

Blind Citizens Australia (Tweed Valley Branch)

President Suzanne Hudson

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Blind Citizens Australia (B.C.A) is an advocacy organisation for people with disabilities. I am the president of the Tweed Valley branch of B.C.A. and as such am writing to put my support behind Northern Rivers Railway.

The Northern Rivers area of New South Wales has a very large proportion of people living with disabilities, either from birth or acquired disabilities. As an example, there are over 5,000 people living with Macular degeneration alone, and as you would be aware this limits their driving capacity.

This area has quite an aged population and well-meaning people are limited with Travel and need good reliable public transport. A large number of these residents have relocated from cities far away. The Train would be a fantastic link for them as it was when they located to the area.

I personally have spent many years representing people with disabilities, both in my role as president of B.C.A. Tweed and on the access committee to the Tweed Shire Council. In these roles I have always advocated for the return of the Train service to this area, and there is no reason that the bike path and the train line cannot coexist. This would be so advantageous to the area both for tourism and for Transport.

I have worked for two disability organisations over the last 10 years in this area. Every single client requested better Train services both for Travel and social outings. It is for this reason I am writing this letter of support for the Northern Rivers Railway. I service quite a substantial number of clients with disabilities. NSW does not stand for Newcastle Sydney and Wollongong. There is more to the state than the large cities. We live in regional New South Wales and as such deserve the same services that are granted regularly to the capital cities. We are taxpayers also and our taxes matter for public transport. We feel very neglected in this area. Regional New South Wales matters and should be given as high preference for services as Newcastle Sydney and Wollongong.

On Newcastle Sydney and Wollongong, the lack of good public transport in our area leads us to believe we live in the forgotten part of NSW. I am asking you to look favourably on the grand proposal from Northern Rivers Railway, so we may proceed to get some form of reliable Train service happening in our region.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Hudson