

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

**Organisation:** Australian Centre for Disability Law  
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**Position:** Policy Officer  
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Our reference: PF:FG:749

25 May 2012

The Committee Manager  
State and Regional Development Committee  
Legislative Assembly, Parliament of New South Wales  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
**SYDNEY NSW 2000**

Dear Sir/Madam:

**Response to Inter-regional public transport inquiry inter-regional public transport**

1. The Australian Centre for Disability Law (**ACDL**) is a community legal centre which specialises in disability discrimination and human rights law and policy. We provide legal advice and representation to persons with disability and their associates and undertake law reform, continuing legal education, and community legal education activities.
2. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. We intend to comment on the accessibility of inter-regional public transport. This encompasses most terms of reference. For example, by making inter-regional public transport accessible to persons with disability will improve CountryLink services. By making CountryLink more accessible to people with disability will result in better utilization of CountryLink which will increase tourism in New South Wales. It will also increase the amount of inter-regional travel under-taken by public transport and provide the type of bus and trains that will be required for the provision of public transport in the future. This is particularly the case given our ageing population and the increased incidence of disability associated with age.
3. The New South Wales government is required to make inter-regional public transport accessible by law. At the international level, Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) covers accessibility including transport. It states the following

“1. To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate in fully in all aspects of life, State Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation to information and communications, including information and communication technologies and systems, and to *other* facilities open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures which shall include identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility shall apply to, inter alia:

- (a) Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;"
4. As access to public transport is a fundamental human right and freedom recognised under CRPD, Australia is obligated to follow provisions such as those articulated under Article 9.
  5. Domestically, the NSW government has a duty under the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards) created under the authority of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth). The Transport Standards required 25% of all boarding facilities, including train stations by 31 December 2007 and 55% by 31 December 2012. We would like to acknowledge that CountryLink is compliant with the Transport Standards, according to the CountryLink train and coach network map.<sup>1</sup> However, it is imperative that CountryLink continues to be compliant with the Transport Standards.
  6. Although, the CountryLink train and coach network map states that all CountryLink coach services are wheelchair accessible, provided 48 hours notice is given<sup>2</sup>, as noted on the CountryLink website, services between Broadmeadow and Taree, operated by Busways coaches, have no provisions for wheelchair bound passengers and passengers with motorised scooters.<sup>3</sup> This prohibits passengers using these mobility devices from traveling by public transport between Broadmeadow and Taree.
  7. Please contact Fiona Given at [fgiven@disabilitylaw.org.au](mailto:fgiven@disabilitylaw.org.au) if you would like to discuss this submission further.

Yours sincerely,

**FIONA GIVEN**

Policy Officer

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.countrylink.info/timetables/network\\_map](http://www.countrylink.info/timetables/network_map)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.countrylink.info/travelling\\_with\\_us/special\\_needs](http://www.countrylink.info/travelling_with_us/special_needs)