

INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Organisation: Thredbo Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Thredbo
Name: Mr John McIntyre
Position: President
Date Received: 16/05/2012



9 May 2012

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Thredbo Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Thredbo I wish to make a submission to the Committee inquiring into Inter-regional Public Transport.

The Thredbo Chamber of Commerce represents local businesses in Thredbo and Thredbo Valley including accommodation providers, retailers, restaurants and property owners. As your Committee will be well aware, Thredbo is located within the Kosciuszko National Park and its reason for being is to provide a base for summer and winter tourism within the National Park. As well as being regarded as the premier ski resort in Australia, it is a year round tourist destination providing relatively easy access by chairlift and well-formed footway to the summit of Mount Kosciuszko, the continent's highest peak. Over summer it offers a large range of activities and events including music festivals, mountain biking, golf, bushwalking and tennis but more importantly access to one of the most unique alpine environments in the world.

While Thredbo is reasonably well served in winter by private transport options including a winter air service from Sydney to Cooma with a private shuttle bus to Thredbo, summer is a completely different story. In summer, the air service does not operate nor does the shuttle and the winter private coach operators also cease their services (which it must be said are focused in the main on ski or snowboarding enthusiasts wishing to visit for the day only).

The current year round Countrylink service only goes from Canberra to Cooma which is a distance of about 95 kilometres from Thredbo. There is no public transport of any description in the direction of the Snowy Mountains further than Cooma as the existing Countrylink service then heads south to Bombala. Travelling south west from Cooma towards the mountains, the highway passes through Berridale which has a population of approximately 900 and is the seat of the Snowy River Shire Council and then Jindabyne which now has a population of more than 4000 having grown from just less than 2,000 in the 2006 census. Lake Jindabyne being part of the Snowy Scheme and a venue for many summer activities is a major tourist destination in its own right. Thredbo with a permanent population of approximately 600 but which can swell to over 5000 when overnight visitor numbers are included is a further 35 kilometres along the Alpine Way.

The lack of regular and reliable public transport from Canberra/Queanbeyan to Jindabyne and on to Thredbo is a major impediment to tourism in this region, particularly in summer. Whilst car travel to the region is popular, there are many potential visitors including young overseas visitors who do not have a motor vehicle. In addition the lack of public transport between Thredbo, Jindabyne and Cooma can create difficulties for local residents who need to travel to one of those towns for medical and other services and is regarded as one reason that it is difficult to attract permanent tourism industry workers to live in Thredbo.



NPWS has the publicly announced its aim to increase summer tourism in the Kosciuszko National Park by at least 20% .The Thredbo Chamber of Commerce submits that there is a compelling case to assist this goal by providing a year round Countrylink service from Canberra/Queanbeyan to Thredbo

Yours faithfully

