

4 August 2020

Rural and Regional Bus Review Team
NSW Transport

Dear Sir / Madam

Rural and Regional Bush Fares for the 2021-2025 period

As a regional Council, Lismore City is pleased to provide information to you regarding our local community. In response to your specific questions, I provide the following:

Are the needs of people with limited transport options in your community being met by local buses? What changes would you like to see to these services?

The Lismore Public & Active Transport Group (LPATG) (which Lismore City Council participates in) regularly collects information about transport options in the Lismore community from community service stakeholders and community members through meetings and transport information days.

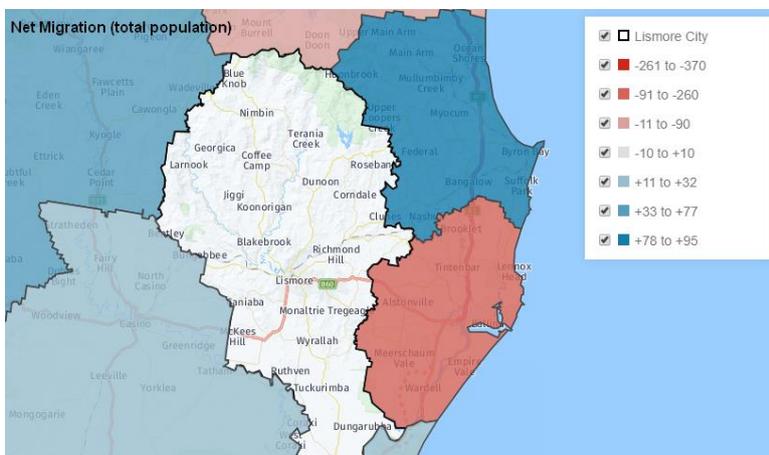
Feedback indicates that the needs of people with limited transport options in our community are **not** being fully met by local buses. The dot points below highlight key issues and changes needed to address these issues:

- Service providers report that transport is the biggest client issue in our region after housing- accessibility (times and frequency of services) and affordability being the two key factors.
- Bus services on Saturday afternoon, Sunday and public holidays to key destinations (eg Lismore Base Hospital, major shopping centres and Byron Bay/Ballina) are desperately needed.
- Better connections between Lismore/Kyogle/Casino that would enable people to commute for work and study- timing is a key issue.
- Bus services to Lismore Industrial Area – need services at beginning and end of day to service work start and end times to enable workers to commute.
- The Lismore Transit Centre receives regular enquiries for a bus from Lismore to Nimbin at midday. If there was a 12 pm service to Nimbin every day, instead of just Monday and Thursday, it would be well used.
- Affordability - many low income earners are not eligible for the \$2.50 RED ticket and can't afford a full fare. An extension of the RED ticket to job seekers, students and other transport disadvantaged groups would make bus services more affordable.

- Easy to find and easy to use transport information is a key issue. Many people don't use bus services because they don't know about them, or don't know how to find information about the bus service they need, or can't understand the bus timetable information. Better signage, information and promotion of transport options in the local community is needed.
- Disability and Aged Care Services highlight that clients who are not eligible for community transport are reliant on public transport and stress the need for affordable fares, easily accessible bus information and one on one travel training to support this particular group of transport disadvantaged people.
- There is currently no bus service into the Gundurimba Aboriginal community which is on the outskirts of the Lismore CBD. The nearest bus stop is too far for older people, people with disability and parents with children to walk to. (HART [the community transport service operating in the Lismore Local Government Area (LGA)] advise that the two senior residents who live at Gundurimba are issued \$150 worth of HART taxi vouchers [called Visiting Vouchers] each, monthly, for general travel to address disadvantage.)
- Bus services between Lismore and Goonellabah do not meet the needs of this community (many people in this community are transport disadvantaged and rely on public transport) Key issues are infrequency and timing of services (eg last bus back leaves Lismore Square at 5.20 pm which is too early for commuters) and there is a lack of weekend services.
- A number of people in smaller villages and rural areas in the Lismore LGA rely on school bus services to get to work (including volunteer work for Centrelink requirements), study, shopping, medical appointments and other regular appointments. This means they have no access to public transport during school holidays and have to try and arrange alternative transport (e.g. hitchhiking) to continue these activities during school holidays. Continuation of school bus services during school holidays where people rely on them for essential travel is needed.
- Smaller forms of transport such as shuttle buses or additional on demand services with more flexible scheduling could address some of the above issues.

How are the demographics in your community changing as a result of migration to and from the area? Will these changes require more/different public transport services in the future?

Between 2011 and 2016, Australia-wide, 52.4% of people (aged 5 and over) did not change address over 5 years, while 33.9% moved within Australia, and 6.3% moved from Overseas. The Lismore LGA experienced the highest migration from the Byron LGA.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled and presented in profile .id, the population experts.

The Lismore LGA area requires changes as identified in response 1 (above) to support our Indigenous, disadvantaged and ageing groups. Furthermore, our community have indicated through input into the Community Strategic Plan a need for essential long-term transport planning to ensure people can have access to the services they need.

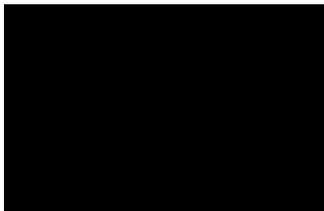
Are you interested in improving public transport options to support tourism in your region? If so, what changes do you think local bus services could make that would help?

The Lismore LGA covers 1290km² and is removed from other public transportation services such as Rail. Improved public transport services between rural villages throughout the Lismore LGA would facilitate improved connectivity and support opportunities for local businesses to diversify offerings and improve tourist access within rural settings.

Are you aware of any 'on-demand' bus services running in your local area, and if so, how has your local community responded to these?

- The only 'on- demand' bus service in the Lismore LGA is the [B ConX](#) which services the Lismore suburbs of Goonellabah and Chilcotts Grass. This bus service is operated by Northern Rivers Buslines. The numbers of people using this service continues to trend upwards, including new customers. Feedback from LPATG stakeholders indicates that people in the Goonellabah community are appreciating the flexibility and convenience of this service.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Tina Irish
Manager Economic Development