

**Submission  
No 27**

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

**Name:** Mr Peter & Mrs Diane Macfarlane

**Date Received:** 23 April 2012

## To the Legislative Assembly on CountryLink service in relation to Branxton

My answers to the terms of reference:

- A. **How CountryLink services can be improved in the Branxton area:-** the train should stop for a start! There are approximately 10,000 people living in the greater Branxton, Greta and Rothbury areas. There are four City rail services a day but only two run at times that suit the majority.
- B. **Network linkages between train & coach** - this does not apply to this area.
- C. **Potential for CountryLink services to carry light freight-** again, this would not apply as there are no staff at Branxton Station.
- D. **How CountryLink can be utilised to increase tourism in the Branxton area.** The biggest tourism area in NSW is in the Branxton area, it's called the Hunter Valley Vineyards. 2.5 million tourists visit this area every year and the train does not stop here!! If the train did stop, tour operators over time could develop their operations to meet the train, just as accommodation houses (and there are hundreds within 15 klms of both Greta and Branxton) could utilise the service and meet the trains.
- E. **How inter-regional travel by public transport could be increased.** Again the train must stop and when it does a good advertising programme should be done utilising the local newspaper (Branxton Greta Vineyard News). The train may not need to stop every day but only if there are bookings. In other words it would become a conditional stop.
- F. **Public transport networks integrated** - This at the moment does not apply but if the area continues to grow it will re- Huntlee.
- G. **Council involvement** - again let's start thinking this through properly as there is a need and until Countrylink bite the bullet and start stopping at these regional stations you will not see Council involvement.
- H. **The type of buses and trains that will be required** – before we get too carried away why doesn't City Rail introduce additional trains at these stations on a trial basis. An additional city rail train service in the middle of the afternoon would at least give locals more options with regards train travel to nearby cities. The congested roads which are drawing much adverse publicity at the moment could possibly be relieved if the various departments started to work together. Commonsense and good planning should tell us that with the rail already in place a more frequent service would soon become a much used facility & especially given the overcrowded road situation, which is now grid locking the small towns on the New England Highway.

Peter Macfarlane

Diane Macfarlane