



28th March 2024

The Bus Industry Taskforce

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Via: bustaskforce@transport.nsw.gov.au

Re: NSW Bus Industry Taskforce

This submission by Regional Development Australia Southern Inland (RDASI) is to provide feedback on local bus services within the RDASI region, to assist the Taskforce when making recommendations to improve the reliability, quality, and effectiveness of bus services across NSW.

RDASI is represented by local leaders and staff who are passionate about the communities in the Southern Inland region of New South Wales (NSW), with a key focus on investing in people, places, services, local industry, and economies. Part of a national network of 50 Regional Development Australia (RDA) Boards across Australia, RDASI's role is to support the Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the Southern Inland region of NSW, including Wingecarribee, Goulburn Mulwaree, Upper Lachlan, Hilltops, Yass Valley, Queanbeyan-Palerang, and Snowy Monaro. RDASI works with all levels of government, business, and community groups to promote economic and social development in the region by facilitating regional projects, collaboration, communication, and advocacy.

As part of this submission, we present the results of a regionally targeted survey designed to gather feedback from residents on issues and impacts of local bus services.

We thank the Taskforce for the opportunity to provide feedback as part of this consultation process.

Local Bus Services | RDASI region

To inform our submission, RDASI distributed a survey relating to local bus services to community members, aged 16 years and above, from across the RDASI region.

Demographics

Seventy-one people started the survey, with eleven people disqualified due to being out of region. Thirty-three people completed all survey questions.

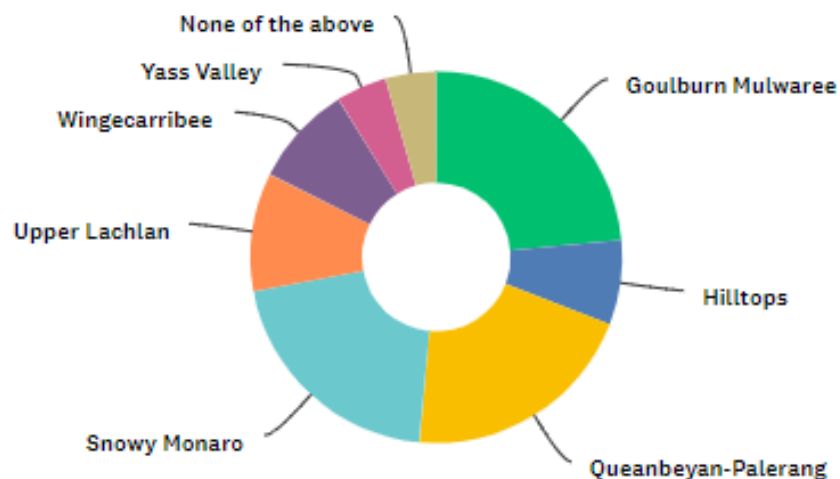
Age

The survey asked respondents to indicate their age group, with the following results:

- 65 year or older: 15.49%
- 55 - 64 years: 25.35%
- 45 - 54 years: 22.22%
- 35 - 44 years: 19.72%
- 25 - 34 years: 19.72%
- 18 - 25 years: 1.41%
- 16 - 17 years: 0%

RDASI Local Government Area

The following chart presents the Local Government Area within the RDASI network in which the respondent resides.



Local Bus Services | Community Feedback

A series of questions relating to local bus services was asked as part of the survey to better understand the issues and impacts experienced across the region. The survey incorporated questions in line with the [NSW Bus Industry survey](#), as well as additional questions and the option for respondents to contribute their own free text comments. Below is a summary of the questions and responses gathered.

Q: How far is your bus stop from where you live?

Responses:

- Under 1 km – 50%
- 1 - 2 kms – 25%
- 2 - 5 kms – 3.13%
- Over 5kms – 21.88%
- Other – 35.29%

Q If there was a bus stop closer to your house, would you use the bus more often?

Responses:

- No – 71.88%
- Yes – 28.13%

Q: How do you get to the bus stop?

Responses:

- Walk – 75%
- Ride a bike or scooter – 3.13%
- Car – 12.50%
- Taxi / paid ride share – 3.13%
- Get a lift from family / friend – 18.75%
- Other – 6.25%

Q: What is the purpose for your bus trip/s? Tick all that apply.

Responses:

- Work – 46.88%
- School / education – 28.13%

- Social / recreation / entertainment – 34.38%
- Childcare – 3.13%
- Shopping – 40.63%
- Medical or health appointment – 37.50%
- Visiting family or friends – 21.88%
- Other (please specify) – 12.50%
 - Community meetings.
 - Holiday – travel to airport.
 - Travel to train or airport.
 - When the car is out of action.

Q: How reliant are you on the local bus service?

Responses:

- Bus is my only option – 34.38%
- I choose to travel on the bus but have other ways to get to where I need to go – 31.25%
- I only travel on the bus when I have to – 34.38%

Q: How often do you use the bus services in your area?

Responses:

- A few days a year or less – 56.25%
- At least one day a month – 3.13%
- 1 - 2 days week – 34.38%
- 3 - 4 days week – 9.38%
- 5 days week – 21.88%
- More than 5 days a week – 0%

Q: What issues have you experienced with the local bus service? Tick all that apply.

Responses:

- No issues – 25%
- Route/s do not go where I need to go – 31.25%
- I have to change buses too many times – 16.63%
- Doesn't run on time – 6.25%
- Cancellations – 0%
- Schedule is not frequent enough – 56.25%

- Doesn't offer a service that gets me to my destination (work / volunteer activity / place of study) on time – 31.25%
- Buses are too crowded – 0%
- Buses are unclean – 0%
- Bus drivers do not provide good customer service – 0%
- Safety – 0%
- Information about services is unreliable - timetables, routes, delays – 12.50%
- Cost – too expensive - \$6.25%
- Other – 28.13%

Some impacts / comments provided in a free text form include:

- Buses do not run to meet train timetables from Goulburn.
- It travels the 'milk run' by accessing the outer areas of Karabar both on the way from Karabar to Queanbeyan and in reverse direction.
- No Opal service on CDC Canberra Services leaves regional residents not getting the same benefits as city residents. This includes the cost-of-living benefits made to the Opal system in recent years by the Minns Government.
- The route from Bombala to Canberra goes via Jindabyne and this makes the trip very long and unnecessary when there is a more efficient direct route.
- Only one bus into Cooma in the morning and one bus back in afternoon.
- Buses only run from Jindabyne 3 days a week. It needs to be a daily service.
- Need to get a teenager to TAFE in Canberra and there is no bus that is suitable to get him there on time in the morning and home again in evening.
- If there were a more frequent service than just the school service, I would use it to get to town and back for shopping and social activities.
- Currently my daughter gets the bus to Bungendore High School (BHS) from Gundaroo. BHS is the local public high school for Gundaroo kids. Bungendore is a 25min drive from Gundaroo but it is taking almost an hour and a half for the school bus. The kids get picked up in Gundaroo and dropped at Sutton (on a bus run by CDC) and then the Bungendore bus company picks them up in Sutton. In the morning the wait is not too long but in the afternoon the kids are waiting in Sutton for half an hour before getting the connecting bus meaning they don't get to Gundaroo to just before 5pm. Our daughter is exhausted, and it makes it difficult to fit in after school activities and to keep her active, let alone homework and in the future a part-time job. I don't understand why the Bungendore bus company can't drive an extra 15 minutes down the road to take the kids all the way to Gundaroo rather than finishing their run in Sutton.

Q: How often do you experience one or more of these issues?

- A few days a year or less – 45.83%
- At least one day a month – 4.17%
- 1 - 2 days week – 8.33%
- 3 - 4 days week – 8.33t

- 5 days week – 8.33%
- More than 5 days a week – 25%

Q: Which issue do you experience the most? Tick only one.

- Route/s do not go where I need to go – 12.50%
- I have to change buses too many times – 8.33%
- Doesn't run on time – 0%
- Cancellations – 0%
- Schedule is not frequent enough – 37.50%
- Doesn't offer a service that gets me to my destination (work / volunteer activity / place of study) on time – 20.83%
- Buses are too crowded – 0%
- Buses are unclean – 0%
- Bus drivers do not provide good customer service – 0%
- Safety – 0%
- Information about services is unreliable - timetables, routes, delays – 0%
- Cost – too expensive – 4.17%
- Other – 16.67%

Some issues provided in a free text form include:

- Buses do not run to meet train timetables from Goulburn.
- It doesn't connect with the train services in Goulburn.
- Not enough buses that offer the same route at other times of day.
- No service.

What impact have the issues with your bus service caused? Tick all that apply.

Responses:

- No impact. – 12.50%
- Missed medical or health appointment – 12.50%
- Late or unable to attend work / volunteer activity – 25%
- Late or unable to attend an interview – 0%
- Late or unable to attend school / education – 37.50%
- Late or unable to attend non - medical / health related appointment – 20.83%
- Late or unable to get child to care – 0%
- Late to collect child from care – 0%
- Late or unable to attend social arrangement – 0%
- Late or unable to visit family member / friend in need of assistance – 0%
- Information about services is unreliable - timetables, routes, delays – 0%
- Other – 4.17%

Some impacts / comments provided in a free text form include:

- Have had to drive myself to Canberra Airport as there is no easy way to get from Cooma to Canberra airport by bus.
- Impacting ability to do sport, keep active, do homework etc.
- I have to schedule medical appointments around 30 min after the bus leaves. If it does the 'milk run' only on Queanbeyan to Karabar, the service would take 10 min not 25 to get into the Queanbeyan Central Business District.
- Have to rely on community service.
- Inability to access public transport.
- Have to use a car rather than public transport.
- Unable to travel 4 days in any week that the bus doesn't travel from Jindabyne.
- Unable to travel at another time to and from Cooma.
- Need a weekend bus route for the kids in the area.

How often would you travel by bus if you did not experience any issues with the service?

- The same number of days as I currently travel on the bus – 12.50%
- A few days a year or less – 12.50%
- At least one day a month – 29.17%
- 1 - 2 days week – 8.33%
- 3 - 4 days week – 8.33%
- 5 days week – 20.88%
- More than 5 days a week – 8.33%

What do you think is working well with your bus service? Tick all that apply.

- Route/s - I can get to where I need to go – 26.67%
- Directness - I don't have to change buses – 40%
- Punctuality - buses run on time – 56.67%
- No or very few cancellations – 23.33%
- Schedule - there's enough buses to get me to where I need to go, as often as I need to travel – 10%
- Buses are not too crowded – 33.33%
- Cost - good value for money – 36.67%
- Buses are clean – 56.67%
- Bus drivers provide good customer service – 50%
- Safety – 43.33%
- Information about services is reliable - timetables, routes, delays – 33.33%



In Summary

RDA Southern Inland works across a region encompassing 44,639 square kilometres, including seven local government areas in the south-east of NSW, home to over 210,000 Australians. Our mission is to support the development of this part of regional Australia, acting as a conduit between residents, business owners and government agencies, providing a connection point for growth, prosperity, and liveability. We drive economic growth, innovation and entrepreneurship through collaboration, communication, advocacy, and the facilitation of regional projects. We strive to disseminate information and resources to our community members and provide unbiased support.

Our submission offers a comprehensive overview of local bus services within the Southern Inland region of NSW. Through a regionally targeted survey, we collected feedback into accessibility, usage patterns, purposes of bus trips, reliance on bus services, issues encountered, impacts of these issues, and potential usage if services were improved. Respondents expressed concerns about route coverage, frequency, connectivity, and reliability of information, highlighting the need for enhancements to meet community needs and expectations. Moreover, respondents highlighted positive aspects of bus services, such as punctuality, affordability, cleanliness, customer service, and safety.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback via this submission and contribute valuable insights to the NSW Bus Industry Taskforce's efforts in improving the reliability, quality, and effectiveness of bus services across the state. The feedback provided in this submission underscores the importance of addressing key challenges and enhancing service provision to better meet the diverse transportation needs of residents within the Southern Inland region of NSW, ultimately fostering economic and social development in the area.

Kind regards,

Carisa Wells

CEO and Director of Regional Development