been

¹⁷² Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, pp 3-4.

¹⁷³ See, for example, Submission 25, name suppressed, p 2; Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 8; Mr Steven Green, Advisor, Transport and Infrastructure, Gosford City Council, representing the Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 4.

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, Submission 59, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 2; and Submission 112, Southern Councils Group, p 5.

¹⁷⁵ Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 9.

¹⁷⁶ Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, Transport for NSW, 17 December 2012, p 4.

cancelled and replaced with a coach service, and was also unaware of the replacement service's timetable.¹⁷⁷

- 4.90 Another inquiry participant suggested providing information at regional stations about all transport modes, not just the service operating from that station. This would include CountryLink and CityRail services, and services provided by private bus contractors that might be relevant to a customer's journey:

Timetables published and shown at stations should include both CountryLink and CityRail (and any private) services. A passenger at Goulburn, for example, should not have to go to 2 different websites or look at 2 different platform posters, or 2 different books, in order to find out all the services that take him to Sydney. There should be a single timetable for all train services (and connecting buses) regardless of operator.¹⁷⁸

Committee comment

- 4.91 One of the key themes throughout this inquiry and report is the importance of facilitating access to public transport in regional NSW. The Committee believes that appropriate infrastructure to support passenger access and up-to-date information on timetables and connecting services would greatly enhance the overall level of service offered to regional customers. Consequently, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW implements practicable measures to improve the amount and timeliness of information available at regional stations.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW implements practicable measures to improve the amount and timeliness of information available at regional stations.

Passenger security

- 4.92 The Committee heard from National Seniors Australia that security at railway stations and bus interchanges was a major issue for older travellers living in rural and regional NSW. The organisation acknowledged that Transport for NSW recognised the importance of the issue, as evidenced by the increasing police presence and the upgrading of security infrastructure at railway stations. However, they maintained that older travellers would like to see even more security guards and police officers patrolling railway stations and bus interchanges.¹⁷⁹ Consistent with other stakeholders who recommended improved services, National Seniors Australia stated improving security at railway stations and interchanges would encourage more older travellers to use public transport:

¹⁷⁷ Submission 150, Mr Kevin Anderson MP, pp 1-2.

¹⁷⁸ Submission 25, name suppressed, p 3.

¹⁷⁹ Submission 83, National Seniors Australia, p 2.

Any action that can be taken to upgrade security at regional stations will encourage older travellers to be more confident about using public transport, particularly in the evenings.¹⁸⁰

- 4.93 National Seniors Australia recommended that a full security audit be undertaken of all regional railway stations and bus interchanges.¹⁸¹ In response to questions about security at regional railway stations and bus interchanges, Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, told the Committee that the agency actively works to cultivate good ongoing working relationships with regional police commands to ensure that individual and broader security issues are appropriately dealt with.¹⁸² Mr Coates also noted the establishment of the Police Transport Command and advised the Committee that CountryLink was in the process of consulting with the Command to ensure that the security needs of regional passengers are appropriately met.¹⁸³

INTER-REGIONAL BUS SERVICES

- 4.94 While the committee's inquiry focussed largely on inter-regional train services, numerous inquiry participants highlighted the significance of bus transport. Ideally, bus services should complement NSW TrainLink train services to provide efficient, frequent and flexible transport to regional passengers.

- 4.95 Stakeholders from the bus industry, in particular, suggested that bus travel had great potential for expanding the inter-regional public transport network. This is due to factors such as lower costs and the flexibility of bus transport, compared to other services such as rail. For example, Mr Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, BusNSW, stated:

We consider that bus and coach travel offers the best options for expanding the regional and rural transport service network. This is because of the cost and time and the flexible nature of the service.¹⁸⁴

- 4.96 Mr Mellish elaborated on the potential benefits of the flexibility of bus services:

We see [buses] playing a major role because of their flexibility and costs and the ability to meet the short- and long-term need.

...with the benefit of having the flexibility of being able to add or take away coaches, both active and proactive to demand, and the flexibility of linking them up with regional services will offer a network type of approach to regional New South Wales without being restricted where, for example, rail lines are operating.¹⁸⁵

- 4.97 When compared to rail services, Mr Mellish stated inter-regional bus services had significantly higher on-time running record than NSW TrainLink services:

¹⁸⁰ Submission 83, National Seniors Australia, p 2.

¹⁸¹ Submission 83, National Seniors Australia, p 2.

¹⁸² Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 11.

¹⁸³ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 11.

¹⁸⁴ Mr Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, BusNSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 24.

¹⁸⁵ Mr Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, BusNSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 27.

...on-time running in the bus industry is in a sense how we looked at achieved services, which is 95 per cent plus as far as on-time running is concerned. I understand that CountryLink services at the moment are probably failing way below that...¹⁸⁶

- 4.98 As noted in this report above, the new Wellington-Dubbo-Narromine coach service was seen as a successful example of buses being expanded to quickly and successfully link regional communities.
- 4.99 Many of the recommendations aimed at improving inter-regional rail services were also raised in relation to bus services. For example, stakeholders suggested that both the level of services offered to inter-regional bus passengers and general patronage numbers would be improved by upgrades to the regional road network, strategic use of technology, and lifting certain restrictions in relation to inter-regional bus travel.¹⁸⁷
- 4.100 Ogdens Coaches and BusNSW stated that better communications, GPS monitoring of CountryLink's trains and coaches, and real-time on-board manifests would improve the efficiency of inter-regional bus travel and the standard of services provided to passengers, as these technologies have the capacity to:
- enhance connectivity and integration of CountryLink's train and coach services
 - minimise the impacts of unscheduled service delays and
 - maximise the use and capacity of available trains and buses.¹⁸⁸
- 4.101 A barrier to inter-regional bus travel that was identified by Sustain Transport and Northern Rivers Social Development Council was the restriction of CountryLink coach services to customers travelling over 40 km. This prevents customers from taking CountryLink coach journeys that are less than 40 km, effectively constraining the flexibility of services and unnecessarily limiting patronage on services that are already underutilised.¹⁸⁹ Northern Rivers Social Development Council stated:
- There is currently a low usage rate of CountryLink coach services and, conversely, a gap in intra-regional transport provision. People are unable to travel on CountryLink coaches unless they are travelling over 40 km. This arrangement creates an unnecessary barrier, particularly in light of the spare capacity in CountryLink vehicles. The ability to use this service from one town to the next would vastly improve the usability of the CountryLink service to regional passengers.¹⁹⁰
- 4.102 Consequently, the two organisations suggested that the restriction should be relaxed in order to expand the numbers of regional passengers eligible to use

¹⁸⁶ Mr Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, BusNSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 24.

¹⁸⁷ See for example, Submission 24, Ogdens Coaches, p 1; and Submission 112, Southern Councils Group, p 4.

¹⁸⁸ Submission 24, Ogdens Coaches, p 1; and Submission 123, BusNSW, p 2.

¹⁸⁹ Submission 48, Sustain Transport, p 1; and Submission 49, Northern Rivers Social Development Council, p 2.

¹⁹⁰ Submission 49, Northern Rivers Social Development Council, p 2.

coach services and to provide more flexible coach services that effectively meet regional customers' needs.¹⁹¹

- 4.103 Mr Karim Hussain, Chair, Long Distance Tourist and Charter Committee, BusNSW, also suggested that easing current restrictions on using controlled access buses, that is, buses that are over 12.5 m in length, would increase bus operators' capacity to carry passengers and cargo, such as bicycles and light freight.¹⁹²

Committee comment

- 4.104 The Committee views bus transport as being an integral component of an effective inter-regional public transport network for regional NSW, that it is a cost-effective, flexible, responsive and reliable transport option. The Committee sees the NSW TrainLink coach network as being complementary to its rail network and believes that regional customers will be best served if the coach network is supported and promoted in this complementary role.
- 4.105 To this effect, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW considers measures to broaden NSW TrainLink's coach network coverage; better integrate coach services with connecting train services; and remove unnecessary barriers to using coach services.

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW considers measures to:

- **broaden NSW TrainLink's coach network coverage**
- **better integrate coach services with connecting train services and**
- **remove unnecessary barriers to using coach services.**

¹⁹¹ Submission 48, Sustain Transport, p 1; and Submission 49, Northern Rivers Social Development Council, p 2.

¹⁹² Mr Karim Hussain, Chair, Long Distance Tourist and Charter Committee, BusNSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 26.

Chapter Five – Ticketing

- 5.1 This chapter discusses issues raised by inquiry participants about NSW TrainLink’s ticketing, including affordability and accessibility, and whether the ticketing system is sufficiently integrated to enable passengers to travel easily between the NSW TrainLink network and the Sydney Trains network.

AFFORDABILITY

- 5.2 The Committee heard a range of views from stakeholders about the cost of NSW TrainLink tickets, including that fares should be comparable to those on the Sydney metropolitan network and that discounted tickets should be made more widely available to those sectors of the community that need them the most.
- 5.3 The issue of fare inequality was raised by Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers. The organisation stated that communities should not be transport disadvantaged because they are in regional areas and gave the Committee an example of the differences in pricing between trips of similar times and distances in Sydney and regional NSW:

...a worker commuting from Ballina to Lismore (34km) currently pays \$23.60 return or \$10.80 for a one-way 30 minute trip (e.g. Casino to Lismore). By comparison, a 30 minute one-way trip from Coogee to Sydney costs \$3.30 or 31km from Mona Vale to Sydney costs \$8.60 return. The IPART decision to lower rural bus fares by 8% has a positive impact on this inequity, and Northern Rivers Buslines have also recently capped their rural bus fares at \$9.40 one way. However regional fares continue to be higher than metropolitan fares, and fares on services provided by operators other than Northern Rivers Buslines in the region remain disproportionately high.¹⁹³

- 5.4 Illawarra Forum Inc and Goulburn Mulwaree Council also suggested that there should be more fare parity between CountryLink and CityRail Services.¹⁹⁴ The Council told the Committee that, as at 1 May 2012, a one way economy ticket on a CountryLink service between Goulburn and Sydney was \$28.25 but the equivalent ticket on a CityRail service was \$8.20:

This increased cost may relate to the benefits of comfort and the consistent shorter trip lengths. Nevertheless, it is believed that cost is the key variable when determining a method of travel.¹⁹⁵

- 5.5 The issue of fare parity and network connections was also an issue drawn to the attention of the Committee in regional meetings. Mrs Yvonne Glasson and Councillor Ron Penny of Forbes pointed out that fares from Forbes to Sydney were significantly cheaper when she travelled from Forbes to Bathurst (the latter which is on the CityRail network) and purchased another ticket from Bathurst to Sydney, as compared to pre-booking a fare between Forbes and Sydney. However, she also highlighted to the Committee that by not pre-booking there

¹⁹³ Submission 43, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers, pp 8-9.

¹⁹⁴ Submission 59, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 2; Submission 114, Illawarra Forum Inc, p 3.

¹⁹⁵ Submission 59, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 2.

was a chance that she would miss out on a seat for the Bathurst-Sydney leg of the journey.

- 5.6 The issue of fare disparity between those on the Sydney Trains network and those not, and the ticketing and fare anomalies that arose were also raised with the Committee in the context of Orange passengers travelling to Sydney. Bathurst is on the Sydney Trains network and Orange is not.
- 5.7 The Chair also raised the issue of NSW TrainLink customers having to wait for longer periods at certain stops in order to take advantage of Sydney Trains fares.
- 5.8 The cost of CountryLink fares for pensioners and those on low incomes was highlighted as a concern by stakeholders including the NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc. The organisation received feedback from stakeholders, which stated that inter-regional public transport was too expensive for many people living on low incomes, and that access to concession fares was inconsistent.¹⁹⁶
- 5.9 Increasing access to medical and education services were two reasons put forward to support fare reductions. Bathurst Regional Council submitted that it is important to maintain low-cost fares between Bathurst and Sydney, particularly for pensioners who frequently access medical services in the metropolitan area.¹⁹⁷
- 5.10 Stakeholders also suggested that young people and people on low incomes should receive certain CountryLink concessions.¹⁹⁸ The Illawarra Forum Inc, for example, suggested that expanding the Regional Excursion Daily Ticket Program to include people on Newstart and Youth Allowance would increase access to education and employment opportunities.¹⁹⁹ Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers echoed this view:

Fare concessions for public transport dependent people need to be consistent for people on low incomes and Centrelink Payments, and young people are a priority.²⁰⁰

- 5.11 The NSW TrainLink website states that half-price fares are available for customers with a NSW ‘Half Fare Entitlement Card’, which includes people who are registered as looking for work or receiving payments at the maximum rate under programs such as Youth Allowance (jobseeking) and the Newstart Allowance.²⁰¹ However, the Committee heard that even where concessions are available, there was a lack of awareness among eligible customers. Northern Rivers Social Development Council gave the example of pensioners purchasing full prices tickets rather than the Pensioner Excursion Ticket.²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ Submission 77, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc, p 4.

¹⁹⁷ Submission 42, Bathurst Regional Council, p 1.

¹⁹⁸ Submission 114, Illawarra Forum Inc, p 3; Submission 43, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers, pp 8-9; Submission 49, Northern Rivers Social Development Council, p 3.

¹⁹⁹ Submission 114, Illawarra Forum Inc, p 3.

²⁰⁰ Submission 43, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers, pp 8-9.

²⁰¹ NSW TrainLink, viewed 19 August 2013, <<http://www.nswtrainlink.info/book/concessions>>.

²⁰² Submission 49, Northern Rivers Social Development Council, pp 1-2.

5.12 Transport for NSW advised the Committee that CountryLink fares were last increased in 2007 by 4.6%, and also provided the Committee with some examples of its discounted fare products for regional NSW:

- Country Pensioner Excursion ticket – provides \$2.50 travel for a one-way trip anywhere in regional and rural NSW on CountryLink services outside of areas serviced by the CityRail network.
- NSW Pensioner Travel Voucher – provides four free single economy class trips on CountryLink services within NSW each year.
- Half-fare concessions for pensioners, seniors and eligible students.
- 15% ‘study fare’ discount on CountryLink services for students who are not eligible for half-fare tertiary student concessions.
- \$1 fare for children (aged 4-15 years) travelling with a full-fare paying adult.
- Family fares – all adults pay full fares and the first two children pay child fares, while any additional children travel free of charge.
- Discounts of up to 30% of the full fare in low season.²⁰³

5.13 A stakeholder recommended that CountryLink should also offer similar discounts for group travellers as a means of making rail travel more competitive with other transport alternatives:

For Countrylink rail and inter-city coach services, a single adult fare is viable when compared to the cost of airfares within regional NSW or private vehicle journeys. However, the fare structure is a disincentive as people travel in groups of two or more. Countrylink should consider a fare structure that provides further discounts for group purchases on a journey. This would make the cost of public transport more competitive compared to car travel and therefore draw people to IRPT [inter-regional public transport].²⁰⁴

5.14 Both the Southern Councils Group and Shoalhaven City Council shared the view that CountryLink should offer better deals for group travellers purchasing multiple fares.²⁰⁵

5.15 The Committee notes that NSW TrainLink currently offers a discount of 15% on fares for groups of ten or more. To qualify as a group, all group members have to book at the same time, travel together from the same start and end point and in the same class of seat.²⁰⁶

5.16 Mr David Beres suggested that inter-regional rail travel would be made more attractive to a broader range of potential customers if discounts were also offered on CountryLink’s more expensive fares:

²⁰³ Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 4.

²⁰⁴ Submission 115, Name suppressed, p 9.

²⁰⁵ Submission 112, Southern Councils Group, p 4; Submission 37, Shoalhaven City Council, p 3.

²⁰⁶ NSW TrainLink, viewed 19 August 2013, <www.nswtrainlink.info/book/groups>.

Countrylink needs to be commended on having cheap fares over the past 12 months but needs to remember not everyone likes travelling Economy Class what about a sale for Sleeper fares.²⁰⁷

- 5.17 The Bathurst Business Chamber similarly stated that business travellers would be more likely to travel by train if they were given the choice of purchasing business class tickets with additional services and fares that are competitive with air travel.²⁰⁸

Committee comment

- 5.18 The Committee notes that Transport for NSW offers a range of discounted tickets on its NSW TrainLink rail and coach services for pensioners and people on low incomes. However, the Committee understands that some inquiry participants still have difficulties with meeting the costs of inter-regional public transport. The Committee strongly encourages Transport for NSW to continue to offer the lowest fares possible to these groups by regularly reviewing the fares for NSW TrainLink services. The Committee would also encourage Transport for NSW to identify other groups that would benefit from discounted fares.
- 5.19 In examining the issue of the general cost of fares for regional travellers, the Committee was particularly keen to address the issue of fare differentials in relation to passengers travelling on the Sydney Trains network and passengers travelling on the NSW TrainLink network.
- 5.20 For this reason, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW examines and reviews the cost of fares on the NSW TrainLink and the Sydney Trains networks, with a particular focus on the fare structure concerning the nexus of the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks.

RECOMMENDATION 20

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW examines and reviews the cost of fares on the NSW TrainLink and the Sydney Trains networks, with a particular focus on the fare structure concerning the nexus of the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks.

ACCESSIBILITY

- 5.21 Stakeholders raised the issue of difficulties for passengers in accessing CountryLink ticketing. Examples of this included passengers being required to pre-book tickets, use the internet or use a travel agent to purchase tickets.
- 5.22 Northern Rivers Social Development Council received feedback that current booking requirements were a significant barrier to accessing CountryLink services. The organisation stated that this was a particular issue for people who do not have access to the internet, people who do not use credit cards, and

²⁰⁷ Submission 125, Mr David Beres, p 1.

²⁰⁸ Submission 129, Bathurst Business Chamber, p 7.

people that are required to undertake urgent or unplanned travel. In their view, much of CountryLink's potential customer base fell into these categories.²⁰⁹

- 5.23 Ms Ka Ki Ng, Senior Policy Officer, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc. reiterated this point and stated that many potential customers needing to travel to access critical health services were forced to book tickets through travel agents because of poor internet connections and physical distances from the nearest railway stations. The requirement to book tickets through a travel agent presented an additional barrier to being able to access tickets, as many customers had difficulties with meeting the costs of the travel agents' booking fee.²¹⁰
- 5.24 A personal example illustrating the problem with booking fees was provided by Mr John and Mrs Gayl Schmich. They submitted that because the train station in Orange was not open on weekends or public holidays, and because there is no ticket machine at the railway station, passengers had no choice but to pre-book tickets and pay a pre-booking fee.²¹¹
- 5.25 Lack of awareness about the requirement to pre-book CountryLink tickets was highlighted as another issue by Ms Eulyce Arkleymith. Ms Arkleymith stated that her friend, an international visitor, was not aware that she had to book tickets for the coach service from Lithgow to Sydney. As a result, Ms Arkleymith's friend did not get a seat on the first available coach service and had to wait for two hours with a young child and luggage for the next coach service.²¹²

INTEGRATION

- 5.26 A number of stakeholders supported integrating CountryLink tickets with CityRail tickets, so that passengers could travel more easily on both networks.²¹³ Mr Iain MacDonald provided the Committee with examples of areas where multiple tickets need to be purchased for a single journey. Mr MacDonald explained that pensioners and concession card holders travelling from Orange to Sydney are required to purchase a CountryLink coach ticket from Orange to Lithgow and then purchase a CityRail ticket for the next sector from Lithgow to Sydney's Central Station.²¹⁴
- 5.27 As noted above, the Chair also raised the issue of NSW TrainLink customers having to wait for longer periods at certain stops in order to take advantage of Sydney Trains fares. It is noted that this can mean that customers are required to

²⁰⁹ Submission 49, Northern Rivers Social Development Council, p 2.

²¹⁰ Ms Kai Ki Ng, Senior Policy Officer, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, pp 30-31; and Submission 77, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., p 4.

²¹¹ Submission 22, Mr John and Mrs Gayl Schmich, p 1.

²¹² Submission 11, Ms Eulyce Arkleymith, p 1.

²¹³ See for example, Submission 40, Snowy Mountains Backpackers, p 3; Submission 89, Destination Jindabyne, p 3; Submission 90, Ms Kerry Beer, p 3; Submission 93, Mr John Wallis, p 3; Submission 96, Mr Nicholas James Elliott, p 3; Submission 98, JB Interiors, p 3; Submission 101, Eureka Exchange Pty Ltd, p 3; Submission 103, Ms Anne Thompson, p 3; Submission 104, Jindabyne Central School Parents and Citizens Association, p 4; Submission 106, Tourism Snowy Mountains, p 4; Submission 109, Snowy Hydro Limited, p 2.

²¹⁴ Submission 35, Mr Iain MacDonald, p 2.

alight from buses and wait for the next service despite the bus they alight from not being full.

- 5.28 Integrated regional and metropolitan tickets are already available in other states. One inquiry participant informed the Committee that Queensland Rail provides a useful free transfer service within Brisbane for passengers arriving on inter-city services:

Queensland Rail offers a free transfer within Brisbane on commuter trains to any passenger arriving on an inter-city service. There is no need to travel to Roma Street then buy another ticket to backtrack to a local station that the inter-regional train did not serve. This provides a seamless service for people travelling to or from the state capital. A similar scheme should operate with Countrylink and Cityrail: a traveller with a Countrylink ticket should be able to take a Cityrail train to get to Central, Strathfield, Campbelltown etc to board his service, without having to buy an extra ticket. Likewise, a Countrylink passenger arriving in Sydney should be able to connect to any Cityrail train to arrive at his Sydney metro station of choice without needing an extra ticket.²¹⁵

- 5.29 The Committee also heard from Mr Marco Argolo, Special Projects Engineer, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils about the potential benefits of having an integrated ticketing system:

When you travel from the Central Coast into Sydney, you are paying \$59. If you add \$1, that is \$60 and you will have the option to also use the bus and the ferry. If someone is already paying a certain amount to go from Gosford or the Central Coast into Sydney, if the cost is the same to use the local bus system, that could be a trigger for behaviour change as well, if they can use the same ticket locally—in the regional areas—that they travel to Sydney with, not just the Central Coast.²¹⁶

- 5.30 The Committee notes that Transport for NSW has recently introduced the Opal Card. Once fully implemented, the Opal Card will cover journeys on the Sydney metropolitan network, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Hunter, Illawarra and Southern Highlands.²¹⁷

Committee comment

- 5.31 The Committee notes that Transport for NSW provides a number of methods to purchase tickets for NSW TrainLink services including over-the-counter at railway stations, by telephone and via the internet. However, the Committee understands that some stakeholders still experience difficulties obtaining tickets, whether this is due to lack of internet access, ticketing facilities not being available at railway stations, or difficulties with meeting the costs of pre-booking fees. The Committee encourages Transport for NSW to consider the stakeholder evidence received to this inquiry should it examine the issue of the accessibility of ticketing in the future.

²¹⁵ Submission 25, Name suppressed, p 3.

²¹⁶ Mr Marco Argolo, Special Projects Engineer, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 7.

²¹⁷ Transport for NSW, viewed 17 June 2013, <<http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/opal>>.

- 5.32 The Committee hopes that the Opal Card initiative will address calls from inquiry participants for integrated ticketing and travel between the NSW TrainLink network and the Sydney Trains network. The Committee recommends that to establish an integrated public transport network across NSW, the coverage of the Opal Card should be expanded to incorporate all areas of regional NSW.
- 5.33 In Chapter 6 of this report, the Committee will consider stakeholder views about the benefits of the Opal Card being rolled out across regional NSW for the benefit of regional tourism.

RECOMMENDATION 21

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW extends the coverage of the Opal Card to incorporate public transport in all areas of regional NSW.

- 5.34 In considering ways to make NSW TrainLink's ticketing more accessible and integrated, the Committee is keen to address the issue of NSW TrainLink customers having to wait for long periods of time at certain stops in order to take advantage of less expensive Sydney Trains fares.
- 5.35 For this reason, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW investigates the matter of customers being required to disembark at the nexus of the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks in order to obtain Sydney Trains fares, with a view to addressing the issue.

RECOMMENDATION 22

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW investigates the matter of customers being required to disembark at the nexus of the NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains networks in order to obtain Sydney Trains fares, with a view to addressing the issue.

STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
TICKETING

Chapter Six – Tourism

- 6.1 Tourism makes an important contribution to the NSW economy as highlighted to the Committee by Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW:

Our focus is to deliver the Government's goal of doubling the overnight visitor expenditure to New South Wales by the year 2020. As I am sure you are all aware, tourism is an extremely important industry to the State with overnight visitor expenditure contributing more than \$20 billion to the New South Wales economy. In terms of employment, it supports more than 159,000 jobs and more than 96,000 businesses.²¹⁸

- 6.2 In this chapter, the Committee explores the contribution that NSW TrainLink already makes to tourism in NSW. It also considers suggestions from participants as to how NSW TrainLink could attract a greater share of the tourism market, not just for the benefit of NSW TrainLink, but also to benefit tourism in regional NSW generally.
- 6.3 The chapter examines whether NSW TrainLink's advertising and promotion strategy is effective and how NSW TrainLink collaborates with other government agencies and regional organisations to develop tourism initiatives. The chapter concludes by looking at existing service gaps and new train and bus services that could contribute to growing tourism in regional NSW in the future.

NSW TRAINLINK TOURISM PACKAGES AND EVENTS

- 6.4 NSW TrainLink offers a range of integrated tourism packages which include features such as bus transport, accommodation, event tickets and car hire. It also offers special services to particular festivals or events. There was broad support for these initiatives and calls from a number of participants for the range of services to be expanded.

Existing tourism packages and events

- 6.5 NSW TrainLink currently offers various holiday packages to a number of destinations within NSW such as Sydney, Port Stephens, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, the Hunter Valley and Broken Hill.²¹⁹
- 6.6 While some of these initiatives include accommodation, others are promoted as day trips, particularly for locations where there might be a shortage of accommodation as explained by Ms Chipchase:

The Dungog Film Festival is an example of a successful relationship between an event organiser and CountryLink. Due to the current accommodation shortage in Dungog organisers had effectively reached the limit of their ticketing capacity. To overcome these capacity constraints within the destination, CountryLink created a one-day party package, if you like, to the event whereby people could purchase a

²¹⁸ Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 16.

²¹⁹ NSW TrainLink, viewed 29 July 2013, <<http://www.nswtrainlink.info/deals/holidays>>.

ticket that enabled them to board the train at Central station, travel to Dungog, watch the films, attend the evening party and return to Sydney on the late-night train service.²²⁰

- 6.7 Several inquiry participants praised the tourism packages and events offered by CountryLink. BusNSW highlighted the Parkes Elvis Festival, which is sponsored by Destination NSW and CountryLink and is examined further in a case study below, as being an example of effective, co-ordinated event planning between transport and tourism agencies.²²¹
- 6.8 The Friends of the Northern Railway expressed the view that CountryLink's package tours are of excellent quality and value and supported the continuation of such packages to and from regional areas.²²²
- 6.9 These tourism packages were also found to increase tourism in NSW. For example, Ms Chipchase highlighted the success of the 2011 'Sydney in Summer' tourism package, which involved CountryLink as a partner and targeted domestic markets including regional NSW:

We got a 2 per cent increase in overnight visitors and a 6.4 per cent increase in visitor nights year-on-year, and it generated overnight visitor expenditure in excess of \$5.6 billion, which represented a year-on-year increase of 9.9 per cent.²²³

Case study: CountryLink Elvis Express

- 6.10 CountryLink's Elvis Express train service to the Parkes Elvis Festival is an example of one of CountryLink's special tourism events. The Festival has been held annually in Parkes in the second week of January since 1993, to coincide with Elvis' birthday. The Festival spans five days with more than 150 individual events including Elvis concerts, an Elvis gospel church service and a street parade.²²⁴ More than eighteen thousand fans visited the festival in 2013 and the festival's website states that the festival has "...sparked a boom in awareness of Parkes as a tourist destination."²²⁵
- 6.11 Since 2003, CountryLink has carried passengers to the Festival on a special train service known as the Elvis Express. In 2012, the Elvis Express included Elvis-inspired entertainment at Central Station. Fans were also treated to entertainment throughout the journey, including an Elvis tribute artist.²²⁶

²²⁰ Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 17.

²²¹ BusNSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 30 November 2012, p 2.

²²² Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 3.

²²³ Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 16.

²²⁴ CountryLink Parkes Elvis Festival, viewed 19 June 2013, <<http://parkeselvisfestival.com.au/about/festival-history.htm>>.

²²⁵ CountryLink Parkes Elvis Festival, viewed 19 June 2013, <<http://parkeselvisfestival.com.au/about/festival-history.htm>>; Destination NSW, viewed 19 June 2013, <<http://www.visitnsw.com/events/countrylink-parkes-elvis-festival>>.

²²⁶ Railcorp, viewed 19 June 2013, <http://www.railcorp.info/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/10562/120112-RailCorp_release-Elvis_express.pdf>.

- 6.12 The Elvis Express has grown in popularity over the years, with CountryLink carrying just eight Elvis fans to Parkes in 2003, versus 388 fans in 2012. In 2012, tickets for the Elvis Express sold out in less than a week.²²⁷

Suggestions for future tourism packages and events

- 6.13 There was support from local councils, individuals and Destination NSW for CountryLink to continue to offer tourism packages and transport for special events.²²⁸
- 6.14 In Ms Chipchase's view, there was "...considerable scope..." to increase the use of public transport in ticket packages for major events such as the State of Origin at ANZ Stadium.²²⁹ Ms Chipchase also stated that it would be beneficial if some of the larger regional towns in NSW emerged as key drivers of regional tourism:

There should be less focus on Sydney, Canberra and Newcastle as the main hubs and more focus on some of the bigger regional towns as key drivers. For example, the residents of Tamworth and Gunnedah would be a potential audience for events in Armidale. There needs to be less reliance on the capital cities and a bigger focus on pulling in overnight visitors from nearby towns and regions.²³⁰

- 6.15 Namoi Councils pointed out that most regional towns have a signature event such as the Country Music Festival in Tamworth or the Blues Festival in Byron Bay.²³¹ Stakeholders suggested that other regional festivals or events could be the focus of CountryLink tourism packages, such as the Bathurst 1000 and the Return to Murrurundi Festival.²³²
- 6.16 One participant proposed that NSW TrainLink run special trains once or twice a year along freight or branch lines that are not usually serviced and recommended that such trips could coincide with local festivals as a further attraction. He observed that some people travel by rail because they enjoy the journey, not just as a means of transport.²³³ Another participant was of the view that Sydney residents may be interested in weekend winery packages to Griffith.²³⁴
- 6.17 CountryLink indicated that it would consider expanding its packaged tourism product range²³⁵ and Transport for NSW advised that its Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy will investigate how CountryLink services can better facilitate

²²⁷ Railcorp, viewed 19 June 2013, <http://www.railcorp.info/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/10562/120112-RailCorp_release-Elvis_express.pdf>.

²²⁸ See for example, Submission 37, Shoalhaven City Council, p 3; Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 20; Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 5; Submission 72, Mr Bob Manning, p 1; Submission 112, Southern Councils Group, p 4; and Submission 68, Central NSW Councils, p 4.

²²⁹ Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 17.

²³⁰ Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 20.

²³¹ Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 5.

²³² Submission 42, Bathurst Regional Council, p 2; and Submission 79, Upper Hunter Shire Council, p 1.

²³³ Submission 25, name suppressed, p 4.

²³⁴ Submission 17, Mr Charles Body, p 2.

²³⁵ CountryLink, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 29 November 2012, p 1.

tourist focused initiatives. Transport for NSW explained that this will set the strategic agenda for further work with Destination NSW to increase tourism.²³⁶

Committee comment

- 6.18 The Committee sees the great potential of tourism packages and tourism-oriented activities in increasing patronage of NSW TrainLink's rail and coach services; benefitting regional businesses; and growing tourism in regional NSW.
- 6.19 The Committee considers that there is scope to expand upon NSW TrainLink's existing tourism packages and events, particularly given the previous success of these initiatives and the wide-ranging support for them.
- 6.20 For this reason, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW works with Destination NSW to expand its range of rail and coach tourism packages to and from regional NSW, with a particular focus on packages that support local festivals or events.

RECOMMENDATION 23

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW work with Destination NSW to expand its range of rail and coach tourism packages to and from regional NSW, with a particular focus on packages that support local festivals or events.

TRAVEL PASSES

- 6.21 There was support from various inquiry participants to extend the Government's new Opal Card to more regional areas in NSW and for NSW TrainLink to expand its range of travel passes to incorporate some of the features of transport passes available in Japan and Europe. Both of these measures were viewed as being beneficial for regional tourism.
- 6.22 Once fully implemented, the Opal Card will work on the public transport network in Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Hunter, Illawarra and Southern Highlands.²³⁷
- 6.23 Mr Randall Walker, Chairman, Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, supported the introduction of the Opal Card, believing that it would give tourists access to well-priced fares to regional destinations.²³⁸ BusNSW echoed this support and considered it critical that the rollout of the Opal Card caters to tourists.²³⁹ Ms Chipchase agreed that it would be beneficial if there was a similar scheme for regional NSW.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, p 2.

²³⁷ Transport for NSW, viewed 17 June 2013, <<http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/opal>>.

²³⁸ Mr Randall Walker, Chairman, Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 22.

²³⁹ BusNSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 30 November 2012, p 3; Mr Karim Hussain, Chair, Long Distance Tourist and Charter Committee, BusNSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 29.

²⁴⁰ Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 21.

6.24 Apart from the Opal Card, NSW TrainLink currently advertises the following travel passes:

- (a) **Backtracker Pass** – provides visitors with unlimited economy travel on all NSW TrainLink rail and coach services for 14 days, one month, three months or six months.²⁴¹
- (b) **East Coast Discovery Pass** – provides visitors with the opportunity to travel along the Pacific coast, selecting their own start and end points and taking up to six months to travel in one direction with coastal NSW TrainLink services. The pass includes free connecting coach services to destinations east of the railway line including Eden, Hawks Nest, Port Macquarie, Byron Bay and Surfers Paradise.²⁴²

6.25 At present, the travel passes offered by NSW TrainLink do not include the range of public transport options covered by the new Opal Card. In contrast, the Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils told that Committee that on a recent visit to Japan, a Council Officer was able to use the same Japan Rail Pass on the Bullet Train, regional trains, metro lines, buses and ferries.²⁴³ Mr Marco Angolo, Special Projects Engineer, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, spoke of the ease with which he was able to travel throughout Japan using a Japan Rail pass:

The idea of putting forward this, suggesting this JR Pass, was based on my own experience. It is pretty much thinking from the perspective of the international visitor who is coming to a new country, a different country, and how that, from my experience in Japan, helped me not just to visit the main cities like Tokyo and Kyoto but also giving me the opportunity to use part of the rail system in Tokyo was very helpful, as well as going to regional areas in Japan and use regional trains, local trains and ferries. So I thought that from the perspective of an international visit it would be interesting to have this integrated approach for visitors not only coming to Sydney as a main city that attracts a lot of tourists, but also allow those tourists to share part of the market share that comes to Sydney to visit the countryside.²⁴⁴

6.26 Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink agreed that a comprehensive travel pass would be beneficial for customers:

My view would be that a facility of that type would be of benefit to our customers, particularly our international customers who want to come over here, so something akin to a Euro rail pass that I can get if I go to Europe. Again these matters are part of the strategy for Transport for NSW, but certainly if there was a desire to look at that I would encourage it. I think that would be a beneficial product for our customers.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ NSW TrainLink, viewed 29 July 2013, <http://www.nswtrainlink.info/deals/travel_passes/backtracker>.

²⁴² NSW TrainLink, viewed 29 July 2013, <http://www.nswtrainlink.info/deals/travel_passes/east_coast_discovery>.

²⁴³ Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 5.

²⁴⁴ Mr Marco Angolo, Special Projects Engineer, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 2.

²⁴⁵ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 17.

6.27 Another concern raised by several participants about CountryLink's travel passes is that most of them are only available to overseas visitors. Australian residents can only purchase the East Coast Discovery Pass.²⁴⁶

6.28 Stakeholders proposed that CountryLink should consider developing new passes for local customers to encourage more Australian tourists to undertake inter-regional travel on its services.²⁴⁷ BusNSW stated that passes should be targeted towards particular domestic tourism markets:

BusNSW suggests that in order to promote inter and intra-state travel on CountryLink services, the Government must review the types of ticketing available, as well as considering ticketing products that provide incentives for domestic tourists. BusNSW suggest that fare products for target markets (eg backpackers, seniors) are developed and include access to local bus services, based on a compensation mechanism for operators via NSW Government contracts.²⁴⁸

Committee comment

6.29 The Committee considers that extending the Opal Card Scheme to all regions will have significant benefits for tourism in NSW. These benefits reinforce the Committee's earlier recommendation that the coverage of the Opal Card be extended to incorporate public transport in all areas of regional NSW (Recommendation 21).

6.30 The Committee also considers that patronage of NSW TrainLink's services and tourism in NSW will increase if NSW TrainLink expands its range of travel passes to include a comprehensive travel pass that can be used across public transport modes (e.g. regional and metropolitan networks, as well as buses and ferries), similar to travel passes that are available in Japan and Europe.

6.31 Further, the Committee is of the view that NSW TrainLink would attract a greater share of the local tourist market if all of its travel passes were made available to Australian residents.

6.32 Consequently, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW considers introducing a comprehensive travel pass for domestic and international tourists that can be used across public transport modes; and that it makes all of its travel passes available to Australian residents.

RECOMMENDATION 24

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW:

- **considers introducing a comprehensive travel pass for domestic and international tourists that can be used across public transport modes and**

²⁴⁶ CountryLink, viewed 17 June 2013, <http://www.countrylink.info/travel_passes>.

²⁴⁷ Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p17; Submission 115, name suppressed, p 6.

²⁴⁸ BusNSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 30 November 2012, p 3.

- **makes all of its travel passes available to Australian residents.**

SERVICES AND FACILITIES TO ATTRACT TOURISTS

- 6.33 The Committee heard various suggestions from stakeholders as to how NSW TrainLink could improve the experience of tourists using its services and how best to encourage tourists to use these services.

Improving timetables

- 6.34 The Committee examined the broad issue of timetabling and the needs of regional residents in Chapter Four of this report. This section refers specifically to the role that improved timetables can play in attracting tourists.

- 6.35 Timing of CountryLink services was viewed as a significant barrier to tourism by some inquiry participants. For example, one participant highlighted CountryLink's service to and from Broken Hill as an example of this:

For passengers visiting Broken Hill, there are two return rail journeys per week, one provided by Countrylink and the other being the Indian Pacific. Unfortunately, both depart Broken Hill for Sydney on a Tuesday. Any tourist wanting to travel to Sydney from the Far West is limited in choice to Tuesday morning or Tuesday evening, unless they are prepared to do the hard slog of a coach/Cityrail journey, with longer travel times and modal shifts that are off-putting. Countrylink could provide a second return Broken Hill service later in the week which would give passengers greater flexibility in the timing of their trips. If this is not feasible, the existing service could be moved to a different part of the week so that it complements the Indian Pacific service rather than competes with it.²⁴⁹

- 6.36 Central NSW Councils and Destination NSW expressed the view that tourism in regional areas could be increased by ensuring that timetables meet the needs of tourists.²⁵⁰ However, Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, advised the Committee that CountryLink is unable to further expand its timetables because of the restrictions imposed by current rolling stock.²⁵¹

- 6.37 Stakeholders also drew attention to the need to improve links between CountryLink services and other transport modes in regional areas in order to attract more tourists.²⁵² For example, Destination NSW stated that CountryLink services need to be better aligned with onward transport, particularly bus services to neighbouring destinations.²⁵³

- 6.38 BusNSW explained that although bus timetables are developed in consultation with the rail network, there is still scope for more co-ordination between regional

²⁴⁹ Submission 115, name suppressed, p 6.

²⁵⁰ Submission 68, Central NSW Councils, p 4; Submission 148, Destination NSW, p 2.

²⁵¹ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 11.

²⁵² See for example, Submission 29, Albury City, p 4; Submission 148, Destination NSW, p 2.

²⁵³ Submission 148, Destination NSW, p 2.

services in order to limit wait times.²⁵⁴ BusNSW agreed that better co-ordination of local bus services with CountryLink services would improve efficiency:

Many problems with the current network see services arriving to regional centres without a logical return journey available; making overnight stays the only way to travel on public transport in some regions.²⁵⁵

- 6.39 Transport for NSW told the Committee that it is taking action to ensure better connections between train and bus services, integrating timetables and responding to customer needs through the development of Regional Transport Plans in 2013.²⁵⁶

Reducing travel times

- 6.40 Long travel times were cited by several participants as a disincentive to tourists using CountryLink services. For example, Greater Taree City Council told the Committee that a CountryLink service from Sydney to Taree currently takes five hours, versus three hours by car.²⁵⁷ Another participant spoke of the time taken to get to Canberra:

Faster services would encourage tourists to consider travelling by public transport. At the moment, a rail journey to Canberra is 90 minutes longer than driving. This means a return journey by car instead of by train would mean 3 hours more leisure time for tourists, quite a bit of time for somebody visiting for a day or weekend.²⁵⁸

- 6.41 Trackwork was also cited as having an impact on travel times or preventing tourists from exploring regional areas altogether. Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism said that tourism in the area is often affected by trackwork:

It is nearly always on weekends (peak visitor times) and has an instant and dramatic reduction on passengers. Katoomba adventure operators lose more than 50% of anticipated revenue on days of trackwork – visitors either see sights in Sydney and choose not to travel, or they spend so long on connecting buses they have less time in the destination.²⁵⁹

Flexible booking options

- 6.42 Along with proposing that CountryLink increase its range of tourism packages, some participants, including Mr Randall Walker, Chairman of Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, suggested that CountryLink's booking system should be more flexible, so that tourists can add on the services they need:

If they have the transport solution taken care of – we already have many of the components but they are just not linked in a convenient point-of-booking context –

²⁵⁴ BusNSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 30 November 2012, p 1.

²⁵⁵ Submission 123, BusNSW, p 3.

²⁵⁶ Transport for NSW, Response to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 17 December 2012, p 2.

²⁵⁷ Submission 120, Greater Taree City Council, p 2.

²⁵⁸ Submission 115, name suppressed, p 5.

²⁵⁹ Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, Response to supplementary questions following 26 October 2012 public hearing, 29 November 2012, pp 2-3.

then they are able to make their own arrangements for accommodation or book additional add-on accommodation components. This would be a huge boost to the economy and to revenue for the Government in terms of public transport.²⁶⁰

- 6.43 Another participant also suggested that such features should be available to CountryLink passengers who are not specifically booking a tourism package, but would like to include other services such as car hire as part of their fare.²⁶¹

Promoting regional food and beverages

- 6.44 Ms Chipchase suggested that the passenger experience could be enhanced by serving local food and beverage specialties on CountryLink routes:

That scheme would allow preapproved local vendors to board trains at specific points in the journey and sell their produce to passengers before alighting at the next station stop. For example, it might be strawberry season somewhere, so people could come on board and sell strawberries, or bananas or local produce. They might, particularly in New South Wales which is renowned for its wine production, be able to come on board and perhaps sell local wine or boutique brewery beer.²⁶²

- 6.45 Apart from enhancing the tourist's experience, Ms Chipchase said that this kind of initiative could also be an opportunity to raise the profile of regional produce.²⁶³ Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils also supported the idea of serving regional food and beverages on trains.²⁶⁴

Initiatives for children

- 6.46 Destination NSW suggested that consideration should be given to the operation of a children's car during school holidays to allow children to watch films or engage in other appropriate activities under the supervision of a children's club leader.²⁶⁵ Narrabri Shire Council also supported this concept and proposed that children could be given a complementary activity pack with a tourism theme²⁶⁶

On-board amenities

- 6.47 Destination NSW stated that for international visitors, the level of comfort and on-board amenities on CountryLink services should be upgraded to world-class standards in line with countries such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan.²⁶⁷
- 6.48 Inquiry participants suggested that CountryLink should provide on-board facilities such as Wi-Fi, battery charging facilities for mobile phones, laptop computers and

²⁶⁰ Mr Randall Walker, Chairman, Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 22.

²⁶¹ Submission 115, name suppressed, p 4.

²⁶² Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 16.

²⁶³ Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, pp 16-17.

²⁶⁴ Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils, Response to supplementary questions following 26 October 2012 public hearing, 10 January 2013, p 2.

²⁶⁵ Submission 148, Destination NSW, p 2.

²⁶⁶ Submission 126, Narrabri Shire Council, pp 3, 5.

²⁶⁷ Submission 148, Destination NSW, p 2.

tablets, and entertainment systems similar to planes, both for tourism purposes and also to entice business travellers.²⁶⁸ However, one participant saw no need for expensive entertainment systems, given that many people already have their own portable entertainment devices such as iPads, Kindles, and so on.²⁶⁹

6.49 Another stakeholder suggested that differently configured trains, such as trains that are configured to facilitate increased luggage capacity, would provide better services to tourists.²⁷⁰

6.50 Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, indicated that customers had expressed interest in these facilities and that CountryLink and Railcorp had looked at the issue. However, as some of the XPT trains are over 30 years old, Mr Coates explained that significant refurbishment of trains would be required to accommodate these types of on-board amenities.²⁷¹

Improving infrastructure

6.51 The Committee heard concerns that the standard of bus and rail infrastructure did not meet international standards. For example, BusNSW suggested that a lack of investment in tourism-related transport infrastructure had effectively held the industry back:

A small investment in coach related infrastructure will support the tourism industry and greatly improve the customer experience. Facilities for coaches throughout NSW need to be upgraded to world class standards.²⁷²

Committee comment

6.52 The Committee considers that it would be beneficial for Transport for NSW and Destination NSW to work together to identify ways to improve the tourist experience and remove some of the disincentives to using NSW TrainLink services.

6.53 The Committee acknowledges that some initiatives, such as upgrading infrastructure, are long-term projects. However, others such as promoting local food and beverages on NSW TrainLink's services may be carried out in the short-term.

6.54 The Committee therefore recommends that Transport for NSW works collaboratively with Destination NSW to prepare a strategy focusing on short and long-term initiatives to improve the tourist experience of NSW TrainLink services, with the aim of encouraging more tourists to use those services. The Committee recommends that the strategy should also address disincentives for tourists using NSW TrainLink services.

²⁶⁸ See for example, Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 4; Submission 81, Sustainable Living Armidale, p 3; Submission 126, Narrabri Shire council, p 3.

²⁶⁹ Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 4.

²⁷⁰ Submission 39, Mr Christopher Henning, p 2.

²⁷¹ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 14.

²⁷² Submission 123, BusNSW, pp 2-3.

RECOMMENDATION 25

The Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink works collaboratively with Destination NSW to prepare a strategy focusing on short and long-term initiatives to improve the tourist experience of NSW TrainLink services, with the aim of encouraging more tourists to use these services. The strategy should also address disincentives for tourists using NSW TrainLink services.

CARRIAGE OF BICYCLES

6.55 As discussed in Chapter Four, the Committee received a number of submissions recommending that NSW TrainLink's rail and coach services be better equipped to store and carry bicycles. Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, considered that increasing options to transport bicycles (along with surfboards, snow skis and other equipment) on trains would attract greater numbers of tourists to NSW TrainLink's rail services and be a driver for increased tourism to regional NSW.²⁷³

6.56 Inquiry participants noted the significant difficulties experienced by passengers transporting bicycles on NSW TrainLink trains, with one stakeholder describing the current requirements as follows:

- there is a limit of two bicycles per train
- bicycles must be pre-booked and
- bicycles must be partially disassembled and boxed before being stored in the luggage area.²⁷⁴

6.57 In contrast, the stakeholder stated that Victoria's V/Line regional rail services allowed passengers to wheel bicycles onto carriages, provided luggage vans for carrying bicycles, and did not require passengers to pre-book bicycles.²⁷⁵

6.58 In tandem with making carrying bicycles easier for NSW TrainLink passengers, stakeholders stated that tourism to regional NSW would benefit if NSW TrainLink developed and actively promoted cycling tourism packages.²⁷⁶ Mr Christopher Henning noted that many regional towns already promoted themselves as cycling destinations and hold cycling events such as the Bicycle NSW event in Orange:

Cycling is already undergoing a major renaissance in this country, as the boom in bike sales, and the increasing use of bikes as commuter transport show. Cycle tourism should be encouraged in parallel with this as a growth area for a tourism industry which is struggling with the high dollar and the high price of petrol. Cycling encourages a more leisurely form of tourism which is more genuinely relaxing than

²⁷³ Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 17.

²⁷⁴ Name suppressed, Submission 25, p 2.

²⁷⁵ Name suppressed, Submission 25, p 2.

²⁷⁶ See for example, Submission 68, Central NSW Councils, p 4; and Submission 124, Bungendore Public Transport Group and Palerang Local Action Network for Sustainability, p 2.

travel by car. Back roads are a better way to view the country than main highways.²⁷⁷

- 6.59 The Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils similarly identified the international tourist market as being a potential market for cycling tourism packages:

Many international visitors appreciate cycling in their own countries and would be attracted to any walking and cycling opportunities on their visit to Australia. In this regard Country Link could also allow, within its ticket range, packages that promote walking and cycling opportunities along scenic sections of the magnificent NSW East Coast Cycleway. A good example would be a cycleway link between Gosford and Wyong Country Link stations where there are several kilometres of appealing waterfront cycle ways already developed.²⁷⁸

Committee comment

- 6.60 The Committee considers that there is great scope for NSW TrainLink to capitalise on the growing bicycle tourism market, and to therefore increase its own customer base and grow tourism to regional NSW. An effective way which NSW TrainLink would achieve this is by making it easier for passengers to carry bicycles on its rail services.
- 6.61 Consequently, the Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink considers enhancing its capacity to carry bicycles on its services and simplifies the procedure for using this facility.

RECOMMENDATION 26

The Committee recommends that NSW TrainLink considers enhancing its capacity to carry bicycles on its services and simplifies the procedure for using this facility.

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

- 6.62 As discussed earlier in this chapter, many inquiry participants supported NSW TrainLink's tourism packages and were keen for new packages to be developed. However, some participants considered that the visibility of these packages could be enhanced by improved marketing on the part of NSW TrainLink. The Committee heard that CountryLink's own data indicated spikes in patronage whenever it advertised in the media, supporting a correlation between increased profile and increased patronage.²⁷⁹
- 6.63 Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink told the Committee about some of CountryLink's strategies to market and advertise its tourism packages:

Our current marketing and advertising plan runs through until April next year. We advertise packages and members might have seen television advertisements about our trips to Dubbo zoo and to Broken Hill. We often do those advertisements in

²⁷⁷ Submission 39, Mr Christopher Henning, p 1.

²⁷⁸ Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 7.

²⁷⁹ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 15.

partnership with Destination NSW and they bring us full fare paying customers. We have an ongoing marketing plan. We would obviously like to increase it, but we must do what we can within budgetary constraints.²⁸⁰

- 6.64 The Friends of the Northern Railway suggested that CountryLink services be promoted in a range of different ways:

A major problem appears to be low community awareness of these packages. When shown the brochures some of our members have indicated surprise at their existence. In most cases they would only have noticed them if visiting the station or other travel agency and provided they had time to browse while there. We believe the excellent and very appealing brochures are being underutilised due to an absence of support promotion in the wider media. We suggest more supporting promotional material in local newspapers, and occasional television advertisements focused on the packages. In this way there is a chance of attracting a wider range of patrons who might otherwise not travel by train and therefore be unaware of the brochures.²⁸¹

- 6.65 Victorian and Queensland tourism campaigns that promote experiences across the State (as opposed to just capital cities) were praised by another participant. Mr Walker drew attention to the “You’ll love every piece of Victoria” campaign, and suggested that the whole of NSW needs to be promoted better to both local and overseas visitors.²⁸²

- 6.66 The Committee also heard that CountryLink needs to increase the promotion of rail as an inter-regional transport alternative for overseas tourists.²⁸³

Committee comment

- 6.67 While marketing budgets for government agencies are limited, the Committee considers that there is scope for wider promotion of NSW TrainLink’s services, in particular to the international and domestic tourism market.
- 6.68 To this effect, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW reviews and updates its current marketing strategy for promoting NSW TrainLink services to the international and domestic tourism market, with a view to increasing the visibility of its services.

RECOMMENDATION 27

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW reviews and updates its current marketing strategy for promoting NSW TrainLink services to the international and domestic tourism market, with a view to increasing the visibility of its services.

²⁸⁰ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 13.

²⁸¹ Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 3.

²⁸² Mr Randall Walker, Chairman, Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 23.

²⁸³ Submission 81, Sustainable Living Armidale, p 2.

CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN NSW TRAINLINK AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

6.69 There was a call by some inquiry participants for more co-ordination between NSW TrainLink, Destination NSW and regional organisations to promote tourism in the State. For example, Namoi Councils and Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism emphasised the need for more collaboration between CountryLink, Destination NSW and regional tourism organisations to develop relevant tourism strategies and products and to better promote tourism packages.²⁸⁴

6.70 BusNSW also emphasised the importance of collaborating with regional tourism organisations:

Engaging regional tourism bodies to facilitate and promote the whole of region experience for the tourist travelling by local and CountryLink services would further increase passenger numbers. This extends to the promotion of regional public transport services by the NSW Tourism industry. Destination NSW could extend its partnership with CountryLink to bus and coach operators to promote bus, coach and rail travel as the preferred option to travel to, and throughout, regional NSW.²⁸⁵

6.71 The use of ongoing reference groups was proposed by Central NSW Councils as a way to facilitate engagement with tourism and peak agencies.²⁸⁶

6.72 Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, explained that while CountryLink has some arrangements in place with local tourism operators in partnership with Destination NSW, there were obstacles to extending these arrangements:

It is really around our ability to be able to manage the marketing for that, for one thing, and the other thing is the resources we have within CountryLink to be able to arrange those types of things. You need to have people on the ground who can go out to local businesses, whether it is a bed and breakfast or a local winery, and we are limited in the amount of resources we have to be able to do that.²⁸⁷

6.73 However, Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, explained that Destination NSW has close relationships with a variety of industry stakeholders:

We work very closely with industry partners; in fact we have partnerships with a variety of stakeholders including regional tourism organisations, airlines, accommodation providers and so on, to deliver advertising and marketing campaigns to drive increases in visitation and visitor expenditure to New South Wales. CountryLink is a key partner of Destination NSW and we work with CountryLink on a

²⁸⁴ Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 5; Mr Randall Walker, Chairman, Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 22.

²⁸⁵ BusNSW, Answer to supplementary questions following 15 October 2012 public hearing, 30 November 2012, p 2.

²⁸⁶ Submission 68, Central NSW Council, p 3.

²⁸⁷ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, pp 14-15.

very regular basis to promote travel to Sydney and to regional New South Wales by utilising the CountryLink rail network.²⁸⁸

Committee comment

- 6.74 Given that Destination NSW already has close ties to the tourism industry, the Committee considers that the best way for NSW TrainLink to identify and create new tourism opportunities is in partnership with Destination NSW. Destination NSW can use its strong connections to assist NSW TrainLink to build strategic alliances with regional tourism operators, which may be more difficult for NSW TrainLink to achieve in isolation, given its resource constraints.
- 6.75 The Committee notes that there is also a willingness on the part of stakeholders to collaborate with NSW TrainLink on tourism packages. While Destination NSW is NSW TrainLink's primary partner for identifying new tourism opportunities, the Committee encourages NSW TrainLink to consider any initiatives to better consult and collaborate with regional tourism operators.
- 6.76 The Committee therefore recommends that Destination NSW considers developing a strategy to enhance collaboration and engagement between NSW TrainLink and regional tourism organisations to identify and develop tourism opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 28

The Committee recommends that Destination NSW considers developing a strategy to enhance collaboration and engagement between NSW TrainLink and regional tourism organisations to identify and develop tourism opportunities.

SERVICES FOR REGIONAL TOURIST DESTINATIONS

- 6.77 The Committee heard from various inquiry participants about particular regions where NSW TrainLink services are needed to support the tourist industry in those regions. In particular, there was widespread support for CountryLink services to be extended to the Snowy River Shire.
- 6.78 The issue of inadequate CountryLink services to the Snowy River Shire was examined in detail in Chapter Two of this report and the Committee has made a recommendation in relation to this (Recommendation 2).
- 6.79 In addition to the Snowy River Shire, several stakeholders suggested that other areas could also be better serviced by CountryLink to increase regional tourism. Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism flagged the idea of a tourism circuit that links key tourist destinations. They gave an example of the following circuit:
- (a) Sydney to Blue Mountains
 - (b) Blue Mountains to Mudgee
 - (c) Mudgee to Hunter Valley and

²⁸⁸ Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, transcript of evidence, 26 October 2012, p 16.

(d) Hunter Valley to Sydney or anywhere North.²⁸⁹

6.80 YHA Ltd also noted that the Princes Highway to the South Coast is not well serviced by public transport and that potential tourism opportunities in regional towns along the highway would greatly benefit from a CountryLink service.²⁹⁰

Committee comment

6.81 The Committee received a large number of submissions from stakeholders from the Snowy River Shire calling for NSW TrainLink to extend its coach services to the area, both for tourism purposes and also for the benefit of Snowy River Shire residents. Several other stakeholders also suggested other possible NSW TrainLink routes that may attract tourists and create new tourism opportunities for regional NSW.

6.82 The Committee considers that it would be beneficial for Transport for NSW to examine ways in which to orient NSW TrainLink's services to better service tourist destinations and capitalise on untapped tourism opportunities in regional NSW.

6.83 To this effect, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW works with Destination NSW to determine existing service gaps and to identify new NSW TrainLink train and coach services targeted towards growing the regional tourism market.

RECOMMENDATION 29

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW works with Destination NSW to determine existing service gaps and to identify new NSW TrainLink train and coach services targeted towards growing the regional tourism market.

²⁸⁹ Submission 53, Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, p 1.

²⁹⁰ Submission 149, YHA Ltd, pp 1-2.

Chapter Seven – Future trains and buses

- 7.1 In this chapter, the Committee examines NSW TrainLink’s ageing fleet and the types of trains and buses that NSW TrainLink may use in the future. It also considers the outcomes that may be achieved with the fleet of the future, such as reduced travel times, increased comfort and enhanced accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities. Finally, the chapter looks at the pros and cons of NSW TrainLink’s services carrying light freight.

FUTURE TRAIN AND BUS OPTIONS

- 7.2 The increasing age of NSW TrainLink’s fleet and the condition of the track on which trains run impacts on NSW TrainLink’s services in various ways. It leads to higher maintenance costs to keep the fleet running, it makes it more difficult to revise timetables and it hinders the capacity of trains to compete with other forms of transport in terms of travel times.²⁹¹

- 7.3 The Committee heard evidence from Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, that some of CountryLink’s rolling stock had already exceeded its typical lifespan, or is rapidly reaching that stage:

...If you want an appreciation of the problem, the first series of XPT trains that we got, which operate on the routes to Melbourne and Brisbane, entered service in 1981. They are designed for 25 years of operation, or 6.25 million kilometres of travel. By 2011, the trains had travelled over 9.2 million kilometres and were 28 years old, but they are still functioning. They are being kept together. The second series of XPT trains entered service in 1993. Recent refurbishment extended the operational life to beyond 2016. The Explorer fleet, which runs to Armidale, Moree, Broken Hill, Griffith and Canberra, entered service in 1993 and is likely to need replacement between 2023 and 2028.²⁹²

- 7.4 Mr Wielinga also advised the Committee of the options available to CountryLink to deal with its ageing fleet. These include refurbishing existing rolling stock, replacing locomotives and carrying out heavy maintenance on the Explorer trains to keep them running.²⁹³
- 7.5 Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, stated that capital investment was the key to making significant improvements to CountryLink’s services. He said that the level of services which CountryLink currently provides is at the limit of what is achievable with the current rolling stock.²⁹⁴
- 7.6 The Committee notes that the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan (Transport Master Plan)* states that Transport for NSW will prepare a fleet management

²⁹¹ See for example, Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 5; Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 11; Submission 145, Transport for NSW, p 6.

²⁹² Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 5.

²⁹³ Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 5.

²⁹⁴ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 11.

strategy as part of the NSW TrainLink Passenger Rail Services Strategy, and that this will address the issue of renewing ageing rolling stock.²⁹⁵

- 7.7 The Committee heard evidence from a range of stakeholders about how the related issues of CountryLink's ageing rolling stock and the poor condition of the State's track network could be resolved, and what the trains and coaches of the future might look like.

Tilt trains

- 7.8 Various participants, including Transport for NSW, supported the use of tilt trains on the CountryLink network.²⁹⁶ Mr Iain MacDonald, for example, advised the Committee that he had travelled on tilt trains in other states. Mr MacDonald told the Committee that, in his experience, the tilt trains in Queensland were fast and efficient.²⁹⁷ Another stakeholder made similar remarks:

Consideration should also be given to the acquisition of rolling stock that incorporates tilt train technology. This rolling stock has proved successful in reducing journey times across Queensland's regional rail services as well as in Europe on track that would otherwise not support faster speed.²⁹⁸

- 7.9 The benefits of achieving higher speeds and shorter travel times using tilt trains was identified by numerous stakeholders.²⁹⁹ Mr Stephen Miller, for example, noted that tilt trains can reduce travel times by 15% to 40%. He said the Sydney to Canberra route could be reduced from 4 hours, 15 minutes to 3 hours, 40 minutes and that the Sydney to Newcastle route could also be reduced from 2 hours, 25 minutes to 1 hour, 45 minutes.³⁰⁰

- 7.10 The Friends of the Northern Railway spoke of the potential benefits of introducing a fast tilt train on the North Coast line:

Speed is potentially a selling point for trains, and low speeds are certainly a deterrent to travel. On the existing North Coast track the profusion of curves means that conventional trains have no opportunity to run at their design, and desired, speed. It is unlikely that major realignment will occur in any foreseeable period, so the trains will need to accommodate the existing track. Tilt technology is the only way of doing this.³⁰¹

²⁹⁵ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, December 2012, p 70.

²⁹⁶ See for example, Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 4; Submission 35, Mr Iain MacDonald, p 2; Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 13; Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 4; Submission 115, name suppressed, p 11; Submission 124, Bungendore Public Transport Group and Palerang Local Action Network for Sustainability, p 2; Submission 125, Mr David Beres, p 1; Submission 139, Mr Stephen Miller, p 1; and Submission 143, Lake Macquarie City Council, p 3.

²⁹⁷ Submission 35, Mr Iain MacDonald, p 2.

²⁹⁸ Submission 115, name suppressed, p 3.

²⁹⁹ See for example, Submission 35, Mr Iain MacDonald, p 2; Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 13; Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 4; Submission 125, Mr David Beres, p 1; Submission 139, Mr Stephen Miller, p 1; and Submission 143, Lake Macquarie City Council, p 3.

³⁰⁰ Submission 139, Mr Stephen Miller, p 1.

³⁰¹ Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 4.

- 7.11 Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, confirmed many of the benefits of introducing tilt train technology in NSW, but also the high cost of doing this:

There are different options that you can explore to replace that rolling stock. The minimum cost options, the sort of refurbishing of existing carriageways and replacing the locomotives, is several hundred million dollars—probably in the order of around \$450 million to do that. To completely replace all of the rolling stock with something like tilt trains—which are probably the sort of train that you would put on a network like this, given the sort of geography of it and the topography that it goes through and the current condition of the network; they would be the trains that you could achieve probably the best travel times with—in those circumstances we are talking about a couple of hundred more on top of the figure I just mentioned. So, a fairly significant investment and it is a critical decision point.³⁰²

- 7.12 Tilt trains have been suggested as a means of increasing the speed of rail journeys, including between Central Western NSW and Sydney.
- 7.13 The Committee concurs with stakeholder views that consideration should be given to the acquisition of rolling stock that incorporates tilt train technology.

High speed rail

- 7.14 High speed rail is already a possibility for the future, with the NSW Government assisting the Australian Government with a high speed rail study. The NSW Government has said that it supports the initiative to construct a high speed rail corridor between Brisbane and Melbourne.³⁰³ There was also support from stakeholders for high speed rail,³⁰⁴ although some participants advocated for moderately faster trains in the short to medium-term.³⁰⁵
- 7.15 Inquiry stakeholders spoke of the potential benefits of high speed rail, if it were to be extended to their regions. Goulburn Mulwaree Council stated that high speed rail is a critical long-term infrastructure project that would benefit the South East of NSW.³⁰⁶ Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils similarly stated that high speed rail would significantly improve the lives of Central Coast residents and support tourism to the region.³⁰⁷
- 7.16 Narrabri Shire Council argued that a high speed rail service is required for the sustainability of regional rail services, and to facilitate daily return services to regional locations.³⁰⁸ Albury City considered that there needs to be high speed

³⁰² Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 4.

³⁰³ Transport for NSW, *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, December 2012, p 235.

³⁰⁴ See for example, Submission 29, Albury City, p 6; Submission 59, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 1; Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, pp 10-11; Submission 143, Lake Macquarie City Council, p 3.

³⁰⁵ See for example, Submission 82, Lachlan Regional Transport Committee Inc, p 2; Submission 124, Bungendore Public Transport Group and Palerang Local Action Network for Sustainability, p 1.

³⁰⁶ Submission 59, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 1.

³⁰⁷ Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 10.

³⁰⁸ Submission 126, Narrabri Shire Council, p 7.

rail links between major centres so that rail travel becomes faster than travel by car, and cheaper than travel by air.³⁰⁹

- 7.17 Financial-Architects Asia spoke of overseas experiences of high speed rail and how this can result in travellers switching to rail as a preferred mode of transport:

Overseas experience shows the potential for a long term shift in the modes of transport used by travelers in high traffic corridors where High Speed Rail (“HSR”) is implemented. From France, Spain and South Korea, just for example, figures available publicly show a potential shift of up to approximately one-third of travelers, mainly out of air travel and to a lesser degree away from road transportation, once busy inter-city corridors obtain the additional option of a true HSR link, and traffic patterns stabilise thereafter. Britain quotes higher figures for HS1, e.g. 50% London to Paris.³¹⁰

- 7.18 Some participants, such as the Lachlan Regional Transport Committee Inc, suggested that something in between the current CountryLink service and a high speed rail service would be most appropriate for inland regions:

We are aware of the proposal for a Very Fast Train service between Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. Such a development would benefit only part of inland New South Wales, and there may be a reasonable argument that moderately fast trains serving inland New South Wales, in the manner of CountryLink but faster, would be more satisfactory and equitable for inland people.³¹¹

- 7.19 The Bungendore Public Transport Group and Palerang Local Action Network for Sustainability echoed these sentiments and suggested that moderately faster trains would be beneficial in the short-term:

We would not like to see investment in a Very Fast Train at the cost of upgrading the existing network – we believe NSW can have a much better Somewhat Faster Train for less money in a shorter time reaching more people. We do however support the reservation of a corridor of land for the future event of a very fast train.³¹²

- 7.20 The Committee also heard from Mr Luke Osborne about the benefits of introducing a moderately faster train so that CountryLink services could then compete with air travel, particularly on shorter trips, such as those between Sydney and Canberra.³¹³

Keep existing trains but upgrade tracks

- 7.21 In Chapter Four of this report, the Committee examined the issue of how track condition can impact on running speeds and timetabling of CountryLink’s rail services. In that chapter, the Committee recommended that, subject to budgetary constraints, the NSW Government considers the provision of funding for projects to upgrade the existing track network to enable passenger trains to travel at faster speeds (Recommendation 11).

³⁰⁹ Submission 29, Albury City, p 6.

³¹⁰ Submission 116, Financial-Architects Asia, p 4.

³¹¹ Submission 82, Lachlan Regional Transport Committee Inc, p 2.

³¹² Submission 124, Bungendore Public Transport Group and Palerang Local Action Network for Sustainability, p 1.

³¹³ Submission 52, Mr Luke Osborne, p 1.

7.22 In this section, the Committee highlights evidence from participants who consider that CountryLink's existing rolling stock is adequate, but that the track network needs to be upgraded to enable rolling stock to travel at optimal speeds.³¹⁴

7.23 One stakeholder described the issue as follows:

Theoretically, the existing fleet of trains and buses could serve the state well but they are often let down by travelling on roads and tracks that prevent them from operating at their maximum speed. Improvements to the alignment and condition of tracks and highways are as important as the type of bus or train that travels on them.³¹⁵

7.24 Mr Charles Body expressed similar concerns and wondered whether it was worthwhile buying fast trains if the tracks won't support faster running speeds:

The current XPT and Xplorer trains seem to be well suited to current and future transport needs, although I wonder about the need to buy trains that will travel at 160 km per hour when in many areas the quality of the track limits train speeds to less than 100 km per hour.³¹⁶

7.25 The Committee heard from the Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils about the potential time-savings on a trip from Wagga to Sydney if trains such as the XPT were able travel at their maximum speeds:

If the XPT could actually travel for most of its journey from Wagga to Sydney at 160km per hour the journey's time could probably be halved from the current 6 hours to just over 3 hours. As the journey currently stands it is much faster to drive to Sydney than it is to take the train.³¹⁷

Smaller rail car sets

7.26 Stakeholders, such as The Friends of the Northern Railway, suggested that future trains should have the capacity to add or subtract carriages in response to demand.³¹⁸ One participant highlighted some of the potential benefits of using smaller rail car sets:

...there are only 2 or 3 services between Goulburn and Canberra per day. The morning service to Canberra arrives too late for anyone commuting to work Queanbeyan or beyond. Surely a single-car railcar could make the run hourly, between 7am and 7pm, which would take many cars off the road, and provide a great service for people out to Goulburn who wanted to reach Canberra's shops, offices or hospitals. It would encourage public rather than private transport use (less pollution, safer roads) and be very convenient for residents of Goulburn, Tarago, Bungendore and Queanbeyan (and the increasing numbers of people in these towns that commute to Canberra daily), besides those of Canberra.³¹⁹

³¹⁴ See for example, Submission 81, Sustainable Living Armidale, p 2; Submission 115, name suppressed, p 10; Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 2; Submission 115, name suppressed, p 2.

³¹⁵ Submission 115, name suppressed, p 10.

³¹⁶ Submission 17, Mr Charles Body, p 3.

³¹⁷ Submission 146, Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils, p 5.

³¹⁸ See for example, Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 4.

³¹⁹ Submission 25, name suppressed, p 4.

- 7.27 Mr Les Wielinga agreed that the concept of smaller rail car sets has merit for the future. He told the Committee that in Victoria they use two and three car sets on their network.³²⁰ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, also told the Committee that single or double rail services were options that could be looked at in the future.³²¹

Buses

- 7.28 The Committee heard from Mr Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, BusNSW, who stated that recent innovations in bus construction had the potential to improve the efficiency and passenger experience of bus travel. These innovations include the development of hybrid, diesel, electric, double-decker and bendy buses. By way of example, Mr Mellish advised that double-decker buses are already being used in a range of areas to increase passenger-carrying capacity.³²²

Committee comment

- 7.29 The Committee notes that NSW TrainLink's ageing fleet is a critical issue that Transport for NSW is currently examining as part of the *Transport Master Plan*.
- 7.30 Participants had different views about what kinds of vehicles would provide the best service to passengers – ranging from high speed trains to retaining existing vehicles, but upgrading the tracks. Nevertheless, there was a shared call from participants for fleet solutions that will reduce travel times.
- 7.31 Consequently, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW, in determining the trains and buses to be used for the NSW TrainLink network in the future, purchases vehicles that reduce travel times, enhance passenger comfort and better meet the regional transport needs of customers.
- 7.32 The Committee also recommends that Transport for NSW gives active consideration to the acquisition of future rolling stock that incorporates tilt train technology, as well as the use of smaller rail car sets for NSW TrainLink services, with a view to more frequent services, where possible and practicable.
- 7.33 The Committee notes that NSW TrainLink is working with the Australian Rail Track Corporation to carry out track work to enable faster travel running times (see paragraph 4.18) and the Committee may report on any progress made in this area in a supplementary report.

RECOMMENDATION 30

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW:

- **in determining the trains and buses to be used for the NSW TrainLink network in the future, purchases vehicles that reduce travel times, enhance passenger comfort and better meet the regional transport needs of customers**

³²⁰ Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, pp 5-6.

³²¹ Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 11.

³²² Mr Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, BusNSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 29.

- **gives active consideration to the acquisition of future rolling stock that incorporates tilt train technology and**
- **gives active consideration to the use of smaller rail car sets for NSW TrainLink services, with a view to more frequent services, where possible and practicable.**

POTENTIAL FOR CARRYING LIGHT FREIGHT

7.34 A number of participants were supportive of NSW TrainLink trains and coaches carrying light freight, on the condition that this did not negatively impact on the core business of transporting passengers.³²³ Both the potential benefits and challenges of NSW TrainLink vehicles carrying light freight were raised during the inquiry.

Benefits of carrying light freight

7.35 The Committee heard that one of the main advantages of CountryLink services carrying light freight is that it could take more heavy vehicles off the roads. Greater Taree City Council was of the view that if CountryLink freight services were competitively priced, it could become the preferred freight option for local businesses and regional residents. The Council said this would lead to fewer trucks transporting freight along the Pacific Highway, making the Pacific Highway safer and reducing maintenance requirements for Roads and Maritime Services.³²⁴

7.36 The Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils was also supportive of measures that would result in more freight being taken off the roads on the Sydney to Central Coast to Brisbane corridor.³²⁵ Coffs Harbour City Council suggested that carrying light freight on CountryLink vehicles, as opposed to large trucks, would alleviate community concerns about heavy road freight:

Other road users feel unsafe around large trucks; they are noisy and damage the roads. Meanwhile, demand for freight increases every year. The community tell us very clearly that they would like more freight to be transported by rail.³²⁶

7.37 Other participants spoke of the potential financial benefits to CountryLink of its services carrying light freight. The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson MP supported carrying light freight on all CountryLink services if it would improve the financial sustainability of the services, but not to the detriment of passenger transport.³²⁷

³²³ See for example, Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, pp 6-7; Submission 17, Mr Charles Body, p 2; Submission 29, Albury City, pp 3-4; Submission 42, Bathurst Regional Council, p 2; Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 4; Submission 68, Central NSW Councils, p 3; Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 4; Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 3; Submission 117, The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson MP, p 1; Submission 120, Greater Taree City Council, pp 1-2; Submission 124, Bungendore Public Transport Group and Palerang Local Action Network for Sustainability, p 2; and Submission 126, Narrabri Shire Council, p 4.

³²⁴ Submission 120, Greater Taree City Council, pp 1-2.

³²⁵ Submission 69, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, p 4.

³²⁶ Submission 44, Coffs Harbour City Council, p 6.

³²⁷ Submission 117, The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson MP, p 1.

Namoi Councils also suggested that transporting light freight could improve the productivity and cost effectiveness of CountryLink services.³²⁸

7.38 In addition, the Committee heard from Snowy Mountains Backpackers that local businesses may be interested in using CountryLink's services for freight if the prices were competitive, particularly with the increase in people buying and selling online.³²⁹

7.39 Another participant described the experience of using a railway freight service overseas and advised that it was a very simple and cost-effective means of transporting goods:

Overseas, in countries such as Thailand, one simply takes a parcel to the railway station, where the staff charge a fee based on weight & volume. The goods are carried on the next available service, and dropped off at the destination station, where the recipient can claim it from the station staff, or, for unmanned stations, the goods are simply left on the platform if no one is there to claim them immediately. Goods at manned stations are disposed of or sold if not claimed within a reasonable period of time (say a week).

I have used such service overseas, and it was excellent, as I could send goods or small parcels cheaper than by post, and tell the recipient which train it was on, so that they could claim it directly upon arrival.³³⁰

Challenges with carrying light freight

7.40 Inquiry participants also spoke of the challenges that would have to be overcome in order to make carrying light freight on NSW TrainLink vehicles feasible.

7.41 The Friends of the Northern Railway outlined some of the main challenges to be considered, including the need to develop additional infrastructure at railway stations and the size limitations of current rolling stock:

This would seem to be a good idea as a source of additional income, especially if train speeds are increased, but it would require considerable infrastructure development, providing rooms at stations to accept and process the items. Most stations once had parcel rooms, but they have long since been transferred to other purposes. Staffing and security would also be issues. It is unlikely that the service would warrant a full-time position being allocated to it. Existing station staff are trained in passenger handling and would likely not respond favourably to being diverted to other tasks at the same time. It is perhaps a position best handled by a contractor who may choose to work from their own premises and bring the parcels to the station for loading.

The rollingstock would also need to be reconfigured to handle the parcels. Our local train is so frequently close to capacity that it would not be feasible to take any more passenger room for parcels, yet the existing luggage area is also generally full.

³²⁸ Submission 54, Namoi Councils, p 4.

³²⁹ Submission 40, Snowy Mountains Backpackers, p 2.

³³⁰ Submission 25a, Name suppressed, p 1.

Passenger capacity should not be sacrificed for the secondary function of parcel transport.³³¹

7.42 Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, said that it would be difficult for CountryLink vehicles to carry light freight because the luggage-carrying capacity of many of its services was already well-utilised. However, he stated that light freight could be a possibility with the upgrading of existing rolling stock or the purchase of new vehicles.³³²

7.43 While generally supportive of the concept of CountryLink services carrying light freight, Albury City suggested that any potential benefits were outweighed by significant logistic difficulties:

The use of CountryLink rail services for light freight transport would not result in a significant decrease in local traffic, as vehicles would still be required to travel to Albury train station to drop off or collect light freight: at best this would result in a substitution of large trucks for small ones, although there may be an increase in the number of trucks required for the same number of items. Loading and unloading of light freight may require dedicated facilities at train stations, and for safety reasons, may need to be separated from passenger movements. Finally, loading and unloading of freight at train stations may increase the amount of time required to stop at each station, potentially increasing travel times.³³³

7.44 Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils suggested that CountryLink would need to guarantee delivery and provide door-to-door service if it were to compete with existing courier firms:

This would require substantial investment in logistics and tracking systems as well as delivery vehicles able to take the light freight from the train station to its intended destination.

For CountryLink to make inroads into the light freight market it will also have to overcome its current branding problems, whereby the service is perceived by business to be unreliable, late and inefficient.³³⁴

7.45 Ensuring that passenger services take precedence over freight carriage was a theme that ran through a number of submissions. For example, Bathurst Regional Council stated that if freight rail services were combined with passenger services, the timing of departures should be geared toward passenger convenience as a clear priority.³³⁵

7.46 The Committee also heard evidence on the capacity of buses to carry light freight. Mr Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, BusNSW said that a number of bus operators carried freight, but that the capacity to do this was limited by vehicle mass limits and the competing requirement to carry items such as wheelchair

³³¹ Submission 78, The Friends of the Northern Railway, p 3.

³³² Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 12.

³³³ Submission 29, Albury City, pp 3-4. See also, Submission 124, Bungendore Public Transport Group and Palerang Local Action Network, p 2.

³³⁴ Submission 146, Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils, p 4.

³³⁵ Submission 42, Bathurst Regional Council, p 2.

hoists and passenger luggage.³³⁶ Ogdens Coaches stated that logistical difficulties meant that carrying light freight on buses was not a viable option:

Light freight on Countrylink Coach Services is not an option. With wheelchair hoists and passenger luggage, space is limited. Current timetables do not allow time for freight transactions or movements. Countrylink coaches should concentrate on their core business and carry passengers.³³⁷

Committee comment

- 7.47 While a number of participants were supportive of NSW TrainLink services carrying light freight, the Committee also heard of certain difficulties that would have to be overcome in order for this initiative to be successful.
- 7.48 On balance, the Committee was persuaded that carrying light freight on NSW TrainLink services is something that should be considered given the potential benefits to both NSW TrainLink and regional NSW. These possible benefits include the reduction of heavy road freight traffic on regional roads and light freight transport being an additional revenue stream for NSW TrainLink.
- 7.49 The Committee notes the evidence from Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, indicating that, to date, Transport for NSW had not considered the potential of NSW TrainLink services to carry light freight.³³⁸
- 7.50 For these reasons, the Committee recommends that Transport for NSW investigates the feasibility of carrying light freight on NSW TrainLink's services, but takes into consideration any possible detrimental impacts on its passenger services.

RECOMMENDATION 31

The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW investigates the feasibility of carrying light freight on NSW TrainLink's services.

³³⁶ Mr Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, BusNSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 25; Submission 123, BusNSW, p 2.

³³⁷ Submission 24, Mr Peter Ogden of Ogdens Coaches, p. 1.

³³⁸ Mr Les Wielinga, Director General, Transport for NSW, transcript of evidence, 15 October 2012, p 7.

Appendix One – List of submissions

1	Ms Helen Weal
2	Ms Rowena Marchant
3	Ms Loretta Marks
4	Ms Kay Gibbs
5	Name suppressed
6	Mr Victor Isaacs
7	Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Ltd
8	Mrs J Hawken
9	Ms Deborah Hunt
10	Dr John Ward
11	Ms Eulyce Arkleysmith
12	Narromine Shire Council
13	Mr Keith Smith
14	Mr Jessie Legge
15	Mr William Graham
16	Name suppressed
17	Mr Charles Body
18	Mr Bede F Ryan
19	Mrs G Barratt
20	Ms Lesley Radford
21	Mr Ian McGufficke
22	Mr and Mrs Schmich
23	Name suppressed
24	Mr Peter Odgen
25	Name suppressed
25a	Name suppressed
26	Mrs Elsie Backhouse

STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

27	Mr and Mrs Macfarlane
28	Clr Ron Macpherson
29	Albury City
30	Name suppressed
31	Mr King Neville
32	Mid-Western Regional Council
33	Scone Neighbourhood Centre
34	Name suppressed
35	Mr Iain MacDonald
36	Confidential
37	Shoalhaven Council
38	Broken Hill City Council
39	Christopher Henning
40	Snowy Mountains Backpackers
41	Mrs Susan Moore
42	Bathurst Regional Council
43	Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers
44	Coffs Harbour City Council
45	Boorowa Council
46	Mr Greg Piper MP
47	Mr Julian Campbell
48	Sustain Transport
49	Northern Rivers Social Development Council
50	Mrs M P Eaton
51	Mr John Wholohan
52	Mr Luke Osborne
53	Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism
54	Namoi Councils
55	Mrs GH Alcock
56	Kiama Alpine Club

INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT
LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

57	Planning Institute Australia
58	Thredbo Historical Society
59	Goulburn Mulwaree Council
60	Perisher Ski Resort
61	Mr Mark Schweikert
62	Mr Eric Tierney
63	Mr Sam Harris
64	Thredbo Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Thredbo
65	Pepper Design
66	Name suppressed
67	Port Stephens Council
68	Central NSW Councils
69	Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils
70	Bland Shire Council
71	Two More Trains for Singleton
72	Mr Bob Manning
73	Mr David Blazey
74	Tumut Shire Council
75	Wingecarribee Shire Council
76	Name suppressed
77	NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc
78	The Friends of the Northern Railway
79	Upper Hunter Shire Council
80	Name suppressed
81	Sustainable Living Armidale
82	Lachlan Regional Transport Committee Inc
83	National Seniors Australia
84	Rail Action Bathurst
85	Anglican Parish of Berridale & Snowy Mountains
86	Snowy Mountains Grammar School

STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

87	Dalgety Chamber of Commerce
88	Perisher Resorts Chamber of Commerce
89	Destination Jindabyne
90	Ms Kerry Beer
91	Mr Peter Beer
92	Snow Escape Holidays Pty Ltd
93	Mr John Wallis
94	Ms Jane-Elise Green
95	G. Bennett
96	Mr Nicholas Elliott
97	Ms Lisa Linton
98	JB Interiors
99	HJ Thompson
100	Mid P Snow Centre Pty Ltd
101	Eureka Exchange Pty Ltd
102	Mr Bradley Hebir
103	Ms Anne Thompson
104	Jindabyne Central School P&C
105	NSW Institute of Sport – Winter Sports Program
106	Tourism Snowy Mountains
107	The Seer Resort Company
108	Ms Corra-Lees Fenn
109	Snowy Hydro Ltd
110	National Parks and Wildlife Service
111	Mr Peter Paabo
112	Southern Councils Group
113	Central Coast Tourism
114	Illawarra Forum Inc
115	Name suppressed
116	Financial-Architects.Asia

INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT
LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

117	The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP
118	Eurobodalla Shire Council
119	Wollongong City Council
120	Greater Taree City Council
121	Young Shire Council
122	Snowy River Shire Council
123	BusNSW
124	Bungendore Public Transport Group
125	Mr David Beres
126	Narrabri Shire Council
127	Action for Public Transport
128	Mr Andrew Heslop
129	Bathurst Business Chamber
130	Central Darling Shire Council
131	Miss C Newman
132	Kyogle Council
133	Norther Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils
134	Physical Disability Council of NSW
135	Cessnock City Council
136	Infrastructure Partnerships Australia
137	Country Women's Association of New South Wales
138	Mr Greg Tatchell
139	Mr Stephen Miller
140	Ms Yvonne Glasson
141	Blayney Shire Council
142	Australian Centre fo Disability Law
143	City of Lake Macquarie
144	Confidential
145	Transport for NSW
146	Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils

STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

147	Name suppressed
148	Destination NSW
149	YHA Ltd
150	Mr Kevin Anderson MP
151	Forbes Shire Council

Appendix Two – List of witnesses

15 October 2012, Jubilee Room, Parliament House

Witness	Position and Organisation
Mr Les Wielinga	Director General <i>Transport for NSW</i>
Mr Matthew Coates	Acting General Manager <i>CountryLink</i>
Mr Colin Henson	National Chair, Transport Planning Chapter <i>Planning Institute of Australia</i>
Mr Darryl Mellish Mr Karim Hussain	Executive Director Chair, Long Distance Tourist and Charter Committee <i>BusNSW</i>

26 October 2012, Jubilee Room, Parliament House

Witness	Position and Organisation
Mr Steven Green Mr Marco Argolo	Advisor, Transport and Infrastructure Special Projects Engineer <i>Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils</i>
Cr Phyllis Miller OAM Mr Garry Styles Ms Jennifer Bennett	Chair Deputy Chair, General Manager Executive Officer <i>Central NSW Organisation of Councils</i>
Ms Sandra Chipchase	Chief Executive Officer <i>Destination NSW</i>
Mr Randall Walker	Chairman <i>Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism</i>
Ms Penny Nelson	Chair, NSW Policy Advisory Group <i>National Seniors Australia</i>
Ms Jordana Goodman	Policy Officer <i>Physical Disability Council of NSW</i>
Ms Ka Ki Ng	Senior Policy Officer <i>NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc</i>

STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
LIST OF WITNESSES

Appendix Three – Visits of inspection

The Committee made three visits of inspection to Jindabyne, Bathurst and Tamworth. The purpose of the visits of inspection was to meet with local stakeholders and obtain further regional information in relation to the inquiry.

Monday 3 December 2012 Jindabyne, New South Wales

On 3 December 2012, two Committee members (Mr Andrew Gee and Mr Spence) and one staff member (Ms Rachel Simpson) travelled to Jindabyne. The Committee met with the following people:

- Ms Carole Morris, President, Country Women's Association of NSW (Jindabyne Branch)
- Mrs Dale Whitfield, Secretary, Country Women's Association of NSW (Jindabyne Branch)
- Mr Peter Bird, Destination Jindabyne
- Ms Joan Bird, Destination Jindabyne
- Mr Murray Blackburn-Smith, Director Community and Environmental Services, Snowy River Shire Council
- Mr John McIntyre, Thredbo Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Thredbo
- Mr Peter Sheppard, Tourism Snowy Mountains
- Cr Dean Lynch, Mayor, Cooma Monaro Shire Council
- Cr Martin Hughes, Cooma Monaro Shire Council
- Mr John Vucic, General Manager, Cooma Monaro Shire Council.

Wednesday, 6 February 2013 Bathurst, New South Wales

On 6 February 2013, two Committee members (Mr Andrew Gee and Mr Daryl Maguire) and one staff member (Ms Rachel Simpson) travelled to Bathurst. The Committee met with the following people:

- Mr Angus Edwards, Bathurst Business Chamber
- Mr Grant Baker, Director Infrastructure Services, Blaney Shire Council
- Mr John Mason, President, Mr Laurie Williams, Committee Member and Mr Randall Edwards, Member, Millthorpe Village Committee
- Mr Douglas Brooks

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- Cr Ron Penny, Mayor, and Ms Yvonne Glasson, Resident, Forbes Shire
- Mr Mike Sweeney, Mudgee Rail Group
- Mr Edmund Ogden, General Manager and Mr Peter Ogden, Depot Manager, Ogden's Coaches

Thursday, 7 February 2013
Tamworth, New South Wales

On 7 February 2013, three Committee members (Mr Andrew Gee, Mr Daryl Maguire and Mr Richard Torbay) and one staff member (Ms Rachel Simpson) travelled to Tamworth. The Committee met with the following people:

- Dr Donald Martin, Friends of the Northern Railway
- Cr Col Murray, Chair, Cr Scott Schmutter and Mr Stephen Bartlett, Executive Officer, Namoi Councils
- Mr Kevin Anderson MP, Member for Tamworth,
- Cr Col Murray, Mayor and Mr Paul Bennett, General Manager, Tamworth Regional Council
- Cr Gai Swain, Deputy Mayor, Gunnedah Shire Council
- Mr Robert Hunt, General Manager and Mr Greg Tory, Director, Works, Liverpool Plains Shire Council
- Cr Danielle Mulholland and Mr Malcolm Wallis, Tourism Development Officer, Kyogle Shire Council
- Ms Penny Jobling, Tourism Director, Narrabri Shire Council
- Ms Kate Geary, and Ms Linda Worth, Northern Rivers Social Development Committee
- Ms Katrina Luckie, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers
- Mr Tom Fisher, Sustainable Living Armidale
- Mr Tim Coates, President and Ms Marjolyn Thomas, Executive Officer, Tamworth Business Chamber

Appendix Four – Extracts from minutes

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 6)

8.50 am, Wednesday 7 March 2012
Room 1136, Parliament House

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair), Ms Burney, Mr Torbay.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Maguire and Mr Spence.

Officers in attendance

Ms Buchbach, Dr Littlefair, Mr Tyler.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Ms Burney:
That the minutes of the meeting of 21 December 2011 be confirmed.

2. ***

3. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

The Chair tabled proposed terms of reference for an inquiry into inter-regional public transport. The Committee discussed the proposed terms of reference.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Burney, seconded by Mr Torbay:

That the Committee inquire into how inter-regional public transport can better serve the needs of regional New South Wales.

Particular issues for consideration include:

- (a) how CountryLink services can be improved;
- (b) how network linkages between CountryLink train and coach services can be improved;
- (c) the potential for CountryLink services to carry light freight;
- (d) how CountryLink can be better utilised to increase tourism in New South Wales;
- (e) how the amount of inter-regional travel undertaken by public transport can be increased;
- (f) the extent to which regional public transport networks are integrated and how they can be better integrated;
- (g) the role local councils can play in improving inter-regional public transportation networks; and

- (h) the type of buses and trains that will be required for the provision of regional passenger services in the future.

For the purposes of this inquiry, the Committee uses the term inter-regional travel to refer to travel between regional areas or between a regional area and a metropolitan area.

The Committee does not intend to consider the privatisation of existing government owned public transport, including CountryLink, as part of its inquiry.

The Committee discussed an indicative timetable, a list of key stakeholders and media and advertising preferences for the inquiry into inter-regional public transport.

The Committee noted that:

- the closing date for submissions would be 18 May 2012.
- a media release would be distributed to regional and major metropolitan newspapers and radio stations.
- advertisements would be placed in *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Land* and selected regional newspapers.
- letters would be sent by the Chair to relevant Ministers and key regional stakeholders.

The Committee requested background information on CountryLink including network maps, timetables and fare structures.

The Committee adjourned at 9.15 am until a time and date to be agreed upon.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 7)

8.50 am, Thursday 31 May 2012
Room 1136, Parliament House

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair), Ms Burney, Mr Maguire and Mr Torbay.

Apologies

An apology was received from Mr Spence.

Officers in attendance

Ms Buchbach, Dr Littlefair, Mr Tyler.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Ms Burney:
That the minutes of the meeting of 7 March 2012 be confirmed.

2. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

- a. Resolved on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Ms Burney:

That the Committee agrees to publish those submissions, or parts of submissions, that are not listed as confidential in the circulated table, on its website.

- b. Resolved on the motion of Ms Burney, seconded by Mr Maguire:
That the Committee agrees to allow Financial-Architects.Asia to provide a copy of their submission (number 116) to other parties as requested.
- c. The Committee noted recent media articles in relation to the inquiry.
- d. The Committee noted the following background information: *RailCorp Annual Report 2010-11, CountryLinkUp 2010 Community Consultations Report* and *NSW Government response to the CountryLinkUp 2010 Community Consultations Report*.
- e. The Committee considered potential witnesses it wishes to examine at a proposed public hearing at Parliament House.

The Committee agreed to invite the groups and individuals listed below and any other stakeholders identified by Committee members:

Transport for NSW
CountryLink
Destination NSW
Planning Institute Australia
Infrastructure Partnerships Australia
BusNSW
Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils
Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism
Bathurst Regional Council
Rail Action Bathurst
National Seniors Australia
Physical Disability Council of NSW
NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc

- f. The Committee considered options for regional visits of inspections and agreed that the secretariat should provide a geographical analysis of the submissions received to inform further discussions at its next deliberative meeting.

3. ***

4. NSW Long Term Master Plan

The Chair welcomed Mr Les Wielinga (Director General, Transport for NSW) and Mr Fergus Gammie (Deputy Director General, Transport Services, Transport for NSW), and invited them to brief the Committee on the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan. The briefing commenced at 9.00 a.m.

The briefing concluded and the Committee adjourned at 9.26 am until a time and date to be agreed upon.

**Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development
Committee (no. 8)**

8.45 am, Wednesday 5 September 2012

Room 1254, Parliament House

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair), Ms Burney, Mr Maguire, Mr Spence and Mr Torbay.

Apologies

None.

Officers in attendance

Mrs Maxwell, Mr Buttsworth.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Maguire:
That the minutes of the meeting no.7 be confirmed.

2. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

a. Submissions

- (i) Resolved on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Maguire:
That submission 144 remain confidential to the Committee and not be published.
- (ii) Resolved on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Spence:
That submissions 145-146 be published on the Committee's website.
- (iii) Resolved on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Maguire:
That submission 147 be published on the Committee's website, with name suppressed.

b. Public Hearing

- (i) Resolved on the motion of Mr Spence, seconded by Mr Torbay:
That the Committee agrees to conduct two half days of public hearings at Parliament House, on the afternoon of 15 October 2012 and the morning of 26 October 2012.
- (ii) Resolved on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Spence:
That the Committee agrees to invite Central NSW Councils (Centroc) to be a witness to be examined at the public hearings.

c. Proposed visits of inspection

The Committee discussed locations for possible visits of inspection. The Committee agreed that the Committee staff provide a briefing paper outlining potential itineraries for visits of inspections to Committee members at the next Committee meeting.

d. Update on recent media coverage

The Committee noted recent media articles in relation to the inquiry.

3. ***

4. ***

The Committee adjourned at 9.15 am until a time and date to be agreed upon.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 9)

9.01 am, Thursday 20 September 2012

Room 1153, Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Maguire, Mr Spence and Mr Torbay.

Apologies

An apology was received from Ms Burney.

Officers in attendance

Ms Minnican, Ms Simpson, Mr Buttsworth, Mr Tyler and Ms Gallagher.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Maguire:

That the minutes of the meeting no.8 be confirmed.

2. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

Proposed visits of inspection

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Spence:

That the Committee undertake a visit of inspection to Cooma on 3 December 2012.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Spence, seconded by Mr Torbay:

That the Committee undertake visits of inspection to Bathurst and Tamworth during the week beginning 4 February 2013.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Spence:

That the Chair seek approval from the Speaker for funding for Committee members and staff to visit Cooma, Bathurst and Tamworth, to consult with relevant local stakeholders and obtain further information on issues relevant to the inquiry into inter-regional public transport.

The Committee agreed that the secretariat would make logistic arrangements for the visits, in consultation with members' electorate offices, with arrangements to be finalised during a future meeting of the Committee.

3. ***

The meeting concluded and the Committee adjourned at 9.15 am until a time and date to be agreed upon.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 10)

11.45 am, Monday 15 October 2012
Jubilee Room, Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Maguire, Mr Spence and Mr Torbay.

Apologies

An apology was received from Ms Burney.

Officers in attendance

Ms Simpson, Mr Buttsworth, Mr Tyler, Ms Whight and Ms Yeoh.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Spence, seconded by Mr Torbay:

That the minutes of the meeting no.9 be confirmed.

2. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

Incoming correspondence

The Committee noted incoming correspondence from Anna Bardsley, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia.

The Committee noted that Infrastructure Partnerships Australia was invited to appear at the hearing but will not be appearing, as they have no suitable representative available on either 15 October or 26 October.

Publication orders

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Spence:

That the Committee publish the transcript of evidence for the public hearing, and any tabled documents, which are not confidential, once any corrections for inaccuracy have been made.

Admission of media

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Spence, seconded by Mr Maguire:

That the Committee authorises the audio-visual recording, photography and broadcasting of the public hearing on 15 October 2012 in accordance with the guidelines for coverage of proceedings for parliamentary committees.

Return date for answers to questions on notice

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Spence:

That the Committee notes that return date for answers to questions on notice is to be 14 days from the date sent by the Committee secretary for the duration of the inquiry.

3. Public Hearing

Members noted the draft questions without notice, as circulated.

The public and media were admitted at 12.00 pm. The Chair opened the hearing and made a short opening address.

Mr Les Wielinga, Director-General, Transport for NSW, was affirmed and examined.

The witness agreed to take further questions from the committee on notice.

Evidence completed, Mr Wielinga withdrew.

Mr Matthew Coates, Acting General Manager, CountryLink, was affirmed and examined.

The witness agreed to take further questions from the committee on notice.

Evidence completed, Mr Coates withdrew.

The Committee adjourned at 1.32 pm until 2.34 pm.

Mr Colin Henson, National Chair, Transport Planning Chapter, Planning Institute Australia, was affirmed and examined.

The witness agreed to take further questions from the committee on notice.

Evidence completed, Mr Henson withdrew.

Mr Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, and Mr Karim Hussain, Chair, Long Distance Tourist and Charter Committee, BusNSW were affirmed and examined.

The witnesses agreed to take further questions from the committee on notice.

Evidence completed, Mr Mellish and Mr Hussain withdrew.

As the Hearing was concluded, the public and media withdrew.

Acceptance of documents

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Spence:

That the Committee accepts and publishes the document provided by Les Wielinga, Transport for NSW at the hearing on 15 October 2012.

Non-appearing witness

The Committee noted that Ms Sandra Chipchase, Destination NSW did not appear at the hearing.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Spence:

That the Committee invites Sandra Chipchase, Destination NSW to appear at the hearing on 26 October 2012.

Transcript

The Committee noted that the transcript will be circulated for correction and that Members will return any corrections and any additional questions on notice to Committee staff within 7 days or receipt of transcript.

4. ***

The meeting concluded and the Committee adjourned at 3.57 pm until Friday 26 October 2012.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 11)

8.45 am, Friday 26 October 2012
Jubilee Room, Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Maguire, Mr Spence and Mr Torbay.

Apologies

An apology was received from Ms Burney.

Officers in attendance

Ms Simpson, Mr Buttsworth, Mr Tyler, and Ms Yeoh.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Maguire:

That the minutes of the meeting no.10 be confirmed.

2. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

Proposed visit of inspection

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Maguire:

That the Committee undertake a visit of inspection to the Jindabyne area on Monday 3 December 2012.

The Committee noted that the Speaker had approved funding for Committee members and one staff member to visit Cooma/Jindabyne, Bathurst and Tamworth, to consult with relevant local stakeholders and obtain further information in relation to the inquiry into inter-regional transport.

IPART briefing note

The Committee noted that a briefing note in relation to the draft IPART report and determination, *Review of Rural and Regional Bus Service*, had been prepared by the Committee secretariat and circulated to Committee members.

Publication orders

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Maguire:

That the Committee publish the transcript of evidence for the public hearing on 26 October 2012, once any corrections for inaccuracy have been made.

Admission of media

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Maguire:

That the Committee authorises the audio-visual recording, photography and broadcasting of the public hearing on 26 October 2012 in accordance with the guidelines for coverage of proceedings for parliamentary committees.

Return date for answers to questions on notice

The Committee noted that the return date for answers to questions on notice is to be 14 days from the date sent by the Committee secretariat for the duration of the inquiry.

3. General business

The Committee agreed that a media release outlining the Committee's progress made, to date, in relation to the inquiry into inter-regional transport, be prepared by the Committee secretariat and distributed to Committee members for circulation.

4. Public Hearing

Members noted the draft questions without notice, as circulated.

The public and media were admitted at 9.00 am. The Chair opened the hearing and made a short opening address.

Mr Steven Green, Advisor Transport and Infrastructure, and Mr Marco Argolo, Special Projects Engineer, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, affirmed and examined.

Mr Green made a brief opening statement.

The Chair commenced questioning the witnesses, followed by other members of the Committee.

The witnesses agreed to provide a written reply to any further questions the Committee might have.

Evidence concluded, the Chair thanked the witnesses for their attendance, the witnesses withdrew.

Councillor Phyllis Miller OAM, Chair, Mr Garry Styles, Deputy Chair and General Manager, and Ms Jennifer Bennett, Executive Officer, Central New South Wales Organisation of Councils, affirmed and examined.

Cr Miller and Mr Styles made brief opening statements.

The Chair commenced questioning the witnesses, followed by other members of the Committee.

The witnesses agreed to provide a written reply to any further questions the Committee might have.

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Evidence concluded, the Chair thanked the witnesses for their attendance, the witnesses withdrew.

Ms Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination New South Wales, affirmed and examined.

Ms Chipchase made a brief opening statement.

The Chair commenced questioning the witness, followed by other members of the Committee.

The witness agreed to provide a written reply to any further questions the Committee might have.

Evidence concluded, the Chair thanked the witness for her attendance, the witness withdrew.

The Committee adjourned at 11.02 am until 11.32 am.

Mr Randall Walker, Chairman, Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, affirmed and examined.

Mr Walker made a brief opening statement.

The Chair commenced questioning the witness, followed by other members of the Committee.

The witness agreed to provide a written reply to any further questions the Committee might have.

Evidence concluded, the Chair thanked the witness for his attendance, the witness withdrew.

Ms Ka Ki Ng, Senior Policy Officer, New South Wales Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., affirmed and examined.

Ms Ng made a brief opening statement.

The Chair commenced questioning the witness, followed by other members of the Committee.

The witness agreed to provide a written reply to any further questions the Committee might have.

Evidence concluded, the Chair thanked the witness for her attendance, the witness withdrew.

Ms Penny Nelson, Chair, New South Wales Policy Advisory Group, National Seniors Australia, affirmed and examined.

Ms Nelson made a brief opening statement.

The Chair commenced questioning the witness, followed by other members of the Committee.

The witness agreed to provide a written reply to any further questions the Committee might have.

Evidence concluded, the Chair thanked the witness for her attendance, the witness withdrew.

Ms Jordana Goodman, Policy Officer, Physical Disability Council of NSW, affirmed and examined.

Ms Goodman made a brief opening statement.

The Chair commenced questioning the witness, followed by other members of the Committee.

The witness agreed to take a question on notice and agreed to provide a written reply to any further questions the Committee might have.

Evidence concluded, the Chair thanked the witness for her attendance, the witness withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 1.12 pm.

Acceptance of documents

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Spence:

That the Committee accept and publish the documents provided by Mr Marco Argolo, Special Projects Engineer, from Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils; Mr Randall Walker, Chairman, Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism; Ms Penny Nelson, Chair, New South Wales Policy Advisory Group, National Seniors Australia; and Ms Ka Ki Ng, Senior Policy Officer, New South Wales Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc., at the hearing on 26 October 2012.

The Committee adjourned at 1.17 pm until a time and date to be agreed upon.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 12)

8.45 am, Thursday 15 November 2012
Room 1136, Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Maguire, Mr Spence and Mr Torbay.

Apologies

An apology was received from Ms Burney.

Officers in attendance

Mr Nordin, Mr Buttsworth and Mr Tyler.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Torbay:

That the minutes of the meeting no.11 be confirmed.

2. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

Submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Torbay:

That submissions 148 and 149 be accepted and published on the Committee's website.

Answers to questions on notice

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Maguire:

That the Committee accept the responses to questions taken on notice from BusNSW, Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils and Transport for NSW and publish them on the Committee's website.

Visit of inspection

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Torbay:

That the Committee appoint a Sub-committee consisting of Mr Gee and Mr Spence to undertake a visit of inspection to the Snowy Mountains region on 3 December 2012.

Media release

The Committee considered a draft media release outlining the Committee's progress made, to date, in relation to the inquiry into inter-regional public transport. The Committee agreed to prepare two media releases, one addressing the Committee's progress in relation to the inquiry, and the other promoting the upcoming visits of inspection to the Snowy Mountains region, Bathurst and Tamworth; and for the media releases to be circulated to Members for comment.

3. ***

The meeting concluded and the Committee adjourned at 8.55 am until a time and date to be agreed upon.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 13 – meeting as a Sub-committee)

10.00 am, Monday 3 December 2012

Conference room, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Jindabyne

Members Present

Mr Gee (Chair) and Mr Spence.

Officer in attendance

Ms Simpson.

1. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

Private briefings

The Sub-committee met with the following local representatives:

- Ms Carole Morris, President, Country Women's Association of NSW (Jindabyne Branch)
- Mrs Dale Whitfield, Secretary, Country Women's Association of NSW (Jindabyne Branch)
- Mr Peter Bird, Destination Jindabyne
- Ms Joan Bird, Destination Jindabyne
- Mr Murray Blackburn-Smith, Director Community and Environmental Services, Snowy River Shire Council
- Mr John McIntyre, Thredbo Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Thredbo
- Mr Peter Sheppard, Tourism Snowy Mountains
- Cr Dean Lynch, Mayor, Cooma Monaro Shire Council
- Cr Martin Hughes, Cooma Monaro Shire Council
- Mr John Vucic, General Manager, Cooma Monaro Shire Council.

Briefings concluded, the Sub-committee adjourned at 3.00 pm.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 14)

9.00 am, Tuesday 5 February 2013
Room 1254, Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Gee (Chair) and Mr Maguire, and, via teleconference, Mr Torbay.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms Burney and Mr Spence.

Officers in attendance

Ms Simpson and Mr Tyler.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Torbay, seconded by Mr Maguire:

That the minutes of the meeting no.12 and meeting no. 13 be confirmed.

2. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

Responses to additional questions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Torbay:

That the Committee accept the responses to additional questions from Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism; CountryLink; Destination NSW; Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (CCROC); Transport for NSW; and Central NSW Councils (CENTROC), and publish them on the Committee's website.

Visits of inspection

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Torbay:

That, in accordance with the resolution passed 20 September 2012, Minutes no. 9, Item 2, the Committee appoint a Sub-committee consisting of Mr Gee, Mr Maguire and Mr Torbay to undertake visits of inspection to Bathurst and Tamworth on 6 and 7 February 2013, and that a quorum consist of two Sub-committee Members.

Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence received from Cooma-Monaro Shire Council, dated 20 December 2012; and Mr John Hollis, Chair, Rail Action Bathurst, dated 1 February 2013.

Supplementary submission

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Torbay:

That the correspondence from Mr John Hollis, Chair, Rail Action Bathurst, dated 1 February 2013, be accepted as a supplementary submission to submission 84 from Rail Action Bathurst and published on the Committee's website.

CountryLink statistics

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Torbay:

That the Committee write to CountryLink to obtain official statistics in relation to recent passenger numbers for the North Western train line between Sydney and Tamworth, and for the Western Train line between Sydney and Bathurst.

3. ***

The meeting concluded and the Committee adjourned at 9.10 am until a time and date to be agreed upon.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 15 meeting as a sub-committee)

9.00 am, Wednesday 6 February 2013
Bathurst Business Centre, Bathurst

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair) and Mr Maguire

Officer in attendance

Ms Simpson

1. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

Private briefings

The sub-committee met with the following individuals:

- Mr Angus Edwards, Bathurst Business Chamber

- Mr Grant Baker, Director Infrastructure Services, Blaney Shire Council
- Mr John Mason, President, Mr Laurie Williams, Committee Member and Mr Randall Edwards, Member, Millthorpe Village Committee
- Mr Douglas Brooks
- Cr Ron Penny, Mayor, and Ms Yvonne Glasson, Resident, Forbes Shire
- Mr Mike Sweeney, Mudgee Rail Group
- Mr Edmund Ogden, General Manager and Mr Peter Ogden, Depot Manager, Ogden's Coaches

Briefings concluded, the sub-committee adjourned at 12.30 pm until Wednesday 7 February 2013.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 16)

9.00 am, Thursday 7 February 2013
Long Tan Room, Wests' Diggers Club, Tamworth

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Maguire and Mr Torbay

Officer in attendance

Ms Simpson

1. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

Private briefings

The committee met with the following individuals:

- Dr Donald Martin, Friends of the Northern Railway
- Cr Col Murray, Chair, Cr Scott Schmutter and Mr Stephen Bartlett, Executive Officer, Namoi Councils

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That the Committee admit the media and authorise sound and visual recording of the briefing with the Member for Tamworth and local mayors.

The briefings continued and the committee met with the following individuals:

- Mr Kevin Anderson MP, Member for Tamworth,
- Cr Col Murray, Mayor and Mr Paul Bennett, General Manager, Tamworth Regional Council
- Cr Gai Swain, Deputy Mayor, Gunnedah Shire Council
- Mr Robert Hunt, General Manager and Mr Greg Tory, Director, Works, Liverpool Plains Shire Council

The media withdrew.

The briefings continued and the committee met with the following individuals:

- Cr Danielle Mulholland and Mr Malcolm Wallis, Tourism Development Officer, Kyogle Shire Council
- Ms Penny Jobling, Tourism Director, Narrabri Shire Council
- Ms Kate Geary, and Ms Linda Worth, Northern Rivers Social Development Committee
- Ms Katrina Luckie, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers
- Mr Tom Fisher, Sustainable Living Armidale
- Mr Tim Coates, President and Ms Marjolyn Thomas, Executive Officer, Tamworth Business Chamber

Briefings concluded, the sub-committee adjourned at 3.15 pm, *sine die*.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 17)

12.00 noon, Tuesday 2 April 2013
Room 1254, Parliament House

Members present

Mr Maguire, and, via teleconference, Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Spence (Deputy Chair), Mr Furolo and Mr Piper.

Apologies

None.

Officers in attendance

Ms Simpson and Mr Tyler.

1. Change in Committee membership

The Committee noted the appointment of new members, Mr Robert Furolo, replacing Ms Burney (discharged), and Mr Gregory Piper, replacing Mr Torbay (resigned), and welcomed the new members to the Committee.

2. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire:

That the minutes of the meeting no. 14, meeting no. 15 and meeting no. 16 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

(a) Resolved, on the motion of Mr Piper:

That the Committee note the correspondence from Mr John Williams MP in relation to a proposed public hearing for the inquiry into inter-regional public transport in Broken Hill; and that the Chair write to Mr Williams advising him that the Committee will not be

undertaking further public hearings for the inquiry as it is at report drafting stage, but that it would accept a submission from him or from other area stakeholders.

The Committee noted that, to date, it had received submissions from Broken Hill City Council and one other stakeholder from the Broken Hill area.

(b) ***

4. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

Responses to additional questions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire:

That the Committee accept the responses to additional questions from BusNSW, Planning Institute of Australia and Physical Disability Council of NSW, and publish them on the Committee's website.

Visits of inspection – documents tendered

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire:

That the Committee accept documents tendered during visits of inspection to Bathurst and Tamworth on 6 and 7 February 2013 from Millthorpe Village Committee, Mudgee Rail Group, Gunnedah Shire Council, Kyogle Council and Liverpool Plains Shire Council, and publish them on the Committee's website.

Visits of inspection – media

The Committee noted media items in relation to visits of inspection to Bathurst and Tamworth on 6 and 7 February 2013.

5. ***

6. Adjournment

The meeting concluded and the Committee adjourned at 12.22 pm *sine die*.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 18)

9.00 am, Thursday 9 May 2013
Room 1136, Parliament House

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Spence (Deputy Chair), Mr Furolo, Mr Maguire and Mr Piper.

Staff in attendance: Ms Simpson and Mr Tyler.

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.04 am.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Furolo, seconded by Mr Spence:

That the minutes of the meeting no. 17 be confirmed.

2. Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

Submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Furolo, seconded by Mr Spence:

- (a) That supplementary submission 81a be accepted and published on the Committee's website; and
- (b) That submissions 150 and 151 be accepted and published on the Committee's website with individual names suppressed.

CountryLink passenger/train statistics

The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Matthew Coates, General Manager, CountryLink, dated 19 April 2013, in relation to the Committee's request for passenger/train statistics, which will be considered in the Committee's final report.

3. ***

4. Adjournment

The meeting concluded and the Committee adjourned at 9.20 am until Wednesday 22 May 2013 at 9.00 am.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (no. 20)

9.00 am, Wednesday 28 August 2013
Room 1254, Parliament House

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Spence (Deputy Chair), Mr Furolo, Mr Maguire and Mr Piper.

Staff in attendance: Rachel Simpson, Rohan Tyler and James Newton.

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.00 am.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Piper: That draft minutes no. 19 be confirmed.

2. ***

3. ***

4. ***

5. ***

Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

6. Private meeting with Mr Rob Mason, CEO, NSW Trains

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Piper, seconded by Mr Spence: That the Committee invite Mr Rob Mason, CEO, NSW Trains, to meet with the Committee on Wednesday 11 September 2013 at 9.30 am, for a discussion in relation to the report of the inquiry into inter-regional public transport.

7. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 9.14 am until Wednesday 11 September 2013 at 9.30 am.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (No. 21)

4.00 pm, Tuesday 10 September 2013
Room 1153, Parliament House

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Furolo, Mr Maguire and Mr Piper.

Staff in attendance: Rachel Simpson and James Newton.

The Chair opened the meeting at 4.00 pm.

1. Membership

The Chair reported that Mr Spence had been discharged from the Committee and Mr Marshall had been appointed in his place.

2. Apologies

Mr Marshall.

3. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Furolo: That draft minutes No. 20 be confirmed.

Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

4. Briefing from NSW Trains

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Furolo: That Mr Rob Mason (CEO, NSW Trains), Mr Andy Thomas (Director, Business Development, NSW Trains) and Mr Kieron Ritchard (Director, Customer Service Delivery, NSW Trains) join the meeting for a briefing on NSW TrainLink's operations.

Discussion concluded, the participants withdrew.

5. Briefing note – Safety of rail operations on the interstate rail line between Melbourne and Sydney

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Furolo: That Committee staff prepare a briefing note on the Australian Transport Safety Bureau's report into the safety of rail operations on the interstate rail line between Melbourne and Sydney.

6. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 4.55 pm until Monday 16 September 2013 at 12.00 noon.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (No. 23)

9.30 am, Wednesday 23 October 2013
Room 1254, Parliament House

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Furolo, Mr Maguire, Mr Marshall and Mr Piper.

Staff in attendance: Bjarne Nordin and Rohan Tyler.

The Chair commenced the meeting at 9.30 am.

1. Election of Deputy Chair

The Chair reported that there was a vacancy in the office of Deputy Chair due to Mr Spence being discharged from the Committee on 10 September 2013.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Piper, seconded by Mr Maguire: That Mr Marshall be elected Deputy Chair of the Committee.

2. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Piper, seconded by Mr Furolo: That draft minutes No. 21 and draft minutes No. 22 be confirmed.

3. ***

4. ***

5. ***

Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

6. Briefing note – Safety of rail operations on the interstate rail line between Melbourne and Sydney

The Committee noted a briefing note prepared by Committee staff on the safety of rail operations on the interstate rail line between Melbourne and Sydney.

7. Correspondence

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Piper: That the Committee write to the Australian Rail Track Corporation to ascertain whether it has considered actions to duplicate the rail track between Melbourne and Sydney in the interests of track maintenance, safety, and faster and more frequent train services.

8. Meeting with NSW TrainLink staff

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Piper, seconded by Mr Marshall: That the Committee invites up to three managers of NSW TrainLink railway stations to meet with the Committee to consult on measures that could be put in place to improve inter-regional public transport.

9. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 10.01 am until Monday 18 November 2013.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (No. 24)

8.50 am, Monday 18 November 2013
Macquarie Room, Parliament House

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Marshall (Deputy Chair), Mr Furolo, Mr Maguire and Mr Piper.

Staff in attendance: Rohan Tyler, James Newton and Millie Yeoh

The Chair commenced the meeting at 8.54 am.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall, seconded by Mr Piper: That draft minutes No. 23 be confirmed.

Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

2. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following item of correspondence sent:

- 4 November 2013 from the Chair to Mr John Fullerton, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd, regarding the interstate rail line between Melbourne and Sydney.

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence received:

- 25 October 2013 from Mr Randall Edwards, Millthorpe Village Committee, to the Minister for Transport (copied to the Committee) regarding a stop on request train service for Millthorpe.
- 11 November 2013 from Mr John Fullerton, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd, to the Chair in response to the Committee's correspondence regarding the interstate rail line between Melbourne and Sydney.

3. ***

4. ***

5. ***

6. ***

7. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 12.13 pm, *sine die*.

Minutes of proceedings of the State and Regional Development Committee (No. 25)

9.00 am, Thursday 6 March 2014
Room 1136, Parliament House

Members present

Mr Gee (Chair), Mr Marshall (Deputy Chair), Mr Maguire and Mr Piper.

Staff in attendance: Elaine Schofield, Rohan Tyler, Emma Wood and James Newton.

The Chair commenced the meeting at 9.05 am.

1. Apologies

An apology was received from Mr Furolo.

2. Confirmation of minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Piper: That draft minutes No. 24 be confirmed.

3. ***

4. ***

Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

5. Consideration of the Chair's draft report

The Chair tabled his draft report, which having been previously circulated, was taken as being read.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Marshall: That the Committee consider the Chair's draft report recommendations first, then chapter by chapter.

Recommendation 1

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall, seconded by Mr Piper: That Recommendation 1 be adopted.

Recommendation 2

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 2 be adopted.

Recommendation 3

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 3 be adopted.

Recommendation 4

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 4 be adopted.

Recommendation 5

"The Committee recommends that Transport for NSW conducts a review of Regional Transport Coordinators to examine the expansion of their role to include:

- *assessing public transport needs and service gaps in their target regions*
- *developing appropriate strategies to meet the needs identified and*
- *facilitating liaison and consultation between local governments and Transport for NSW in relation to public transport issues."*

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 5 be amended by omitting the words *"the expansion of their role to include:"* and inserting instead *"their role, including, but not limited to their role in the following:"*.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 5, as amended, be adopted.

Recommendation 6

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 6 be adopted.

Recommendation 7

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 7 be adopted.

Recommendation 8

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 8 be adopted.

Recommendation 9

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 9 be adopted.

Recommendation 10

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 10 be adopted.

Recommendation 11

“The Committee recommends that the NSW Government (subject to budgetary constraints):

- *considers the provision of funding for projects to upgrade the existing track network to enable passenger trains to travel at faster speeds and*
- *obtains advice from Transport for NSW to identify the priority areas requiring immediate action.”*

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 11 be amended by omitting the word “*constraints*” and inserting instead “*considerations*”; inserting the words “*with the Australian Rail Track Corporation*” following the word “*funding*”; and inserting the words “*and the Australian Rail Track Corporation*” following the word “*NSW*”.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 11, as amended, be adopted.

Recommendation 12

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 12 be adopted.

Recommendation 13

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 13 be adopted.

Recommendation 14

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 14 be adopted.

Recommendation 15

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 15 be adopted.

Recommendation 16

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 16 be adopted.

Recommendation 17

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 17 be adopted.

Recommendation 18

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 18 be adopted.

Recommendation 19

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 19 be adopted.

Recommendation 20

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Piper: That Recommendation 20 be adopted.

Recommendation 21

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 21 be adopted.

Recommendation 22

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 22 be adopted.

Recommendation 23

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 23 be adopted.

Recommendation 24

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 24 be adopted.

Recommendation 25

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 25 be adopted.

Recommendation 26

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Piper: That Recommendation 26 be adopted.

Recommendation 27

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Piper: That Recommendation 27 be adopted.

Recommendation 28

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Maguire: That Recommendation 28 be adopted.

Recommendation 29

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 29 be adopted.

Recommendation 30

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 30 be adopted.

Recommendation 31

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That Recommendation 31 be adopted.

Executive summary

Executive summary read.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Marshall, seconded by Mr Maguire: That the executive summary be adopted.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 read.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Marshall, seconded by Mr Maguire: That Chapter 1 be adopted.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 read.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Marshall, seconded by Mr Maguire: That Chapter 2 be adopted.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 read.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Marshall, seconded by Mr Maguire: That Chapter 3 be adopted.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 read.

Paragraph 4.63

“Other submissions focused on the need for improved express services to reduce travel times for travelling between regions. For example, Mrs Yvonne Glasson advocated a reduction in bus/rail travel times between the Central West of NSW and Sydney.”

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Marshall: That paragraph 4.63 be amended by adding the words *“Circuitous coach routes from the Forbes area was a particular issue highlighted by Mrs Glasson.”*.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Marshall, seconded by Mr Maguire: That Chapter 4, as amended, be adopted.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 read.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Marshall, seconded by Mr Maguire: That Chapter 5 be adopted.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 read.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Marshall, seconded by Mr Maguire: That Chapter 6 be adopted.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 read.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Marshall, seconded by Mr Maguire: That Chapter 7 be adopted.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Maguire, seconded by Mr Marshall:

- That the draft report, as amended, be the report of the Committee, signed by the Chair and presented to the House.
- The Chair and secretariat be permitted to correct stylistic, typographical and grammatical errors.
- Once tabled, the report be posted on the Committee's website.

6. ***

7. ***

8. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 9.45 am until Monday 24 March 2014.

STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
EXTRACTS FROM MINUTES

Appendix Five – Stakeholder service and timetabling issues

This appendix details stakeholders' individual service and timetabling issues that were detailed in submissions to the inquiry and documents presented to the Committee during visits of inspection.

Summary of stakeholder service and timetabling issues (by region)

Central Coast

Stakeholders from the Central Coast called for a Sydney to Gosford express train service, possibly including Tuggerah and Ourimbah.

Central Tablelands

Stakeholders from the Central Tablelands called for the following:

- a Bathurst to Sydney commuter train service
- improved Orange to Sydney/Canberra services
- a review of timetabling and improved connectivity from smaller towns (e.g. Blayney, Boorowa and Millthorpe) to regional centres (e.g. Bathurst, Orange and Lithgow) and
- a resumption of passenger train services to Mudgee.

Central West

Stakeholders from the Central West called for the following:

- a review of timetabling and more frequent Dubbo to Sydney train and bus services and
- improved connectivity from smaller towns (e.g. Narromine, Cootamundra and Condobolin) to Dubbo.

Hunter

Stakeholders from the Hunter called for improved and more frequent train and bus services for:

- Newcastle
- Maitland
- Lake Macquarie
- Singleton
- Raymond Terrace
- Scone

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- Branxton
- Greta and
- Morrisset.

Illawarra

Stakeholders from the Illawarra called for an extension of current services into the region, in particular, south of Wollongong.

Liverpool Plains

Stakeholders from the Liverpool Plains called for a Tamworth to Newcastle day return train service.

Northern Tablelands

Stakeholders from the Northern Tablelands called for improved connectivity between towns (e.g. Moree, Grafton) and larger regional centres (e.g. Coffs Harbour, Tamworth and Dubbo).

North Coast

A stakeholder from the North Coast called for more frequent services from Coffs Harbour to Tamworth.

Northern Rivers

Stakeholders from the Northern Rivers called for the following:

- a resumption of the Casino to Murwillumbah train service and
- a twice daily border crossing train service between NSW and South East Queensland that will service Northern Rivers commuters.

North West

A stakeholder from the North West called for additional services into Narrabri and a daily return train service to Sydney.

Riverina

Stakeholders from the Riverina called for the following:

- improved train and bus services into Albury and
- an improved service from Griffith to Albury/Sydney.

Snowy River

Stakeholders from the Snowy River region called for the following:

- an expansion of CountryLink services past Cooma and into Jindabyne and
- improved bus connectivity throughout the region (e.g. linking Canberra, Thredbo, Cooma, Jindabyne etc.).

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South Coast

Stakeholders from the South Coast called for the following:

- an improved and more frequent Canberra to Sydney train service and
- improved bus connectivity throughout the region (e.g. linking towns between Wollongong and Eden etc.).

South West Slopes

Stakeholders from the South West Slopes called for twice-weekly bus services to Boorowa, Murringo, Temora, Young, Cootamundra, Yass and Canberra.

Southern Tablelands

Stakeholders from the Southern Tablelands called for the following:

- a commuter train service from Canberra/Queanbeyan to Goulburn; and
- more frequent Goulburn to Sydney express trains.

Sydney

Stakeholders from Sydney and other areas called for trains to stop at Sydney Airport.

Far West

Stakeholders from the Far West called for additional Sydney to Broken Hill train services.

Table – Stakeholder service and timetabling issues (by region)

Region/Stakeholder	Issue	Reference
Central Coast		
Ms Rowena Marchant	Called for the Sydney to Gosford to Tuggerah express train service to also stop at Ourimbah.	Submission 2, pp 1-2.
Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils	Called for a Gosford to Sydney express train service, with limited stops.	Submission 69, p 8.
Central Tablelands		
Ms Helen Weal	Called for a daily Bathurst to Sydney train service.	Submission 1, p 1.
Ms Kay Gibbs	Called for a daily Bathurst to Sydney train service.	Submission 4, p 1.
Mrs Jessie Legge	Called for a direct Orange to Canberra bus service.	Submission 14, p 1.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for improved bus services from Coonabarabran to nearby town centres.	Submission 16, p 1.
Ogdens Coaches	Called for a more frequent train/bus shuttle service between Orange, Bathurst and Lithgow.	Submission 24, p 2.
<i>Confidential</i>	Supported the existing Bathurst to Sydney train service, though expressed concerns regarding conditions if a morning XPT train was added.	Submission 36, p 1.
Bathurst Regional Council	Called for a daily Bathurst to Sydney train service, with minimal (a maximum of 3) stops each way.	Submission 42, pp 1-2.
Mrs M P Eaton	Called for a review of Orange to Sydney train timetabling.	Submission 50, p 1.
Mrs G H Alcock	Called for an Orange to Sydney bus service.	Submission 55, p 1.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for a regular Bathurst to Sydney train service.	Submission 66, p 1.

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Region/Stakeholder	Issue	Reference
Central NSW Councils	Submitted that there is a need for daily train services from Canberra, Sydney and the Blue Mountains into the region. Called for more frequent train services to Orange. Called for a bus link to Boorowa, and from small towns into regional centres (Lithgow, Bathurst and Orange). Called for train services into Bathurst.	Submission 68, pp 2-5.
Mr Bob Manning	Called for train instead of bus services for Bathurst to Lithgow and Cowra to Lithgow.	Submission 72, p 1.
Rail Action Bathurst	Called for a daily Bathurst to Sydney express train service.	Submission 84, p 3.
Bathurst Business Chamber	Called for a daily return (commuter) train service between Sydney and Bathurst.	Submission 129, p 4.
Mr Greg Tatchell	Called for an Orange to Blayney commuter service.	Submission 138, p 1.
Blayney Shire Council	Submitted that train services between Sydney and Dubbo, via Blayney, are poorly utilised due to inconvenient timetabling and the absence of a commuter day service. Called for a commuter day train service between Orange and Bathurst, via Blayney, possibly extending to Lithgow and on to Sydney.	Submission 141, pp 2-3.
Millthorpe Village Committee Inc.	Called for the establishment of a 'stop on request' train service for Millthorpe.	Document presented at Bathurst site visit on 6 February 2013, pp 2-5.
Mudgee Rail Group	Called for the resumption of passenger train services to Mudgee.	Document presented at Bathurst site visit on 6 February 2013, pp 1-5.
Central West		
Ms Rowena Marchant	Called for additional Dubbo to Sydney bus services.	Submission 2, p 1.
Ms Loretta Marks	Called for a Wellington to Dubbo bus/train service.	Submission 3, p 1.
Narromine Shire Council	Called for more frequent bus services to travel through Narromine. Called the resumption of passenger train services through Narromine.	Submission 12, p 1.
Mr John and Mrs Gayl Schmich	Called for more frequent Dubbo to Sydney train services.	Submission 22, p 1.
Ogdens Coaches	Called for a Dubbo to Tamworth service.	Submission 24, p 2.
Mid-Western Regional Council	Called for increased cross-linkages between regional hubs (e.g. Mudgee, Wellington, Dubbo and Orange) and for more frequent services to Sydney.	Submission 32, p 1.
Mr Christopher Henning	Called for increased to Sydney to Orange (and other 'hubs') train services.	Submission 39, p 1.
Mr Eric Tierney	Called for an overnight train service from Dubbo to Sydney at the end of each weekend.	Submission 62, p 1.
Bland Shire Council	Called for retention of all services to the region. Called for a review of waiting times at Cootamundra train station.	Submission 70, p 2.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for more frequent Dubbo to Cootamundra bus services. Called for a twice daily Dubbo to Sydney train service.	Submission 115, pp 6-8.
Ms Yvonne Glasson	Called for a more direct and timely service from Forbes to Lithgow (and then on to Sydney). Called for more frequent bus services to Condobolin.	Submission 140, p 1.
Hunter		
Mr William Graham	Called for improvements to public transport servicing Greta, near Cessnock.	Submission 15, p 1.
Mrs G Barratt	Called for improvements to the Branxton to Singleton/Maitland bus service.	Submission 19, p 1.
Ms Lesley Radford	Called for improvements to bus and train services in the Branxton area.	Submission 20, pp 1-4.
Mr Peter and Mrs Diane Macfarlane	Called for more frequent train services to Branxton (e.g. that complement business hours).	Submission 27, p 1.
Scone Neighbourhood Centre	Called for a Scone to Sydney daily return train service and for the service to Muswellbrook to be extended to Scone.	Submission 33, p 1.

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Region/Stakeholder	Issue	Reference
Mr Greg Piper MP	Called for the existing bus service to Fassifern to be replaced by a service stopping at Morisset.	Submission 46, pp 1-2.
Port Stephens Council	Submitted that the existing bus stop at Raymond Terrace is inadequate and has only minimal integration with local services. Submitted that additional Pacific Highway bus stops could improve access to services for residents in the area.	Submission 67, pp 1-2.
Two More Trains for Singleton	Called for additional train services to Maitland, Singleton and Newcastle.	Submission 71, p 1.
Upper Hunter Shire Council	Submitted that two daily Scone to Sydney train services are required.	Submission 79, p 1.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Submitted that the train service to Newcastle should be retained.	Submission 115, p 9.
Cessnock City Council	Submitted that track to Cessnock is currently utilised for coal freight, and should be reinstated for passenger services.	Submission 135, p 3.
Lake Macquarie City Council	CountryLink train services in the Lake Macquarie region should be relocated from Fassifern Station to Broadmeadow Station, with the Fassifern stop being relocated to Morisset.	Submission 143, pp 1-3.
Illawarra		
Shoalhaven City Council	Called for a train/bus service connecting Wollongong and Nowra. Called for a service from Wollongong/Nowra to Queanbeyan/Canberra.	Submission 37, p 2.
Illawarra Forum Inc.	Called for an extension of train services into the southern Shoalhaven region (e.g. Ulladulla). Called for increased Illawarra to Sydney commuter train services.	Submission 114, pp 2-4.
Wollongong City Council	Called for more frequent bus services to Wollongong.	Submission 119, pp 1-2.
Liverpool Plains		
Liverpool Plains Shire Council	Called for a Tamworth to Newcastle day return train service.	Document presented at Tamworth site visit on 7 February 2013, pp 2-6.
Gunnedah Shire Council	Called for a Tamworth to Newcastle day return train service.	Document presented at Tamworth site visit on 7 February 2013, pp 1-2.
Northern Tablelands		
Mrs Elsie Beckhouse	Called for the Moree to Grafton bus service to stop at Coffs Harbour.	Submission 26, pp 1-4.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for more frequent Tamworth to Dubbo services and Grafton to Moree bus services.	Submission 115, pp 6-9.
North Coast		
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for more frequent services from Coffs Harbour to Tamworth.	Submission 115, pp 6-8.
Northern Rivers		
Mrs J Hawken	Called for the resumption of the Casino to Murwillumbah train service.	Submission 8, p 1.
Mr Keith Smith	Called for the resumption of the Casino to Murwillumbah train service.	Submission 13, p 1.
Sustain Transport	Called for a twice daily border crossing train service between NSW and SE QLD to service Northern Rivers commuters. Called for the resumption of the Casino to Murwillumbah train service. Called for morning connections with Brisbane to Grafton train services.	Submission 48, pp 3-9.
Northern Rivers Social Development Council	Called for the resumption of the Casino to Murwillumbah train service.	Submission 49, p 2.
Mr Eric Tierney	Called for an overnight train service from Armidale to Sydney at the end of each weekend.	Submission 62, p 1.
The Friends of the Northern Railway	Called for the extension of the North Coast train service to Lismore, (currently stops 30km short, at Casino). Submitted that the timetabling of the Northern Tablelands Xplorer weekly train service, via Armidale, should be reviewed to better service the area.	Submission 78, p 2.

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Region/Stakeholder	Issue	Reference
Sustainable Living Armidale	Submitted that the Main North line should be utilised to provide a Sydney to Brisbane train service.	Submission 81, pp 1-2.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for the resumption of the Casino to Murwillumbah train service.	Submission 115, p 4.
Kyogle Council	Called for the extension of the Sydney to Casino train service to Brisbane and an adjustment to the timetabling to allow for commuter travel. Called for the resumption of the Casino to Murwillumbah train service.	Submission 132, pp 6-16; and Document presented at Tamworth site visit on 7 February 2013, pp 6-16.
Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils	Called for greater connectivity with SE QLD services.	Submission 133, pp 1-2.
Mr Stephen Miller	Submitted that the QLD rail network should be extended from Robina to Byron Bay or Casino in order to give residents better access through to Sydney.	Submission 139, pp 1-2.
North West		
Narrabri Shire Council	Called for additional services to Narrabri and surrounding areas. Called for a daily return train service from Narrabri to Sydney.	Submission 126, pp 4-6.
Riverina		
Mr Charles Brody	Called for more frequent Sydney to Griffith train services.	Submission 17, pp 1-3.
AlburyCity	Called for improved bus and train services to/from Albury.	Submission 29, pp 2-3.
Mr Eric Tierney	Called for an overnight train service from Griffith to Sydney at the end of each weekend.	Submission 62, p 1.
Mr Bob Manning	Called for a train service instead of a bus service from Griffith to Albury.	Submission 72, p 1.
Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils	Called for improved timetabling and route planning in the region.	Submission 146, pp 1-4.
Snowy River		
Mr Iain McDonald	Called for a Snowy River Shire train service. Called for a Jindabyne and Thredbo service.	Submission 35, pp 1-3.
Snowy Mountains Backpackers	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 40, pp 1-2.
Mr John Whololhan JP	Called for a bus service to Jindabyne that could be extended to Thredbo.	Submission 51, pp 1-2.
Kiama Alpine Club	Called for a bus service to Jindabyne and Thredbo.	Submission 56, p 1.
Thredbo Historical Society	Called for a bus service to Jindabyne and Thredbo.	Submission 58, p 1.
Perisher Ski Resort	Called for the addition of Jindabyne, Perisher and Thredbo to CountryLink's Southern Timetable and a corresponding improvement of network linkages.	Submission 60, p 1-2.
Thredbo Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Thredbo	Called for year-round services from Canberra/Queanbeyan to Jindabyne and Thredbo.	Submission 64, p 1.
Mr Simon Blazey	Called for a Jindabyne/Cooma/Canberra/Sydney service.	Submission 65, p 1.
Mr David Blazey	Called for greater connectivity between the Snowy Mountains region and Cooma and Canberra.	Submission 73, p 1.
Tumut Shire Council	Submitted that there is a long wait for connecting services at Cootamundra train station.	Submission 74, p 1.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for a bus service between Cooma and Jindabyne, incorporating Berridale and Dalgety.	Submission 76, p 1.
Anglican Parish of Berridale and Snowy Mountains	Called for a year-round Canberra to Cooma to Jindabyne service	Submission 85, p 1.
Snowy Mountains Grammar School	Called for a year-round Canberra to Cooma to Jindabyne service	Submission 86, p 1.
Dalgety Chamber of Commerce	Called for a service between Jindabyne, Bombala and Cooma.	Submission 87, p 1.
Perisher Resorts Chamber of Commerce	Called for a year-round Snowy Mountains service.	Submission 88, p 1.
Destination Jindabyne	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 89, pp 1-2.

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Region/Stakeholder	Issue	Reference
Ms Kerry Beer	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 90, pp 1-2.
Mr Peter Beer	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 91, pp 1-2.
Snow Escape Holidays	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 92, pp 1-2.
Mr John Wallis	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 93, pp 1-2.
Ms Jane-Elise Green	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 94, pp 1-2.
G Bennett	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 95, pp 1-2.
Mr Nicholas Elliott	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 96, pp 1-2.
Ms Lisa Linton	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 97, pp 1-2.
JB Interiors	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 98, pp 1-2.
H J Thompson	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 99, pp 1-2.
Mid P Snow Centre Pty Ltd.	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 100, pp 1-2.
Eureka Exchange Pty Ltd	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 101, pp 1-2.
Mr Bradley Hebir	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 102, pp 1-2.
Ms Anne Thompson	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 103, pp 1-2.
Jindabyne Central School Parents and Citizens Association Inc.	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 104, pp 1-2.
NSW Institute of Sport – Winter Sports Program	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 105, pp 1-2.
Tourism Snowy Mountains	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 106, pp 1-2.
The Seer Resort Company	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 107, pp 1-2.
Snowy Hyrdo Ltd	Called for an extension of services past Cooma into Jindabyne and improved bus services into the region.	Submission 109, pp 1-2.
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	Called for a public transport link to nearby centres (Jindabyne, Tumut and Albury, from Canberra and Sydney).	Submission 110, pp 1-2.
Mr Peter Paabo	Called for a bus service past Cooma and into Jindabyne.	Submission 111, pp 1-2.
Snowy River Shire Council	Called for services between Bombala and Canberra be reconfigured to include Jindabyne, via Cooma and Berridale.	Submission 122, pp 9-11.
Country Women’s Association of NSW – Jindabyne Branch	Called for a Jindabyne to Canberra train service. Called for year-round services to all towns in the region.	Submission 137, pp 1-4.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for the restoration of a Canberra to Cooma bus service and a connecting bus service along the South Coast. Called for the Cooma to Canberra bus service to stop at Canberra Airport.	Submission 147, p 1.
YHA Ltd	Submitted that the Snowy Mountains region is not adequately serviced by inter-regional public transport.	Submission 149, pp 1-2.
South Coast		
Mr Victor Isaacs	Called for improvements to the Sydney to Canberra/Queanbeyan train service.	Submission 6, p 1.
Dr John Ward	Called for improvements to the Sydney to Canberra train service.	Submission 10, pp 1-2.
Mr Charles Brody	Called for improvements to the Sydney to Canberra/Queanbeyan train service.	Submission 17, pp 1-2.

STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
STAKEHOLDER SERVICE AND TIMETABLING ISSUES

Region/Stakeholder	Issue	Reference
Mr Ian McGuffickle	Called for a Bega to Batemans Bay (incorporating other South Coast stops) daily bus service.	Submission 21, p 1.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for an improved train/bus service from Bungendore to Canberra.	Submission 23, p 1.
Ms Susan Moore	Called for a service between Cooma and Jindabyne, connecting with the Canberra to Cooma train service.	Submission 41, p 1.
Southern Councils Group	Called for the Wollongong to Eden corridor to be serviced, with connections to Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne train lines. Called for an extension of the South Coast rail line to Nowra CBD.	Submission 112, p 4.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for more frequent Canberra to Nowra services and improved South Coast connection services.	Submission 115, pp 7-8.
Eurobodalla Shire Council	Called for a service to link the Shire to the CountryLink network and fill service gaps not covered by private operators.	Submission 118, pp 2-4.
Bungendore Public Transport Group	Called for more frequent Sydney to Canberra services, including a Sydney Airport connection. Submitted that there is a need for a cross-border (coastal and country NSW and ACT) bus service.	Submission 124, pp 1-4.
Mr Andrew Heslop	Called for an additional daily Sydney to Canberra train service.	Submission 128, pp 1-2.
Mr Stephen Miller	Called for a Sydney to Canberra train service, operating three times daily.	Submission 139, pp 1.
YHA Ltd	Submitted that the South Coast is not adequately serviced by inter-regional public transport.	Submission 149, pp 1-2.
South West Slopes		
Boorowa Council	Called for twice weekly bus stops at Boorowa and Murringo, which could be achieved through a deviation of the existing Queanbeyan to Cootamundra service. Called for a twice weekly service linking Temora, Young, Boorowa, Yass and Canberra.	Submission 45, pp 1-4.
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for more frequent Cootamundra to Canberra services.	Submission 115, pp 6-8.
The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson MP	Called for a twice weekly bus service to Boorowa.	Submission 117, p 1.
Young Shire Council	Called for twice weekly bus stops at Boorowa and Murringo, which could be achieved through a deviation of the existing Queanbeyan to Cootamundra service. Called for a twice weekly service linking Temora, Young, Boorowa, Yass and Canberra.	Submission 121, pp 1-4.
Southern Tablelands		
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	Called for train services to Canberra and Queanbeyan to be improved in order to arrive/depart in line with working hours.	Submission 59, pp 1-2.
Wingecarribee Shire Council	Called for more frequent Goulburn to Sydney express train services. Called for additional train and bus services to the region.	Submission 75, p 3.
Mr Roderick Theile	Called for a commuter train service from Goulburn to Canberra.	Submission 80, pp 1-2.
Sydney		
<i>Name suppressed</i>	Called for train services to stop at Sydney Airport.	Submission 25, p 3.
Mr Stephen Miller	Called for adjustment of the timetabling of the Sydney to North Coast (and on to Brisbane) train service.	Submission 139, pp 1-2.
Far West		
Ms Deborah Hunt	Called for additional train services to Broken Hill.	Submission 9, p 1.
Broken Hill City Council	Called for additional train services to Broken Hill, e.g. an additional weekly service.	Submission 38, pp 1-2.
Mr David Beres	Called for an additional Sydney to Broken Hill train service.	Submission 125, p 1.
Central Darling Shire Council	Submitted that the current Dubbo to Broken Hill bus service should be maintained. Noted that there are no services linking Ivanhoe, Wilcannia, White Cliffs and Menindee. Called for improved timetabling of bus services between Wilcannia and Cobar and other more eastern towns.	Submission 130, p 1.

INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT
STAKEHOLDER SERVICE AND TIMETABLING ISSUES

Region/Stakeholder	Issue	Reference
Mr Stephen Miller	Called for the Sydney to Broken Hill train service to be extended to three times per week.	Submission 139, pp 1-2.