

Tabled by Penny Nelson  
@ 12:21  
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**Countrylink Parliamentary Inquiry  
National Seniors Australia – NSW Policy Advisory Group**

National Seniors Australia, based in Brisbane, has about 225,000 members nationally, nearly 60,000 in NSW. Our members are aged 50+. This submission came from our policy office, located in Canberra at the time it was submitted, now located in Brisbane at NSA head office. NSW has a Policy Advisory Group, all volunteers. I currently chair that group.

**Gaps in service and reliance on cars.**

In broad terms the map of NSW Countrylink bus and train services and of concentration of residents aged 65 and over shows a good correlation. The main spurs of the current service correspond in very broad terms with population density of older people, with the notable exception of the south coast. But of course there are gaps. Cars are the transport of choice and necessity in remote townships, residential age care villages, Aboriginal communities, farms, etc. School buses restrict users to morning travel about 8 am and return about 3.30pm.

**Case study** – my friend's funeral at Neville in central NSW in 2010 was only accessible by car. The tiny church was surrounded by about 150 cars.

**Impact of loss of driver's licence.**

Discretionary travel is vital to identity and the maintenance of a friendship network. We all like to visit friends, attend club meetings, attend courses or special events, and keep in touch with the community at large. In NSW we are not bad at responding to emergencies, but life is all not about hospitals and doctors, it's about living... The loss of a licence has a devastating impact, particularly on those who have never familiarised themselves with public transport.

**Accessibility** – only about 45% of NSW railway stations meet disability standards. There are inadequate drop-off parking places at stations for people with frail passengers.

**Security** – safety is important to all travellers, but older travellers feel particularly vulnerable.

**Respect –**

- right to live fully in the community and maintain mobility
- right to consumer information in printed and oral forms as well as online
- right to be consulted and included in policy planning process.

**Penelope Nelson  
26 October 2012**