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LETTERS

Buses v Trains

HOW wonderful to see Blanch's Bus Company, local councils, businesses and Social Futures trialling a commuter bus run.

Unfortunately, the promotion of this momentous event only rated a page five mention in your paper.

Commuter public transport will never get off the ground if trials such as this one slide by unnoticed and (they are) consequently under-utilised and we will never get ANY government funding!

This is a chance to get cars off the road, ease parking congestion and save money.

A weekly ticket at \$36, \$3.60 per trip, is so cheap and means commuters could even do without a second car and save rego, insurance and running costs.

Please do a front page spread and get bums on bus seats and people could sit in comfort and safety, relax and read your paper. Win/win.

Now do TOOT/NRRAG get behind this? Not on your nelly. They continue to divide the community over their fixation on bringing trains back. This is not going to happen and does not help the majority of

people who don't live adjacent to a railway station.

What is their agenda? It is not about realistic public transport!

Their simplistic approach, "Would you like to see trains return to the track between Casino and Murwillumbah?", doesn't address the real question: "What public transport does our widespread community need (and can be achieved for an affordable price)?"

This bus trial from Byron to Lennox then Ballina and Lismore, services the

majority of local commuters. The infrastructure is in place – no cost, it takes a car off the road for every passenger, concession prices are available (below the \$3.60/trip), it is a safer, relaxing trip and alleviates parking space.

Restore the train: Government feasibility study \$900 million, TOOT/NRRAG who knows? \$300 million? Ongoing maintenance and asset costs HUGE TOOT/NRRAG, stop your self-centred, divisive action, and throw your energies towards a proper, achievable public transport system. The state and this community can not afford your limited, grandiose dream.

— **Richard White,**
East Ballina.