

**Submission
No 40**

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

Organisation:

Name: Mr Chris Dunkerley

Position:

Date Received: 20 July 2016

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My submission is one from an individual, age 66, a resident of Sawtell, who travels regularly on the North Coast XPT, and assists his mother-in-law, 92, onto the same train.

Addressing the terms of reference:

(a) Specific issues relating to the transport needs of seniors and disadvantaged people in rural and regional NSW:

With family in Sydney and Newcastle, with social links, medical/dental specialities, and with official duties in NSW wide organisations that require attendance in those centres several times a year, a suitable public transport system is needed. Driving is possible for now, but becoming beyond me (and certainly beyond my mother in law), and air is prohibitively expensive.

(b) Accessibility of current public transport services in rural and regional NSW;

The XPT service picks up and drops off at Sawtell station - with easy walking distance of our home. There is ramp access to the station, and the access to the train is level and without serious impediment. Within the train movement is easily possible, both to access and egress, to go for the toilet and canteen, and for relaxation of any sitting discomfort. These are of prime importance for my mother in law. She can get help with bags and movement by the staff. Air, and the often mooted alternative, coaches (do not provide all those things). Sawtell station, which services 20,000 people to the south of Coffs Harbour, and is always used, must be kept - certainly it was one the key factors that led us to buy our home here.

(c) Potential strategies to improve access, including better alignment between different modes of transport, available routes and timetabling generally;

Timetabling appears to revolve around right of way access, and limitation in rolling stock, rather than sensible timetabling. An extra train (4 per day) would help with this, and would better tracks and more passing loops.

On the odd occasions that a trip to Brisbane or Gold Coast is required, the user unfriendly timetable makes it not only very unpleasant but potentially unsafe (eg. Roma Street Station in the very early hours, with no connection transport).

(d) Support that can be provided to seniors and disadvantaged people to assist with the costs of private transport where public transport is either unavailable or unable to meet the needs of these groups; and current discounts for seniors, and pensioners, are adequate. Price for sleeper use however is prohibitive, and needs attention.

(e) Any other related matters.

The XPT is at its life. It needs urgent replacement, with a high speed train, preferably very fast train, with modern conveniences.

Chris Dunkerley

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20 July, 2016