

Rick Banyard

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

IPART

Sydney

[ipart@ipart.nws.gov.au](mailto:ipart@ipart.nws.gov.au)

## **Review of Regional Buses Submission**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a comment.

I wish to raise four issues

1. Buses are an essential service and deserve support even though their viability may be more difficult than in highly populated areas. Sparse potential patrons, longer routes, lower income of more isolated areas, lower levels of community infill and smaller bus companies are some of the reasons.
2. The immediate introduction of seat belts is absolutely essential and price paths must encourage immediate uptake. As part of the process from the start of the new price path there should be no standing in any bus and each passenger should have their own seat. Operators should be provided with incentives to install or upgrade to seat belt equipped buses. It is quite ridiculous to have children roaming free in a bus whilst in a car they are entrapped in a child restraint until about 7 or above the nominated weight.

Seatbelts are a very serious issue and buses are not immune from accidents. The boy that died at Singleton from being catapulted from a bus would be alive today if restrained by a seat belt.

3. Disability access requirements need to be renegotiated. Capital costs of buses is increased by about 25% to cater for extremely low numbers of patrons with disability. Disability access and seating also increases the physical size of the bus thereby increasing operational costs. At the same time as inflating the cost of owning and operating the bus the government is heavily subsidising the provision of disability taxis and specialist community transport. Time has come to review the provision of public transport to those less physically able. There are simply better and cheaper ways of providing public transport to those less abled.

IPART may also be interested to note that buses operated community transport services are frequently below the standard of bus required to be provided by normal bus service operators.

4. There is a major need to greatly reduce the size of the bus used to provide public transport. Where operators use large buses the bus routes often become very long and convoluted in order to try to get a "bus load". This slows journey time and is in turn a disincentive to use public transport.

With the car being the main competitor it is essential that bus travel be as car like as possible giving quick journey times, comfort and a high level of safety including seat belts.

Mini buses should replace most "stretch limos".

Mini buses immediately eliminates standing and equips buses with seat belts and air conditioning. Mini buses are also far more suitable for most country roads.

Mini buses have low capital costs as well as very much lower operational and maintenance cost.

The school bus transport system is in need of urgent review as it is extremely wasteful, serves children very poorly and in context of this determination is a significant conflict with the operational objectives of public transport.

Rick Banyard