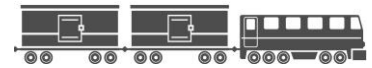




TRAINS NORTH



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www.trainsnorth.org.au • P.O. Box 575, Armidale, NSW 2350. • trainsnorthinc@gmail.com

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Media Release

A crowd gathered at Armidale Railway Station at 11.00am today to celebrate the successful completion of a petition to the NSW legislative Assembly seeking the restoration of passenger train services from Armidale to Queensland on the Main North railway line.

Representatives of local councils and the Trains North groups in Guyra, Glen Innes and Tenterfield were present.

The petition, commenced by the group Passenger Trains North of Armidale, was subsequently taken up by Trains North and has reached a total of 10,746 signatures. In the afternoon it was delivered to Mr. Adam Marshall, MP for Northern Tablelands, to be presented in parliament, where it is expected to be debated in due course.

President of Trains North, Matthew Tierney, said, “We think that this petition will prove to be a key milestone in establishing that public opinion in this region is in favour of protecting the railway line, restoring it north of Armidale, and getting the trains running through to Queensland once more.”

“The social and economic future of this region depends to a large degree upon getting freight moving on the Main North Line, but also upon the restoration of proper public transport — and that means trains.”

“By co-incidence the minister for Transport, Jo Haylen, has announced discounted fares on Fridays in the Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong metropolitan area to encourage use of passenger trains, starting today. But the need for good public transport in the regions is important too, and it deserves greater attention. And passenger trains on existing railway lines are the backbone of good public transport.”

The Main North railway line, north of Armidale, has been neglected for over three decades by successive governments, despite the growing popularity of the restored service north of Tamworth to Armidale. Next month will be the thirtieth anniversary of the very welcome partial return of passenger trains to the Northern Tablelands when the Xplorer train commenced operating to Armidale on 22nd November, 1993. “Sadly, Guyra, Glen Innes and Tenterfield did not share in that wonderful achievement. Now is the time to deal with unfinished business and work towards getting the line operating again all the way,” Mr Tierney said.

Siri Gamage, vice-president of Trains North observed, “Over the border, in South-East Queensland, the population is expected to grow to 4.3 million by 2030. Many residents in New England have close family or work connections with Queensland and students come from there to the schools and university at Armidale. It’s time for our regions to be connected by effective public transport and to reduce carbon emissions by moving goods by rail.”

For further information, contact:

Matthew Tierney 0427 255 787

Siri Gamage: 0434 289 371