

**Submission  
No 127**

## **INQUIRY INTO THE CLOSURE OF CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH RAIL SERVICES**

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**Date Received:** 02/06/2004

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**Subject:**

**Summary**

**GPSC4 GPSC4 - North Coast Rail Submission**

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**From:** nrderm <nrderm@ozemail.com.au>  
**To:** <gpscno4@parliament.nsw.gov.au>  
**Date:** 2/06/2004 3:39 PM  
**Subject:** North Coast Rail Submission

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Dear Sir / madam,

Please find enclosed my submission to the enquiry into the North Coast Rail Line and its future.

As a doctor located in Lismore providing a specialist Dermatology service to the Northern Rivers area, I would like to add my comments to the decision of the NSW state government to close the Casino to Murwillumbah branch rail line. Lismore is the "capital" of the Northern Rivers area and is the location of most of the area's specialist health services. On the basis of this, in addition to the other issues well covered by other writers, the decision to amputate the rail service that runs through our town is a betrayal to citizens and patients.

I have patients who need to access me as the only Specialist Dermatologist between Port Macquarie and Tweed Heads. They come from Byron Bay, Casino, Grafton, Coffs Harbour and many other places. Previously they were denied rail access by the absurd times the trains ran. One brave soul used to come up from Coffs on the train - he'd catch the train the day before and arrive in Lismore about 7 pm and stay overnight. He'd see me the next day and then have to wait til midnight to get the train back again.

I also need to refer patients with extensive skin cancers for radiotherapy to the John Flynn Hospital in Tugun and specialist services for skin surgery at the Gold Coast and in Brisbane. To have conveniently timed and efficient rail service from the Northern Rivers north to Brisbane and the Gold Coast would be a boon for my patients and those of other doctors. I know that some of my patient's drive or get a lift to Robina and take the train from there into Brisbane to see doctors, because they would much rather travel by rail than road when they can.

My point is this; My patient's should not be denied public transport to specialist health facilities because they live in the country rather than in a major city. I know they will travel to see me and other doctors by rail if the service is fast (money put into repairing bridges and straightening lines), runs at appropriate times (not just between 6 PM and 1 AM as it did !) and can be extended ideally thru to the Gold Coast to make it a really useful line (how many people do you think would use the Pacific Highway if it ended at Murwillumbah ?)

The Carr-Costa conspiracy to wreck the long heritage of country rail transport in north-east NSW is unspeakably stupid and citizens and patients need to stand up and challenge them.

Thank you

Dr Ken Gudmundsen  
Specialist Dermatologist