



Mr Andrew Gee MP
Committee Chair
State and Regional Development Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney, NSW, 2000

29 November 2012

Re: Inquiry Into Inter-Regional Public Transport – Supplementary Response to Letter dated 14 November

Regional Public Transport Issues

1. The Blue Mountains and Lithgow areas are well serviced with rail access and local buses, and Leura-Katoomba has two hop on hop off tourist bus services. The challenge is to make local public buses appealing and accessible to visitors. Oberon (Jenolan Caves) is not accessible via public transport so visitors must find a commercial tour operator.

In many destinations adequate public transport services exist, however, from a visitor perspective whilst a location may be identified as a “bus stop”, unless a timetable and route information is available the opportunity is not able to be conveniently taken up, revenue is lost. We understand that displaying timetables that change and route information is expensive and prone to vandalism. It is however, relatively simple to provide a QR code for the majority of people travelling to use their smart phone to access that necessary information.

2. Trains, as exist, to the Blue Mountains and Lithgow are logical modes of transport
3. BMLOT does not believe the visitor market is price-sensitive, especially international visitors are not price sensitive. Hop on hop off tickets such as MyMulti Day Pass and Link Tickets, due to their convenience, are a more practical product than reduced fares. The \$2.50 RED ticket is appealing to some segments within the over 50s demographic.

BMLOT supports the expansion of the 131 500 customer service number, currently for metropolitan based transport information, to providing all information including for regional transport.

Convenient storage for mountain bikes on trains and buses, and the promotion of such options, would be a real motivating factor for visitors to tourism areas such as the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area to use public transport.

4. The main issue within our region is a lack of public transport to get visitors all the way to Oberon (Jenolan Caves).

The focus of current CountryLink services is connecting smaller regional centres in a single line to larger regional centres which then connect with Sydney. E.g. Lightning Ridge has a service to Dubbo which connects through to Sydney. Moree connects through Gunnedah to Sydney, so if a tourist wishes to visit both Lightning Ridge and Moree they have to travel a long way around to visit both centres. If there were more services/options interconnecting the network you could design itineraries for tourists to travel to many regional destinations without the need for back tracking. The benefit to a region such as the Blue Mountains for this would be connecting Mudgee with the upper Hunter Valley as one possible connection – services could then be connected such as

- Sydney – Blue Mountains
- Blue Mountains – Mudgee
- Mudgee – Hunter Valley
- Then the option from Hunter Valley is either returning to Sydney or heading anywhere North
- Currently you have to do Sydney – Blue Mountains – Mudgee – return to Sydney same path to then travel North

The expansion of the Countrylink holiday programme to more regional destinations is desired. A greater connection between CountryLink and private services would allow greater communication and shared time-tabling. Ultimately, providing greater product information of all services, CountryLink and private, could lead to one ticketing system accepted by all operators.

We support the use of coaches as being the most economical and flexible way of providing access to any areas not otherwise well serviced, or to those areas that can be identified as needing services.

5. Not so much unreliability for us, the main problem is scheduled trackwork and shifting passengers to buses. It is nearly always on weekends (peak visitor times) and has an instant and dramatic reduction on passengers. Katoomba adventure operators lose

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more than 50% of anticipated revenue on days of trackwork – visitors either see signs in Sydney and choose not to travel, or they spend so long on connecting buses they have less time in the destination.

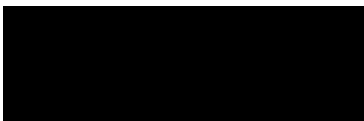
6. BMLOT sees the key for improvement being the integrating of and planning for the existing resources currently out there i.e. rail, commercial buses, school buses, taxis, community service vehicles – at present working independently. To achieve this we need data, and so BMLOT supports the current aim for a Customer Passenger Strategy as identified in the Long Term Transport Master Plan.

We would also support the role of the 12 Regional Transport Coordinators, providing they are proactive and engaged, to liaise with industry to ensure improved services.

We advocate for the engagement of Destination NSW as a significant tourism marketing body well-placed to promote land transport tourism packages, and similarly, the private sector tourism industry bodies, Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) and Local Tourism Organisations (LTOs) can assist in promoting land transport tourism packages.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully



Randall Walker
Chairman
Blue Mountains Lithgow & Oberon Tourism