



30 November 2012

The Committee Manager
State and Regional Development Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000
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Re: Inter-regional public transport (Inquiry) BusNSW Supplementary questions

To the Committee Manager,

BusNSW thank the Committee of the Inquiry into Inter-regional public transport for their supplementary questions following the hearing on the 15th October 2012. BusNSW is pleased to provide further detail on their submission to the inquiry.

- 1. In your organisation's submission to this inquiry, you mention that CountryLink coach services can be better promoted as a form of transport for tourists visiting regional areas and that there should be greater focus on promoting local bus services linking with CountryLink to give tourists access to tourist destinations in regional towns.**
 - a. How do you believe is the best way to promote such services and provide examples of such promotions?**

CountryLink, and local bus services (including NSW Government contracted and deregulated services) can be better promoted for tourists exploring regional NSW using a variety of ways including transport coordinated events, better promotions and increased flexibility. Although current bus timetables are developed in consultation with the rail network, there could be greater coordination between regional services to limit layover and waiting times for customers, promoting seamless travel and connectivity - a positive way to encourage people to use public transport.

Communication between services and their passengers can be improved through greater technologies, for example, Transport Infoline 131 500 could be expanded to provide service and timetable information for rural and regional bus services.

Public transport in rural and regional areas needs to be promoted as a viable alternative to private transport. Integrating services and increasing effective communications will assist to achieve a greater adoption of regional services as a convenient option rather for travel.

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.

b. Examples of other successful tourism campaigns that have increased coach patronage, include;

Destination NSW and CountryLink sponsor the Parkes Elvis Festival which encourage thousands of people to venture to the Central West every year using public transport. This is an example of effective, coordinated event planning between transport and tourism agencies which has resulted in mutual benefits.

Government sponsorship has helped mark this event as one of the biggest regional festivals whilst promoting public transport as the most viable means of transport to the region.

Promotions like this could be used for similar annual large scale regional events such as Floriade in Canberra, the Bathurst 1000, Tamworth Country Music Festival, as well as utilising the local bus and coach operations servicing these large regional towns.

It is important to note that the majority of regional events and festivals increase the number of coach passengers and research suggests that these passengers spend more per person than those travelling by car. However, there needs to be greater industry consultation and engagement with the coach sector to allow the development of packages in advance and to facilitate marketing campaigns.

2. During the hearing you mentioned that there are a number of cross-border anomalies which make it difficult for the industry to provide efficient services. Could you please expand on this?

The industry supports a review of the cross border anomalies which exist between States with an aim to achieving a common national approach or, at a minimum,

mutual recognition under the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. Discrepancies between states, and the related cross border issues, affect the operation of public transport services that run between states. These anomalies impose unnecessary burden on coach operators who conduct cross border services.

Areas in need of harmonisation include:

- Vehicle standards.
- Accreditation requirements.
- Driver licensing.
- Driving hour regulations.

BusNSW has been working in close association with RMS on increasing mass limits for two axle vehicles following the introduction of higher limits in Victoria earlier this year. Trials in NSW are likely to endorse similar results.

3. A number of submissions to the inquiry have supported the introduction of an integrated ticketing system, similar to the Japan Rail Pass or the Eurail pass.

a. Is BusNSW supportive of such a system?

BusNSW and its members support the efficient delivery of public transport services to the general public. This includes the increased use of greater technologies and integrated fare products designed to improve the passengers experience and make public transport more viable for more people.

BusNSW have been very supportive of the latest NSW Government electronic ticketing initiative, the Opal Card, to be trialled from December 2012. However, upon review of the current ticketing options for CountryLink, many of the ticket passes available, similar to those of the Japan Rail Pass and Eurail Pass, are not available to Australian residents.

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.

b. Should travel by bus and coach be included in such a pass?

Yes. BusNSW support fully integrated fare products that provide the most convenient outcome for the customer and promote additional trips. Local bus operators are in a

position to accept such products based on a mechanism for compensation that can be included in NSW Government contracts.

4. How can the tourist experience be improved in NSW in relation to inter-regional travel?

Whether intrastate, interstate or international, tourism should acknowledge all options for public transport and encourage people to embrace different parts of Australia, not just remain confined to the cities. With a rising Asian market, the role of the coach is becoming more important and these passengers require world class standards.

For international tourists, this begins on arrival. Currently Sydney Airport has an inefficient arrangement with coach operators, with the waiting bay not convenient for pickups or dropoffs. This heightens problems regarding communication between coach operators, passengers and the airport management. Passengers should be able to easily access information on bus and coach services, as well as regional tourism information.

Visitor information and signage in a variety of languages are of particular importance for international tourists and safer waiting areas, shelters, lighting and toilets, required in regional areas. The link between airports and rail interchanges is not adequate to cater to the vast number of tourists visiting NSW. This includes regional airports. Interchanges must be improved and upgraded in order to cater for the growing number of tourists. The Long Term Transport Master Plan proposes these upgrades for the CBD, Central; however regional interchanges must also be considered.

Consideration must be given to the scheduling of low priority trackwork for the rail system and other disturbances to the public transport network during times of higher capacity, for example when regional events are scheduled and/or long weekend public holidays.

Coordinated communication between services and their passengers can be improved with the aforementioned expansion of the Transport Infoline 131 500 to accommodate rural and regional bus services. Passenger announcements to communicate delays and other changes to the service, as well as the possibility of providing WiFi for public transport services are technologies welcomed by the industry and would improve the passenger experience onboard regional public transport. As discussed in Question 3, BusNSW support fully integrated tourism and transport products that are designed for special events.

BusNSW looks forward to the outcome of the inquiry and for continued industry consultation by all appropriate Government departments in support of the initiatives stated above.

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Executive Director
BusNSW