

INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Organisation: Greater Taree City Council
Name: Mr Richard Pamplin
Position: Senior Leader Strategic Planning
Date Received: 18/05/2012

18 May 2012

The Chair
State and Regional Development Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir / Madam

Inquiry into inter-regional public transport.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the terms of reference and the inquiry. We provide the following comments for your consideration.

How CountryLink services can be improved

CountryLink services could be improved in a number of ways, including providing a faster service and carrying light freight. As regional airports often fly limited routes, it is important for the coach and train network to function regularly and efficiently from the city to regional areas and in between regional areas.

While we are aware through anecdotal evidence that the services need improvement we feel that in order to answer this question in full, a process of community and business consultation would need to be undertaken. The State and Regional Development Committee need to allocate time in the inquiry to undertake appropriate consultation.

How network linkages between CountryLink train and coach services can be improved

The network linkages between CountryLink train and coach services could be improved by consulting with service users to determine whether alternative linkages could be provided or whether existing linkages require upgrading.

As above, we feel that in order to answer this question in full, a process of community and business consultation in regional centres would need to be undertaken. Without undertaking community consultation it is difficult to determine what improvements could be made.

The potential for CountryLink services to carry light freight

It would be advantageous for investigating the potential for CountryLink services to carry light freight. Currently regional air services provide light freight services, however the cost can often be prohibitive and therefore under utilised. CountryLink light freight services would need to be competitively priced, and if it were to be competitively priced it could become the preferred option for local businesses and members of the community.

ABN 45 851 497 602

2 Pulteney Street Taree | PO Box 482 Taree NSW 2430

T 02 6592 5399 F 02 6592 5311



Carrying light freight on CountryLink services may mean that less freight will be transported along the Pacific Highway by trucks, thus making the Pacific Highway safer and reducing maintenance requirements for Roads and Maritime Services.

How CountryLink can be better utilised to increase tourism in New South Wales

Currently coach and train travel accounts for less than 2% of our total annual tourism numbers into the Greater Taree region. In order to increase these numbers, the services would need to be improved to include:

- Faster train service i.e. currently a 5 hour trip between Sydney and Taree versus a 3 hour drive or 40 minute flight is simply not competitive.
- Improved catering and standard of travel – by improving the current standards, the services could appeal to a larger demographic.

In order to increase the utilisation of this service, the inquiry would need to look to countries in Europe and Asia to establish how they have ensured that train travel remains a viable option for all members of the public.

Our recommendations for increasing tourism in New South Wales include a full relaunch of the service, using a marketing campaign that shows the benefits of train travel once these have been established. To capitalise on the initial increase in numbers however, improvements to the standard and speed of the journeys would need to be made. The cost of train travel also would need to remain competitive versus the cost of travel by private vehicle.

How the amount of inter-regional travel undertaken by public transport can be increased

Through the process of consultation mentioned above, it could be ascertained which areas of the network, if any, need amending or improving. We know anecdotally that in regional areas it can be difficult to travel on public transport due to the lack of services, car parking facilities at train stations, the time between service connections and the area covered by the public transport network. Information we do not have however is who is currently using the service, versus who is not due to the inconvenience or extended travel time.

Once this information was gathered, these potential travellers could be included in the target market of the possible relaunch marketing campaign mentioned above.

The extent to which regional public transport networks are integrated and how they can be better integrated

The best way to achieve integration in regional areas is to first consult with the communities to determine what their needs are. After determining the needs of the community, services can be provided that will meet these needs.

The role local councils can play in improving inter-regional public transportation networks

Council would be willing to provide input as a stakeholder.

The type of buses and trains that will be required for the provision of regional passenger services in the future.

The trains need to provide a faster and more reliable service if regional passenger services are to be viable into the future. Buses need to link with rail and air services, and run at a frequency that makes them a viable transport option.

If you have any questions with regard to the above please contact the officer below.

Again, thank you again for providing Council with the opportunity to comment on the terms of reference and the inquiry.

Yours faithfully

Richard Pamplin
Senior Leader Strategic Planning