

30 November 2012

Legislative Assembly  
State and Regional Development Committee  
Parliament of NSW  
Att: Mr Todd Buttsworth  
Research Officer

Dear Mr Buttsworth,

Re Inquiry into inter-regional public transport

I write in response to your letter of 14 November posing questions as follows:

*1. In your organisation's submission, it recommends that development assessment codes and processes for individual specific sites for major new development applications, including retail and mining projects, identify how public transport and public transport interchange are supported.*

*a. In regards to regional towns, do you believe that such requirements may hinder development in regional towns?*

*b. Do you believe that assessing mining proposals on the basis of their ability to use and support existing and future public transport services, may hinder the growth of the mining sector?*

a) I not believe that such requirements would hinder development in regional towns.

Improved public transport is a small component of the cost of development. Adequate public transport reduces other development costs such as reducing the extent and cost of new roads and car parking. Certainly major retail operators understand the value in increasing their catchment of customers from public transport and walking from nearby denser development.

Improved public transport would have spin-off effects on the wider viability of town and the competitive position of those towns that have better public transport than others. There is evidence in most counties that further development is attracted to centres with public transport hubs, and is concentrated around hubs such as train stations and bus stops.

NSW government policy encourages more development density or intensification to be located around public transport interchanges.

b) I do not you believe that assessing mining proposals on the basis of their ability to use and support existing and future public transport services, may hinder the growth of the Mining sector.

The growth of the mining sector has long been based on efficient transport of goods, resources, and people, with the historic growth of towns such as Bathurst, Lithgow and Broken Hill including excellent public transport by rail and road. Towns such as Bendigo and Ballarat constructed extensive light rail networks for their employees during mining booms that have given such towns enduring legacy of development and transport.

P2/2

Mining operators in relatively remote areas have benefitted from regular bus services for staff, particularly younger staff that does not have easy access to a private car, and mining families that have to buy a second car for commuting to work.

The mining sector chronically struggles to attract stable staff and families to their mining sites. They have tackled this in earlier years by building company towns at the mines, and then when that amenity was insufficient by establishing FIFO operations with high carbon and social costs. Many mining companies now recognise that that spending modest sums on pleasant living in regional towns is a cost-effective means of keeping staff happy, and public transport is part of that pleasant living mix.

The mining industry puts great emphasis on the safety of its staff and communities. Road crashes are a major contributor to injuries to mining workforces. Good public transport by road and rail provides safer roads and travel to all road users.

I trust this goes some way to addressing your questions. I and others at PIA would be pleased to elaborate on this response or provide further evidence if it would assist the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Colin Henson

Chair,  
Transport Planning Chapter,  
Planning Institute of Australia, NSW  
PO Box 484  
North Sydney NSW 2060

CC Ms Robyn Vincin, NSW Manager, PIA