



Transport

CountryLinkUp Community Consultations Report 2010

RESPONSE

January 2011

SUMMARY OF RESPONSE TO 62 RECOMMENDATIONS:

Accept (49):

Recommendation is supported.

Accept in principle (2):

Recommendation is supported in part.

Further investigation required (10):

Further work is required to determine final response.

Reject (1):

Recommendation is not supported for the provided reason.

NUMBER		RESPONSE	
1	That CountryLink review current opportunities for customers to give feedback with a view to incorporating customer feedback survey's in person and on line feedback on a regular basis.	Accept	CountryLink will commit to a 12 monthly online survey similar to the CountryLinkUp review. CountryLink currently use the CountryLink website and the 131 500 to receive feedback and we invite feedback on timetable changes.
2	That information about on time running for CountryLink Services be disaggregated and provided by individual train routes on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis and be publicly available on the CountryLink Website.	Accept	It is proposed to publish information in two ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all services by day, week, month and year • individual routes by month and year. The presentation of the data would be similar to what is published for CityRail, with the use of bar charts and graphs rather than just text.
3	Consideration be given to adjusting on time running figures that recognise factors outside the control of CountryLink including flood, fire and other unavoidable events such as state emergencies, gas leaks, incidents with other rail operators or security incidents from being included in the overall on time running figures.	Accept	It is proposed to copy the CityRail process for identification and approval of force majeure events with some slight alterations around the rules to reflect the regional nature of the business. <p>Force majeure adjustments would come into effect when a single external event impacts the on time arrival of one or more services. This level of impact is considered to be significant. These calculations would then be made at the end of the week and reflected in our monthly and yearly on-time running records.</p>
4	That when reviewing timetables and coach routes, consideration be given to maximising connectivity to larger centres where ever possible that includes transport connections to health services, education and employment.	Accept	Agreed
5	That CountryLink work with Regional Transport Coordinators and Transport NSW (Bus contract and taxi divisions) to identify opportunities to integrate local bus and taxi services connections with CountryLink services.	Accept	Agreed
6	That CountryLink involve staff in a review of the recommendations arising from this report to implement the suggestions made by customers throughout the CountryLinkUp. That the review specifically look at ways to improve the current role of passenger service staff visibility, interaction with passengers, proactive approaches to passengers with special needs and how passenger service staff can better assist those with mobility issues on unstaffed stations.	Accept	Agreed. A summary of recommendations and outcomes will be communicated to all staff. CountryLink will conduct a forum with on board and station staff to consider the recommendations and develop strategies for passengers with special needs.
7	That installation of wireless internet access and battery charging facilities be investigated for the current XPT and Xplorer trains. For future rolling stock, internet access and charging facilities be included.	Accept	Agreed, preliminary Investigation being undertaken in early 2011.

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8	That entertainment devices similar to those used on a aeroplanes (games/films/TV) be made available to passengers on a fee for service basis. For future Rollingstock, investigate the inclusion of entertainment devices within the seating of the trains.	Accept	Agreed. A trial was conducted in 2010, the results of which are currently being evaluated.
9	That CountryLink investigate the provision of portable passenger attendant buttons be provided to passengers with special needs. For future Rollingstock include attendant buttons throughout the train.	Accept	Agreed, preliminary investigation being undertaken in early 2011.
10	That CountryLink trains consider making pillows and blankets available to Customers, especially those travelling on night services.	Accept	Agreed. Trial undertaken in November 2010, results currently being evaluated.
11	That the needs of children travelling on trains be planned for with a view to providing affordable / complementary activity bags.	Accept	Agreed
12	That CountryLink undertake a regular on board survey to gain feedback about food and beverage services.	Accept	Agreed through use of paper based and on-line surveys.
13	That CountryLink review the individual suggestions made as part of the CountryLinkUp including more regular rotation of the main meal options, better quality tea and coffee, reintroduction of croissants, provision of soy milk and whether additional healthy options could be introduced.	Accept	Agreed. Buffet main meal menus are rotated fortnightly basis and are stocked with a comprehensive range of fresh healthy choices. Quality coffee and tea is now available with coffee machines and cornet coffee products on services.
14	That CountryLink examine and review how closing times for the buffet car could be reduced, especially when those changeovers are due to occur during main meal times such as lunch and dinner.	Accept	Agreed. The introduction of Point of Sale measures and recently revised stocktaking procedures will result in buffet remaining open until arrival to the metropolitan borders.
15	That CountryLink review the use of Transport (Transit) Officers across the CountryLink network to ensure that their deployment is intelligence based and reflects the reporting of incidents .	Accept	Agreed. Deployment of Transit Officers are based on intelligence gained from staff security incident reports. Transit Officers currently patrol trains on the north to Taree.
16	That all stations ensure that lighting is adequate for passengers getting on and off trains on night services.	Accept	Agreed. Safety system requirement to complete daily station checklist including lighting. Reinforced to staff at regional locations.
17	That signage on information phones on stations indicates that passengers can be connected directly to assistance if they wish to speak to CountryLink staff if concerned about security on the station.	Accept	Agreed. Recently completed installing A4 sign adjacent to information phone and large cantilevered location sign mounted at phone location.

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18	That booking arrangements for passengers take into account any special needs of individual passengers and where necessary allow passengers to book specific seats.	Accept	Agreed. Changes have been made to the Call Centre Interactive Voice Recording to prompt passengers to inform the call centre agent if they have special needs. Website section titled "Travelling with CountryLink" has been updated to have the information regarding special needs in a more prominent location.
19	That prior to passengers boarding on night services that passenger service staff turn on the overhead lights to assist passengers find their seats.	Accept	Agreed. A summary of recommendations and outcomes will be communicated to all staff. CountryLink will conduct a forum with on board and station staff to consider the recommendations and develop strategies for passengers with special needs.
20	That passenger attendant staff review procedures to ensure that passengers are seated in their allocated seats.	Accept	Agreed. Passenger attendants manage the seating of all passengers based on the allocation provided in the manifest. Additionally, on board staff patrol each carriage to ensure the seating arrangements are suitable for all passengers including those with special needs.
21	That CountryLink work with passenger service staff to review opportunities for on board recycling of paper, cardboard, glass and plastic and provide recycling facilities at terminus points to allow recycling to be implemented.	Accept	Agreed. CountryLink's catering managers are currently reviewing re-cycling opportunities.
22	That CountryLink review the current arrangements for the inspection and maintenance of toilets during journeys to ensure that toilets remain in clean working condition.	Accept	Agreed. On board staff are required to regularly inspect, clean and replenish all toilets.
23	That CountryLink consider opportunities to differentiate first class travel including free food and drinks, newspapers, reading material and entertainment options.	Accept	Agreed. First class enhancements including tea-coffee, newspaper, pillows and blankets are currently being considered and trialled.
24	That CountryLink work with station, booking and passenger service staff to implement a proactive approach to dealing with passengers with mobility issues. In particular to examine how passengers can be encouraged at booking to indicate whether they need specific assistance.	Accept	Agreed. Changes have currently been made to the Call Centre Interactive Voice Recording to prompt passengers to inform the call centre agent if they have special needs. Website section titled "Travelling with CountryLink" has been updated to have the information regarding special needs in a more prominent location. Work to be undertaken to further remind Travel Centre/Booking office staff to ask passengers if they require special assistance.
25	That luggage handling procedures be reviewed in relation to how luggage can be better managed for passengers on unstaffed stations including the ability to pre-book luggage, assistance with unbooked luggage and assistance given to passengers with mobility difficulties.	Accept	Agreed. Investigate the possibility of having a procedure created where passengers who have prebooked their travel are able to have a manifest comment inserted as part of their booking to inform on board staff that the passenger will require assistance with luggage.

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26	That for current XPT and Explorer services CountryLink review storage requirements for bicycles to make it easier for passengers to book, store and move bikes on and off trains as part of their journey. For future rolling stock include appropriate storage systems for bicycles that make it easy for cyclist to book, store and take bikes on and off CountryLink trains.	Accept	Agreed. Bicycle storage is available on all CountryLink services. Luggage cars have been modified to store 5 bicycles on XPTs and 3 on XPLs.
27	That CountryLink review booking restrictions placed on each route across the network with a view to removing the restriction where possible or provide a rationale for why this booking restriction is in place. Any booking restriction and its rationale should be publicly available on the CountryLink website.	Accept	Agreed. Review of booking restrictions to commence, with the detail of the booking restrictions to be placed on the FAQ section of the CountryLink website.
28	That CountryLink be included in the 131500 Transport NSW information system.	Accept	Agreed. Discussion currently underway with Transport NSW representatives.
29	That CountryLink review systems to improve information given to passengers in relation to track work, service delays, and replacement of trains with coaches. This information should be provided wherever possible at booking. Post booking systems need to be in place to alert passengers by phone, email or text about changes to services if possible.	Accept	Agreed. Call centre currently utilise phone, email, post, and SMS to notify passengers of any change to their services post completing the booking process. Recent changes to the way that track work is entered into the reservation system has resulted in an significant increase in the number of passengers being notified of potential, and confirmed delays as part of the booking process.
30	That CountryLink ensure that procedures are adhered to that ensure that lighting on stations for night services remains on even in the event of late trains and that staff when present at station are wherever possible visible to passengers should they require assistance.	Accept	Agreed. Staff have been directed to remain on duty and keep station lighting on when trains are delayed.
31	That CountryLink review and replace the signage for the information points on stations to make sure that these points are highly visible and provide information about what the points can be used for – eg. to get up to date information about train arrival and departures, to book a ticket where no ticket facilities are available, to report vandalism or graffiti, to reports concerns about security.	Accept	Agreed. New A4 sign adjacent to information phone and large cantilevered location sign mounted at phone locations has been recently completed.
32	That CountryLink design and implement customer service standards for coaches similar to what is in place for train services.	Accept	Agreed. The new Customer Service Standards handbooks have been distributed to the coach operators as an interim measure until a unique edition will be developed for coaches.
33	That access for those with mobility issues on current coaches be reviewed to see how current procedures could be improved. In the future commissioning of coaches, the issue of access be a primary consideration.	Accept	Agreed. CountryLink will investigate with Coach Body Builders and seek advice from vehicle experts while adhering to Australian Design Standards at all times. All coaches at present have a kneeling / lowering facility; however the main impediment to easy access is the luggage bins underneath the sitting area which require steps to gain entry to the seats.

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34	That for the current coach arrangements that coach drivers take a "people first - luggage second" approach to assisting passengers on and off coach services.	Accept	Agreed. CountryLink has forwarded the Customer Service Standards to the coach operators. CountryLink provide continuous monitoring through audits and investigation of customer complaints.
35	That the restrictions regarding the ban on food and beverage consumption be reviewed with a view to removing this restriction. In particular ensure that the rules for people with medical and other special conditions are sufficiently flexible to give passengers certainty about their ability to bring food onto the services if required.	Accept in principle	Agreed for customers with medical conditions - sent memo reminding coach companies to allow passengers to eat and drink if required for medical reasons.
36	That the online booking system for coaches removes the booking number that appears on tickets as it causes confusion about allocated seating within coaches.	Accept in principle	Agreed. This will be discussed with Res Systems/Amadeus early in 2011 to identify costs for inclusion in future reservation system releases.
37	That CountryLink investigate the deviation of the existing CountryLink coach service that operates from Queanbeyan to Cootamundra to go via Boorowa and Murringo at least two days per week. This would provide the community of Boorowa and Murringo with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	Further investigation required	CountryLink needs to undertake detailed and specific investigation work to determine the demand and feasibility of the proposal.
38	That CountryLink investigate a two day per week service that links Temora - Young - Boorowa - Yass and Canberra. This would provide these communities with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	Further investigation required	CountryLink needs to undertake detailed and specific investigation work to determine the demand and feasibility of the proposal.
39	That the subway be either painted in a light colour or additional lighting be installed at Harden Station.	Accept	Subway unsuitable for painting due to dampness in the walls. Structure to be left exposed for inspection purposes. Convex mirrors replaced and light fittings replaced.
40	That leasing of the vacant rooms at Harden Station be investigated to try to find suitable lessees to better improve passive surveillance of the station and provide a community space.	Accept	Agreed. RailCorp's Property Group will investigate community and business interest.

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41	That future timetable reviews investigate if timetable connections to the South Coast and via Yass for coaches can be improved.	Accept	Agreed. A review of South timetables is planned for mid 2011 after the ARTC track upgrades are completed.
42	That future timetable changes being devised after completion of the track work and lifting of safety restrictions on the southern line include a connection in Sydney to the North Coast.	Accept	Agreed. A review of South timetables is planned for mid 2011 after the ARTC track upgrades are completed. It is planned to reinstate this connection if train paths are available.
43	That signage at Junee station indicate how tickets can be purchased via the call centre or with assistance from the information point on weekends and outside of regular hours.	Accept	Agreed. Signage for new hours of business being arranged and to include options of ticket purchase.
44	That the next timetable review, consideration be given to improving the connections between Newcastle and Taree.	Accept	This will be considered in a review of North Coast timetables in mid 2011.
45	That CountryLink investigate a bus connection between Port Macquarie and Wauchope station for all XPT services.	Further investigation required	CountryLink needs to undertake detailed and specific investigation work to determine the demand and feasibility of the proposal.
46	That CountryLink have discussions with Lismore Council to allow CountryLink coaches going to Lismore to stop at both the station and at the Lismore bus interchange.	Accept	Agreed. This is underway and is planned for introduction in February 2011.
47	That CountryLink investigate a Lismore to the Gold Coast coach service.	Accept	Agreed. An alteration is being made to an existing coach service that will provide an early morning service to the Gold Coast. An afternoon return service is already available. This will be introduced in February 2011.
48	The 40km rule for CountryLink services in the North Coast region be reviewed with the aim of removing where possible restrictions that unnecessarily limit the ability of passengers to use existing services.	Accept	Agreed, The Passenger Transport Act that restricts journey distance will be re-examined by Transport NSW.
49	That CountryLink investigate a coach connection from Ballina via Iluka, Wombat and Maclean to Grafton station for the XPT service. Further community consultation is required to determine whether demand for this service would be most for the day or the night service.	Further investigation required	CountryLink needs to undertake detailed and specific investigation work to determine the demand and feasibility of the proposal.
50	That CountryLink investigate in planning for future rolling stock and timetabling the feasibility of a day return service from Bathurst to Sydney.	Further investigation required	CountryLink needs to undertake detailed and specific investigation work to determine the demand and feasibility of the proposal.
51	That CountryLink investigate the viability of a coach leaving Parkes via Orange to connect to Lithgow on Sundays.	Further investigation required	CountryLink needs to undertake detailed and specific investigation work to determine the demand and feasibility of the proposal.

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52	That CountryLink investigate providing another set down and pick up location at Orange Hospital.	Reject	Disagreed. CountryLink has reviewed the request for an extension of the coach services to the Health Campus. At this time CountryLink is unable to support the proposal for an extension due to the impact it will cause on CountryLink passengers. The Health Campus is not along the route of the current timetable, a deviation would add additional time to the current timetable.
53	That for future rolling stock and timetable planning that consideration be given to "reversing" the Dubbo train to provide an early morning departure time. In reviewing this option attention must be given to the impact on those passengers connecting from the further west via Dubbo.	Further investigation required	CountryLink needs to undertake detailed and specific investigation work to determine the demand and feasibility of the proposal.
54	That CountryLink pursue a replacement agent for CountryLink ticket sales in Merriwa.	Accept	Agreed. A suitable agent has been identified and CountryLink is awaiting accreditation documents to be returned from them.
55	That CountryLink review the submission regarding the extension of the CityRail network to Tamworth and provide a response on the issues raised.	Further investigation required	The submission is being reviewed. CountryLink needs to undertake detailed and specific investigation work to determine the demand and feasibility of the proposal.
56	That future rolling stock purchase investigate the use of sleeper cars for north west services.	Accept	Agreed. To be included in development of options for fleet replacement.
57	That CountryLink investigate an additional weekly service to Broken Hill.	Further investigation required	CountryLink are reviewing options to provide an additional Broken Hill service following advice that Great Southern Rail intend to reduce the frequency of their service from 2 services per week to one service per week for half of the year.
58	That passengers on the long haul coach trips from Dubbo be surveyed about entertainment options	Accept	Agreed
59	That the current CountryLink staffing arrangements in Broken Hill remain.	Accept	Agreed. There are no plans to change the current staffing arrangements at Broken Hill.
60	That CountryLink investigate a service from Jindabyne to Cooma that connects with the CountryLink service Cooma to Canberra, south coast services and the Explorer service to Sydney.	Further investigation required	CountryLink needs to undertake detailed and specific investigation work to determine the demand and feasibility of the proposal.
61	That in future timetable reviews of the Cooma to Canberra service that consideration be given to providing a service that would allow employment based commuting.	Accept	Agreed. This will be considered in the 2011 timetable review.
62	That CountryLink examine what improvements to coach services can be made to the connection between Cooma, Jindabyne, Dalgety and Bombala as a result of recent road upgrades.	Accept	Agreed. This will be considered in the 2011 timetable review.