

## **INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**Organisation:** Anglican Parish of Berridale & Snowy Mountains  
**Name:** Rev Owen Davies  
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Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn  
*Anglican Parish of Berridale & Snowy Mountains*

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**NSW State and Regional Development committee  
"Inquiry into inter-regional public transport"**

**Social Impact of Isolation**

During my 18 months service as a community chaplain based in Jindabyne I have frequently seen the difficulty sections of the community experience because there is no regular or affordable public transport from the high country.

In particular those who are unable to drive their own vehicle because of their youth, mature years, or financial circumstances experience the challenges of connecting with family and friends, medical or commercial matters. Please remember that alongside the 100 days of affluent snow season business that there is another side to our region that is an isolated rural community where the socio-economic advantage stands in significant contrast.

Please consider the following:

1. The commonwealth funded community transport service operated by Snowy River Shire Council for medical appointments in Cooma and Canberra is oversubscribed. A dedicated Countrylink service would help meet the need for high country residents to access a range of allied services and less serious medical conditions that don't qualify for this service.
2. The demographers have consistently underestimated the population dynamics of the region and Jindabyne in particular. We now have two high schools. School holiday and weekend services would be worth a trial for our young folk. There are over 180 people receiving aged care in their homes with approximately 500 more facing the prospect of not being able to drive, or fearful of their safety driving themselves. A Countrylink service will provide safe and secure options for these folk who have given so much to their community and state during their working lives.
3. Wellbeing of youth and the aging in our region will benefit significantly family and friends being able to travel to visit local residents. Pastorally I have considerable evidence of locals who are isolated because family are unable to visit. For example, a one car family in Canberra requires the vehicle for work and children's sporting commitments. If there were a Countrylink service one or more of the family could more easily visit for a week.

Thank you for your consideration of this aspect alongside all the other tourism and commercial benefits.

Rev Owen Davies