

**Submission
No 34**

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

Organisation:

Name: Ms Beth Shelley

Position:

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Submission 34: Ms Beth Shelley

To whom it may concern,

Submission to the Enquiry into Rail Services in Regional NSW:

We've been told by successive governments that they can't afford to pay for railway services. According to the ARUP Report of 2012, a big part of the reason for the closure of the Casino to Murwillumbah line was the high proportion of elderly and other concession holders in this area. This means that our community has a high level of need for public transport.

The Deloitte Report states, "Mobility is a key aspect of social inclusion as, without it, individuals are likely to have difficulty finding work, travelling to places of education, accessing health services, buying affordable groceries or even participating in social activities".

There are many, very sick people who can't get their healthcare needs met in Lismore. They have to go to Brisbane or the Gold Coast and find this difficult if they are unable to drive themselves. The available buses take hours and are an exhausting experience for a sick person. Many elderly and the poor are stuck at home because they don't own a car or drive because of health issues. Social isolation is a constant element in research on illness and death.

Please find attached a recent letter from our local newspaper from someone who found it difficult to find transport to visit her family. As a volunteer at the local bus transit centre I've spoken to many people who couldn't find the public transport they needed. I spoke to one young woman who wanted to take her grandmother to Sydney to see family but as there was no wheelchair access on the bus between Lismore and the train at Casino she couldn't find a way to take her.

I also worked at Casino Youth Service ten years ago and had many young Aboriginal teenagers visit the drop in service. None of them had bikes and their families didn't have cars but a local youthworker told me that they used to be able to catch the train to the beach at Byron. Without the train they were stuck in Casino with no transport to get around the region in a day.

Recent statistics show that road accidents in the Northern Rivers have cost \$450 million over the last 5 years. Rail is approximately 200 times safer than travelling by road. NRRAG have collected over 3,500 signatures on a petition advocating a commuter railway service. A recent survey by the Northern Star called '10 things that really, really need to change in Lismore'. The number one issue expressed in the survey was the need for public transport. These things conclusively show that this community supports and wants reinstatement of railway services.

Road usage is increasing at a rapid rate in our region and is leading to bottle necks, pollution, accidents but there is no alternative to road traffic. Around the world governments are looking to create rail services to provide more environmentally and socially responsible transport for their citizens and we already have the line as a central part of our local infrastructure.

Given the same number of vehicles are crossing the border into Northern NSW every day as entering Sydney every day, it would be advantageous for our region economically and socially if the government-reinstated the Casino to Murwillumbah railway line and extended it

to the Gold Coast. We are a rural area but not a remote area and have a fast-growing population and are close to the large populations of Southern Queensland.

There are many reasons why the Northern Rivers community need and deserve a commuter railway system and connecting to Queensland.

Thank you,

Beth Shelley



Government embarks on upgrading public transport for Sydney commuters by putting plans in place for a light rail system, regional NSW is being left behind yet again.

I have been invited to a family reunion this weekend and I have no way of getting there via public transport options as there aren't any.

So getting to my family reunion is going to be somewhat of a challenge.

The only way I can get to Brisbane is by catching the XPT from Kyogle at 2.46am, which is certainly not a

suitable option, or by catching a Train Link bus at 7.34pm, which doesn't arrive at Roma Street until 9.35pm Queensland time.

I then have to take further public transport out to Cleveland, on the bayside of Brisbane. Either way I will be travelling alone in the early hours of the morning or in the late hours of the evening, which I feel is unacceptable.

Why is it regional areas of NSW have to suffer from the lack of government foresight?

— Gillian Lobegeier,
Goonellabah.

Lack of transport

I AM appalled at the lack of public transport in this region.

As the NSW State