

**Submission  
No 37**

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

**Organisation:**

**Name:** Mr Alan McGregor

**Position:**

**Date Received:** 20 July 2016

### **Submission 37: Mr Alan McGregor**

Dear Sir/Madame,

I'm writing my submission about the lack of appropriate, affordable and usable transport from Kyogle to all the main destinations that I have, as well as others in the area by public transport. I include the problems that visitors also have in getting to arrive at my residence from the Northern Rivers region and from South East Queensland.

I am on a disability support pension, and must rely on my driving to attend a range of medical specialists that I see regularly from Byron Bay, Brisbane, Lismore, and sometimes in Casino or elsewhere. I also have friends living near the Tweed and Byron Coast, in Lismore, and mostly in Brisbane. I live in Kyogle, but have for several years experienced residency in Burringbar, Crabbes Creek and Lismore; all these places assessable to the railway corridor.

More recently, some health issues have brought up the issues of losing some sight, as well as increasing problems with narcolepsy, and other medical problems that make driving difficult, and even travel by the buses in the area take too much time, and there's nothing for return journeys after around the mid afternoon.

I have a carer who can't drive, and a fuel voucher would be of no real value. I already receive IPTAAS funding for some of my Brisbane specialists, but would rather have daytime rail services that return to Kyogle in the evening. One of these could link with the Casino XPT. The Trainlink coach leaves too early in the afternoon, takes longer than the train, and leaves one stranded in Casino. There is no way of returning to Kyogle in the evening via the state's railway services.

Most of my destinations are near railway stations that have been closed since 2004. When I arrived in the Northern Rivers in 1989, there was still rail services that stopped at stations where I have lived. Now the population has greatly increased, I would have thought that there would be improved railway services, not their removal.

Friends who use wheelchairs also can not come to visit using the rail time table we have. They would not be able to go to the coast from here, although that was once possible by rail. It makes no difference having onboard toilets on buses when a person with mobility problems cannot access it. We need to eat and take medications while in transit, and buses do not allow this either.

There are many things, such as reading and using a laptop computer that are facilitated onboard a rail vehicle. Cyclists also can easily board with their bicycles, as well as people with shopping, children, and even motorised mobility scooters.

There are many people who can't or won't use buses except for a short duration. The exhaust fumes were horrific when attempting to walk in Lismore's CBD. The road tolls are also horrific in this region. There should be less traffic on the roads, and less pollution if we get more people to use railway services.

I have not been to the local markets in years, and find it more and more difficult as time passes without a properly integrated rail-based public transport system. I cannot see any alternative but to have an equitable transport system priced similarly to the Bathurst Bullet, where the distance of 230 kilometres to Sydney has the same

distance as Lismore to Brisbane by rail. It is also only \$15 return, whereas it is about four times that here for a return railway journey to Brisbane.

We have much traffic throughout the region indicating that there are enough people to have several daytime rail services on the Murwillumbah line, at least to Mullumbimby/Byron area. Rail is usually subsidised as it is in Sydney. The buses are heavily subsidised too, so it cannot be said that there isn't enough funding to run rail services.

The safest most direct route for people in the western section of the Northern Rivers to Brisbane or to southern NSW towns is by rail. The roads are not conducive to any regular bus services from here into Queensland, and are not good for travel across the region to Murwillumbah, Lismore, and to the coast. The best solution is to engage local bus and community services with an integrated rail-based system to enable the large number of daily commuters to use public transport in a coordinated well-timed way.

Yours Sincerely,

Alan McGregor