

INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Organisation: Central Darling Shire Council
Name: Mr Tim Drew
Position: General Manager
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21 May 2012

Andrew Gee MP
Chair
State and Regional Development Committee
Parliament of NSW
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr. Gee,

Inquiry into Inter-Regional Public Transport

I am writing to provide Council's submission in relation to the Inquiry into Inter-Regional Transport. Council would like to thank you and the Committee for the opportunity to make this submission and trusts that it will receive due consideration by you and the Committee.

Council considered this matter at its April meeting, at which considerable discussion took place on the subject. The Central Darling Shire is the largest and one of the most remote local government areas in NSW. As such, regional public transport services are extremely important to Council and its communities.

Council is concerned that possible changes have been mooted to the bus services provided by Countrylink between Dubbo and Broken Hill. The service provided by CountryLink is essential to the people of the Central Darling Shire, as it is the most direct and affordable means of accessing Sydney from Wilcannia and surrounding areas. Any reduction to that service will have a significant impact on people in the Shire, who represent some of the most financially disadvantaged people in NSW.

This bus service currently runs on a daily basis in both directions and is well-patronised by passengers through our Shire, particularly at Wilcannia and with some passengers travelling from as far afield as Ivanhoe and Tilpa to the Emmdale roadhouse stop. A reduction in this service to a few days a week would further increase the isolation that people in our area experience and make essential services such as health, medical and educational more inaccessible.

In addition to this, Council is also concerned about the lack of public transport between the towns within our Shire. There are currently no services between our towns of Ivanhoe, Wilcannia, White Cliffs and Menindee. If public transport services were available between these towns, it would enable passengers to more easily link up with services to other regions.

Council is of the view that bus services between Wilcannia and Cobar and towns further to the east could be improved. The existing CountryLink service to Dubbo leaves Wilcannia at 6:15am, whilst the return service arrives in town at 8:55pm. A frequent service at more

accessible times of the day would enable more people to travel to and from Sydney, Cobar, Dubbo and other towns to the east of Wilcannia.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Drew
General Manager