

**Submission
No 83**

INQUIRY INTO THE CLOSURE OF CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH RAIL SERVICES

Organisation: Mirrabook Rail Services
Name: Mr Phillip Mackenzie
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Date Received: 03/06/2004

Subject

Summary

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31 May 2004

The Hon Jenny Gardiner, MLC
Chair
General Purpose Standing Committee No.4
Legislative Council Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Madam Chair,

**Reference: Parliamentary Enquiry into the Closure of the Casino to
Murwillumbah XPT Rail Service**

Attached please find my submission in response to this enquiry.

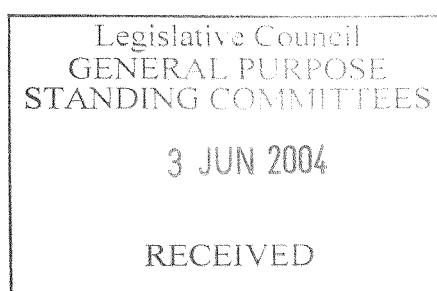
I request permission to attend one of the enquiry hearings in the Northern Rivers between 8 and 10 June 2004, in particular the hearing set down in Lismore for 9 June 2004 and would like to offer my services for comment and/or to offer any evidence the Enquiry may wish to take.

I hope I can be of assistance to you.

Yours faithfully,



Phillip Mackenzie
Mirrabook Rail Services.



SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY INTO THE CLOSING OF THE CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH XPT RAIL SERVICE

Reference NoJPSC4



Date: 31 May 2004

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SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY INTO THE CLOSING OF THE CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH XPT RAIL SERVICE

Contact Name: Phillip Mackenzie, Mirrabook Rail Services
Address: 515 Back Forest Road
Berry NSW 2535
Telephone: 02 4464 2665
Email: nswtrain@tpg.com.au

Madam Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the NSW Parliamentary Enquiry into the Closure of the Casino-Murwillumbah XPT Train Service.

I make this submission on behalf of myself, details as above and in the capacity of a proponent to operate a private daylight country commuter/tourist rail service on the Casino-Murwillumbah line.

For the past twelve months I have conducted my own observations into the feasibility of operating a daylight country commuter and tourist service for the residents and tourists alike. I have examined many aspects, such as:

- Population and social dynamics,
- Condition of the track and other infrastructure such as stations etc.,
- Scenic beauty,
- Tourism dynamics,
- History and potential,
- Extension of the line to Coolangatta and
- Support from the community.
- Current transport infrastructure and proposed rail closures.

I have concluded that this rail line is, without a doubt, one that has enormous potential as:

- A country commuter service,
- Tourist traffic - Gold Coast, Byron Bay, Kingscliff, Ballina.
- Freight potential – Murwillumbah, Gold Coast and Interstate
- A significant section of rail infrastructure that can have immense benefit for the Northern Rivers Region and beyond.

This submission consists of 5 parts:

1. Introduction; Rail Line Closures Statewide and other significant problems
2. Brief History of the Murwillumbah line
3. Proposals
4. Recommendations
5. Attachments – including media extracts

Acknowledgements:

1. Byways of Steam, Eveleigh press
2. Railways of Australia Yearbook
3. History of Railways, ARHS
4. International Rail Journal
5. Daily Telegraph
6. Transport News and Views, Combined Pensioners & Superannuants
7. The Land, Rural Press
8. The Sydney Morning Herald, Fairfax
9. Railway Digest.

PART 1

INTRODUCTION TO RAIL CLOSURES STATEWIDE AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS

The closure of the Casino-Murwillumbah line is but a symptom of numerous problems facing the NSW rail network, whether it is Countrylink or CityRail. These services, particularly Countrylink have been run down progressively by successive State governments since the 1970's, from about the time when the office of the Commissioner for Railways was abolished in 1968. NSW is rapidly declining in rail infrastructure and as such is becoming a liability to the economy of the state and the nation. Today many third world and developing nations are investing heavily in rail, e.g. Iran, India etc., (see Attachment F) yet NSW is falling into a rail infrastructure black hole due to forty years of neglect and State vandalism. i.e. the unnecessary removal of numerous sidings, crossing loops, safe working equipment, stations and platforms etc.

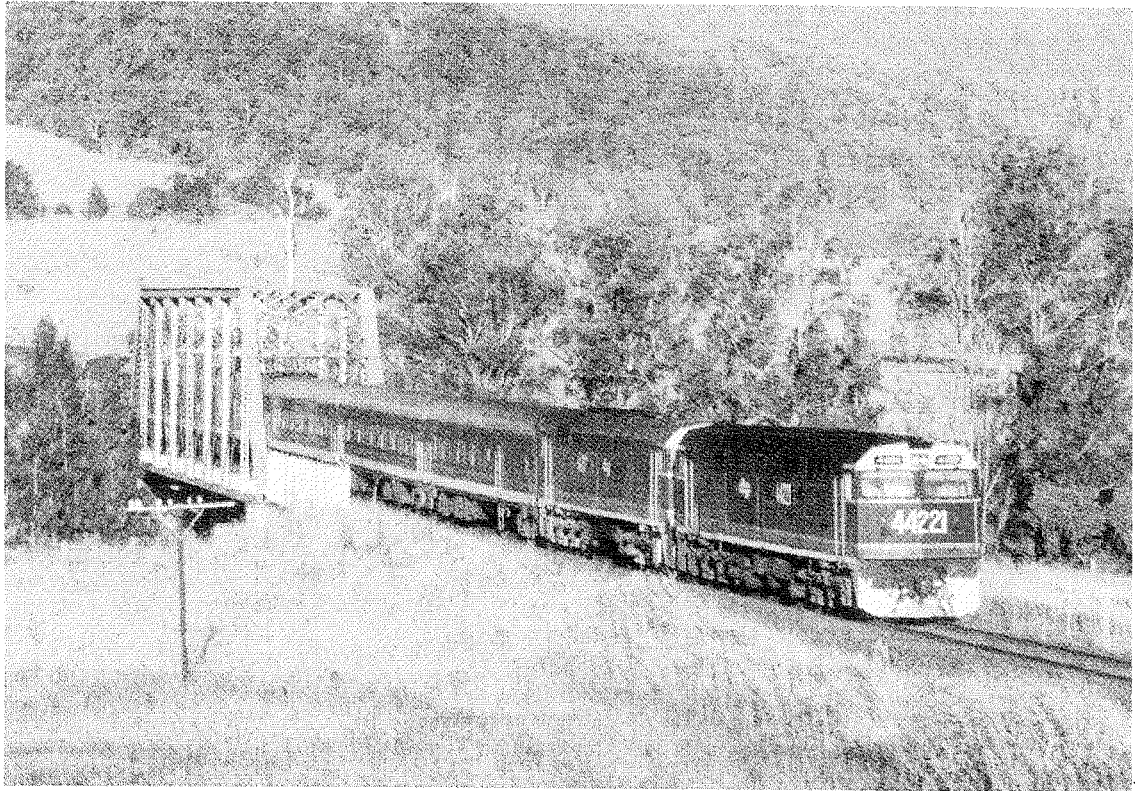
CityRail has by far benefited more than Countrylink in that time. The Richmond line, Macarthur line, Gosford to Newcastle, Sutherland to Dapto/Kiama electrification projects, new double deck carriages e.g. Tangaras and "v" double decker electric sets for longer runs. Suburban rail links to Sydney Airport, East Hills to Glenfield, Eastern Suburbs lines built. Now the line from Chatswood to Epping is under construction.

Countrylink has fared much worse in spite of a better financial return to the State government (32c/\$ compared to 28c/\$ for Cityrail). This includes interstate as well as intrastate rail services. Well-known trains like the Southern Aurora and Spirit of Progress (Sydney to Melbourne), the Brisbane Express, the Gold Coast Motorail and Gold Coast Overnight Express – both trains ran on the Casino/Murwillumbah line – gone in recent years.

Up to the 1970s there were some 27 air-conditioned daily country services running throughout N.S.W. This has been reduced to approximately 10-12 services (depending on the day of the week). Many of today's services run to fewer destinations, run less frequently, have fewer connections – mostly a bus connection now instead of rail previously, stop at fewer stations, and have less seat availability.

Additionally, all eight overnight mail trains have vanished into oblivion together with their branch line connections. Only a few connections have been replaced by a bus connection. Additionally, there are few carriages or train consists to provide extra services during peak travel periods, ie school holidays. The XPT has little room for additional capacity during peak times and cannot be divided to run on separate lines simultaneously.

THE LAST GOLD COAST MOTOR RAIL EXPRESS SERVICE 11.2.90



There is also a constant spiral of station closures, staff retrenchments or 'downgrading' of positions. Many depots have closed. Maintenance has been neglected or non-existent on many lines, (attachments E) together with other cost cutting measures, resulting in the current typical situation with Countrylink offices on the North Coast hanging by a thread.

EPITAPH OF COUNTRY RAIL LINE CLOSURES

The following is an honour roll of country rail lines either closed altogether or closed to passenger services, in the past 40 years – a few now only available for seasonal wheat traffic.

1. Picton - Mittagong loop line (closed – tourist trains only).
2. Wollongong - Moss Vale (freight & tourist trains only).
3. Bungendore – Captains Flat (closed).
4. Queanbeyan – Cooma – Bombala (closed, Tourist only to Michelago).
5. Yass Junction – Yass Town (closed).
6. Goulburn – Crookwell (closed).
7. Galong – Boorowa (closed).
8. Harden – Blayney (freight and tourist only).
9. Koorawatha – Grenfell (seasonal).
10. Cowra – Eugowra (closed – possibly seasonal).
11. Wagga – Tumbarumba (closed).
12. Cootamundra - Tumut and Batlow lines (closed).
13. Uranquinty – Kywong (closed).
14. The Rock – Urana (closed).
15. Temora – Lake Cargellico (seasonal).
16. Ungarie – Naradhan (seasonal).
17. Barmedman - Rankin Springs (seasonal)
18. West Wyalong – Burcher (seasonal).
19. Henty – Rand (closed).
20. Holbrook - Corowa Lines (closed).
21. Culcairn - Holbrook (closed).
22. Narranderra – Tocumwal (closed – possibly seasonal).
23. Griffith – Roto (closed – possibly seasonal).
24. Bogan Gate – Tottenham (seasonal).
25. Nyngan – Bourke (closed).
26. Nyngan – Cobar (closed).
27. Nevertire – Warren (closed).
28. Molong – Dubbo – via Yeovil (closed – possibly seasonal).
29. Dubbo – Coonamble (closed – possibly seasonal).
30. Leeton - Hay (closed - possibly seasonal).
31. Binnaway – Gwabegar (seasonal)
32. Narrabri – Walgett (seasonal).
33. Burren Junction - Pockataroo (closed – possibly seasonal).
34. Moree – Mungindi (seasonal)
35. Moree – Boggabilla (seasonal)
36. Moree – Inverell (seasonal)
37. Tamworth – Barraba (closed – possibly seasonal).
38. Dumeresque – Wallangarra (closed).
39. Wallerawang & Merrygoen (coal & cement only to Kandos)
40. Dunedoo – Coolah (closed).
41. Sandy Hollow – Merriwa (coal only)
42. Glenreagh – Dorrigo (closed and sold)
43. Tarana – Oberon (closed).
44. Toronto – Fassifern (closed)
45. Sutherland – Royal National Park (Tramway only).
46. Casino – Murwillumbah (closed 17.5.04)
47. Broadmeadow – Newcastle (closure and removal pending).

These closures leave only around half the rail system in NSW remaining, and a large part of that is for freight exclusively. Essentially only main trunk routes, a few cross country lines for freight and 15 seasonal wheat lines remain, and even these are currently under a cloud.

On top of this, the Carr government has sold off the only rail profit-making arm to private enterprise for \$350m. Hence this government will be far less inclined to fund any country rail infrastructure unless absolutely unavoidable. The sale of Freightcorp has cut off the supply of drivers to transfer to CityRail in the event of driver shortages. This has been further exacerbated by the Waterfall accident. The public is now going to pay for government greed, ineptness, fiscal mismanagement and stupidity. To make matters worse, \$118m of the \$350m from Freightcorp's sale has been set aside for the AWB and Pacific National - both private companies. Surely all the proceeds from Freight Corp should go into Country Rail lines and Countrylink Services. (see attachment H)If these payments proceed then the state government has set a precedent and all private operators should be entitled to seek direct funding from the state government irrespective of whether they are passenger or freight. As no further rail dividends will be paid to the Government as a result of the Freightcorp sale, this will inevitably continue a downward spiral in rail investment in country areas. In 1998 for example Freightcorp returned to the state government \$75million. Over a twenty year period, \$75million x 20 = \$1.5 Billion dollars in potential lost revenue. That would have reconstructed a lot of rail lines in rural NSW and allowed for new trains to be built etc. This fiscal mismanagement is a "set up to fail" mentality that pervades today within Railcorp and within the State government.

Further, this government has leased all main corridors to A.R.T.C. – Australian Rail Transport Corp, for 60 years. This is an abrogation of state responsibility. Is the NSW government allowed to lease rail assets owned by the people of NSW? Is this allowable under State constitution?

Given the above, it is clearly apparent that the Carr government is intent on closing any country rail line that does not come under ARTC's lease agreement. ARTC has only one criterion to operate and that is profit from freight services. ARTC is not interested in cross subsidizing seasonal or unprofitable lines. Neither does there appear to be any obligation to restore stations for passenger use, either now or in the future. ARTC does not appear to have any social requirements attached to its lease for passenger services run by it, Rail Corp or other operators.

Additionally, the Carr government is progressively shutting down, cutting back or altering passenger services on lines that are not maintained or funded by ARTC. This is the real reason why the Casino – Murwillumbah line XPT service was cut. The timing of the service cut bears this out. This is also applicable to some CityRail outer services, i.e. Kiama – Bomaderry from 24 July 2004.

Other Countrylink rail services that Michael Costa has in his sights for closure and replacement by busses are Dubbo and Armidale. If buses replace these, there will be no passenger rail services beyond Tamworth at all. Nor will there be any rail service north of Orange and no daily rail service beyond Lithgow (except for the Indian Pacific 3 times per week) and the Broken Hill weekly Explorer service. This would leave a huge hole in the state's country passenger rail network which is already cut to the bone. Buses from Lithgow to Dubbo are not acceptable to residents of the Central West or the travelling public.

A few additional rail car sets could significantly enhance passenger services for country residents. These types of rail vehicles do not require major track upgrades so would be suitable for lines to Mudgee and Cowra.

It would also be prudent of any state government to have a reasonable number of locomotive hauled carriages for peak periods such as school holidays, Easter and Christmas. This was once the case and should be policy again to allow for the varying needs of the travelling public.

Additionally a small fleet of single rail cars could be utilized on some branch lines again to feed mainline XPT services and Countrylink bus services.

Explorer Rail Cars



PART 2

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH LINE

The Casino to Murwillumbah line had its beginnings 110 years ago as an isolated section of track in the "Big Scrub" area of northern NSW to extract timber for the growing community of Sydney. Cedar was a highly valued trade and the region required a rail system to transport the timber out. The line then developed to meet the needs of graziers, dairy, and cane farmers who located there once the timber was cleared. Towns such as Casino, Lismore, Byron Bay, Mullumbimby and Murwillumbah grew into commercial centres for the other numerous smaller communities along the line and surrounding area.

This line extending from Grafton to Murwillumbah operated in isolation from the rest of the NSW rail network for many years prior to a rail ferry service being commenced and then a rail bridge being constructed across the Clarence River at Grafton in 1932. It had its own passenger and freight operations that helped the region expand and are largely attributable for the region's growth and development.

Once connected to the rest of the State's rail network, "through" passengers were able to connect off the now "extinct" overnight train – the North Coast Mail. This continued till the late 1980's. In its heyday, Lismore depot supported some 50 locomotives for both passenger and freight services.

In 1925 a short branch line from Booyong to Ballina was constructed but was closed in 1945 due to landslides. As early as 1904, Parliamentary Works Committees investigated various route options to extend the Murwillumbah line to Tweed Heads and link up with Queensland Railways there, but a through line to Brisbane was eventually built inland via Kyogle. Other extension proposals were put forward at later dates, but were once again the subject of political interference.

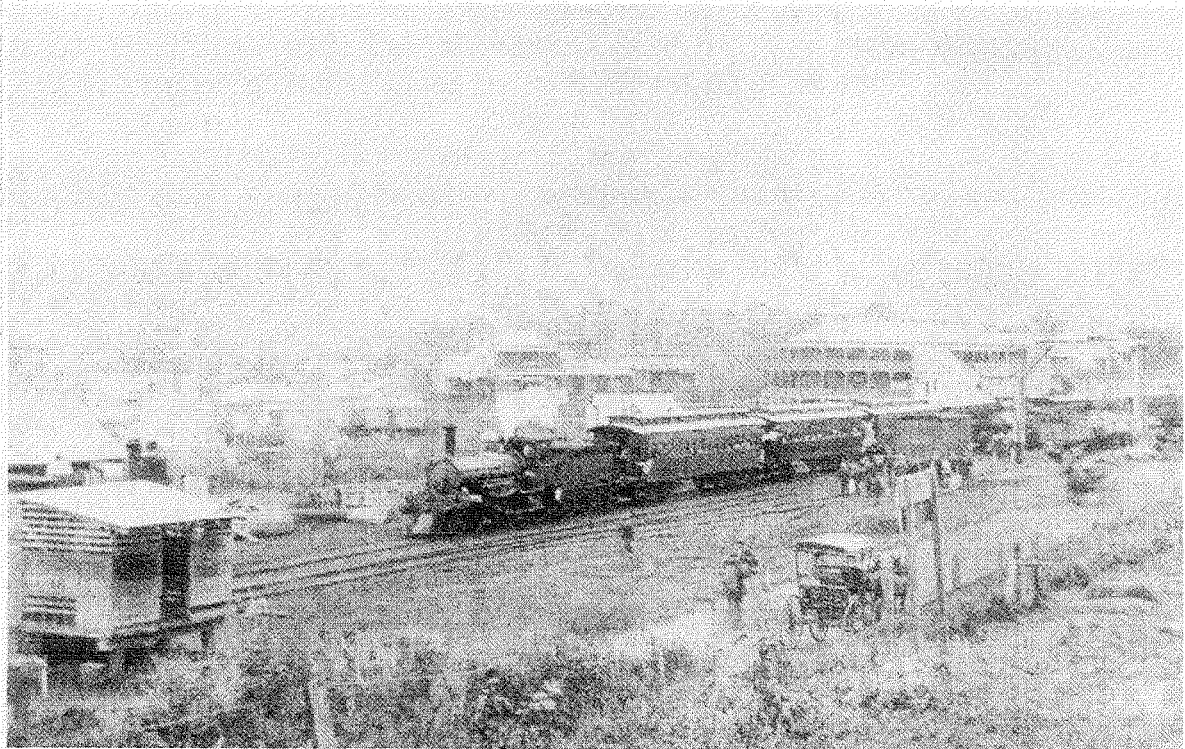
The most significant change came to the Murwillumbah line when the Gold Coast Motorail Express was introduced in the early 1970's. This air-conditioned train composed of several sitting cars and several stainless steel sleeping cars, together with two motor vehicle carrying wagons, enabling passengers to travel on the train and arrive with their own vehicle for their holidays, etc. This concept proved so popular that a second similar train called the Gold Coast Overnight Express was introduced within a few years. Alas this success story was not to last and in February 1990 both services were replaced with one five car XPT service. This immediately cut capacity on the Murwillumbah line significantly – from around 1000 seats for both previous trains to around 250-300 for the XPT. An additional two cars have been added to allow for an approximate 400-seat capacity at peak times. Still a significant decline from the previous popular and well patronized express trains.

Overall the Murwillumbah line has seen a decline from four passenger services per day, to two, then one. It is not because of the advent of the motor vehicle so much as successive governments failing to provide adequate funding to maintain the line. This has been particularly evident since the 1970's, and more so since the Carr government has been in office.

In support of this statement, Michael Costa, the NSW Minister for Transport, has constantly stated that it costs \$5 million per year to maintain this service. Attachment A contradicts this statement. The average costs are \$2.5m p.a., and for 2003/4 it is estimated that only \$1m was spent to 17.05.2004. Most of the actual funding shortfall is on the numerous bridges in need of repair on this line.

Mr. Costa has repeatedly stated publicly that patronage for this service is only 300 passengers per day. What he failed to state was that this was one-way travel only. The XPT makes a return journey daily. Therefore, the patronage is actually 600 daily. Total patronage for 2003/4 was 133,000 – that's a great number of motor vehicles not traveling on the roads. It is very likely that concession card holders are not included in the daily patronage figures, yet these people still have to occupy a seat.

The Tweed Railway



PART 3

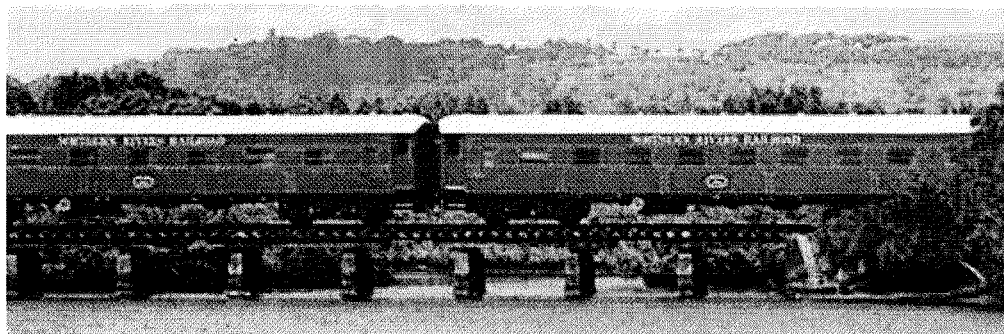
PROPOSALS

This section provides an overview of my proposals for the Murwillumbah – Casino line, together with some notes on my background and interest in rail operations.

The Casino – Murwillumbah line has attracted me for many years given its location, scenic beauty and potential. In May 2003 I discovered that the Ritz Rail Tourist Train was on the market, so over the next several months I have made my own assessment of the train's potential and various other items required to run on the line including locomotives, tonnage limits on bridges and track conditions, whether the line would remain open or not. I have developed a business plan for running a rail service.

I had hoped to lease, with option to buy, the Ritz Train late last year, however the owners decided against this option in February 2004. One of my conditions to lease the train was dependent on the line remaining open and serviceable. This condition was reassured with **Michael Costa's public announcement in December 2003 "that the Murwillumbah XPT service would be extended until December 2004, at which time a complete review would be carried out"**.

The Ritz Rail carriages



When I was advised that leasing the Ritz train was no longer an option (as the train was now for sale only), I then investigated other options. I am currently negotiating to buy three stainless steel carriages and leasing 3 others from the Glenreagh Mountain Railway of which I am a member. I hope to complete negotiations within the next 3-4 months. I am also investigating suitable motive power and am proceeding with setting up the administrative infrastructure to operate this service.

My long-term objective is to establish a passenger rail service linking the Gold Coast to Casino and a daylight service from Coffs Harbour (airport) to Brisbane, with both services connecting at Casino and with present daylight XPT services.

I will still consider operating this service, even if the Carr government refuses to reverse their unjust, short sighted decision to close the line. Other options under consideration include pursuit of Federal funding and /or working with Queensland Rail.

I have held discussions with many individuals and groups including:

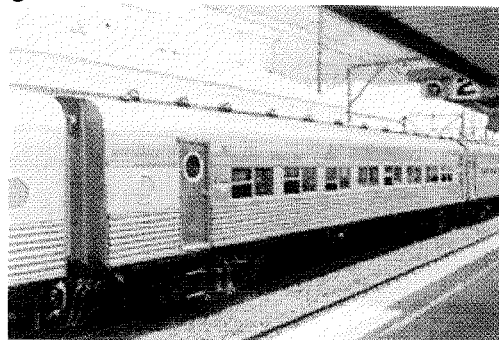
- Lismore and other Councils;
- Ruth Povall, the Sustainable Regions Co-ordinator, Northern NSW;
- The developer of the Norco factory near Murwillumbah railway station;
- Northern Rivers Trains for the Future; and
- MP's Thomas George and Don Page who have also been most supportive.

All the above persons, groups and councils, etc., are in support of my proposal.

I have appealed to the Federal Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, John Anderson, for funding to extend the Murwillumbah line to Coolangatta Airport under the Auslink programme. This 26 km missing link could be constructed simultaneously with the proposed Tugun road bypass, thereby completing two projects at a reduced cost compared to building the two projects separately. Once this link is made and Queensland Rail link up to Coolangatta Airport, a major road, rail and air transport network will then be completed for both northern NSW and SE Queensland. This link will not only be important in itself, but will benefit in the following ways;

1. Remove numerous vehicles from overcrowded roads and towns. Tugun/Coolangatta and Byron Bay are classic examples of traffic problems.
2. It will alleviate many truck trips by having direct access to Coolangatta Airport and the Gold Coast.
3. Will assist in reducing road carnage and reduction in medical costs for the state health system.
4. Will be more environmentally and user friendly compared to road traffic.
5. Tourism in this region will benefit enormously.
6. Employment opportunities will increase for the Northern Rivers.

Single Deck Interurban Cars – alternative



BACKGROUND

As I have a diverse background and have specialised in tourism/airlines, as well as my own agricultural business, I believe I can utilise these skills and adapt them to running a country rail/tourist operation.

My background is as follows:

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------|
| 1. | Banking 3 yrs | 1970-73 |
| 2. | NSW Public Service – Education Dept | 1973-4 |
| 3. | NSW Dept Tourism – Rail Reservations Officer | 1974-5 |
| 4. | South Africa & Namibia – Foreign Exchange/Clerical | 1975-8 |
| 5. | Qantas Airways – International Flight Attendant | 1979-2000 |
| 6. | Farmer – Alpacas & Beef cattle | 1983-Present |

Interests:-	Railways since	1960-present.
Membership:-	Rail Transport Museum	1960's
	Dorrigo Steam Railway	1970-80's
	Glenreagh Mountain Railway	1990's-Present

I have worked on a number of rail projects particularly with the Dorrigo Steam Railway and currently with the Glenreagh Mountain Railway, from cleaning equipment, track repairs, repairing/restoring locomotives and rolling stock. I have a good working knowledge of railway operations and safe working and other requirements to run railways.

Living and working overseas from 1975-2000 has given me the opportunity to observe and experience many working railways in Southern Africa, Canada, USA, UK, Europe, South America, Asia, Japan, India, New Zealand and Hong Kong. I will adapt some overseas rail practices to make my operation successful.

SECTION 4

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ENQUIRY INTO THE CLOSING
OF THE CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH XPT RAIL SERVICE

1. Remove Michael Costa as NSW Minister for Transport for the following reasons:
 - a. Removing and denying the basic right of NSW residents to a safe and reliable rail service.
 - b. He is only focused on cost savings.
 - c. He has not considered the social, safety or environmental impact on the community.
 - d. He has removed access for the disabled beyond Casino. This is unacceptable. He is surely in contravention of both State and Federal Disabled Persons acts.
 - e. As a result of (a) and (b) above, Michael Costa is discriminating against both the disabled and country residents in favour of city rail users. Discrimination is a punishable offence.
 - f. He has misquoted patronage and costing figures to justify the closure of this service. He uses similar tactics to justify other proposed closures to rail services, including the Kiama-Bomaderry and Southern Highlands through services, and also Sydney ferry services. In fact, it would appear that if his figures are correct, then considerable funds have been siphoned away from the Murwillumbah line. Where have these funds gone?
 - g. Countrylink has not responded to communiqués re criticism of the service closure. Why has Countrylink gone "quiet". Have they been told by the Minister to remain quiet?
 - h. He has used rail closures in order to achieve his own political aspirations (see Attachment D) at the expense of the traveling public.
 - i. He promised repeatedly in December 2003 that the Murwillumbah XPT would have a 12-month reprieve and then be fully reviewed. This service was cancelled only 4 months after this promise was made publicly.
 - j. He has not looked at practical and cost effective rail alternative, e.g., swapping Brisbane and Murwillumbah timetables to achieve a better outcome for the traveling public to both Brisbane and Murwillumbah.
 - k. He has not considered the safety or comfort of the traveling public. Rail travel is responsible for only 2% of accidents nationally whereas the carnage on roads claims 97% of the total carnage. This impacts hugely on health systems and so on. The only beneficiaries are the funeral industry. Ten extra bus movements per day equates to 3,650 extra bus movements on our roads per year.
 - l. Repair costs to local roads are being borne by local councils as a result of damage caused by extra buses.
 - m. In spite of Countrylink's website, the people of the Northern Rivers were never consulted about proposed changes. When they were told about the proposals they were widely rejected and condemned.
 - n. The Parry Report was ordered on 5 August 2003. Tenders for bus replacements were issued on 4 August 2003 – a day prior to the report's instigation.
 - o. The loss of a vital piece of infrastructure to the most rapidly growing area in the state (2% per annum growth rate).
 - p. Job losses from the removal of track crews, Countrylink staff, etc, in one of the nations most financially disadvantaged regions, will result in disappearance of 50 jobs in Grafton, 10 track crew, and 19 Countrylink staff.

- q. Timing of closure was coordinated with ARTC taking over the lease of the mainline to Brisbane. The Carr government does not want any rail infrastructure responsibilities north of Newcastle. The Casino-Murwillumbah line would have been the only line left under Rail Infrastructure Corporation control, which has been reorganized back under the umbrella of RailCorp.
- r. The mini budget announcements were set up for political and financial quick fixes. In May 2003, Michael Egan forecast a \$8.5 billion surplus for 2003/4 financial year due to property boom. By May 2004 a deficit of hundreds of millions was foreshadowed, yet actually the government had collected an additional \$1.16 billion to 31 January 2004. (see attachment B). This mini budget was just political expediency so that Egan carried out Costa's dirty work. (The Carr government has just lost \$32m revenue in speeding fines due to a computer malfunction. This alone could have kept the XPT to Murwillumbah operating for at least 10-12 years.)
- s. Mr. Costa has not examined the importance of providing for the current or future rail transport needs of the region, or the potential gain of linking the Murwillumbah line to Coolangatta Airport, and / or the proposed link by Queensland Rail from Robina to Coolangatta – which would have provided this region with a fully integrated transport system
- t. He has shown a total lack of 'duty of care' towards the residents or the Northern Rivers and the traveling public.
- u. He has dismissed completely the possibility of allowing private operators to use the line to either supplement or replace the XPT.
- v. The Carr Government is borrowing \$2.5 billion for Sydney rail lines, but not one cent of taxpayers' funds are being spent to upgrade Countrylink rail services this financial year. Nor are there any long term plans to replace ageing XPT services – except by buses.
- w. Michael Costa's appointment to State Transit Authority of Jim Bosnjak and Keith Todd, both bus operators, on 17 March 2004. Where are the rail representatives on the State Transit Authority? (see attachment G)
- x. The stupidity of axing the line from Broadmeadow to Newcastle – just for the sake of "beautification", and the proposed replacement by buses. How much will this cost the taxpayer? This is nothing less than state vandalism.
- y. He presided over the sale of the states freight division, Freight Corp, to Pacific National. This was a profit making rail division so why was it sold and where did the proceeds go from the sale and Why? Is it constitutionally permissible to allow Pacific National to scrap 60 electric locomotives soon after the sale of Freightcorp to Pacific National for an estimated value of \$30m plus? (See Attachment C.)
- z. Stop any funding to the AWB or Pacific National from Freightcorp sales proceeds. Direct this funding straight into rail infrastructure and passenger rolling stock upgrades for rural NSW.

All the above reasons demonstrate gross negligence and incompetence by The NSW Minister for Transport, Michael Costa, The NSW Treasurer, Michael Egan, The NSW Premier, Bob Carr and the Head of RailCorp, Vince Graham.

PART 5
ATTACHMENT A: Page 1 of 2



NSW Legislative Assembly Questions and Answers for

18 February 2004.

1039 CASINO—MURWILLUMBAH RAIL SERVICE—Mr Page to Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, and Minister for Natural Resources, representing the Minister for Transport Services, Minister for the Hunter, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Natural Resources (Forests)—

(1) How many passengers used the XPT service on any part of the Casino-Murwillumbah rail line in 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and to June 2003?

(2) How many of these passengers were full fare paying passengers?

(3) How much money has been spent on maintaining the Casino-Murwillumbah rail line in 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and to June 2003?

(4) When will the Government make the decision regarding the recommendations of the Parry Report on the future of the Casino-Murwillumbah train service?

(5) Will the Government guarantee the continuance of the current train service on this line?

Answer—

I am advised:

The average number of passengers per day, including the average number of full fare paying passengers per day for the Sydney to Murwillumbah service each way is outlined in the tables below:

Sydney to Murwillumbah Service - Analysis of Journey's Along Route						
Year	Total Journey Syd Mwm	Pax Travelling through Casino-Mwmbh (*connect with coach)		*Connecting with coach at Mwmbh	*Pax Travelling within Casino- Murwillumbah only	
		All Pax	Full Fare		All Pax	Full Fare
1998	335	All Pax	Full Fare	N/A	All Pax	Full Fare
1999	309	281	N/A	140	9	N/A
2000	291	262	N/A	139	7	N/A
2001	288	245	14	126	5	2
2002	282	223	15	140	4	1
2003	240	236	16	115	4	1
		195	12		4	1

Murwillumbah to Sydney Service - Analysis of Journey's Along Route						
Year	Total Journey Syd Mwm	Pax Travelling through Casino-Mwmbh (*connect with coach)		*Connecting with coach at Mwmbh	*Pax Travelling within Casino- Murwillumbah only	
		All Pax	Full Fare		All Pax	Full Fare
1998	309	All Pax	Full Fare	N/A	All Pax	Full Fare
1999	364	267	N/A	102	13	N/A
2000	336	245	N/A	88	10	N/A
2001	338	214	14	85	7	2
2002	340	203	17	91	6	1
2003	304	206	20	75	6	1
		170	16		5	1

Expenditure on maintenance of the Casino - Murwillumbah rail line between 1997/1998 and 2003-2004 is outlined below:

Year	Maintenance

<http://bulletin/prod/la/lapaper52.nsf/4e628b53addde5c14a25660a0011dfbc/46f3b14e8...> 26/02/2004

2. Hold a Royal Commission into the destruction and dismantling of NSW rail services and infrastructure and include all contracts to bus operators and appointments to STA.
3. Sack the Minister for Transport, Michael Costa and replace him with someone with vision and expertise in rail.
4. Sack Vince Graham and establish a NSW Rail Commissioner who will be free from political interference as was the case prior to 1968.
5. Also, establish a "rail watchdog" to protect rail assets and recommend rail service improvements.
6. Carry out a full audit of costings on the Murwillumbah line since 1996.
7. Return to NSW rail services, the XPT Service to Murwillumbah immediately and on a timetable to meet the needs of the local community.
8. Return any other rail services that have been replaced by buses in the interim.
9. Cancel any proposals to dismantle Broadmeadow to Newcastle rail line.
10. Ensure the Carr Government and successive State governments adequately fund and upgrade Countrylink Rail services (and coach services, where no rail line is available).
11. Establish a charter guaranteeing improved country rail services for all NSW with provision for towns like Mudgee, Cowra, Young, etc, to be re-connected by rail daily and progressively add others.
12. Allow concession card holders a better opportunity by removing availability limitations, but not to the disadvantage of paying passengers – in other words, set up a priority system similar to airlines.
13. Make rail travel more attractive by bringing more stations back 'on line', e.g. Nambucca Heads, Coramba, Glenreagh, which are prime examples on the North Coast.
14. Permit a 'pay on board' system where stations are unattended.
15. Introduce more Explorer Rail cars to Countrylink. One such train could service Mudgee and Cowra/Young daily and another could substitute the Dubbo XPT and still service Dubbo as well as Parkes/Forbes daily.
16. Support private operators to provide additional services.
 - a. Particularly where these services 'feed into' Countrylink services.
 - b. Concession fares should be available on these services and paid out of the Community Service Obligation Fund.
 - c. Make available to rail operators, the rail cars and carriages 'in store' at Eveleigh doing nothing by RailCorp, i.e. DEB rail cars and air-conditioned cars off the Newcastle Flyer.
17. Instigate an imaginative and creative Countrylink advertising programme. I can't remember the last time I saw a Countrylink advertisement on the television.
18. Develop state strategies to link in with other transport networks; i.e. transcontinental trains, Victorian and Queensland networks, cruise line companies, the Tasman ferry service, Regional airlines, etc.
19. Audit Countrylink coach services safety aspects (see article from Pensioner & Superannuants publication in Part 5 Attachment G).

4-CAR DEB SET:



Attachment A: Page 2 of 2

NSW LA House Papers 53rd Parliament

Page 2 of 2

1997/98	\$1,760,000
1998/99	\$1,390,000
1999/2000	\$2,020,000
2000/2001	\$2,980,000
2001/2002	\$3,560,000
2002/2003	\$2,570,000
2003/2004	\$3,440,000

The final report of the Inquiry into Sustainable Transport by Dr Tom Parry was released on 9 December 2003. As part of the Inquiry the Government consulted with communities on ways to improve the funding and delivery of public transport, including through a series of CountryLink Solutions Groups.

The final report found the loss to taxpayers in providing CountryLink services is growing every year. This financial year operating costs were approximately \$217 million, with fares generating only \$43 million. This is clearly not sustainable.

In response to the final Parry report, the Government has announced it will retain all CountryLink train services provided StateRail addresses its cost structures, monitor patronage and consider current fares. Reforms include:

- § Restructuring sales and booking of CountryLink tickets currently costing \$30 million but only generating \$43 million in fares;
- § Ensuring CountryLink tickets can be sold on the Internet;
- § Relocating restructured CountryLink staff positions to country/regional centres;
- § Restructuring country station and travel centre staffing;
- § Reviewing discount rules, concessions and fares applying to CountryLink and considering a co-payment on CountryLink travel vouchers;
- § Reviewing CountryLink timetables and; and
- § Monitoring CountryLink patronage, costs and revenue over 12 months.

Your feedback [Legal notice](#)
Refer updates to LA Procedure Office on 9230 2440 or use the feedback link above.

<http://bulletin/prod/la/lapaper52.nsf/4e628b53addde5c14a25660a0011dfbc/46f3b14e8...> 26/02/2004

ATTACHMENT B: Page 1 of 4

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH, www.dailytelegraph.com.au Monday, April 19, 2004

Two weeks ago Bob Carr cried poor and raised taxes, now he has

\$1bn IN THE BANK

By MARK SKELSEY
State Political Reporter

THE Carr Government is rolling in \$1 billion more revenue than it expected — despite public claims it is facing a funding crisis.

The Daily Telegraph has seen the latest available figures for state taxation, which show the Government is well ahead on its revenue expectations due to a strong property market and business conditions.

As well the Government appears comfortable enough with its finances to have awarded Governor Marie Bashir an unexpected \$12,917 pay rise.

But Treasurer Michael Egan, who two weeks ago announced tax increases, on insisted yesterday that the figures did not necessarily mean the Government was due to make a major surplus in this financial year.

He said the Government was still on track to make only a "modest surplus" and the Government's revenue supply could change quite rapidly from month to month.

The figures to the end of January 31, 2004, the last to be publicly available, show the Government collected \$9.4 billion in state taxes in seven months.

Continued Page 2

The cash flow

<p>Jun 2003-Jan 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Total State tax collected: \$9.398 billion ▣ Budgeted collection figure for this period: \$8.282 billion ▣ State tax over-budget bonanza \$1.116 billion <p>Jun 2002-Jan 2003</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Tax collected: \$7.826bn ▣ Budgeted figure: \$7.502bn ▣ Over-budget: \$324m <p>Jun 2001-Jan 2002</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Tax collected: \$7.608bn ▣ Budgeted figure: \$7.052bn ▣ Over-budget: \$556m 	
--	--

\$1 billion found in the bank

From Page 1

from June last year. Major State taxes include property transfer stamp duty, payroll tax, land tax, insurance duties and various other gambling and lottery duties.

But the budget figures show that by January 31, on a month by month basis, the Government was expecting to have collected only \$8282 million.

In other words, it's ahead of revenue projections by \$1.116 billion.

Overall at the end of January 31, taking into account expenditure changes, the Government had a budget surplus of \$1.6 billion.

This is an amount 40 times the surplus the Government was predicting to make in 2003-04.

While the Government was clearly way over budget until January 31, it's possible it has seen reduced revenue as a result of a softening in the property market in February and March.

Sydney lawyer Joanne Seve, considered one of NSW's pre-eminent state tax experts, confirmed to *The Daily Telegraph* that the Government's revenue figures were ahead of budget by \$1.116 billion at the end of January.

"Unless there has been a very dra-

Taxing times Treasurer Michael Egan and Premier Bob Carr release figures for increasing state revenue

Two weeks ago, Treasurer Michael Egan released a mini-budget which announced new tax rises and expenditure cuts because of alleged "difficult circumstances" facing the budget.

He said in particular the Government was facing a \$756 million revenue cut in federal grants.

Opposition Leader John Brogden said the figures showed the Government had failed to manage its budget.

"There's no reason for the revenue drop in NSW taxation revenue collections over the past two months. NSW should still be ahead of budget on taxation revenue for 2003-04," Mr Seve said.

In fact, the Government is ahead of its revenue projections at the end of January 2004, far more than at the same period over the past three years.

The Government has projected to make a surplus of \$156 million in 2003-04.

taxes, the Government is rolling in it. It's that their spending and wages bill is out of control," he said.

Mr Brogden said the Opposition would oppose the new widening of the land tax net and stamp duty on the sale of investment properties.

But it would support the new exemption on first-home buyers paying stamp duty on properties worth up to \$300,000, he said.

Editorial: Page 18

Attachment B: Page 3 of 4

GOVERNMENT
Australian Government

\$15,987,300,000
Australian Government Funding
for the People of NSW

More Funds for Hospitals

More Funds for Police

More Funds for Schools

SCHOOL ZONE
8-9:30 AM
2:30-4 PM
SCHOOL DAYS
40

The Sunday Telegraph, May 16, 2004, page 9

.... / Continued next page

Attachment B: Page 4 of 4



More Funds for Roads

>More Funds for State Governments

Disciplined, focused hard work and experienced economic management has seen the Australian economy grow considerably. In fact, our economy has grown more strongly than most countries in the developed world. That means Australian Government funding to all the States and Territories will grow by \$2,783.5 million in the coming year.

The growth in the economy means that extra money will flow to the States and Territories and that each State can now receive more.

More Funds for Public Transport

Since the introduction of the New Tax System on 1 July 2000, every State and Territory will be better off than without tax reform - over \$1,620 million better off in the coming year.

As a result, we should all expect to receive better services from our State Governments.

>More Funds for the People of New South Wales

New South Wales is set to receive \$15,987.3 million from the Australian Government in the coming year, including a \$113.7 million bonus from tax reform. That's \$15,987.3 million that can be spent on better local hospitals, more police,

More Funds for Better Services

better schools, better roads, better services or abolishing state taxes.

As part of this funding, the Australian Government also provides special payments to each State and Territory for education, health and transport.

NSW will receive:

\$2,758 million for education

\$2,952 million for health

\$524 million for transport

That amounts to a fair go for all people of New South Wales

Better Services for All Australians

© Copyright 2004 by the Australian Government and the NSW Government

10 - THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, www.sundaytelegraph.com.au, May 16, 2004 - 10

ATTACHMENT C: Page 1 of 4

Electric Twilight ?

At the end of June, the last of Pacific National's 86 class electric locomotives ceased running, effectively ending almost 50 years of electric freight haulage in New South Wales. 'What benefits, if any will flow from this decision?', and 'Who stands to gain from the demise of electric traction?' are two of the questions posed in this article. Compiled by the *Railway Digest* Editorial Team.



Far away from home, 86 class members 8632/49/16 lie in storage at Werris Creek loco on Sunday 17 March. (DOMINIK GIEMZA)

ATTACHMENT C: Page 2 of 4

On 30 June 2002 the last of Pacific National's 86-class electric locomotives ceased running on the Blue Mountains to Port Kembla coal route. Following Victoria's lead, the use of electric locomotives to haul trains in NSW has now ceased, with the exception of preserved locomotives. This leaves Queensland as the only state in Australia where electric locomotives operate in commercial service (excluding industrial users such as mines).

From Pacific National's viewpoint (and that of its publicly owned predecessor FreightCorp) there were undoubtedly operational and commercial reasons to cease operating electric locomotives, and they should not be blamed for the situation, but does it really provide the best overall result for all parties, including the taxpayers of NSW? Or is it the result of the split-up of State Rail and shortsighted limits to electrification? Will the only people who will really benefit be the diesel fans who can now see and hear their favourite locos blasting up steep grades with heavy freights?

The use of electric locomotives on both passenger and freight services was limited by the need to change to diesel power at the edges of the network, typically at Enfield, Lithgow and Broadmeadow, while changes to crew rostering patterns and the need for more efficient use of locomotives dictated against unnecessary loco changes. In the end

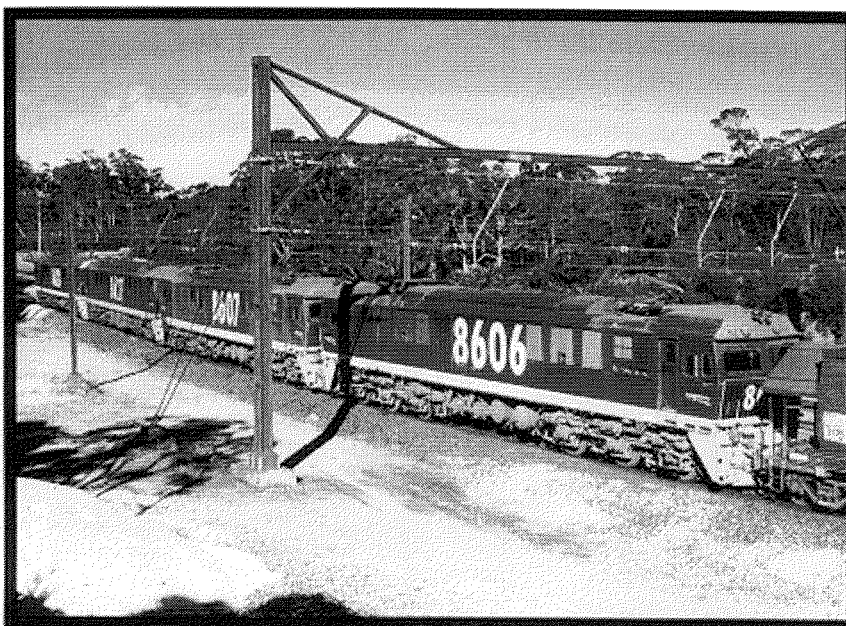
the only through electric locomotive workings were limited to Clarence to Port Kembla coal trains, yet it need not necessarily have been so.

Limited extensions to electrification might have resulted in much more efficient use of electric locomotives for through hauls. For example short stretches of electrification to the Newcastle coal loaders, Metropolitan Colliery or Port Botany could in the past have added some significant electric hauls to the network. Longer stretches, such

as to some of the Hunter Valley coal mines and perhaps to Baal Bone or Tahmoor collieries could have resulted in large scale use of electric locomotives, but it was not to be.

By abandoning electric locomotive haulage, Pacific National solves one of its problems in that the ten 85-class and fifty 86-class electric locos provide it with half of the 120 locomotives it is required to sell. The 85 class are becoming increasingly derelict and it is suggested that many of the 86-class have major frame defects. Meanwhile the market for second hand standard gauge 1500-volt electric locos is virtually non-existent. It can be assumed that the locos will all go for scrap, neatly avoiding the risk that any of them may fall into any competitor's hands. So the (political?) requirement for Pacific National to divest itself of a number of locomotives may in turn have contributed to the end of electric traction.

However, is this really the best result for New South



Rolling into history: 8628/27/07/06 leaving Newnes Junction with the Clarence - Port Kembla loaded coal train at 1.05pm on Saturday 29 June. (DAVID JOHNSON)



8628/27/07/06 on a Pacific National Clarence - Colliery - Port Kembla coal train rolls past Enfield North on what appeared to be the last revenue service hauled by 86 class on Saturday 29 June. (TONY WOODLAND)

ATTACHMENT C: Page 3 of 4

Wales? Electric traction is undoubtedly more environmentally acceptable than diesel at the point of use (the issue of power station emissions is perhaps another issue), while the regenerative brakes fitted to both 85- and 86-class locos had the potential to provide huge quantities of free power for use by other trains if properly used. How many trains could a loaded coal train dropping down from Katoomba or Waterfall power up the hill? However, by the end the use of one just set of four 86-class locos was unlikely to provide much useful free power to anyone, especially since they were effectively restricted to off peak operation. In reality of course the use of regeneration imposes costs and technical complications of its own, but overall the result of a dense traffic of electric-hauled freights should have been substantial and ongoing energy and cost savings. Another benefit of electric haulage was minimisation of noise 'pollution' as compared to diesel traction, a benefit, which, while not necessarily apparent to rail fans was obvious to those who lived by the line side.

The biggest irony is that NSW government departments and authorities, including RIC and State Rail are now subject to a requirement to demonstrate the use of green energy, and there is not much energy that is greener than regenerated electricity. It is



The writing was already on the wall for electric haulage when 8131/03 plus dead attached 8647 powered west through Clyde with BB29 Down empty coal at 10.34am on Tuesday 22 January. (JOHN WALKER)

therefore unfortunate that the use of electric power for freight has ceased just at the time when electric traction could conceivably demonstrate sufficient environmental benefits to assist in achieving energy conservation and emission control targets.

Unfortunately the break up and partial privatisation of the railway has not allowed a holistic approach to be taken to this issue. In the past the justification for electrification would take into

account all operators and types of services, but no longer. It is perhaps worth pointing out that this problem is not unique to NSW. In the UK there has been virtually no additional electrification since privatisation of the railways, while the proportion of both freight and passenger trains worked by diesels under the wires has increased. A similar trend has also been noted in Europe, particularly in Germany and the Benelux countries, as private operators have mushroomed.

While the commercial aspects of electricity supply by RIC to CityRail and Pacific National have not been made public, it must be a matter of question as to whether the charges levied to the freight operator were commercial (from their viewpoint) when compared with the option of using diesel power. And was regenerated electricity the subject of a rebate to the operator? The break up of the rail system undoubtedly resulted in Pacific National becoming the sole user of large sections of electrified infrastructure. Did



8628/27/07/06 accelerate out of Newnes Junction with their last train load of Clarence coal on Saturday 29 June. Diesel-electric traction now handles all Blue Mountains coal traffic. (DAVID JOHNSON)

ATTACHMENT C: Page 4 of 4

this result in uneconomic access charges, which discouraged the use of electric power?

It is probable that the recent electrification of CityRail services to Kiama could have been justified purely on commercial grounds, so could any of the additional factors which were taken into account in Kiama's case have provided a basis to compensate Pacific National for the continued use of electric traction? Indeed, one benefit to both CityRail and RIC is that the more the electrified system is used, the lower the unit cost of providing infrastructure and power should become. The result of abandoning electric freight haulage is the opposite. Presumably any resulting costs will have to be picked up by the NSW taxpayer.

On the other hand, if Pacific National was only charged for what current it used (which towards the end would not have been much), then either CityRail or RIC would have to be picking up the entire cost of the infrastructure, adversely affecting their bottom line. With the end of electric loco working, the entire cost of the Blue Mountains electrification is now borne by an interurban train service, and west of Mount Victoria that means just a four-car train every two hours outside of the peaks. Can this be justified? However if CityRail too is paying only for the current it uses, then the elimination of loco hauled workings has increased the proportion of costs, which must now be borne by RIC. What does that do to the chances of renewing infrastructure as it becomes life expired?

It is a real pity that an overall approach to the use of electric traction could not have been taken in NSW. If it had, would the results have been different? Vale electric traction in New South Wales.



The shape of things to come: 8230/49/06/8119 on BB29 Down empty coal to Baal Bone runs through Clyde station using the Down Local on Wednesday 3 July. (JOHN WALKER)



Their working lives are done, only preservation or the scrapper's torch await electric locomotives 8623/8508/8602/8507/8501, put out to pasture on StateRail's 'long paddock' on the Binnaway line on Saturday 16 March. (DOMINIK GIEMZA)

ATTACHMENT D:

7—THE DAILY TELEGRAPH, www.dailytelegraph.com.au Saturday, May 15, 2004—7

Costa's treasured ambitions denied

By MARKSKELSEY
State Political Reporter

TRANSPORT Minister Michael Costa has admitted his long-term plan to become state treasurer, after being teased about the issue by the current office holder in Parliament this week.

In the light-hearted parliamentary exchange on Wednesday, Treasurer Michael Egan said that Mr Costa, a former hard Left-winger, had a "very long wait indeed ahead" before he achieved his dream.

Mr Egan made the comments after

the State Opposition's Upper House Leader Mike Gallacher predicted the 2003-04 Budget, to be delivered next month, would be Mr Egan's last.

"Your big day is coming soon," Mr Gallacher told Mr Costa.

Mr Egan replied: "The Leader of the Opposition is simply trying to give unwarranted hope to my colleague, the Minister for Transport Services."

In the same debate, Mr Egan made some derogatory comments about the ALP's Left — saying it was "a matter of great happiness that the Left has no influence within the Australian Labor Party."

Asked about Mr Egan's comments, Mr Costa told *The Daily Telegraph* he had previously said he "wanted one day to become Treasurer".

He also said he wasn't concerned about Mr Egan's promise to be in the position for a very long time.

"I am relaxed about that because I support the policy of keeping seniors in the workplace as long as they want," Mr Costa said.

There has been media speculation that Mr Egan, who's been Treasurer since 1995 and a member of the Legislative Council since 1986, may only have another year in the job.

He's been at pains to point out in

Parliament over the past two weeks that's he's not going anywhere.

"My plans were to stay until 2016 and that would have given me a 21 year stint as Treasurer," he said.

Some are interpreting Mr Costa's decision to close down the Casino to Murwillumbah rail line from this weekend as an attempt to show he is willing to make the tough decisions to assist the state's finances and therefore is a worthy treasurer.

Mr Costa's shift towards economic rationalism is a radical change from the days in the 1970s when he was a member of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party.



Funny – no one's laughing

EDI Rail electrician Mick Cross wasn't laughing when he joined about 200 of his workmates in an angry rally to protest the State Government's decision to scrap the third stage of the controversial Millennium train.

The workers gathered outside the Newcastle offices of Transport Minister and Minister for the Hunter Michael Costa yesterday to protest against the expected loss of their jobs due to the cancellation of the train commuters are dubbing the MILemon.

"He's supposed to be the Minister for the Hunter but what's he doing to scratch our backs?" Mick asked.

"Sydney needs the Millennium trains to replace the ageing fleet they've got down there."

"I've got a wife and three kids to support so I can't afford to lose my job."

The decision to cancel the \$192 million final stage of the Millennium project is expected to cause the loss of at least 200 jobs at EDI.

Mr Costa yesterday agreed to meet with EDI employees at an open day at the Cardiff works on May 30.

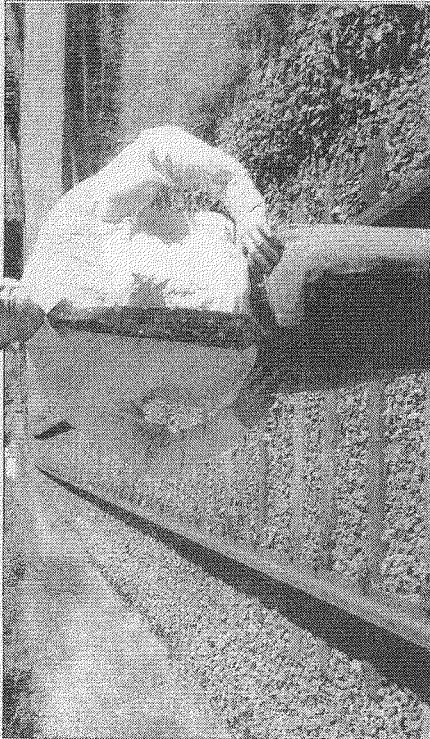
How can people be so cruel ... Mick Cross has a swipe at Michael Costa yesterday.

Picture: WAIDE MAGUIRE

ATTACHMENT E: Page 1 of 3

THE LAND ■ Thursday, May 20, 2004 25

Upfront News



Opposition Roads spokesman, Don Page, says the closure of the Casino-Murwillumbah line was "shortsighted and unjust" given the region's two per cent a year population growth.

Joint talks on rail's fate

By PENNY ZELL and KEVIN ELSLEY

Meanwhile, the impact of rail line closures on road safety became a key issue on the North Coast this week where coaches replaced the century-old rail passenger service between Casino and Murwillumbah.

Like communities in the grain belt where H-double trucks are now moving more of the crop to avoid inefficient and costly rail freight, Far North Coast residents fear a serious accident on roads described as "inadequate" for existing traffic volumes.

Countrylink's XPT service between the two centres ran for the last time last Sunday night (May 16), replaced by 10 coaches on a daily basis.

Local railway station rallies and protests in Sydney have, however, convinced Mr Costa to announce a working party to look at the future of the Casino-Murwillumbah rail corridor and an Upper House inquiry will take evidence on the Far North Coast between June 8-10.

The rail closure issue has triggered united condemnation of the Carr Government in the region.

MEETING between farmers and the State and Federal governments this week to discuss the hotly disputed findings in the Grain Infrastructure Advisory Committee's February report will decide the future of the State's rail branch lines.

Talks are hoped to take place within a month. In Dubbo this week to announce a three-year community transport plan, Minister for Transport Services, Michael Costa, said no decision had yet been made on branch line closures.

He conceded, however, ongoing commercial decisions about the placement of grain storage facilities by companies like AWB and GrainCorp would put a question mark over the future of some branch lines.

If companies establish grain storages away from particular lines, it will put pressure on these lines," he said.

NSW Farmers' Association's grain sector policy manager, Bill Golsby, said the association was insisting the government had a primary responsibility to fix the neglected lines and to look at a long term plan for the industry.

"We hope to get representatives from all parts of the industry in the one room to work out a long-term solution," he said.

But this week also brought some good news for northern railway lines, with the return of regular freight business to a previously endangered Armidale to Tamworth rail line.

The State Government has considered closing this line, too, but a deal with international transport company, Menlo Worldwide, will see the transport firm freight containers of timber from the region to Sydney for export once a week, building up to two services a week within a short period. Opposition Roads spokesman and Ballina MP Don Page, is confident Coalition parties will restore Far North Coast rail services and keep grain branch lines open, too, if elected to Government in 2007.

He has branded the decision to close the Casino-Murwillumbah line as short-sighted and unjust given the region's two per cent a year population growth.

He said the Government is taking away country services at the same time as borrowing \$2.5 billion to enhancing city rail services.

He said local passengers, with subsidised fares were even willing to pay rather than lose a service that made a greater contribution towards covering costs than city rail, yet the Government is taking away country services at the same time as borrowing \$2.5 billion to enhancing city rail services.

ATTACHMENT E: Page 2 of 3

THE LAND ■ Thursday, April 29, 2004 7

Upfront News

Farmers, greens in rail alliance

IT'S not just rural roads at risk of being pulverised by the convoys of extra truck traffic likely to follow the closure of country railway lines in NSW – the State's environmental credentials will take a hammering, too.

Farmers calculate that 3.2 million 200-litre (44 gallon) drums of crude oil will be needed every year to manufacture extra truck tyres used to carry grain crops by road instead of by rail.

NSW is likely to be burying, burning or dumping an extra million truck tyres each year if the State Government walks away from paying for upgrades to branch lines in the grain belt.

The State's 15 ageing "restricted" branch lines now carry the equivalent of 79,000 B-double truck movements a year, including more than 60 per cent of NSW's export grain crop.

The statistics have horrified the NSW Farmers Association and the NSW Greens Upper House MP, Lee Rhiannon, who meets farmers and community leaders from grain belt districts around Grenfell, Dubbo and Parkes today and tomorrow.

By ANDREW MARSHALL

"Now is the time to upgrade freight lines while grain volumes are low because of the drought but the government seems focused on ripping the heart out of country freight and passenger rail services," Ms Rhiannon said.

"The State Government always cries poor... yet many country lines need less than \$10 million spent on them to ensure they run more efficiently."

Ms Rhiannon's bush fact finding mission follows a similar visit to the North Coast and New England Tablelands last week where passenger rail services face the axe.

Community anger at the town of Murwillumbah, which will lose its XPT service, has prompted protesters to travel to Sydney on the doomed train this week to voice their anger at the cuts, while

North Coast rail workers are bracing for a cut in their workforce including 50 jobs at Grafton.

On the Central West Slopes, Greenethorpe graingrower, Michael

Bryant, today leads a meeting with Ms Rhiannon and The Greens representatives with about 40 farmers and community leaders who are tuning about the potential community cost of losing their Koorawatha to Greenethorpe line.

The present 21-kilometre Greenethorpe branch track is one of 10 branch lines in danger of being abandoned



Members of the Greenethorpe rail action committee, Warwick Hodges, Michael Bryant and Mark Bryant, who will meet with Lee Rhiannon from the Greens today to discuss how local farmers can protect their threatened rail branch line.

End of the Line

- Farmers and the Greens are forming an alliance to save country rail branch lines.
- Both say the closure of the lines will create more environmental problems in NSW.
- The 15 threatened branch lines now carry much of the NSW wheat harvest



by the State Government following the release of the Grain Infrastructure Advisory Committee's January report into future grain freight options.

Mr Bryant, "The Kurrajongs", said drawing a strong farmer alliance with The Greens on this issue could give their case some

clout against the government.

NSW Farmers Association's grains committee chairman, Angus Macneil, said graingrowers felt conned because the Department of Transport's action plan for 2010 committed to spending \$170 million a year to maintain and improve rural rail lines.

ATTACHMENT E: Page 3 of 3

THE LAND ■ Thursday, May 20, 2004 15

Upfront Opinion**Railroaded again**

SIR: Last month's "mini-budget" handed down by the NSW Government with no apparent spending on rural, regional and remote rail services, track or passenger continues a planned shutdown of rail in this State that has been occurring since the 1980s.

A close examination of this process shows a remarkable system of stealth.

Progressive corporatisation, started in 1996, of track and freight services and culminated with the sale of FreightCorp and the current leasing of NSW interstate track to the Federal Government (ARTC).

This year the State Rail Authority has evolved, being corporatised to form RailCorp (all CountryLink passenger services, the CityRail network, track and trains, plus other track not leased).

Country public passenger rail services have been a big casualty of this approach to government cutbacks in the past 20 years.

About 1000 passenger rail services have been reduced to the current 161 XPT and XPLOER services and 547 bus services.

The net result of these cuts has seen 19 towns and communities Statewide, which were previously serviced, receiving no public transport – road or rail.

The recommendations of the Parry Report, if carried out, which is almost certain, will see the probable annihilation of all CountryLink passenger rail services, based on the argument that they lose money.

Apart from the NSW leased track, the remaining RailCorp track is in such poor condition that it will add to the argument to support such a shutdown.

Of the 307 speed restrictions known in November 2003, 91 were due to poor bridges which are costly to repair.

The Casino to Murwillumbah line is a glaring example. This line has 28 of those 307 speed restrictions and of those 28, 24 of the 91 listed State-wide are due to bridge problems.

It is therefore understandable that NSW wants to get rid of rail's expensive problems, other than the urban network, and leasing is one way out of shutting down the track altogether.

As all rail freight services are privately owned, NSW could not be expected to fund railworks for them.

And as NSW considers roads to be the responsibility of the Federal Government then it is natural for the State Government to encourage rail use.

The onus now lies on the Federal Government to create an equity between road and rail use, using its powers under both the Australian Constitution and the Australian Land Transport Development Act.

BILL BARWOOD,
President,
Lachlan Regional Transport
Committee,
Canowindra.

**Revolt of rural MPs**

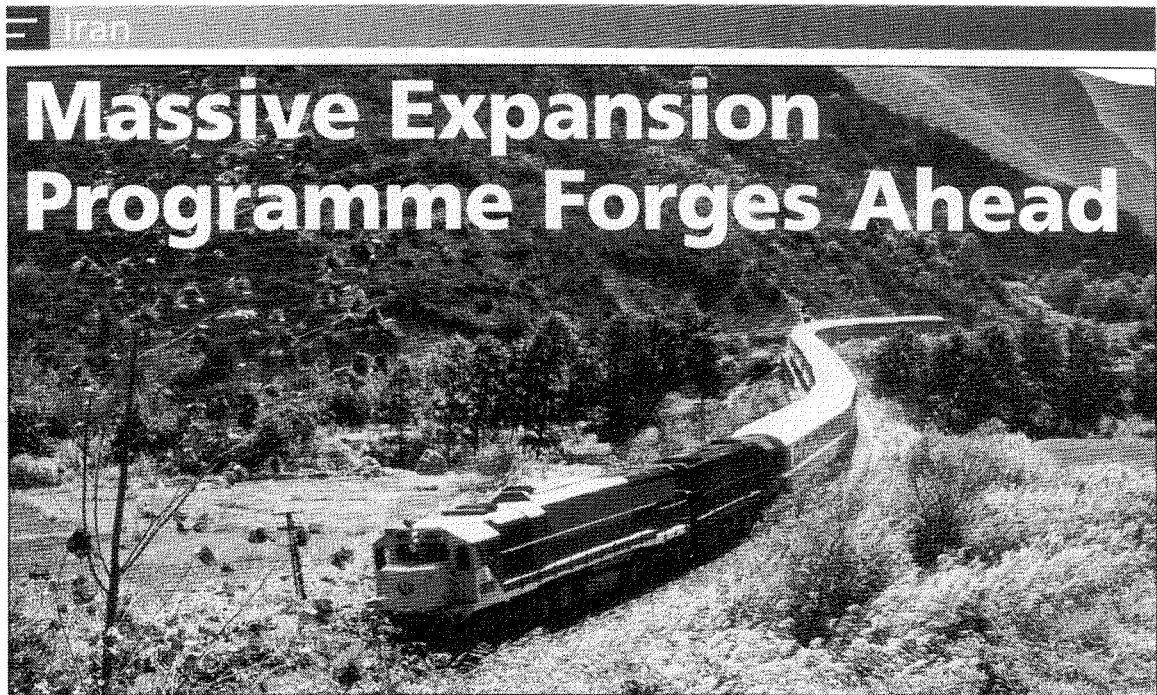
NSW Premier Bob Carr is facing a revolt among country Labor MPs over rail line closures and the unpopular pokies tax.

A special meeting was convened during parliament last week to discuss the issues.

The 13 MPs are particularly upset over the decision to scrap the Murwillumbah line in northern NSW.

Daily Telegraph April 2004

ATTACHMENT F:



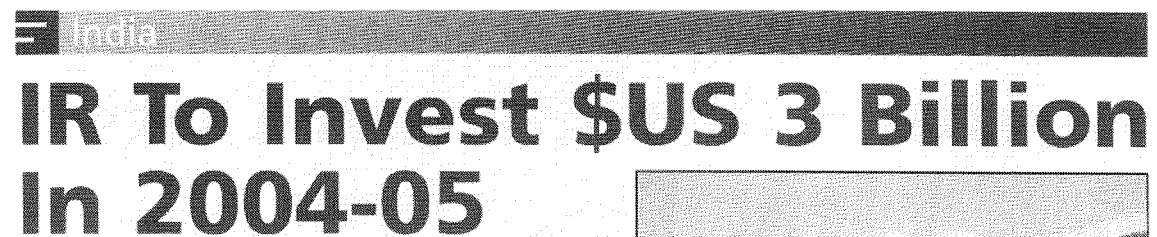
With 3300km of lines under construction, Iran has the world's second largest railway expansion programme after China. Plans are being drawn up to build a further 3579km of new lines.

David Briginshaw
Editor-in-Chief



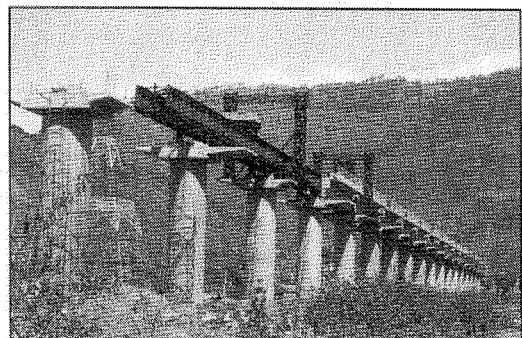
"About 10 years ago, the government decided to increase rail's share of the transport infrastructure budget to about 30%."
Eng Mohammed Saeed Nejad

International Railway Journal, May 2004, page 31



Expanding capacity, removing bottlenecks, and carrying out safety-related projects continue to mark the thrust of Indian Railways' capital investment policy.

K K Gupta
Regional Editor, India



Expenditure on bridges reached Rs 3.1 billion in 2003-04.

International Railway Journal, May 2004, page 37

ATTACHMENT G: Page 1 of 4

Extracts From "The Voice Of Pensioners And Superannuants Of NSW" May/June 2004

Transport News and Views

Another line bites the dust...

CPSA has expressed outrage at the NSW Government's decision to close the Casino to Murwillumbah rail line despite giving assurances to the people of rural NSW there would be no immediate changes to CountryLink services.

Mr Costa claims since that commitment, the lack of Federal Government funding has forced the State Government to close the Casino-Murwillumbah line. In March 2004 Mr Costa once again assured the Rail, Tram and Bus Union there would be no further changes to CountryLink lines or services... for the time being. CPSA is very sceptical of such a commitment.

Bruce Hutton
Vice President

Neville Wran the Builder and Bob the Wrecker

For the Premier to allow a politician who has never been elected by the voters of NSW to such an important portfolio as Transport Minister is ludicrous. Effective legislation should prevent non elected members of both houses of Parliament from becoming Ministers.

Our forefathers were the pioneers of this State and made it what it is today. They had the vision and the initiative to build the railway system which linked the isolated communities along the coast and inland. The politicians of yester-year created the infrastructure to provide services for all

this State's residents, not only the most populous areas, as appears to be the case today.

Our earlier statesmen did not have access to land tax, club tax, gambling tax, and stamp duty revenues but still completed the projects they committed to. The first lotteries introduced went directly to the hospital system but today get lost somewhere in the coffers of consolidated revenue. It's time to pressure our local State member for a State-wide public transport lottery.

Our current ALP Government intends to terminate all trains at

Broadmeadow Station in place of Newcastle and replace existing lines with buses.

30 years ago the ALP Premier decided to electrify the Gosford to Newcastle line. Today the Premier wants to demolish another successful service. Is Newcastle, as a safe Labor area expected to be exposed to the whims of Macquarie Street?

Bad news Bob. The resolve of the Newcastle commuters is that the ALP State Member for Newcastle, and the Member for Lake Macquarie will be joining the unemployment que if they at

low the Newcastle rail service to be dismantled.

Perhaps this is too presumptuous, I completely forgot about the nepotism that is rampant within this current State Government. The latest example is the ex-Transport Minister, who is also an ex-Premier who is now receiving a free ride on the political merry-go-round.

The rewards appear to be endless for those who during their time in Parliament, answer the calls of Macquarie Street and ignore the pleas of their constituents.

Les Elkins
West Wallsend

New members for STA board spells Relocation of

Relocation of Central Reservation Centre to Newcastle

Mr Costa stated this was a Rail Corp decision and the issue needs to be dealt with by Rail Corp management. The CEO of Rail Corp stated his intention to continue with the relocation in a cost effective manner, he also agreed to negotiate with Rail Unions.

CPSA will insist consumers and user groups participate in discussions on proposals that arise.

Bruce Hutton
Vice President

New members for STA board spells conflict of interest

ity given to filling the vacancies on the STA board, and that the information should have been made public. The three new members gained their place on the board through a Ministerial appointment and not through a proper process of election. There is a definite conflict of interest in appointing Jim Bosnjak and Keith Todd to the STA board, both of whom are providers of private bus companies. CPSA intends to rigorously pursue these issues with the Minister.

Bruce Hutton,
Vice President

CPSA feel there should have been more publicity given to filling the vacancies on the STA board, and that the information should have been made public.

of the Unsworth process to direct the STA board to do anything in relation to services other than what it believes to be in the best interests of its customers and the taxpayers of New South Wales." Mr Costa said.
CPSA feel there should have been more public-

Minister for Transport Mr Michael Costa, while addressing Parliament (NSW Legislative Council Hansard Article No. 17 on 17th March) has confirmed three new members will serve on the State Transit Authority (STA) board.

"I have announced that Barrie Unsworth will be the new chair of the board and that Jim Bosnjak and Keith Todd who are bus operators of long experience, will also serve on the board. I will allow them to make decisions about the services provided by the STA... The Government has no intention as part

Vice President

And another one gone...

The proposal for rail services between Sydney and Newcastle, to terminate at Broadmeadow is preposterous and will bring poorer health in the Newcastle area. An increase in buses and cars can only mean more pollution, more accidents and more roadblocks.

It is time politicians stopped noting just the businessmen and developers. I implore you to take real leadership Mr Carr. Listen to the masses and act on their wisdom.

Janet Copley
Cooks Hill



Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of NSW Inc
Formed 1931.

Representing all pensioners and superannuants.

MAY / JUNE 2004 THE VOICE OF PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS OF NSW

Transport News and Views

NSW Government's plans for community transport

In a recent letter to CPSA, Michael Costa, Minister for Transport Services said,

"There is no suggestion normal public passenger services will be replaced with program funded Community Transport Services. It is important to understand the Ministry's definition of Community Transport encompasses the whole range

of potential transport options beyond those already funded under the Home and Community Care program (HACC)." Costa says the *Home and Community Care Act* 1985 may not be interpreted by the Ministry of Transport at will.

At face value, this does provide some reassurance. CPSA has been concerned regular public

transport services could be replaced by occasional community transport buses as a cost-saving measure. That would be detrimental both to public transport (by allowing users less travel flexibility) and to the HACC program by siphoning off precious funds. John Whelan, from the Ministry of Transport, explained existing re-

sources should be utilised – such as private buses being currently used only twice a day.

As part of our campaign for better transport overall, CPSA will strive to see community transport and public transport are deployed appropriately with our constituents in mind.

David Skidmore
Policy & Information Officer

Who's running this State, the Government or CountryLink?

The damning findings of the Waterfall enquiry and the recent comments by the Auditor General, highlights the contempt with which State Rail has

This action by CountryLink is an act of bastardry and shows the depths to which they will stoop to destroy

in excess of 4,000,000 per annum which are fully funded by Community Service Obligation. CountryLink has reduced the seating available to

Dear Mr. McGrane (Member for Dubbo)

Please ask Mr Costa if coaches replacing trains justifies the "cost saving?" Already we have had numerous accidents on our highways and Mr Costa's answer to the train problems seems to be medicals and DUI tests.

A few months ago while travelling on the CountryLink coach to Lithgow, the driver became quite ill and pulled up at a service station to revive himself before continuing on. Speaking to other travellers I learnt this was not an isolated incident. There was no one to relieve the coach driver, and we must be thankful that it was not a heart attack, fit or stroke.

Would you ask Mr Costa what medical examinations coach drivers

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of the Waterfall enquiry and the recent comments by the Auditor General, highlights the contempt with which State Rail has treated the travelling public since the introduction of the Booz, Allen report in 1988. The changes have cost the taxpayers of NSW millions in public funding and destroyed the rail system on which we (particularly the aged and incapacitated) depend.

Mr Carr gave a commitment at Nambucca Heads in 1990 to restore the service. To date he has failed to fulfil that commitment.

The major station between Kempsey and Coffs Harbour, Nambucca Heads was closed in 1988, it had the highest sales, is the major holiday resort and boasts the largest popu-

This action by CountryLink is an act of bastardry and shows the depths to which they will stoop to destroy our rail system.

lation in the area. Passengers travelling to and from Nambucca Heads were then required to travel an additional 150km, or over 2 hours, to cover the same journey as those travelling from other stations. The bus service was not only unworkable but cost well in excess of \$1,000,000 to replace 2 retrenched staff whose combined income did not exceed \$70,000 per annum.

The timetable introduced in 1990 eliminated sleepers and reduced the seating by a further 33 percent, resulting in universal delays, filthy trains

per annum which are fully funded by Community Service Obligation. CountryLink has reduced the seating available to 300,000. Pensioners are advised to pay a concession fare or find alternate transport, while trains run to their destinations with empty seats. This auction by CountryLink is an act of bastardry and shows the depths to which they will stoop to destroy our rail system.

The present system is totally unsatisfactory. The lies and mismanagement by those responsible certainly warrant a royal commission to sort out this mess. The people of NSW have made it clear they want their rail service retained and maintained.

**Jim Teasel
Nambucca Heads**

Strange but true

A Japanese company has developed a mobile phone that turns your finger into an earpiece. You pick up sound by sticking your finger in your ear, while talking into a microphone on a wristband.

New Scientist 8/11/03

driver, and we must be thankful that it was not a heart attack, fit or stroke.

Would you ask Mr Costa what medical examinations coach drivers have to undergo and how often? Train drivers medicals are done every three months. Will there be relief drivers aboard coaches in case of mishaps?

What is the annual cost of running coaches on our highways? Mr Costa said "The XPT costs \$30,000 per day to run to Dubbo". How many other figures have been plucked out of the air to justify the failure of the transport system?

I know you are well aware of these points but we at CPSA want them spelled out on terms we can understand. Mr Costa thinks because we have lost our youth we have lost our marbles but we are an intelligent able band of people who only want a fair go.

**Joan Teale
Secretary Dubbo**

ATTACHMENT H:

14 Thursday, May 27, 2004 ■ THE LAND

Upfront Opinion

\$118m conundrum

SIR: My committee would like to commend the NSW Farmers Association for the good work it has done highlighting the issue of the threatened rail branch lines in this State.

This important issue has been raised with many of our State parliamentarians, including Transport Minister, Michael Costa, who is finding it increasingly difficult to dismiss the concerns of country residents.

However, it's time a closer examination was undertaken by the association of the deal that took place over the funding of the proposed grain consolidation facilities (GCFs) at Werris Creek and Stockinbingal.

A Community Service Obligation sum of \$118 million from the sale of FreightCorp was originally budgeted for the GCFs.

These public funds were going to build assets that AWB Ltd, a private corporation, would run in conjunction with Pacific National, another privately owned company.

Almost three years later the GCFs have not been built and we understand that Pacific National considers them a non-commercial investment.

Meanwhile, NSW communities are struggling to convince government to fund the upgrades of rail branch lines that will reduce the burden of large truck combinations on our road network.

AWB Ltd's Grainflow subsidiary provides road transport that draws grain from up to 200 kilometres to its grain storage sites – compounding the problem of declining grain tonnages on branch lines.

Mr Costa last week referred to the AWB storage sites as being likely to “force up to one million tonnes of grain per harvest on to regional roads instead of rail branch lines”.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau claims that two deaths and five injuries a year occur on NSW country roads for each one per cent of freight moved from rail to road. This loss of life is preventable.

How can a private company be allowed access to public funds to build grain consolidation facilities that would exacerbate a transport problem common across the State?

It's time NSW Farmers took the next logical step and demanded the \$118 million of public funds be directed to reconstruction of the 15 branch lines that are under threat of closure.

This is the obvious solution to an ongoing problem of rail and road funding that cannot be solved at local government level.

GRANT HOLLAND,
Greenethorpe Rail Action Committee,
Greenethorpe.