

**Submission  
No 29**

**ACCESS TO TRANSPORT FOR SENIORS AND  
DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE IN RURAL AND  
REGIONAL NSW**

**Organisation:** Northern Rivers Social Development Council (NRSDC)

**Name:** Mr Alex Lewers

**Position:**

**Date Received:** 20 July 2016

# Submission on Transport for Seniors and Disadvantaged People in Rural and Regional NSW



To the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry - Access to Transport for Seniors and Disadvantaged People in Rural and Regional NSW

This submission is presented on behalf of Northern Rivers Social Development Council (NRSDC) and draws from issues raised through the Northern Rivers Transport Working Groups.

NRSDC is a social justice organisation based in Northern NSW with more than 40 years' experience as a regional leader, advocating for the communities where we work; working in partnership with others; and providing activities and services that promote inclusion fairness and growth.

Our work encompasses homelessness and housing supports, youth and family services, case management for people with complex needs, support for people with disability, community sector support, professional development and systemic advocacy.

NRSDC run a Transport Development Project, which looks at ways to improve transport options for people in the Northern Rivers with a specific focus on disadvantage. As part of this role, the Transport Development Project Officer facilitates/attends Transport working groups in all the local government areas to address issues that arise over time. These groups have contributed to and informed the issues outlined in this submission

## Region Background

In general, all regional and rural residents in NSW are relatively disadvantaged, as a result of limited access to adequate transport options and the Northern Rivers is no different.

The Northern Rivers region has a population of approximately 293,000 and is the fastest growing region in NSW, at about 0.9 percent per year. Significant population growth is expected to continue due to the region's proximity to expected growth and development in South East Queensland.

The region's population is ageing, and the proportion of the population aged 65 or over is expected to increase from 19 percent in 2011 to 28 percent in 2031. This compares to an increase from 15 percent to 20 percent for NSW. An ageing population will change travel patterns and require improved transport access to health and aged care services in the region's main centres.

The Northern Rivers region also has an above average level of social disadvantage compared to the NSW median. The smaller regional centres such as Richmond Valley and Kyogle are especially disadvantaged areas and transport services that provide access to education and employment opportunities, health facilities and services, can go some way to addressing this social disadvantage.

# Submission on Transport for Seniors and Disadvantaged People in Rural and Regional NSW



## Specific issues relating to the transport needs of seniors and disadvantaged people in rural and regional NSW

The [2013 Sustain Northern Rivers Transport Survey](#) found:

- The Northern Rivers is highly car-dependent — almost 70% of respondents to the survey reported they made their most frequent non-work-related trip as the driver of a private car
- More than half the respondents reported they were unable to make trips due to lack of transport
- Health appointments are the most frequently 'missed trip' by more than 20% of respondents. In the case of Indigenous respondents, this figure was almost a third

### **Issue 1: Public transport services are too infrequent and not available in some areas**

The [2013 Sustain Northern Rivers Transport Survey](#) identified social/cultural events, shopping, recreation visiting family/friends, personal, and health appointments as amongst the main reasons respondents wanted to use transport but were unable to due infrequency and or lack of public transport services in the area. This issue is compounded for communities that rely on school bus services for public transport which limits opportunities for people to access public transport to early morning and late afternoon and also means that during school holidays there is no public transport available in these communities.

Reduced weekend services, when people are more likely to be using public transport for social/cultural events, combined with low levels of car ownership amongst disadvantaged population groups, contributes to significant social isolation and the subsequent flow-on effects of social isolation.

The [2016 North Coast Primary Health Network Needs Assessment](#) found that the lack of public transport on the North Coast was a considerable barrier to people accessing healthcare amongst senior and other disadvantaged population groups.

**Recommendation 1:** Maintain weekday services over Saturday, Sunday and public holidays

**Recommendation 2:** Ensure that isolated communities have access to a minimum of one public transport trips that take in basic services i.e shops, health care etc during school holidays

**Recommendation 3:** Increase communication of locally available public transport options

### **Issue 2: Cost of accessing public transport is prohibitive**

The [2013 Sustain Northern Rivers Transport Survey](#) found that cost was amongst the most significant barriers to people in the community accessing public transport. Whilst the \$2.50 RED ticket was introduced for people with a Pensioner Concession eCard, NSW Seniors card or a War Widower/s card, this has not been extended to other transport disadvantaged groups.

# Submission on Transport for Seniors and Disadvantaged People in Rural and Regional NSW



*Case Study: Students attending Maclean High School and other high schools in the area who wish to study a single subject at TAFE in Grafton are forced to have private transport or pay unsubsidised transport fares because they bus pass does not cover this journey and they don't meet requirement for alternate concession arrangements. This fare can be as high as \$24.60 return. This cost is prohibitive and anecdotally has stopped students from taking courses they are passionate about.*

**Recommendation 1:** Extension of the RED ticket concession rate to other transport disadvantaged population groups, including students and job seeker groups.

### **Issue 3: Lack of identified accessible bus routes**

In the Northern Rivers there are currently few identified routes that have a designated accessible bus (low-floor or kneeling), with appropriate infrastructure at stops to support access. This reduces confidence of public transport users with access issues.

**Recommendation 1:** Increase the amount of accessible buses in regional and remote areas

**Recommendation 2:** Until 100% of fleet is accessible, develop identified accessible bus routes along major travel routes

### **Issue 4: Lack of linking with major services/employment**

Many areas in the Northern Rivers don't have access to specific services or need to travel between towns for employment. For this reason there is a need for more direct services and a better coordination of bus timetabling.

*Case Study: I was recently contacted by members of the Kyogle community to advise me of difficulties that students have in accessing TAFE classes. Currently, students cannot get to TAFE via public transport because a connecting service leaves 30 minutes before the arrival of the service from Kyogle. This put students in this area at a significant disadvantage to students who live in Lismore.*

**Recommendation 1:** Ensure routes take in major services/employment areas

**Recommendation 2:** Consider 'commuter bus' services to areas of higher employment. See the [2016 Lismore commuter bus plan for details](#).

### **Issue 5: Services for people in residential aged care**

Currently there are no services available for people in residential aged-care. This makes residents reliant on family members or the facility to drive them if they cannot afford a taxi and/or are not well enough to travel independently on a bus.

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*Case Study: A man who lives in a residential aged care facility in Murwillumbah needs to travel to Tweed Heads for important dental work. He is unable to afford a taxi, has no family and is not well enough to travel to Tweed Heads on a bus. His current arrangement is to use the patient transport service, however, when a more serious patient needs transport he misses his appointment. Currently under Community Transport funding, they are not able to provide any assistance to him and so his condition will likely deteriorate as he continues to miss medical appointments.*

**Recommendation 1:** Community Transport be funded to provide 'special circumstances' transport services for people in residential aged care to get to and from medical appointments. Or;

**Recommendation 2:** Aged care providers be required to provide transport to and from health appointments

## **Issue 6: Understanding of travel options and how to access services:**

Whilst there is a lack of public transport in some areas across the Northern Rivers, there is also a low understanding of public transport options and how to access services. This is a significant barrier to people accessing public transport and other community transport services.

**Recommendation 1:** Travel training for seniors and disadvantaged communities

**Recommendation 2:** Increase communication of locally available public transport options

## **Issue 7: Lack of bus arrival technology for visually impaired users**

People with a visual impairment often find using public transport challenging particularly the identification of correct stops. In many regional buses there is no on-board stop announcer system and therefore, people with a vision impairment are often reliant on others to identify their stop. There is also a barrier in terms of identifying which bus to catch and how long that bus is from arriving.

**Recommendation 1:** Upgrading the 'Stop Announcer App' with timetable information and/or live tracking of services

**Recommendation 2:** Increase communication to general public of the 'Stop Announcer App'

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## **Issue 8: Lack of bus knowledge around issues impacting people who are hearing impaired**

**Case Study:** *“Our local Deaf community experiences significant transport barriers [due to a high proportion of the community who don’t have licences and are unemployed/low income earners]. Due to the high proportion of the local Deaf Community not having licenses, or the financial means to use taxi’s, any social interactions have to be planned around other transport options. Any employment opportunities also have to tie in with public transport which is virtually impossible in this region. What this does is greatly restrict connectivity in the community, and limits potential opportunities to access the wider community and opportunities. The difference in access for the Deaf community in Brisbane where I spent a few years, compared with back home is very noticeable, and we miss out on a lot as a result. Education, employment, social and community opportunities are diminished. It impacts not only on deaf people but their families also.”*

**Possible Solutions:** *“Face to face Q & A sessions with the Deaf community to get to know the gaps, and their needs combined with other opportunities for the community to provide comment/feedback in Auslan. A higher proportion of the Deaf community has lower levels of English literacy, so written surveys often do not reach the people with most need.”*

Lismore Sustainable Transport Group

# Commuter Bus Plan 2016

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## Project Outline

The Lismore Sustainable Transport Group (LSTG) proposes that a 12-18 month trial of a commuter bus be implemented between the townships of Lennox Head/Ballina and Lismore, Byron Bay and Lismore as well as an extension of the Casino to Lismore route to reduce the impact of regular trips made for work and education purposes.

### Background

Lismore is a regional city serving as an administrative hub for the far north coast of NSW, and a centre of employment and post-secondary education in the Northern Rivers. The Northern Rivers region has a population of around 236,500 and is the fastest growing region in NSW, at about 0.9 percent per year.

Lismore is the primary base for a number of the region's major employers including Southern Cross University, Lismore Base Hospital, Lismore City Council and the Northern Rivers Social Development Council.

Currently, there are limited public transport options for commuters in the region compared with metropolitan areas and the services that do exist (Buslines routes 661,610 and 675) do not attract commuters due to the time taken for each commute (often double the time taken to drive).

This project was initiated through the LSTG - a group established to bring together representatives from local transport providers, local government and other community stakeholders to identify and develop solutions to transport issues in the region.

### Commuter Bus Objectives

This project aims to:

- Reduce traffic congestion and motor vehicle accidents along main routes that service the township of Lismore (Ballina road and Bruxner Hwy)
- Reduce emissions caused by the commuting trips
- Provide greater access to public transport for commuters
- Increase use of public transport in the Northern Rivers

This project is in-line with objectives outlined by Transport for NSW in the [Northern Rivers Transport Plan](#) in which the government committed to:

- Developing routes, hours of operation, and vehicles to match specific local needs
- Improve the frequency and hours of regional inter-town routes

## Key stakeholders and project partners

In developing this project, the LSTG has sought input from a range of key stakeholders in the Northern Rivers including:

- Ballina Shire Council
- Byron Shire Council
- Home Assistance and Regional Transport (Northern Rivers Community Transport)
- Lismore City Council
- Northern NSW Local Health District
- Northern Rivers Buslines
- Northern Rivers Social Development Council
- Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers
- Richmond Valley Council
- Southern Cross University

These project partners will assist in the promotion of the service to increase uptake.

This project was also guided by local community responses to surveys from the Lismore Commuter Hub report.

## What we know

In 2011, the [Lismore Commuter Hub Report](#) found there was up to 3442 daily commuter trips made between Lennox Head/Ballina and Lismore, up to 1000 commuter journeys between Casino and Lismore and up to 500 commuter journeys between Byron Bay and Lismore. However, only one percent of these trips were made using public transport.

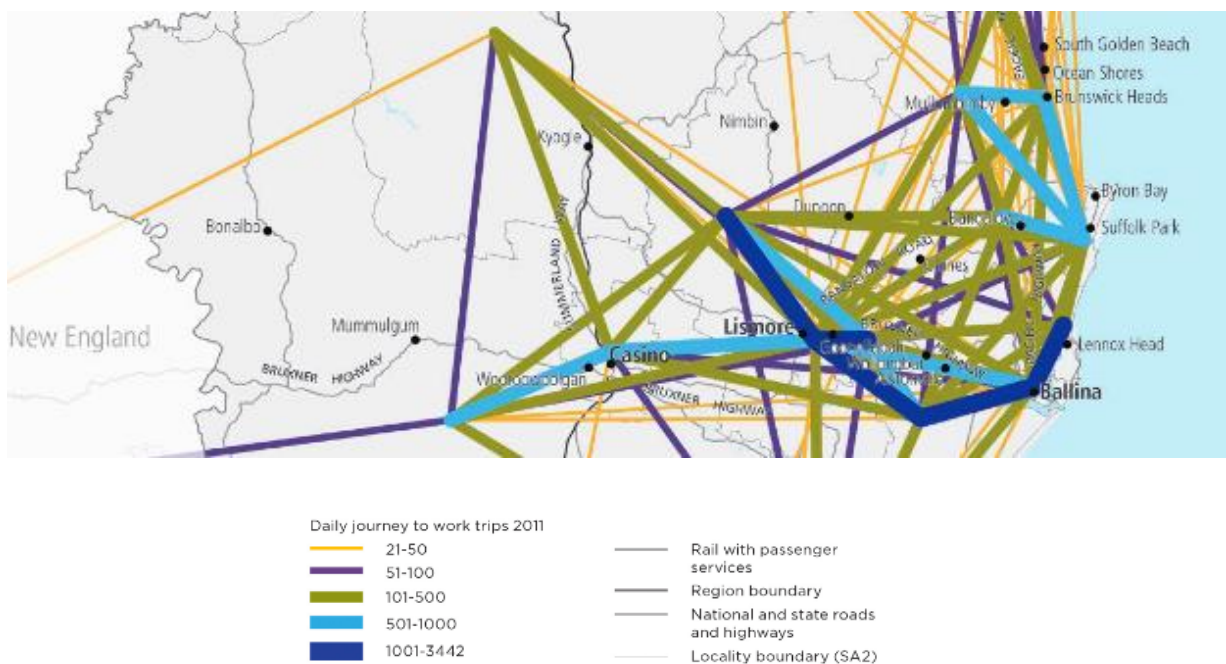


Figure 1.1 - Journey to work origins and destinations in the Northern Rivers region

Source: Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan

Through the surveys conducted for the Lismore Commuter Hub report, 42.1% (455) of commuters identified the availability of direct bus routes as a major incentive for them to consider using public transport to their place of work in Lismore.

Another incentive identified for using public transport was the cost of accessing the service. Since this survey was conducted, Northern Rivers Buslines has capped fares at \$6. Although some still see this as expensive, educating commuters on the true cost of private commuting (more than \$205.75 per work week to Lismore from Casino or Ballina) may help shift this perception and increase uptake of public transport.

Private Ownership Costs, New - 5 years @ 15,000km per year

Vehicle	List Price	On Road Price (estimated)	Standing Costs (avg \$ per week)			Running Costs (avg cents per km)			Total Costs			
			Depreciation	Interest on Loan	Other Costs* see note page 9	Fuel	Tyres	Service / Repairs	Average cents per km	Avg \$ per week	Annual cost	5 year cost
<b>Medium Car Class</b>												
Ford Mondeo Ambiente 2.0L Turbo 6sp Auto 5dr hatch	\$32,790	\$36,853	\$78.82	\$26.88	\$44.19	10.66	1.02	7.07	70.72	\$204.00	\$10,607.75	\$53,038.73
Hyundai i40 Active 2.0L 6sp Auto 4dr sedan	\$31,990	\$36,029	\$87.36	\$26.29	\$42.60	9.75	1.42	5.99	71.33	\$205.75	\$10,698.90	\$53,494.49
Hyundai Sonata Active 2.4L 6sp Auto 4dr sedan	\$29,990	\$33,969	\$79.01	\$24.80	\$42.08	10.79	1.50	6.10	68.97	\$198.95	\$10,345.61	\$51,728.05
Mazda6 Sport Safety 2.5L 6sp Auto 4dr sedan	\$33,770	\$37,862	\$75.33	\$27.61	\$44.62	8.58	1.44	7.25	68.43	\$197.39	\$10,264.27	\$51,321.34
Mazda6 Touring Safety 2.2L T/diesel 6sp Auto 4dr sedan	\$41,740	\$46,071	\$98.73	\$33.54	\$47.59	7.47	1.44	8.94	80.21	\$231.36	\$12,030.78	\$60,153.88
Skoda Octavia 103 TSI Ambition Plus 1.4L Turbo 7sp DSG 5dr hatch	\$26,790	\$30,673	\$70.58	\$22.42	\$45.15	7.34	1.62	6.80	63.65	\$183.60	\$9,547.26	\$47,736.32
Subaru Liberty 2.5L CVT 4dr sedan	\$29,990	\$33,969	\$66.90	\$24.80	\$44.84	9.49	1.93	9.93	68.69	\$198.14	\$10,303.30	\$51,516.50
Toyota Camry Atara S 2.5L 6sp Auto 4dr sedan	\$29,490	\$31,990	\$77.69	\$23.37	\$36.40	10.14	1.39	5.48	64.67	\$186.54	\$9,700.01	\$48,500.03
Toyota Camry Atara S Hybrid 2.5L CVT 4dr sedan	\$32,490	\$34,990	\$78.10	\$25.54	\$36.97	6.76	1.39	5.54	62.44	\$180.10	\$9,365.26	\$46,826.30
Volkswagen Passat 118 TSI 1.8L Turbo 7sp DSG 4dr sedan	\$38,990	\$43,239	\$101.22	\$31.49	\$47.64	10.16	1.51	8.39	82.59	\$238.24	\$12,388.23	\$61,941.13

Figure 1.2 – Standard Private Car Ownership Costs,

Source: RACQ

Changes to parking availability in the Lismore Hospital precinct as a result of the implementation of the Lismore Base Hospital Precinct Travel Plan, is another factor likely to incentivise greater patronage on this service.

Lismore Base Hospital, a major source of employment in Lismore, is undergoing a major development to better respond to the increasing health demands of the population. As part of the Stage 3A development, staff numbers are expected to increase from 850 per day to 956 per day and outpatients and visitors to increase from 600 per day to 710 per day. Additional car-parking will be partly provided by the construction of a multi-storey car-park, however, this will be paid parking and will not cover the entire workforce. Lismore City Council will also increase the number of on street paid parking sites and introduce 2 hour limited parking in the streets around the hospital. As a result, staff will be forced to park a large distance away or use the on street paid parking facilities available.

## Implementation Plan

It is proposed that the Lennox Head/Ballina – Lismore commuter route be trialled over a 12-18 month period, along with the extension of the existing service between Casino and Lismore. During this time data will be collected on each route and assessed at the end of the period to determine usage and viability of the service.

These routes will run two trips per day (depart and return) and will commence and drop off at regular commuting times (at or before 8:30am and departing at 5pm) (see figure 1.2).

Stops along each route will be limited to the major employment providers as well as at the Lismore Transit Centre ensuring that the journeys are as quick as possible.

These services will be applied for and managed by the Buslines Group, who currently service these localities.

<b>Table 4: Number of respondents travelling by arrival time and site</b>							
Arrival times at Work/Study sites	7.00am	7.30am	8.00am	8.30am	9.00am	9.30am	10.00am
Lismore CBD(LBH, Council sites, TAFE, Community Health)	12	17	35	42	26	8	0
Southern Cross University-Lismore Campus	8	12	93	121	287	46	90
Lismore City Council	1	3	31	13	4	0	0
Wollongbar TAFE	1	8	8	14	9	3	1

<b>Table 5: Number of respondents travelling by finishing time and site</b>							
Finishing times of work/study sites	3.00pm	3.30pm	4.00pm	4.30pm	5.00pm	5.30pm	6.00pm
Lismore CBD (LBH, Council sites, TAFE, Community Health)	14	8	27	37	38	13	14
Southern Cross University-Lismore Campus	61	34	124	88	200	68	42
Lismore City Council	0	0	3	21	16	7	2
Wollongbar TAFE	3	2	6	10	14	4	4

Figure 1.2 Travel times for large employers in Lismore  
Source: Lismore Commuter Hub Report

### Proposed New Routes

Departure: 7:30 – Arrival 8:30 (appendix 1)

**Lennox Head → Ballina → Southern Cross University → Lismore Base Hospital → Lismore Transit Centre**

Departure: 17:00 – Arrival 18:00

**Lismore Transit Centre → Lismore Base Hospital → Southern Cross University → Ballina → Lennox Head**

Note: This route will incidentally service other local employment providers such as Northern Rivers Social Development Council, St Vincent's Hospital, and Lismore City Council.

Departure: 7:30 – Arrival 08:30

**Byron Bay → Lismore Transit Centre → Lismore Base Hospital → Southern Cross University**

Departure: 17:00 – Arrival 18:00

**Southern Cross University → Lismore Base Hospital → Lismore Transit Centre → Byron Bay**

### Proposed 670 Route Extension

Departure: 7:30 – Arrival 8:30 (appendix 2)

**Casino → Lismore Transit Centre → Lismore Base Hospital → Southern Cross University**

Departure: 17:00 – Arrival 18:00

**Casino → Lismore Transit Centre → Lismore Base Hospital → Southern Cross University**

Note: This service is proposed to be extended to provide connectivity to major employers and increase patronage.

## Project promotion strategy

To assist in increasing take up of the service, a coordinated marketing campaign will be rolled out through each of the major employment sites in Lismore.

This promotion strategy will be coordinated by the Northern Rivers Social Development Council's Transport Development Officer, and will target staff of major employers, as well as members of the general public that would benefit from the commuting service.

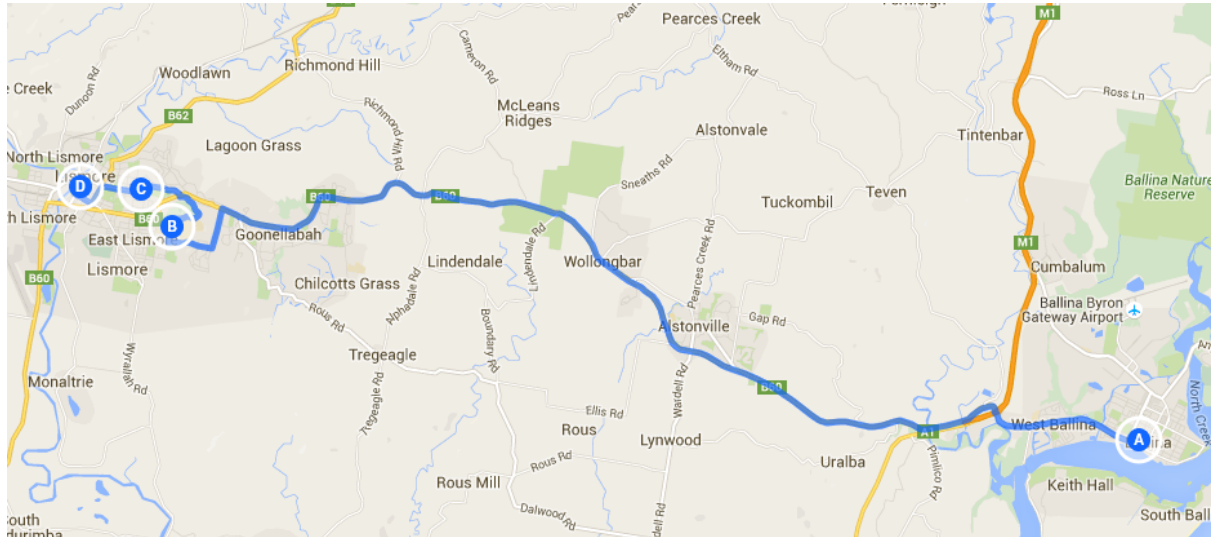
## References

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2. <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/b2b/publications/nsw-transport-masterplan-final.pdf>
3. <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/b2b/publications/northern-rivers-regional-transport-plan.pdf>
4. <http://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/health-promotion/files/2014/01/124.pdf>
5. <http://www.racq.com.au/cars-and-driving/cars/owning-and-maintaining-a-car/car-running-costs>

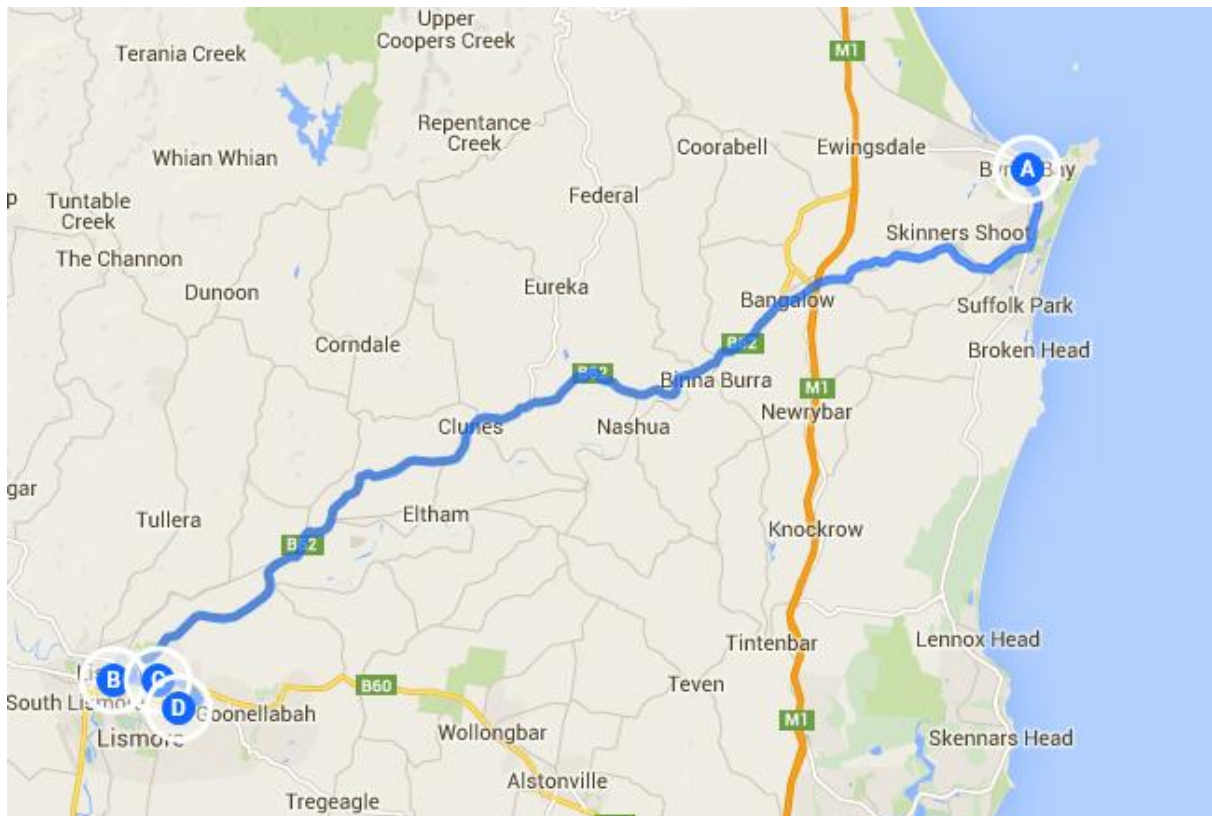
# Appendices

## Route Maps

### 1. Ballina to Lismore Route

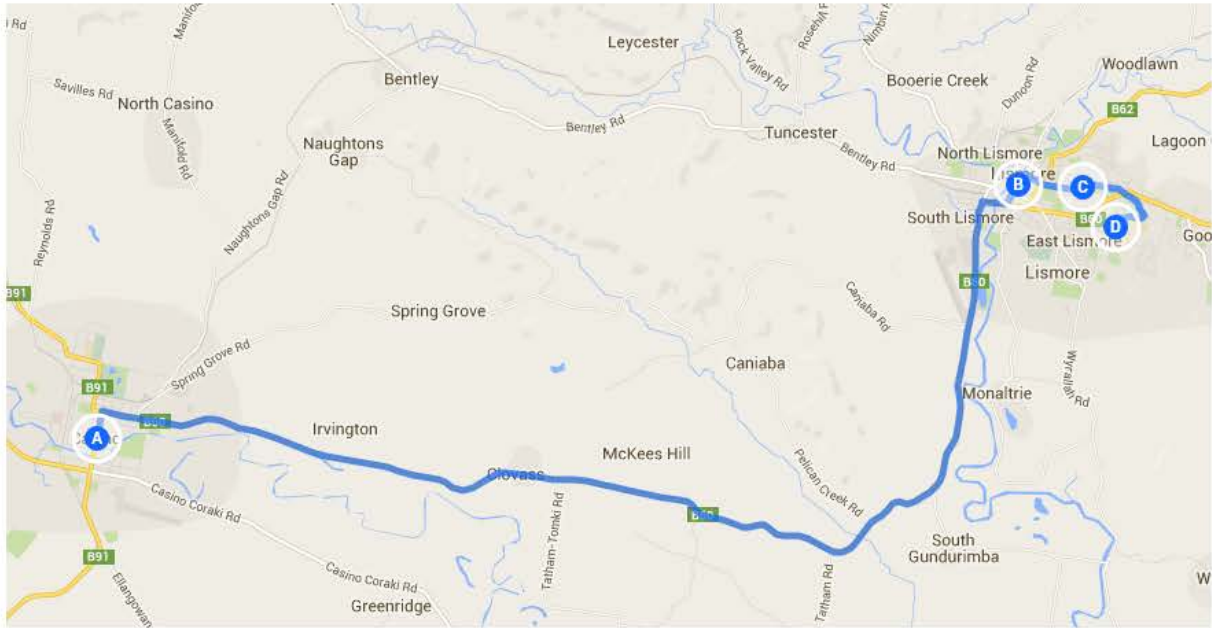


### 2. Byron Bay to Lismore Route





### 3. Casino to Lismore Route Extension





## Letters of support

enquiries refer  
**Helen Carpenter**  
in reply please quote  
16/33275

11 May 2016

Transport for NSW  
18 Lee Street  
CHIPPENDALE NSW 2008



Dear Sir/ Madam

**Re: Letter of Support for Lismore Sustainable Transport Group Commuter Bus Plan 2016**

I am writing to express Ballina Shire Council's in-principle support of the Commuter Bus Plan 2016, as proposed by the Lismore Sustainable Transport Group. Ballina Shire Council has reviewed the planned commuter routes between Lennox Head/ Ballina and Lismore, Byron Bay and Lismore, and Casino and Lismore, and would support the proposed 12- 18 month trial.

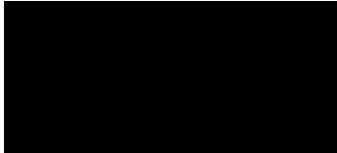
The Ballina Shire Local Government Area is characterised by a significant portion of residents who travel outside the area to work and study, and as having a high level of socio-economic disadvantage. Many existing public transport services in the area do not accommodate commuters and Ballina has a low proportion of people using public transport. The development of additional and more direct bus routes to key commuter areas would have many benefits for Ballina Shire including:

- Encouraging change in mode of transport to public transport;
- Reduced traffic and traffic congestion on highly travelled routes to Lismore Base Hospital and Southern Cross University;
- Provision of a safe, reliable and affordable transport option for Lismore Base Hospital employees;
- Provision of a safe, reliable and affordable transport option for Lismore Base hospital clients and visitors;
- Promotion of active transport options linking to bus service pick up and drop off locations; and
- Improved safety, reliability and affordability of transport for many Southern Cross University students.

Ballina Council considers this a valuable trial project as it will address a much needed public transport service. The project is also consistent with Council's Road Safety Strategy (2014/15 – 2023/24), and it's identified actions for exploring and supporting sustainable transport initiatives. As a key stakeholder for the project, Ballina Council is committed to support the Commuter Bus Plan through promotion of the service within the Shire Local Government Area.

If you have any enquiries in regard to this matter please contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Helen Carpenter  
Road Safety Officer  
Civil Services



**Home Assistance & Regional Transport Services**  
**PO Box 1788 LISMORE NSW 2480**

[www.hartservices.org.au](http://www.hartservices.org.au)  
02 6628 6000

12/05/2016

Attn: Transport for New South Wales

To whom it may concern,

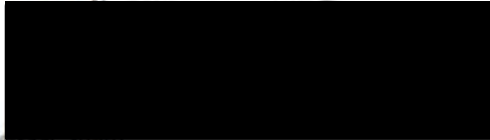
This is a formal letter of support for the "Commuter Bus Plan 2016" as developed by the Lismore Sustainable Transport Working Group. As a founding member of this group and an organisation that works across the Northern Rivers region, HART services whole heartedly endorses the recommendations in this plan.

Our region is growing quickly and people are looking for ways to travel to Lismore, the service centre of the region, to take up employment and connect to services. Our regional status already provides a high level of transport disadvantage in comparison to the more dense urban areas, so plans such as this go a long way to encouraging employment and connecting community.

The "Commuter Bus Plan 2016" will go a long way to promoting sustainable transport options and encouraging cultural change in our community. Having relied on cars for so long, we need to continually challenge the assumption that one person in a private vehicle is the best way to commute in our area. With each person who contributes to and participates in this project, we are taking another step towards generational change that must occur for future generations to be more sustainable.

Please call me if you would like to discuss this proposal further.

Sincerely,



Isaac Smith  
Operations Manager

Home Assistance & Regional Transport Services Inc.  
37 Converys Lane, Wollongbar NSW 2477  
Email: [REDACTED]

ABN: 21 023 484 120

Fax: [REDACTED]



Mayor's Office



LISMORE CITY COUNCIL

29 April 2016

Transport for NSW

To Whom it May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Lismore Commuter Bus Plan**

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to provide written support for this application for funding for a 12-18 month trial of the Lismore Commuter Bus as outlined in the Lismore Commuter Bus Plan.

This Plan has been developed by the Lismore Sustainable Transport Group with the support of Northern Rivers Buslines to encourage greater use of public transport in our region. The proposal would ease traffic congestion and reduce motor vehicle accidents particularly on the Bruxner Highway and Bangalow Road. Only yesterday an accident involving six cars and a motorcycle on Bruxner Highway to the east of Lismore held up morning peak hour traffic for more than an hour.

Journey to work data from 2011 data indicates that more than 5000 people travel to Lismore each day for work from Ballina, Byron Bay and Casino. Most of these people travel as a driver in their own vehicle. Their work hours are often the regular 8.30 or 9am until 5pm. Therefore a bus from the three centres of Ballina, Byron Bay and Casino at those morning and evening times would provide an alternative for many commuters.

Health is the major employer in the Lismore LGA so I am pleased to see that the local hospitals are supportive of this plan. Similarly Southern Cross University and TAFE would be major employers of interest. Council's own workforce also consists of many staff who travel from these centres too. As a Council that is also committed to a reduction in carbon emissions, Lismore City Council also sees this plan as a win-win for our environment. Accordingly, I am happy to confirm that Council would promote the commuter bus to staff.

I therefore commend this proposal for a 12-18 month trial to you and await news of its success with great interest.

Yours faithfully

Jenny Dowell  
Mayor

Council Chambers

Telephone

Facimile 02 6625 0400

Email Council@lismore.nsw.gov.au



Alex Lewers  
Northern Rivers Social Development Council  
Keen St  
LISMORE NSW 2480

16 May 2016

Dear Alex,

**RE:** Commuter Bus Plan 2016

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Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers (RDA NR) supports the Lismore Sustainable Transport Group's Commuter Bus Plan 2016.

RDA NR agrees with the rationale behind this project that aims to reduce the traffic congestion, motor vehicle accidents and carbon emissions and encourages greater use of public transport.

There have been numerous transport studies conducted in the Northern Rivers region and a key finding in all has been that public transport options for commuters are limited and those that do exist are not attractive to commuters because of the time taken for each commute.

The Commuter Bus Plan has dedicated 'express' routes from population hubs of Byron Bay, Ballina and Casino to key employment destinations in Lismore, namely Southern Cross University, Lismore City Council, Lismore Base Hospital, and the CBD at times suitable for workers.

The project also aligns with the following key aspects of the Northern Rivers Regional Plan 2013-2016:

Priority 1: Connected communities

- 1.1: *Develop an integrated regional transport plan to address the Northern Rivers' intra-regional transport infrastructure shortfalls.*
- 1.3 *Support initiatives to use existing or ageing infrastructure to meet future needs*

Priority 5: Inclusive communities

- 5.1 *Implement the recommendations of the Northern Rivers Regional Social Plan 2013-2018*

Priority 7: A collaborative region

- 7.1 *Coordinate the region's economic development, planning, promotion, facilitation and development activities using cluster (industry) and/or place-based approaches*



An Australian Government Initiative



A NSW Government Initiative

3 May 2016



**Health**  
Northern NSW  
Local Health District

**Re: Support for commuter bus services in Northern NSW**

Dear Transport for NSW,

We are writing on behalf the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSW LHD) to support the introduction of commuter bus services between Lismore and the coastal towns of Ballina/Lennox Head; Lismore and Byron Bay; and an extension of the Lismore to Casino route, currently operated by Northern Rivers Buslines.

Existing services are predominantly orientated around school travel times, rather than 8.30-5 workers, and targeted commuter bus services are seen as a solution to this.

Surveys conducted in 2006, 2008/9 and 2012, indicate Ballina and Lennox Head as the most highly travelled routes to Lismore Base Hospital and other large employers such as Southern Cross University.

More direct bus routes that suit work times were seen to be the best incentive for people to use public transport.

The introduction of a targeted bus service between these localities would be beneficial to reducing road congestion and greenhouse gas emissions and would help improve staff health through active travel modes to bus drop off / pick up locations.

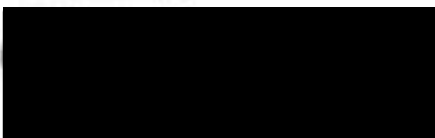
Meetings between various stakeholders including the Northern NSW Local Health District executive, the Northern Rivers Social Development Council, Northern Rivers Buslines, Southern Cross University and the Lismore and Ballina councils indicate support for such services.

The introduction of paid parking throughout the Lismore Base Hospital precinct is a further incentive for staff to use public transport, and offering a commuter bus service would provide them with an affordable and safe option for work travel.

In light of the NSW Government's commitment to reducing obesity rates in adults by 5% by 2020, the NNSW LHD sees the introduction of a commuter bus service as one of the step towards achieving this.

We are happy to meet with you or provide further information in support of this project.

Yours sincerely,



Jillian Adams  
Manager, Health Promotions  
Northern NSW Local Health District

**HEALTH PROMOTION**

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Transport for NSW  
NSW 2124  
13 May 2016

To whom it may concern:

**Re: Lismore Sustainable Transport Group Commuter Bus Plan**

I am writing to express Northern Rivers Social Development Council's (NRSDC) in-principle support of the Commuter Bus Plan 2016, as proposed by the Lismore Sustainable Transport Group.

NRSDC has reviewed the planned commuter routes between Lennox Head/ Ballina and Lismore, Byron Bay and Lismore, and Casino and Lismore, and support the proposed 12- 18 month trial.

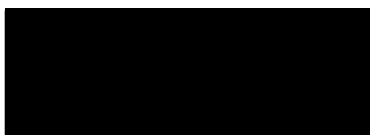
NRSDC is a community-based not-for-profit organisation that promotes fairness and social inclusion in the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

NRSDC supports the project's aims to:

- Reduce traffic congestion and motor vehicle accidents along main routes that service the township of Lismore (Ballina road and Bruxner Hwy)
- Reduce emissions caused by the commuting trips
- Provide greater access to public transport for commuters
- Increase use of public transport in the Northern Rivers

NRSDC is committed to promoting the commuting services should it be approved to our more than 140 staff as well as the general community as a means of building patronage.

Yours sincerely



Tony Davies  
Chief Executive Officer  
Northern Rivers Social Development Council  
PO Box 5419 East Lismore NSW 2480  
[Redacted]