

**Submission  
No 43**

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

**Organisation:**

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**Position:**

**Date Received:** 20 July 2016

### **Submission 43: Mr Trevor Duffie**

Lifting the line from Murwillumbah to Casino will hinder future development prospects and disadvantage a significant portion of the population including seniors and the disadvantaged.

It will be cheaper to refurbish the existing line for a Light Rail commuter service than the previous reports indicate. The Light trains have lighter loads than conventional trains. Lighter loads mean that bridges need not be built to such a high specification.

A Light Rail Service would accommodate all classes of people. The financial boon to one of the most picturesque regions of Australia is hard to estimate but it would be huge. Potentially it could provide for millions of people with that number set to increase year by year.

If the corridor was to be dedicated to walkers and cyclists only a small percentage of the population would be able to benefit. Few people would want to walk the 100 or so kilometres let alone ride a bicycle. On equity grounds a rail commuter service would better serve the needs of all including the cycling enthusiasts. Provision for carrying bicycles is a common occurrence overseas in Europe.

The prospect of breathing new life into the economically depressed towns along the track is exciting with the region being currently one of the poorest socio-economic regions in the country.

Taking huge numbers of travellers off the winding roads through the hills must have a beneficial effect on our roads which are becoming busier year by year. Reducing the potential for accidents on these roads could save billions of dollars in the years to come.

Even the idea of eventually linking the Gold Coast Airport with the Region is a far sighted idea.

The existing corridor must be retained at all costs. To lose this line to other forms of development will ensure that the track will never be regained. We only have to look to the problems associated with reinstating a rail line to link Brisbane to the Gold Coast. With the benefit of hindsight the Queensland Government would never have lifted that line.

Towns such as Murwillumbah would be viable again with services which could allow country students to select their schools of choice so accessing real subject choices. Tourists taking in the scenery by commuter train and spending money in the region would add vitality to an ailing local economy.

So on so many grounds, the government should hasten slowly. Trains can ferry passengers in comfort safely and attract many of the tourists who arrive without cars. Walkers, cyclists, seniors, disadvantaged, old and young all will enjoy trains. Leave the trucks to carry freight but give the human freight a choice that in turn will avoid problems on our roads.

Thank you for allowing me to make some suggestions. I have been a School Teacher for 50 years and have worked in four countries. Infrastructure is the key to prosperity.