

Submission

No 150

INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Name: Mr Kevin Anderson MP

Date Received: 18/04/2013

Partially Confidential

Kevin Anderson MP

MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH ELECTORATE

RECEIVED
11-3-13

Mr Andrew Gee, MP
Chair
State and Regional Development Committee
123 Byng Street
ORANGE NSW 2800

Dear Mr Gee

Andrew

I am writing to you as the Chair of the State and Regional Development Committee and to provide information to your committee reviewing NSW Trains. This is a recent example of the service received from CountryLink and demonstrates a number of the issues discussed during consultations in my electorate.

██████████ booked seats for CountryLink services from Gunnedah to Maitland on Sunday 24 February for a medical appointment on Monday 25 February.

██████████ with two other ladies going to Gosford waited for one hour from the departure time and the train had still not arrived. There was no one from CountryLink on the platform, no signs about delays and no toilets or other facilities open.

A shunt worker came along, and advised them that he didn't think the trains were running that day, opened the toilet block for the passengers and ██████████ called the CountryLink call centre.

They were advised that a bus came that the driver had checked the platform for passengers and he had drove off continuing his journey, in fact he was at Breeza and wasn't turning around to come back and collect them.

██████████ explained that her and the 3 other passengers were waiting on the platform the whole time, they didn't see the bus or the driver and there was no signage at the station to advise passengers that trains would be replaced by buses.

██████████ were required in Maitland for a doctor's appointment and couldn't change their travel plans, CountryLink organised a maxi-taxi to take all 4 passengers to their destinations, Maitland and Gosford.

On their return journey to Gunnedah on the following day, ██████████ were advised that their carriage, carriage F wasn't put on the train at Sydney so they would be returning to Gunnedah by coach.

An extraordinary example of access to rail services in our area and a concerning one.

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THE NATIONALS for Regional NSW

During consultations with your committee we did discuss;

1. Maintenance of regional train services

Examples like this do generate scepticism about the longevity and sustainability of regional rail services. In the conversation with my office, the maintenance of the service was questioned and the competition for rail access with coal.

2. Coordination of services

CountryLink had [REDACTED] home telephone number and mobile number. She received a telephone call at home on Friday advising that there seats had been changed, and a text message to her mobile on Saturday advising there would be no luggage assistance service on the weekend. At no time was it mentioned that the train would be replaced by a coach.

3. Passenger manifestos

I presume CountryLink like some other modes of public transport have a passenger manifesto, this would have been provided to the station and the coach driver, however these 4 passengers were not advised to look out for a coach or contacted regarding changes to their services.

4. Facilities and services for passengers

Apparently the station platform is not staffed on the weekend because of lack of funding, surely if we are to create a service driven transport network access to toilets, luggage assistance, internet and food and beverages must surely be an attraction to the service.

5. Elderly passengers are the core markets

I am sure your committee will find that the core customer market for CountryLink services is retired and elderly. They may not be the most lucrative market for the service due to the concessions available to seniors however they are the primary users of trains. As discussed during the consultations, it is not always possible for elderly people to change plans with train itineraries at the last minute, coaches are not always satisfactory for people with mobility issues and don't provide access to food and beverages needed for people who have diabetes during long periods of travel.

My office has referred this example to CountryLink Complaints and will seek a reply.

I would like to thank you and your committee for coming to my electorate it was a pleasure to host your deliberations and I hope our experiences will inform your recommendations.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Kevin Anderson MP
RT

6-3-2013