

**Submission
No 62**

INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

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Eric Tierney's submission on Countrylink.

I have attempted to fit my ideas into your categories a,d,e and h.

A. How Countrylink services can be improved.

The fare and service gap between first and economy classes could be increased. Economy seats could be of the flip over fixed tilt flat kind with one side of the aisle wider than the other. This would allow flexible booking for children and obese people.

Overnight services between Wagga and Albury to and from Sydney should arrive and leave at times more convenient to passengers. On the North Coast the northbound overnight service currently departs Sydney too early and arrives Coffs Harbour and Grafton at inconvenient times.

This would mean taking emphasis off intercapital travel where the loss making Countrylink has not been able to gain even a tiny share of a huge tourist market.

Overnight trains need to service Armidale, Dubbo and Griffith at each end of the weekend for the convenience of country people working in Sydney and vice versa. The Sunday night services must shift to the Monday night for long weekends.

D. How Countrylink can be better utilised to increase tourism in NSW.

Concentrate limited promotion resources on the 2000 backpacker beds within walking distance of Central. The current very early departures from Central are not a disadvantage with this sub-market.

Ideally the north coast route needs to be promoted as via Newcastle and Byron Bay. This requires encouraging expansion of backpacker facilities in the East End and commencing a daylight service from Newcastle to Grafton. The long term aim would be Lismore and Byron on a rebuilt line.

Countrylink needs to be able to offer a full service to Katoomba.

E. *How the amount of inter-regional travel undertaken by public transport can be increased.(inc to and from Syd)*
Use EMU's (see H.) to run extra daylight services to the Central West changing to bus at Lithgow. Base them at Broadmeadow and run a luxury Mascot connector early morning and lunch trains each way.

If the State Government cannot afford to invest more in rail then using idle time of 737 type aircraft for wet lease in the middle of the day might be feasible.

H. *Type of buses and trains required.*

To expand Countrylinks's fleet at minimum cost there should be sets of double deck electric multiple unit stock built to the suburban loading gauge with toilets, staff facilities and food service on the lower decks. These could service Lithgow and Newcastle.