

**Submission
No 2**

INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

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Inquiry into Inter-regional Public Transport

Countrylink train and coach services Sydney to Dubbo and return

A daily train service leaves Central Railway at 7.10 a.m, arriving in Dubbo at 13.40 p.m. This train, then returns to Sydney, leaving Dubbo at 14.10 p.m. and arriving at Central at 20.49.

In addition, there is a daily coach service leaving Dubbo at 9.15 a.m. arriving at Lithgow at 13.10 p.m., connecting with a cityrail train, arriving at Central at 16.45 p.m. (16.31 weekends and Public holidays).

The same coach returns from Lithgow at 15.25 p.m., arriving in Dubbo at 18.55 p.m.

I frequently use these services.

There are two major problems with the coach service.

1. The afternoon coach service has large numbers of passengers travelling only to Bathurst or Orange (1 hr and 1½ hr journeys respectively).

There are later coaches leaving Lithgow for Bathurst and Orange, at 17.35 and also 20.35 p.m.

There is only one coach to Dubbo, which also connects with other coaches going further west, including Narromine, Nyngan and Broken Hill.

Because of heavy bookings for Bathurst and Orange, it is difficult to get a seat on this coach to Molong, Wellington and Dubbo.

Solution:

An additional coach leaving Lithgow, also at 15.25 p.m., would leave seats available for passengers making longer journeys west.

I have heard that a 2-car diesel from Lithgow to Bathurst or Orange may also warrant consideration.

2. The second problem involves the reduction in seating capacity, caused by the removal of double seats, to provide for wheelchair accommodation.

On most days, 2 double seats have been removed from the coach, to provide for a wheelchair. This reduces the seating capacity by four in each direction, a total of eight passengers.

I have observed the occasional transport of a wheelchair passenger. The side of the bus, adjacent to the missing seats, is removed (by the driver, on his own) to convert to a lift. The

wheelchair and passenger are then raised to the floor level of the coach, and the passenger manipulates the wheelchair into position.

I believe this process is embarrassing to the disabled person, as the whole busload views the loading and unloading process.

It is certainly stressful to the driver and certainly adds time to the journey. I have never seen the facility used for the return trip from Lithgow, in the afternoon.

Solution:

As the facility is generally only for short journeys, say Molong to Orange, a wheelchair taxi may provide door to door transfer, which would also be more convenient for the client. With additional spaces available for fare-paying passenger, the wheelchair taxi option may be feasible.

I request that these options be considered.

Anomaly on the Central Coast Line

Since the opening of the Newcastle University Campus at Ourimbah, the train service has been inadequate.

The peak hour services to Gosford and Sydney have improved, however, the daytime services remain **hourly only**, both South (to Gosford and Sydney) and North (to Tuggerah and Newcastle).

In addition, Southbound train times are inconvenient, as trains leave just before the hour, and lectures generally finish on the hour.

There are minimal shopping facilities at Ourimbah. Students at the university cannot access the shopping centres at Gosford and Tuggerah, even though they are both only ten minutes away by train.

Solution

Express trains which currently stop at Gosford then Tuggerah, could also stop at Ourimbah (in both North and South directions). This would be a boon to University students and other travellers.

This solution would also take considerable traffic off the Gosford to Tuggerah road network and also relieve parking stations at Gosford, and railway parking areas locally.

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