

**Submission
No 12**

INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Organisation: Narromine Shire Council
Name: Councillor Bill McAnally
Position: Mayor
Date Received: 23/03/2012

NARROMINE SHIRE COUNCIL

ABN 99 352 328 405

"Times Change... Values Don't"
File No. 01.013



14 March, 2012

The Chair,
State & Regional Development Committee,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY. NSW. 2000

Dear Sir,

Inquiry into Inter-Regional Public Transport

Narromine Shire Council is pleased to make a submission to the Inquiry into Inter-Regional Public Transport on behalf of its community.

Narromine Shire covers an area of 5,224km² within the central western region of New South Wales and has a population of approx. 6,800* (based on census 2006 statistics), with an Indigenous population of 15%. The Shire comprises three urban centres of Narromine (pop. 3,500) with Trangie (pop. 1,000) 35 kms to the West and Tomingley (pop. 50) 35 km to the South. The remaining 2,250 residents live in the rural area.

Narromine Shire has no public transport other than a Countrylink bus service which travels through Narromine once a day to deliver people travelling between Broken Hill and Lithgow, a distance in excess of 1,000 kms or 11 hours driving time. Despite the fact that Narromine is a rail centre for the transport of freight, including grain and mining purposes, the local railway station does not operate any more for passengers by train.

There is no public transport to Dubbo other than privately operated school bus services and a limited community transport service by volunteers between Warren and Dubbo, and a similar service operating from Narromine for the aged, elderly and infirm to access medical and specialist appointments.

Unlike many rural regional centres, Narromine Shire's population is not diminishing and has a great potential for growth, as an aged care community, given its climate, shopping, medical facilities – an excellent health centre and hospital. Narromine is an attractive option for the retired farming family from more remote western areas because of its rural, small town amenity and access to services, without the big city suburban living experience of the major cities.

One of Narromine Shire's barriers to growth is access to reliable public transport and access to government agencies such as Medicare, Roads & Maritime Services (RMS), and higher education such as TAFE and universities. In this regard, Council is endeavouring to have the RMS set up an agency, similar to those located in Warren and other western shires, within the Council premises. Support for this initiative would assist community transport issues.

Particularly for retirees, and for those in the lower income bracket, and those who rely upon welfare assistance, the provision of a reliable public transport system would provide increased employment and study opportunities to assist them in improving their lifestyle and wellbeing.

An upgrade of the existing railway line would not only provide respite for the high volume of truck transport and their considerable impacts on the roads networks, but could reinstate a reliable passenger service between regional areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the matter of Inter-Regional Public Transport and we look forward to the findings of the Committee in due course.

Yours faithfully,



Cr Bill McAnally,
Mayor.