

**Jenny Aitchison**

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads



## Media Release

# Regional rail travel on NSW TrainLink just the ticket

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Long distance rail travel continues to pique the public interest, with more than a million journeys made so far this calendar year on NSW TrainLink's long-distance regional train services and patronage now around three percent higher than before the COVID period.

Patronage on all routes has steadily increased overall with around 107,000 journeys now made each month on regional trains including the XPTs and XPLOREERS, compared to an average of around 42,000 in 2021.

In addition, more than 440,000 coach journeys have been made in 2023, with an average patronage of around 40,000 per month, or double the 2021 figure.

The sharpest increase in demand has been on the Melbourne to Sydney train route, with a 250 per cent increase in average monthly patronage compared to 2021 and a 47 per cent increase compared to 2022.

This included a spike in bookings in September around the AFL grand final, prompting NSW TrainLink to add a sixth carriage on Melbourne services for several weeks in September.

NSW TrainLink attributes the uplift in demand to factors including an [advertising campaign](#) which has generated more than 14,000 bookings in under two months. Travellers have also responded to rail's value for money price in the face of cost of living pressures, including the high cost of fuel and airfares.

The NSW TrainLink campaign includes a television advertisement that highlights more than 365 destinations in NSW. The video features beautiful and inspirational scenery - from the red outback to rolling green hills, which passengers can see out the window as they travel across NSW and interstate.

As a result of the campaign, there has been a rise in the number of people paying full fare.

For the environmentally-aware traveller, rail offers other benefits namely that the carbon dioxide equivalent emissions for a full capacity XPT train trip from Sydney to Brisbane is around 44kg of CO<sub>2</sub>-e per passenger, compared to 73kg for flying and 134kg for driving a car.

Demand during the cooler months was also strong this year, with all regional train journeys seeing an average 33 per cent increase during winter when compared to 2022.

On the Sydney and Melbourne XPTs, there were 90,000 passenger journeys combined for June, July and August this year, compared to 60,000 for 2022.

NSW TrainLink regional train and coach services are filling up fast, particularly going into the peak summer period and passengers are encouraged to book ahead as much as possible to avoid disappointment.

The most convenient and cost-effective way to book is online at [transportnsw.info/regional-bookings](https://transportnsw.info/regional-bookings). There are online discounts of 10 percent off adult fares or 20 percent off adult fares for bookings made five or more days in advance.

Cheaper options are available through online saver fares sales on selected routes, which change every season, with discounts of up to 35 per cent. Find more at [transportnsw.info/online-saver-fares](https://transportnsw.info/online-saver-fares)

#### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Jenny Aitchison:**

“We’re incredibly pleased to see passengers embracing what NSW TrainLink has to offer, including around 127 regional train services and 605 coach services each week.

“People are recognising that it is a unique, cost-effective way to sit back and enjoy the ride, taking in the stunning scenery out the window, without the stress of driving or catching a plane.

“We also see, particularly for popular routes like Melbourne and Brisbane, are valued because passengers arrive right in the heart of the city, without the need to transfer from an airport.

“Train travel offers passengers fantastic flexibility. They’re able to visit the buffet and stretch their legs, get on and off at multiple stops, breaking up their journey or visiting more places in regional NSW and Australia.”

#### **Average monthly patronage for calendar year 2023\***

Sydney to Melbourne – 31,000 - 250% higher than 2021, 47% higher than 2022

Sydney to Canberra – 23,700 -160% higher than 2021, 31% higher than 2022

Sydney to Brisbane – 10,400 – 146% higher than 2021, 34% higher than 2022

Sydney to Casino – 10,200 – 147% higher than 2021, 35% higher than 2022

Sydney to Armidale – 9,800 – 125% higher than 2021, 36% higher than 2022

Sydney to Grafton – 8,600 – 153% higher than 2021, 36% higher than 2022

Sydney to Dubbo – 8,100 – 85% higher than 2021, 30% higher than 2022

Sydney to Moree – 4,800 – 90% higher than 2021, 36% higher than 2022

Sydney to Griffith – 1,000 – 139% higher than 2021, 31% higher than 2022

Sydney to Broken Hill – 800– 64% higher than 2021, 37% higher than 2022.

*\*Data is approximate, and includes journeys in both directions*