

**Submission
No 45**

INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Organisation: Boorowa Council
Name: Councillor Wendy Tuckerman
Position: Mayor
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Mr Andrew Gee MP
The Chair
Legislative Assembly
State and Regional Development Committee
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

24 April 2012

Dear Mr Gee,

Re: Submission – Inquiry into regional public transport

I am writing on behalf of Boorowa Council to submit a response to the enquiry into regional public transport.

Council appreciates your terms of reference being:

That the Committee inquire into how inter-regional public transport can better serve the needs of regional New South Wales.

It is easy to make improvement to inter-regional public transport in a Local Government Area that has **access to no public transport**.

Boorowa Council has for a number of years lobbied for public transport services for its community. As part of this, Council participated in the CountryLinkUp consultation that led to the following recommendations in 2010 (CountryLinkUp Report 2010):

Recommendation 37: That CountryLink investigate the deviation of the existing CountryLink coach service that operates from Queanbeyan to Cootamundra to go via Boorowa and Murrumbidgee at least two days per week. This would provide the community of Boorowa and Murrumbidgee with:

- *A twice weekly return service to Young allowing for 4 hours in Young*
- *Connections to the XPT at Cootamundra to Melbourne and to Sydney*
- *Connections at Cootamundra with other coach services through to Griffith, Mildura, Bathurst, Dubbo, Condobolin, Canberra and Tumbarumba*

Recommendation 38: That CountryLink investigate a two day per week service that links Temora – Young – Boorowa – Yass and Canberra. This would provide these communities with:

- *A twice weekly return service to Canberra allowing 5 hours in Canberra.*
- *Connection with the Explorer at Canberra through to Sydney.*
- *Connection with coach services in Canberra through to Cooma, Bega, Eden and Merimbula*

Unfortunately, despite taking an active part in consultation for the abovementioned report, our desire to create a public transport service for our community is once again put on hold whilst another review takes place.

Local Councils regularly communicate with their communities and are best able to represent the needs of the community through advocacy.

In September 2011, Boorowa Council held public forums to consider a long term community strategic direction. Approximately 14% of the Local government area population attended three (3) hour public forums to discuss the future of Boorowa. The forum considered; where we are now; where we want to be; and how do we get there.

Over 4000 comments were received to assist with the preparation of a twenty year community strategic plan. A significant issue raised by our community was the lack of public transport in Boorowa.

The community of Boorowa has many aspirations for the next twenty years, however in preparing our plan it has become further evident that having no public transport negatively impacts all of our key directions for the future.

Economy

Boorowa is a growing community in a central location, only approximately 110km to the city of Canberra and 50km to the regional centres of Yass and Young. Our future growth is impeded by the fact that we have no public transport. It affects our liveability and our economy.

As a nearby city, the population of Canberra is rapidly regionalising with a high demand for urban growth and rural lifestyle housing in those areas within commuting distance. Boorowa currently has over 40 persons commuting to Canberra on a daily basis for employment reasons. The availability of public transport would allow further growth in Boorowa and its economy through ease of access to employment in Canberra.

Access to services

Boorowa is considered an ideal retirement lifestyle. Those that have grown up here want to stay and many other retirees are making the change from Canberra and other larger centres.

Unfortunately, loss of licence or restricted use licences for our ageing population prohibits the ability of many to enjoy a retirement in Boorowa. Public transport would allow our ageing population some independence to ensure they are able to retire in Boorowa.

Fuel prices continue to rise and it is inevitable that future demand vs supply will further push the price of fuel to a level unaffordable by many in our community.

As a small community, many services that are required by our residents are located in Young, Yass or Canberra.

Environment

Public transport is the key to a better environment. Strong public transport is essential to reducing our impact on the environment and will allow us to be resilient in the future as fuel prices increase beyond grasp.

In response to the Committee's terms of Reference – particular issues for consideration, Council provides the following comments:

(a) how CountryLink services can be improved

By providing bus services to Boorowa as recommended in the CountryLinkUp Report of 2010 (recommendations 37 and 38)

(b) how network linkages between CountryLink train and coach services can be improved

By providing bus services to Boorowa as recommended in the CountryLinkUp Report of 2010 (recommendations 37 and 38)

(c) the potential for CountryLink services to carry light freight

CountryLink coach services should not carry light freight. Freight should be carried by rail services and this should not be at the expense of passenger services.

(d) how CountryLink can be better utilised to increase tourism in NSW

Boorowa could easily attract additional tourists with public transport being made available. For those wishing to visit Boorowa, they must arrange private motor vehicle transport for a distance of at least 50 km. This precludes all tourists dependent upon public transport from visiting our Local Government Area.

There have been many reports of incidents when tourists have considered or tried to visit Boorowa only to be stuck in Yass.

(e) how the amount of inter-regional travel taken by public transport can be increased

By providing bus services to Boorowa as recommended in the CountryLinkUp Report of 2010 (recommendations 37 and 38)

(f) the extent to which regional public transport networks are integrated and how they can be better integrated

Boorowa has no public transport to integrate. Services can be better integrated by providing bus services to Boorowa as recommended in the CountryLinkUp Report of 2010 (recommendations 37 and 38)

(g) the role local Councils can play in improving inter-regional public transportation networks

Local Councils regularly communicate with their communities and are best able to represent the needs of the community through advocacy.

(h) the type of buses and trains that will be required for the provision of regional passenger services in the future.

Boorowa requires a link between our community and that of Young and Canberra. The type of bus is not considered an issue at this point given the desperation of our community just to have access to a service.


Looking forward, the committee should consider in co-operation with the ACT Government the impact of urban sprawl from Canberra to outlying areas such as Yass and Boorowa. In considering such growth, a passenger train service to Yass from Canberra as a plan for the future appears to have merit.

Summary

Boorowa is the only Local Government Area in New South Wales without access to public transport. It impacts on our ability to live and our ability to grow. Council urges the State Government to not delay in providing an outcome to recommendations 37 and 38 of the CountryLinkUp Report of 2010.

Council understands that a change in government has required a new consultation process surrounding public transport. However Council urges the State Government to immediately put in place a trial public transport route for the community of Boorowa whilst it considers how public transport for the rest of the State can be enhanced.

Yours Sincerely



Wendy Tuckerman
Mayor
Boorowa Council