

**Submission
No 214**

INQUIRY INTO THE CLOSURE OF CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH RAIL SERVICES

Organisation: Community Awareness Task Force
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Date Received: 04/06/2004

Subject:

Summary

GPSC4 GPSC4 - 4th June 04 RAIL SERVICES SUBMISSION

From: "Jacob Baldwin" <adcnet@linknet.com.au>
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Date: 4/06/2004 3:52 PM
Subject: 4th June 04 RAIL SERVICES SUBMISSION

4th June 04

The Chair GPSC 4
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
Sydney 2000

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN :**Re Submission concerning the closure of NSW. Rail Services.**

The CATF is a consumer group comprising of people with disabilities and the general communities of the Far North Coast promoting disability awareness. As the President I am making the following submission on the organisations behalf.

on May the 17th on a return trip from Sydney it became clear to me that the effectiveness of ceasing the Lismore Rail Service was incorrectly researched. The closure of the of the Lismore and subsequent services will place I heavy burden on the Northern Rivers population in areas of ;-

1. Safety

The region has a ever increasing Aged Population that find travelling long distances tiresome and dangerous. Many find the train more direct and manageable. Transferring to coaches in the darkness is an OH&S issue for them when you take fatigue levels and physical limitations that accompany the aging process. E.g on my recent train trip from Sydney to Lismore via Casino an elderly gentleman had to lay next to my wheelchair access position. He had pain in his legs and needed to have them straight out was triply inconvenience when he had to wait in the cold for the Coach to depart and he had to keep his legs bent for a further distance whilst siting in the Coach. Legal suits could be won due to not considering these issues.

2. Access /EQUITY

Lismore and Murwillimbah are regional centres and rely on train travel. This Centres have high and increasing population of people who are aged and disabled. Train travel is safer and more convenient to these groups. Other forms of long distance travel are cost prohibitive. Eg. On my return train trip most of Cabin "c" passengers were aged. Stopping the Service to these centres is discouraging for the aged and people with disabilities who cannot use other forms of transport due to economic viability. Thus there is no equity in the forms transport available to these groups. They are being forced to be unfairly inconvenienced.

3. Efficiency

Providing Coaches and Special Purpose Taxis instead of Station disembarking is not an economically efficient way to transport the people who are aged and disabled When the Coaches have to come from the Gold Coast to

go to Lismore or Murwillimbah. In the case of a Wheelchair user it would be more efficient to use a Special Purpose Vehicle [SPV] Taxi instead of an Accessible Coach. It is often very difficult to get a SPV Taxi because They are often the only vehicle servicing wheelchair passengers and cannot travel long distances to wait for trains, because it cuts the service to people in their proscribed areas.

Accessible Coaches can only seat two wheelchairs, this can be an issue when more wheelchair users travel by train. In my situation on my return trip to Lismore via Cassino, I was loaded onto an accessible Coach in Cassino to take me to Lismore station. My companion and I were the only on board for this trip. How much could be saved in time, cost and discomfort if the appropriate rail services where operational? in the areas where train services have been recently stopped?

4. The environment

Stopping Rail services to MAJOR Rural Centres will prove disastrous to the environment in the long run I areas of :

1. Increased road traffic and the likelihood of more road accidents
2. Increased road/vehicle causing pollution
3. Increased consumer prices due to freight costs
4. Increased road repair costs due to increased heavy vehicle usage.

There have been numerous Public Transport Consultations Our Group was involved in one of these throughout the Far North Coast, and overwhelmingly rail Transport was favoured and asked to be locals reinstated. For the NSW Government to ignore the cries from its constituents is a blatant disregard for their lives and well being. We join the many voices who want affirmative action I the reinstatement of Rural Train services, including local services to a rapidly growing population.

By the year 2015 a quarter of Australia's population will be living on the north coast of NSW. By the year 2025 over 50% of Australia population will be considered Aged. Why are we making things more difficult for our aging and disabled population?

Yours Sincerely



Jacob F Baldwin
President
on behalf of the
Community Awareness Task Force

ABOUT CATF

The Community Awareness Task Force (C.A.T.F.) was formed in 1978.

Re established in 1990 in the North Coast

The Community Awareness Task Force Incorporated (C.A.T.F.) was formed in 1996.

It's purpose then, as it is now, was to fulfil a need to educate the community about classified disabilities and related issues, as well as assisting people with disabilities become inclusive in society.

CATF was one of the first Organisations to bring about an awareness and acceptance of all issues relating to living with a classified disability.

The C.A.T.F. has been involved in developing numerous services and programs now widely accepted in the Australian Community.

Services developed:

- ☑ The instigation and development of “Consumer Information for the Disabled Resource Centre” the first government funded information centre for people with disabilities in Australia [1978] (now the concept [in different guises] is a reality in each state).
- ☑ The instigation of the “Attendant Care Concept in N.S.W.” in 1979(now nationally accepted and implemented).
- ☑ Assisting in the establishment of the first chapter of the “Disabled People’s International”

- ☑ Assisted in the establishment of DPI NSW. (now known as ‘People with Disabilities – NSW.’).
- ☑ Auspiced the Ability Trek – a 4 . 5 Year community awareness campaign around Australia in

a power wheelchair.

☑ Established the Disability Research, Access, Education, and Mobility (D.R.E.A.M.) Trust

☑ Collaborated and inspired the development of the A.D.D.A.P.T. Program for youth classified as disabled in Byron Bay

Over the last five years we have had

⇒ Three Disability Summits,

⇒ Produced A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN a model of disability inclusion for people with classified disabilities

⇒ Developed an Empowerment Day, an annual event,

⇒ Produced submission to establish The Far North Coast Consumer Disability Council

Our current activities are

✓ Promoting the establishment of The Far North Coast Consumer Disability Council

✓ Instigating research and education into the abuse of drugs in the field of Mental Illness and ADDHC

✓ Held the third Disability Summit on the topic of CARE The Need for a Charter for Clients/Consumers of Care.

✓ Promoting the development of a Care Charter for consumers of care services.

✓ Instigating the development of a pilot Transport service for the region that will be community owned, as a result of the CATF hosted Towards a Better Transport Consultation held throughout the North Coast.

Updated 3rd March 2004