‘Countrymindless’
Rural Railway Closure: Destabilising a social exchange relationship between country and city in New South Wales

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A thesis submitted to Charles Sturt University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

November 2013
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Acknowledgements

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Abstract

Once a national icon, country Australia now finds much of its community service support infrastructure being closed down and what were traditional government services being withdrawn, such as railways. Country people have resisted these changes. Country community protest over possible railway closure was notably strong in the New England region of NSW during 2003, providing a case for the study of such resistance.

The public railway in NSW, traditionally owned and administered by colonial/State government, was an inherently political object. During the middle-through latter half of the nineteenth century, country communities lobbied government to give them a railway. Government seemingly reciprocated in giving and continued giving railways to country NSW through and into the latter decades of the twentieth century, largely irrespective of usage and cost. In exchange for a railway, country settlers used it to develop national wealth. Country gave government and the nation primary produce for local consumption and to earn export income, a market for manufactured products, political support, and an iconic Australian national identity.

I argue that the railway can be considered as having effectively mediated a government–country social exchange relationship. Viewing the government–[railway]–country relationship as social exchange offers an opportunity to make visible both government and country contributions to the relationship.

Government railway decision making and actions were inclined and disposed towards country, reflecting elements of an Australian country ideology known as countrymindedness. Beyond offering passenger and freight transport, Australian railways carried powerful symbolism carrying denoted and connoted meanings. Nevertheless, usage of railways changed markedly and by 2003 country use of the railway had declined to a point where government considered closing a number of lines, in addition to those closed earlier.
Countrymindless Rural Railway Closure

Events and interpretations of the events surrounding attempts at closures, are identified and analysed using NSW country newspapers. Thematic analysis of the newspapers, revealed eleven prime themes of meaning that the country communities associated with railway closure during 2003. Seven themes related closely to the elements of countrymindedness. Four themes were additional. Themes expressed denoted and connoted meanings. Railway closure seemed careless towards and heedless of country communities. Government seemed mindless towards them. I argue railway closure signified what I call ‘countrymindlessness’. This became visible through the events of 2003, when New England and grain line communities reacted.

This thesis argues that during 2003, the New England community reacted strongly when countrymindless railway closure destabilised, for a while at least, a traditionally stable government–country social exchange relationship. This study adds to the existing literature on country reaction to service closure by including significant country cultural elements.
## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<td>AC</td>
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<td>AE</td>
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<td>AI</td>
<td>Armidale Independent</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
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<td>AN</td>
<td>Area News</td>
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<td>Annual report of the NSW Department of Railways, its predecessor and successor organisations</td>
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<td>ARw</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARHS RRC</td>
<td>Australian Railway Historical Society Railway Resource Centre</td>
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<td>ARTC</td>
<td>Australian Rail Track Corporation (Appendix 1.1)</td>
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<td>Au</td>
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<td>AWB</td>
<td>Australian Wheat Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDT</td>
<td>Barrier Daily Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>BN(i)</td>
<td>Border News (insert)</td>
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<td>BSE</td>
<td>Byron Shire Echo</td>
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<td>CECN</td>
<td>Clarence Environment Centre Newsletter</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>Crookwell Gazette</td>
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<td>CH</td>
<td>Cootamundra Herald</td>
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<td>CHA</td>
<td>Coffs Harbour Advocate</td>
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<td>cia</td>
<td>Cultural Impact Assessment</td>
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<td>CN</td>
<td>Canowindra News</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Community Service Obligation</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>Champion Post</td>
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<td>CT</td>
<td>Coonabarabran Times</td>
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<td>CWD</td>
<td>Central Western Daily</td>
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<td>d.</td>
<td>Pence</td>
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<td>DA</td>
<td>Daily Advertiser</td>
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<td>Daily News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT</td>
<td>Daily Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eia</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>ft</td>
<td>Foot (imperial measurement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>Guyra Argus</td>
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<tr>
<td>G&amp;DHSJ</td>
<td>Guyra &amp; District Historical Society Journal</td>
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<td>GG</td>
<td>Guyra Guardian</td>
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<td>GIE</td>
<td>Glen Innes Examiner</td>
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<td>GN</td>
<td>Guardian News</td>
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Countrymindless Rural Railway Closure

<table>
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<tr>
<td>GSC</td>
<td>Guyra Shire Chronicle</td>
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<td>GWN</td>
<td>Guyra Weekly News</td>
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<td>hr</td>
<td>Hour/s</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Irrigator</td>
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<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Illawarra Mercury</td>
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<td>in</td>
<td>Inch (imperial measurement)</td>
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<td>Km</td>
<td>Kilometre/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>lbs</td>
<td>Pounds (imperial measurement)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>LM</td>
<td>Lithgow Mercury</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Macleay Argus</td>
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<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Moree Champion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Macquarie Dictionary</td>
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<tr>
<td>min</td>
<td>Minute/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Maitland Mercury</td>
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<tr>
<td>mm</td>
<td>Millimetre</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament, usually State</td>
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<tr>
<td>mph</td>
<td>Miles per hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRT</td>
<td>Manning River Times</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Narrabri Courier</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDL</td>
<td>Northern Daily Leader</td>
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<td>NE</td>
<td>New Englander</td>
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<tr>
<td>NM</td>
<td>Northern Magazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>NMH</td>
<td>Newcastle Morning Herald</td>
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<td>NS</td>
<td>Northern Star</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<td>NVI</td>
<td>Namoi Valley Independent</td>
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<td>NWM(i)</td>
<td>North West Magazine (insert)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMN</td>
<td>Port Macquarie News</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>NSW Public Transport Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Penrith Press</td>
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<td>Qld.</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
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<td>RAC</td>
<td>Rail Access Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>Railway Digest</td>
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<td>RIC</td>
<td>Rail Infrastructure Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN(i)</td>
<td>Rural News (insert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSA</td>
<td>Railway Services Authority from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1998; and on corporatisation, Rail Services Australia from 1 July 1998 to 1 January 2001</td>
</tr>
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<td>RT</td>
<td>Railway Transportation</td>
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<td>R&amp;TS</td>
<td>Railway &amp; Tramway Staff; later R&amp;T Budget; later R&amp;T Gazette</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Strategic Environmental Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>S-H</td>
<td>Sun-Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sia</td>
<td>Social Impact Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Station Master</td>
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Countrymindless Rural Railway Closure

SM Sydney Mail
SMH Sydney Morning Herald
SRA State Rail Authority
SRC Student Representative Council
SS Sydney Sun
ST Sunday Telegraph
SWM(i) Southern Weekly Magazine (insert)
T&CJ Town & Country Journal
T&CM(i) Town & Country Magazine (insert)
TB The Bulletin
TI Tenterfield Independent
TmI Temora Independent
TL The Land
TM Telegraph Mirror
TO Tamworth Observer
TOG Transport Officer’s Gazette
TR Tenterfield Record
TRm The Railwayman
TS Tenterfield Star
UNE University of New England
U&WT Uralla & Walcha Times
UT Uralla Times
V&P LC Votes and Proceedings, Legislative Council
WA Western Advocate
WESROC Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
WM(i) Western Magazine (insert)
WN Walcha News
W.N. Weekly Notice
WS Walgett Spectator
WWA West Wyalong Advocate
YW Young Witness
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

It’s war if Armidale loses its rail link

headlined a media release by the Member for the Northern Tablelands, Richard Torbay, on 8 September 2003; but why? Despite the increasing use of road and air transport; the railway still seemed to be very important.

Country and city are usually conceived of as different but interrelated communities. Each can be described by its internal characteristics, and relationships with the other. They can be differentiated spatially, geographically, economically, socially, culturally, and symbolically. Both are present within the larger grouping of Australian. Relationships between city and country have been theorised by looking through lenses of dependency: either city on country, country on city, or mutuality; power and resistance; core and periphery; state intervention, neoliberalisation; and globalisation.

Country culture features strongly in country’s identity and relationships with city and state. Country was once Australia’s prime economic producer, location for a significant proportion of the population, and source of much cultural imagery. Country Australia retains a capacity for generating cultural imagery; but has lost much significance in terms of population and the national economy. Australian country communities increasingly find themselves subject to changes imposed by government and businesses in the city, notably closure of services. Closures have included banks, post offices, hospitals, agricultural extension services, access to
Introduction

forest areas, police stations, schools, railway stations, train services, and entire railway lines. Closures can impact on country material assets, institutional supports, economic functioning, social activity, and cultural expectations.

Service closures are sometimes studied in terms of anticipated environmental and social impacts. These studies do not generally aim to anticipate or explain popular reactions. There have been many studies of the effects of service closures, including railway services. This thesis argues that prior studies of railway closure have failed to adequately explore and explain the observed country reactions to imposed change in its historical socio-cultural contexts. Country culture and country-mindedness, as its political element, might provide richer, if not a total, explanation. This argument will be built on and illustrated by reference to the possible closure of the New England passenger-only line and several grain-only lines, during 2003.

Railway closure is a real life issue for many country communities, to which they unsurprisingly react. The chapter head quote headlined a media release issued on the same day and in direct reaction to release of the NSW state government report Ministerial inquiry into sustainable transport in New South Wales, Options for the future, interim report (Parry 2003a). The report was written by the Chairman of the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulation Tribunal, Thomas Parry. One of the terms of the inquiry was to review options for better targeting of funding and delivery of transport services to meet the needs of non-metropolitan communities, including rural community and health transport needs (Parry 2003a). Parry (2003a, p.29) noted ‘a number of services are still provided by rail. For example, on the branch lines to Armidale and Murwillumbah a single passenger rail service moves 50 to 300 passengers a day at considerable cost’. To better meet rural community transport needs the report suggested that ‘replacing some rail services with CountryLink bus services must be considered’.

As at September 2003, the railway in New England consisted of 124km of open single-track passenger-only line from Tamworth northwards

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1 Culture is taken to be a particular population’s shared beliefs, customs, and values. The way/s people live their lives and what lies behind what they do in everyday living (Gray & Phillips 2001, pp. 52-59; Vanclay 2003, p. 8).
to Armidale, with a 10km long, unused, goods-only extension to Dumaresq (Figure 3.1). There were four open stations: Kootingal; Walcha Road; Uralla; and Armidale, and nine closed stations (Figure 3.2). Beyond Dumaresq, 203km of closed line continued north to Wallan-garra on the NSW/Queensland border, along which were another eighteen closed stations (Figure 3.2).

In addition, but unrelated to Parry’s reports (2003a; 2003b), one suburban line and one peri-urban passenger-only line, and fifteen grain-only lines were mentioned for possible closure (Appendix 1.1; Figure 3.1). The grain lines were spread across the predominantly grain-growing areas of the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range. All were branch lines.

During 2003 discourses between New South Wales (NSW) government and communities developed which seemed like they were between socially related parties. Government proposed considering closing the lines, alleging the communities were making very little use of the railways. Affected communities objected, and reacted by seeking to keep their lines open. While observing government and country communities discourse at what seemed to be very cross purposes, I asked myself: ‘Why do country communities react so strongly to railway closure when they allegedly make little use of it?’ There appeared to be a gulf in interests between government and country communities over railway closure. Railway closure seemed to evoke a strong community reaction, potentially destabilising country–government relationships.

Railway closure can be seen as generally problematic for country communities. Available modes of transport change. Closure may limit travel. Closure may force communities to find alternative transport. Closure may increase costs of transport. Closure may generate a range of undesirable bio-physical, economic, and social environmental impacts. Closure may reduce government-funded jobs in the community. Closure may also appear to radicalise traditionally conservative country communities.

Railway closure can be problematic for government. Closure may seem desirable; but contradict previous election commitments. Closure may...

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2 My focus was on country railways; not suburban or peri-urban ones.
Introduction

appear to contradict other policy statements. Closure may need justifying. Closure may offer an opportunity for opposing political parties to criticise government. Communities may translate their objection into voting against the government. Community objection may warrant reversing policy.

Railway closure can be problematic for railway administration. Closure may be unforeseen, so surprise unprepared administrators. Closure may seem inconsistent with Australian cultural expectations of government as a provider of public services. Closure may contradict administrators’ self image as guardians of the status quo. Strong community objection may delay administering government closure policy. Reacting to community objection may require administrative action without adequate precedent. Objection may overturn previous policy decisions, so interrupt smooth bureaucratic process. Closure may suggest changing organisational structures. Closure may force reducing staff numbers.

Railway closure can pose intellectual questions worth asking. Why does, supposedly rational railway closure become problematic to anyone, notably country communities, which by some indicators might be assumed to have little practical interest in it? Problems may arise in explaining why communities react so strongly in that particular circumstance. While railway closure logically presents to country communities as an external threat originating from government in Sydney; might there also be internal country cultural factors contributing towards their reaction?

The Problem

The problem is cast against a background of state government, located in the city, closing country services. Along grain lines there was the clear economic issue of increasing freight rates that would arise for country communities. Community reaction could be clearly seen in a universally accepted rationality of the fear of rising costs. There was no passenger rail traffic along the grain lines. However in New England there was no freight traffic along the line. Government alleged very few passengers were using the railway. New England communities had substantially shifted their travel choice to alternative forms of transport; but still objected strongly to railway closure. Why? What was there about the circumstances which could explain
Introduction

their reaction? How might answering my questions add to what is known about country community resistance to imposed change?

A combination of the railway’s historically powerful cultural symbolism and strong community reaction suggested taking analysis beyond rationalist or behavioural paradigms. In looking for explanation, a direction worth taking would be to reflect on the railway’s historically powerful symbolism. Might railway closure similarly carry powerful subjective meaning?

Principal Research Question

Despite some scattered study of individual railway closures in Australia (Gray & Laidley 1976; Wissing 1976; Stiles 1977; 1979; Parolin, Filan & Ilias 1992; Raimond & Parolin 1992; Parolin & Filan 1993; Parolin, Filan & Ilias 1993; Parolin 1996; Grain Growers Association 2002; M&A & Kronos Corporate 2002) none either directly addressed or adequately explained country community reaction to railway closure. Rather, despite apparently rational reasons for closure, it can be concluded from points made by the research that country reaction can be seen as having an apparently irrational element, pointing to possible significance of culture and tradition. There seemed to be a lot more to know about how historical socio-cultural situations affect Australian country community reaction to railway closure. My principal research question became: Why do NSW country communities react so strongly to railway closure when their supposedly objective interests are not threatened?

Empirical work in this thesis proceeds historically through the main features of the material and symbolic importance of the railway in NSW. There seems to be plenty of evidence of cultural attachment to the idea of a country railway; though declining use argues for less instrumental attachment. Nevertheless, country communities reacted to railway closure anyway, and why react so strongly? The railway’s role seemed to be at least partly symbolic. This study examines a hitherto unexplored symbolic relationship between railway closure and ideas, beliefs, and values of country communities across NSW.
Introduction

In addressing my principal research question I developed a theory that country communities reacted strongly when railway closure seemed so, what I call ‘countrymindless’. Counrymindless railway closure destabilised, for a while at least, a traditional government–country social exchange relationship.

Significance of this Study

As discussed in the following chapter, the literature leaves some important questions unanswered and significant problems to be solved. This study contributes significantly to our knowledge and understanding in several ways:

1. Country Community Action: Some of the big questions in rural sociology ask about country people remaining in apparently exploitative social constructions. Why do country communities act when they do? (Tilly 1973, p. 212; 1978). I suggest that rather than seeing government–country relationships as simply exploitative, as implied by terms such as Sydney-centric, city-centric, urbo-centric, metro-centric; government–country relationships can be seen over time as social exchange relationships. Closure of country railways frequently stimulates country community action. This study’s contribution may have application in examining country community reaction to withdrawing other services which were traditionally provided by government.

2. Countrymindedness: Countrymindedness (Aitkin 1985) prescribed what should happen in country–city relationships; but did not address matters such as: what form those relationships might take; what might be included; their dynamics; internal interactions; functioning; possible dysfunction; longevity; or the stages likely to be passed through. Consequences potentially flowing from the relationships were viewed very narrowly. Social exchange theory offers a workable analytical tool for extending our understanding of countrymindedness. Applying social exchange theory enabled extension of countrymindedness by placing countrymindedness into a relational context. The thesis teased out features of the relationship as implied by countrymindenes, so going
Introduction

beyond just showing features of countrymindedness in country communities and state government.”

3. **Social Exchange Theory**: Social exchange theory (Blau 1964, pp. 88-114; Ekeh 1974; Homans 1958, p. 606) has been applied in rural sociology (e.g., Ballard-Reisch & Weigel 1991; Hofferth & Iceland 1998; Miller & Kean 1997). This study demonstrates that social exchange theory can be applied to large groups of people as communities. However analysing the stage of destabilising social exchanges is much neglected in social interaction research (Molm 1981) and in rural studies. Furthering our understanding of the mechanisms that guide reciprocity can shed light on the causes of destabilisation of social exchange relationships so informing possible interventions to avoid or alleviate it (Zhang & Epley 2009). This study provides a novel analysis of social exchange theory over time in a real-world social situation; rather than in a controlled laboratory environment (e.g., Cook & Emerson 1978; Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a).

4. **Writing Recent Country History**: This study helps redress an imbalance in Australian national history-writing (Aitkin 2005), by focussing on the recent past in country areas. My study includes railways in developing major themes in Australian history (Lamb 1972). This study works towards filling a significant gap in history writing about the New England railway (Ferry et al. 2001).

Study Scope and Limitations

While there have been many different kinds of railways in NSW, my interest in this study stemmed from a pattern of growth and decline in the NSW government standard 4ft 8½in (1,435mm) gauge country network. Railways owned and operated in NSW by private businesses; governments of other states; and other NSW government departments were not included. All NSW private railways, and other government department railways once open for general traffic have been closed (ABS 2002).

In interpreting the results of this study, due allowance must be made for the time elapsed between a decision made in a government/railway administration or country community and its manifestation in physical
action or production of documentation. Allowance must also be made for drawing examples of literature from official reports and newspapers each with different literary styles, from over a 150-year period. Variant spellings and conflicting data have been retained as given in the original sources.

Two propositions based on empirical observations were made. First, country communities would publicly react to railway closure. This was demonstrated by: mass public rallies; multi-signature petitions; hundreds of newspaper articles; and 1,173 submissions to the Parry reports (2003a; 2003b). Second, country communities would express their objections to railway closure in the public record. This was verified by the large number of newspaper clippings (n.164) collected. Archival material indicating internal government or railway administrative discourse during 2003 is not yet accessible; however a wide variety of published source material expressing government and community views is accessible. Collection of oral material was not deliberately sought because published material provided an adequate source of data, and the distances to be travelled, which equated to time, were beyond the resources available to the researcher.

**Thesis Structure**

This thesis is structured by my philosophical understanding of the life cycle of developing, maintaining, and then destabilising (Molm 1981) a government–country social exchange relationship mediated by the railway. Chapters 4-8 are arranged to clearly identify and articulate the flow of stages in the social exchange life cycle across its long history, Figure 1.1 – a form of social history.

**Chapter 1:** introduces the study field of enquiry, provides contextual background to initiating the study, and defines the principal research question.

**Chapter 2:** reviews the literature on country service closure, Australian country culture, government–country social exchange, railway symbolism, railway closure in NSW, environmental impacts of railway closure, community reaction to railway closure, and symbolism of railway closure.
The chapter contextualises this study in addressing a significant gap in knowledge.

**Chapter 3:** describes the study springboard, research objective, research methodology, method of data collection, mode of analysis, and departure from existing knowledge used to develop my explanation addressing the principal research question.

**Chapter 4:** argues that within social exchange theory the railway can be interpreted as effectively acting as a government gift to country communities.

**Chapter 5:** argues that country communities used the railway to settle the land and develop national wealth. In giving and using a railway government and country effectively developed a government–country social exchange relationship.

**Chapter 6:** argues that government changed the lens through which it looked at the country railway from that looking like a social exchange relationship towards that of a more focussed financial one. Government reacted by closing lines.

**Chapter 7:** argues that country communities retained a countryminded lens through which they saw railway closure. Railway closure seemed countrymindless.

**Chapter 8:** argues countrymindless railway closure destabilised, at least for a while, the practical equilibrium of the government–country social exchange relationship.

**Chapter 9:** reflects on my findings, presents the study’s conclusions, and recommends looking at two issues beyond its purview.
**Introduction**

Figure 1.1  
Structure of Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Exchange Relationship Stages (Molm 1981)</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Development** | Ch 4 | Government owned the railway.  
New England asked government for a railway.  
Government gave New England a railway to settle the land and develop national wealth.  
A social exchange was initiated. |
| | Ch 5 | New England communities received the railway.  
New England communities used the railway to settle the land.  
New England communities used the railway to develop national wealth.  
A government-New England social exchange relationship developed.  
The exchange was generalised. |
| **Stable maintenance** | Ch 6 | The railway remained a government agent.  
Implicit usage became explicit use.  
Government limited its railway giving.  
New England seemed to interpret railway closure through a countryminded lens.  
Railway closure stressed the relationship.  
New England communities reacted.  
Grain line communities reacted. |
| | Ch 7 | Country remained countryminded.  
Country added new meanings to railway closure. |
| **Disruption** | Ch 8 | Release of the Parry Report (2003).  
The relationship was destabilised.  
Country communities mobilised.  
Country communities acted communally.  
New England communities reacted strongly. |
| **Recovery after disruption** | Ch 8 | Communities reflected.  
Communities and government sought to dialogue so re-stabilising the relationship. |
CHAPTER 2

Existing Knowledge

Introduction

As noted in Chapter 1 the principal research question of this study is: Why do NSW country communities react so strongly to railway closure when their supposedly objective interests are not threatened? In what circumstances do people in localities such as these get together to do things? i.e. act, is a long asked and widely studied question in sociology.

Addressing the study question can be seen as one aspect of Tilly’s (1978) bigger question of when do communities act? Addressing that question is, in turn, one aspect of Tilly’s (1973, p. 212) larger rhetorical question of do communities’ act? Tilly (1978, p. 133) theorised communities act when they have the opportunity or are threatened. The only evidence found of country communities seeing railway closure as having any opportunity was a single writer suggesting a regional trust could deliver the desired train services (AE 29; GIE 30 October 2003). The lone suggestion was not followed up. This chapter reviews the literature on Australian country community action and railway closure in the light of these questions, and contextualises the work in addressing a significant knowledge gap, from which this study was developed. Communities can be conceptualised in many ways. They can be multiple and problematic. Writing on communities has tended to see communities as either geographically situated, e.g., local, town, valley, traditional church parish, or as communities of interest, e.g., railway modelling, religion, environmental conservation, internet gaming to which geographic space or time are not so relevant. Communities referred to herein were either face-to-face locally interactional, i.e., ‘situated’; or of a shared common interest with the members being separated by geography or time but still interacting, i.e., ‘simulated’ (Gray & Lawrence 2001, p. 25). Communities in this study
were typically town-based, or located along a particular railway line, or shared a common interest in country railway closure. Communities of either conceptualisation can also be built on shared meanings in their reading of signs; they can be ‘communities of meaning’ (Cohen 1989, p. 70) whose members read railway closure as if it were a sign. Common interest communities in this study were typically those whose members expressed similar values, norms, moral codes, and ideas about country railway closure independent of spatial boundaries. Local interactions and sharing of meanings are both cultural products. The culture of interest herein was the Australian country culture as influenced by the ideology of countrymindedness (Aitkin 1985).

This review of existing knowledge is structured around eight issues addressing each in turn. The issues are: country service closure; Australian country culture; government–country social exchange; railway symbolism; railway closure in NSW; environmental impacts of railway closure; community reaction to railway closure; and symbolism of railway closure.

Exploring subjectivity, such as that apparently displayed during 2003, can add to our understanding of country community reaction to railway closure in NSW, and has potential to reflect back on theory about community identity and action.

**Country Service Closure**

Over recent decades a range of government and private services have been closed across many country areas. These services have included: Federal and State government offices (Alston 2002); agricultural extension services (Hall et al. 1999); hospitals (Barnett & Barnett 2003); post offices (Gerritson 1998; Horton 2008); schools (Kearns et al. 2009; Woods 2006); banks (Alston 2002; Argent 2005; Argent & Rolley 2000); and railway lines (Bozier n.d.; Laidley 2002; Quinlan & Newland 2000). City–country and central government–local relationships are implicated in all of these closures.

Service closure threatens country communities through thinning human, institutional, and social capitals (Alston 2002; Cocklin & Alston 2003; Dibden & Cocklin 2005). Yet explanations for community reaction to
service closure that are focussed on material, economic, environmental, and social loss alone fail to adequately account for the apparent strength of community reaction.

Although previous writing about country service closure often raises associated country culture and symbolism, there is little exploration of cultural or symbolic interpretations. For example, country hospitals can be seen as a source of community pride and, importantly, hospitals can be seen as a source of security and a symbol of town legitimacy (Barnett & Barnett 2003). Likewise Kearns & Joseph (1997) ascribed great symbolic importance to country hospitals, audaciously suggesting hospital’s symbolic value may even equal or exceed their value as health care providers in country New Zealand (NZ). Hospital symbolism associates strongly with institutional capital, but was not followed up in the analysis.

English country Post Offices have been made to stand as symbols for reliability, probity, and old-fashioned values of British government institutions, and are frequently mobilised as icons of English idyllic rurality (Horton 2008). Many Australian country Post Office buildings have landmark architectural qualities in country town streetscapes (Jeans & Spearrit 1980). Forty-four are listed as being of State cultural heritage significance in NSW. Two hundred and forty-five are listed on NSW local and state government heritage registers (NSW State Heritage Inventory n.d.). Gerritson (1998) identified maintaining heritage listed Post Offices as an Australia Post Community Service Obligation (CSO), but did not elaborate on why the buildings were seen as culturally significant.

As well as providing education, country schools have been described as the heart of country communities, symbolising an idealized rural idyll (Woods 2006). Country schools represent a legacy from previous generations and a gateway to accessing resources for a better future. Kearns et al. (2009) concluded closing country schools in NZ generated tangible and discernable effects in country communities, ranging from a sense of betrayal to feelings of grief.

Like government offices (Alston 2002), many Australian banks have cultural dimensions being listed on local and state cultural heritage registers (NSW State Heritage Inventory n.d.). Argent & Rolley (2000) confined their discussion on bank closures to quantifying loss of country banking services
Existing Knowledge

and local employment. However they did acknowledge roles for both community perception, and so-called genuine concerns as differentiable factors in community dissatisfaction with country bank closure. Closure was tentatively tied to country community anger and frustration; but local resistance to closure went unexplored (Argent 2005).

Telecommunications historically brought practical advantages and symbolism of connection in overcoming the Australian ‘tyranny of distance’ (Blainey 2001). Less absolute than closure, but relevant here, is fear of country being left behind city in accessing benefits of telecommunication advances (Share 1993).

Recent writings about Australian country attach images of: the dying town syndrome (Forth 2000); discontent (Pritchard & McManus 2000); biting rurality (Lockie & Bourke 2001); misfortune, globalisation, neoliberalism (Gray & Lawrence 2001); the passing of country minded ideology (Aitkin 2005); unattainable sustainability (Cocklin & Dibden 2005); struggle and decline (Davidson & Brodie 2005); and subsumption by the tourism industry (Richardson 2000). Our understanding of country life is being recast away from traditional more romanticised rural imagery.

Valuing the aesthetic qualities of country life in a consumption-based countryside challenges rationalistic-only views on service closure. Highlighting advantages of country space creates positive images endowed with attractive environmental qualities. Living space supplants working space. Country politics shifts from rural politics to politics of what constitutes rural (Woods 2003; 2006). Pursuit of agricultural interests is displaced by defending an aestheticised country identity. As discourse and community action focus on meanings of country, ‘country’ is reconstructed.

Barnett & Barnett (2003) recognised several strategies, from the literature, which may be available to community groups resisting closure of rural hospitals in NZ, including: exiting the area; voicing objection; resigning to closure; illegal action; formal participation in the change; legal action; political action; and potentially embarrassing forms of political protest. Exiting the area doesn’t sound much like resistance. Argent & Rolley (2000) argued government intervention in Australian country bank closure would fail. They offered only one option likely to succeed – the Bendigo Bank community bank model.
Existing Knowledge

Like hospitals and banks, ordinary everyday objects, such as a railway line, can be important in creating, expressing, and maintaining collective country identity (Cohen 1989). While traditional agriculturally-focussed elements of the image of country, and country railways, are changing, another set of images is being constructed, including imagery of country railways. Country community self-definition, boundary construction, relationships, and symbolism, suggests placing railway closure as a threat to servicing country into Australian country culture.

Australian Country Culture

Australian country culture has been broadly addressed through concepts of: the bush (Alomes 1991; Ward 1958); the outback (Gill 2005; Palmer 1954); rural (Lockie & Bourke 2001); rurality (Gray & Phillips 2001); rural idyll (Gorman-Murray 2007); agrarianism (Halpin & Martin 1996); farming (Graham 1966); and an ideology known as countrymindedness (Aitkin 1985). All are fluid (Botterill 2000; 2006; n.d.; Botterrill & Chapman 2002; Craig & Phillips 1983; Halpin & Martin 1996; Voyce 2000; Wear 2000), descriptive, and embrace powerful symbolism. Within the literature on Australian country culture, the country ideology known as countrymindedness has been adopted as an analytical tool, seemingly without examination, critique, or development. Countrymindedness has not been developed into a multi-layered, dynamic, and complex understanding. Yet countrymindedness has been used across a wide range of country issues and cultural sites including rural policy debate (Botterill 2006), performance of the National Party in NSW (Duncan & Epps 1992), justifying country claims for government assistance (Wear 2000), country people’s perseverance (Gray & Lawrence 2000), and newspaper representation of election campaigns (Richardson 2000).

Aitkin (1985) summed up Australian agrarianism as countrymindedness. Origins of the term are uncertain, but it was closely associated with the Country Party political party from the 1920s. Countrymindedness reflected the wholesome nature of agricultural activity, and contrasted farming virtue with unpleasantries of city life. The term remains prominent in Australian writing on country culture and country-city
Existing Knowledge

relationships. In presenting the idealised good society, countrymindedness promoted, sustained, and legitimated interests of a social group, unifying and bounding the group as the cultural community of ‘country’. Neither such an idea nor a view of the world necessarily results in observable community action. However when considered as an ideology, the set of ideas about such a community can become action-oriented (Drucker 1974; Eagleton 1991). The Country Party explicitly represented rural interests, and successfully used its countryminded ideology to attract votes. As an action-oriented set of beliefs ideology becomes visible through action of an agent. Countrymindedness manifested through government actions and reciprocal voting by country people in Australia. In studying the NSW country town of Kandos, Oxley (1978) characterised the country–government relationship as embodying symbolic behaviour being the smoke which indicated an ideological fire. Oxley’s (1978) terms were indexical signs having causal relationships. The signs were not constructed by arbitrariness or convention as with a symbol; nor bore a direct actual resemblance as with an icon. Action by the agent signified underlying ideology, but was not necessarily a mechanical or automatic response. Government–country relationships and interaction can be observed, read, and interpreted by observer readers, as railway closure might potentially illuminate.

Aitkin (1985) presented countrymindedness as a singular dominant ideology, comprising seven related beliefs, described as elements:

1. Australia depends on its primary producers for its high standard of living, for only those who produce a physical good add to a country’s wealth.
2. Therefore all Australians, from city and country alike, should in their own interest support policies aimed at improving the position of the primary industries.
3. Farming and grazing, and rural pursuits generally (i.e., country), are virtuous, ennobling, and co-operative; they bring out the best in people.

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3 Indexical signs are signs with a direct existential connection with its object, such as smoke being an index of fire (Fiske 1982, p. 51).
4 Ideology is taken to be a system of values and ideas that presents an idealised picture of the ‘good’ society, which has power to manifest in social action. As well as presenting a goal, ideology provides policies and procedures for purposeful action (Aitkin 1985, p. 35).
4. In contrast, city life is competitive, and nasty, as well as parasitical.

5. [a] The characteristic Australian is a countryman, and the core elements of national character come from the struggles of country people to tame their environment, and make it productive. [b] City people are much the same the world over.

6. For all these reasons, and others like defence, people should be encouraged to settle in the country, not in the city.

7. But power resides in the city, where politics is trapped in a sterile debate about classes. There has to be a separate political party for country people to articulate the true voice of the nation.

Aitkin (1985) did not ascribe a relative importance to the elements. Readers are left without an authorial indication of whether presence of all elements was essential; or whether some elements were essential and some optional. Interpretations of countrymindedness would be open to change across space and through time.

In ascribing elements 1; 3; and 5[a] to country and elements 4; 5[b]; and 7 to city, countrymindedness divided Australia into two groups. Favourable assertions about country allowed absorption of related ideas about country (Hummon 1990). Unfavourable assertions about city allowed absorption of related ideas about city. Country was a culturally constructed identity based on what-it-was; and what-it-was-not (Black 2005; Tilly 1998, p. 460; 478; Walton 1991). Countrymindedness ascribed country communities a prestigious position in Australian culture, and was self reinforcing. Countrymindedness would influence both where the people lived and the meanings they would attach to railway closure.

Countrymindedness provided a more or less considered view about how society should be organised (Godden 1997). Country produced primary goods, wealth, and national character. City should support primary industry, and the land should be settled. Assertions of ‘should’ and ‘has to be’ in elements 2; 6; and 7 prescribed ideas about duty and propriety in city–country and Australia–country relationships. Countrymindedness prescribed country–city exchange of resources and social power. Countrymindedness was a way of thinking about country that also prescribed ways of acting towards country, and specified what country would reciprocate with.
Despite the apparent importance of countryminded country–city relationships, Kelly only identified (1992) five pillars of the Australian Settlement, i.e., the Australian political policy assumptions developed after federation and lasting until neoliberal dismantling of the 1980s. The pillars were: protection against imports; a fair working wage; state paternalism; white Australia; and defence reliance on a powerful ally. Building on Kelly (1992), Brett (2007) argued for adding a sixth pillar: state mediated interdependence and mutual obligation between city and country. The state would compensate country people for the costs of their remoteness and sparse settlement, e.g., provide railways, but relied on agriculture for export performance. Country would people the land and produce agricultural product, but relied on state intervention, e.g., use of railed transport. Through time reliance on the other was reinterpreted as obligation of the other. Countrymindedness’s exchange of primary industry’s physical goods and country settlement for city support, and Brett’s (2007) state mediated interdependence and mutual obligation between city and country suggest city–county relationships might be considered as exchanges of resources between government and country communities. Such exchanges might be characterised as economic, political, or other forms. Being situated within rural societies suggests countryminded exchanges may also be considered from a social perspective.

Beyond Australia, several writers have identified differing sub-types within agrarianism. Of particular relevance to comparing New England and grain lines reactions are those of Smith’s (1982) Southern agrarianism –v– Yankee agrarianism; Dalecki & Coughenour’s (1992) soft agrarianism –v– hard agrarianism; Beus & Dunlap’s (1994) alternative agrarianism –v– conventional agrarianism; and Halpin & Martin’s (1996) lifestyle aspects of farming –v– active farming. Southern agrarianism stressed living in nature, tradition, opposition to government, a way of life, and morality; with identity coming from being in a community. Soft agrarianism promoted an idealised yeoman imagery. Alternative agriculturalists pictured agriculture as improving the natural and social environments. Lifestyle farming placed emphasis on pursuing traditional values. In Australia much ‘Southern agrarianism’ (Smith 1982), alternative agrarianism, and lifestyle farming reflect peri-urbanisation and migration to the country associated with tree-
changers. Yankee agrarianism promoted agricultural production and modernisation; with identity coming from the occupation of being a farmer. Hard agrarianism expressed the aims of agribusiness. Conventional agriculturists envisioned greater farm yields, efficiencies, and productivity. Active farming was more accepting of a largely business approach to farming, and supportive of institutionalised farm organisations.

While Aitkin (1985; 2005), Duncan & Epps (1992), and Wear (2000; 2009) argue countrymindedness has been in decline as a political force for many years; Duncan & Epps (1992) suggest the possibility of rural communities still adhering to it as an ideology.

**Government–Country Social Exchange**

From around the middle of the nineteenth century, with commerce growing, but based primarily in the coastal cities, government sought economic development of the inland regions. For political and defence reasons government wanted to expand the colonial economy. Achieving these objectives would require a substantial inland population, which government could govern, albeit at a distance, across what was then seen as a very large and sparsely settled hinterland. Tulk (2008) asserted that the railway was initially used as a bargaining chip, an inducement, an enticing lure that drew people to settle in a particular region. In so doing a contract established between government and the early settlers; though ‘contract’ seems a rather too rigid descriptor.

Social exchange theory goes beyond economic exchange theory in including material goods, behavioural capabilities (Molm 2003), and non-material symbolic exchanges (Homans 1958, p.606). The basic tenet of social exchange theory is that parties stay in social relationships as long as rewards outweigh costs and outcomes are better than otherwise available. Distribution of, and procedures for, allocating costs and rewards are judged on the basis of often subjective and personalised ‘fairness’. Social exchange theory views exchanges between parties as contingent on rewarding actions from others – reciprocity. Outcomes are the costs incurred and the rewards received by parties in the relationship as they progress towards achieving their goals. Outcomes are perceived in terms of expectations of what should
be attainable. When outcomes meet or exceed expectations, the party is satisfied. Processes within and relationships between the parties are more complex than just market transactions; they can include variations in exchanges across history, cultural contexts, and cultural variables (Zafirovski 2003; 2005).

Social exchange relationships can entail unspecified future obligations on a largely uncalculated basis. The relationship is tacit, an informal understanding. Empirical measurement of contributions can be unclear, because they are unspecified (Blau 1964, p. 93; 113), and temporarily or perceptually asymmetrical. Rather than basing the relationship on explicit negotiations or binding contracts, social exchange bases the relationship on trust. Conflict is less salient in reciprocal than negotiated exchange because inequality develops over time so parties have greater difficulty in keeping a quantified record. Inequality can result from less noticeable acts of omission, rather than acts of commission. Giving at different rates produces comparable inequality which lacks transparency in the costs of exchange (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2006).

Risk and uncertainty of exchange provides opportunity for the parties to demonstrate their trustworthiness (Molm, Takahashi, Peterson 2000). Trusting that the other party will discharge its obligations fairly over the long term allows parties to be less calculative and less demanding of satisfaction in the short term. Loyalty and commitment to the other party are key elements through reducing attention to alternative relationships. Commitment to the other party characterizes and distinguishes social exchange from economic exchange (Cook & Emerson 1978). In social exchange, trust, affective regard, perception of social unity, and feelings of commitment are all dimensions of social solidarity (Molm, Collett, Schafer 2007a). Use of power is lower in reciprocal exchanges than in negotiated exchanges (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 1999). Beyond the things exchanged having material or economic value, the act of voluntary recurring reciprocal exchange itself can convey symbolic value (Molm, Schaefer, Collett 2007).

By conceptualising parties in the exchange as emoting as well as cognizing, exchange outcomes can be construed as having emotional effects varying in form and intensity. When exchanges occur successfully, parties experience emotional uplift. Positive emotions include excitement, pleasure,
pride, and gratitude. Emotions produced by exchange structures and processes are likely to be critical to understanding how and when social exchanges promote cohesion and commitment in the relationship (Lawler 2001).

The principal of reciprocity in this context extends to parties feeling obligated to reward a benefactor, as in a dyad, not directly, but indirectly via benefiting other parties involved in a larger social network. A long-term series of mutual exchanges yields a pattern of reciprocal obligations. Social exchange reciprocity can be boundless so spread benefits across communities and wider society, establishing and maintaining social solidarity, through exchanging symbolic tokens, rather than towards individual economic gain.

By building on the writings of Levi-Strauss (1969) on kinship behaviours, Durkheim on integration, and Malinowski on exchanging items of symbolic value, social exchange theory can be applied to collective as well as individual parties (Ekeh 1974, pp. 37-60). While theorised from individual mindsets, social exchange parties can be collectivised, including social groups, collectives, organisations, interchangeable occupants of structural positions, and societies (Molm 2003; Zafirovski 2003; 2005), for analysis in an abstract manner (Widegren 1997).

In NSW society a railway was traditionally seen as a scarce and valuable commodity with strong symbolic value. Local communities did not have resources to build their own railways, so general haulage and passenger carrying railways were nearly exclusively provided by government. Scarcity compelled the government giver and country community receiver to enunciate rules of exchange consistent with Ekeh (1974, p. 46).

Brett (2007) also suggested the state mediated city–country exchange, thereby maintaining reciprocity. State provision of a railway can be seen as mediating a government–country exchange. A railway would mediate through material transmission and intermediary action expressing relationships (Williams 1976). Intermediary action would be provided by acts of the state railway administration engaging in the process of production, in affecting what was mediated, to bring about agreement. Transmission would be provided by the state railway in making state-wide
transport available, physically transporting inputs for primary production, transporting the primary produce elsewhere, and transporting people in both directions. The state would provide the railway; and country communities would settle the land and produce national wealth. The state railway would express visible material and invisible relationships between country and city through powerful symbolic linkages.

Service closure in country challenges its identity and values, and pushes city–country differentiation towards opposition. So what stabilises country–city relationships? Beyond material and economic exchanges, country–city relationships have displayed considerable symbolic exchange. Studying country culture should reveal answers to this study’s question, and countrymindedness offer a potential window on relevant elements of country culture. Examining cultural bases of the country–city relationship, such as social exchange, should reveal what maintains and what might destabilise it.

Country–city relationships have changed significantly since the 1980s. Aitkin (2005) alleged that by 2005, notions of city–country interdependence had passed. Wool and wheat were no longer directly linked to state or national economic fluctuations. City was not so much anti-country, as country was of less relevance to city interests. Regional Australia was being increasingly marginalised and perceived to be so (Archer 2000). Rural communities could no longer hang on sustaining beliefs that the rest of Australia needed and wanted them, and theirs was a national cause (Davison 2005). Rural communities enjoyed diminishing wider Australian support and value (Dibden & Cocklin 2005). Highlighting Brett’s (2007) sixth pillar should make visible state abandonment of state paternalism (Kelly 1992). Particular to this study’s case of country railways, the railway industry’s main economic interest in network operation had become providing inter-capital mainline transport, rather than operating rural feeder branch lines (Michell 2008).

Placing railway closure into a framework of social exchange theory provides a more enlightening view by focussing on the elements maintaining or destabilising country–city relationships. Unlike dependency or core-periphery theory, social exchange theory opens an opportunity to
focus attention on the breakdown of an apparently otherwise fairly stable, but inherently tense, relationship.

**Destabilising Social Exchange Relationships**

While idealised, social exchange theory recognises problems of pathological or anomic social exchange (Ekeh 1974, p. 56), and offers a relatively straightforward understanding of destabilising the relationship. However published study of disrupting social exchange relationships is rare (Molm 1981).

Egocentric perceptions of the costs and rewards of an exchange between giver and receiver are problematic (Dunning, Van Boven & Loewenstein 2001) and can differ. Either party can see themselves as being unfairly undervalued by the other party. One party ceasing to offer their contribution, results in imposition of costs on the other party that may be greater than the second party’s expected benefits. Receiving inadequate reciprocity can create barriers to further cooperation (Zhang & Epley 2009). Failure to reciprocate generates problems of inequality tending towards discontinuance in the longer term (Zafirovski 2003; 2005).

Distributive injustice in allocating rewards from and/or costs of participating in the relationship is likely to unbalance group equilibrium (Homans 1958, p. 604), and be couched in rhetorical moral judgements of justice and fairness. Procedural injustice in the process through which the outcomes are obtained is also likely to be judged as unfair (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 2003). Unfairness of the treatment received from the other party can be seen as interactional injustice (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2006).

A party shifting its motivations from benefiting others in social exchange to promoting self interest in instrumental exchange is likely to threaten social solidarity (Widegren 1997). One party changing its behaviour will influence, at least partially, the other party’s behaviour (Molm 1981). Behaviour signalling a party’s untrustworthiness will impact on the trust of the other party (Molm, Takahashi, Peterson 2000). When outcomes fail expectations, the party becomes dissatisfied. Logically the second party would choose to decline from interacting with the first party in such a less-than seemingly profitable relationship. A social exchange relationship is likely to be destabilised when a party in the relationship
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ceases to offer the item/s they are expected to contribute. Expectation is conveyed not via legal contract, but by trust. Introducing joint decision-making negotiation into a non-negotiated exchange relationship should shift the distribution of power in the relationship (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 1999), and use of power.

Violating trust, lacking affectsive regard, social disunity, and lacking commitment (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a) are all likely to change the party’s potential alternative partners, destabilising solidarity of the relationship. Loss of commitment will reduce the apparent irrationality of ignoring better alternatives in the short term in favour of staying with older partners (Cook & Emerson 1978), increasing the likelihood of changing partners.

Expressing value in utilitarian financial terms reformats the basis of exchange from social towards economic (Ekeh 1974, p. 56). Quantification of the benefit/cost relationship is unwarranted because the exchange is predominantly symbolic. ‘It is the exchange which counts and not the things exchanged’ (Ekeh (1974, p. 44), quoting Levi-Strauss (1969)). Removing the symbolic value from reciprocity, leaving only the instrumental value in the exchange, would likely convert a social exchange into a market exchange, in turn impinging on the building of social capital (Molm, Schaefer, Collett 2007).

Mutual dependence underlies exchange relationships, making exchange inherently risky (Molm 1994). An asymmetric material exchange might be maintained by reciprocal exchange of powerful symbols, or both parties agreeing on an acceptable resolution of the imbalance. The more able party might not expect equivalence in reciprocity. The less able party might do as much as possible; but not offer equivalence. Both parties might participate in non-equivalent reciprocation, implying a status differentiation or hierarchical relationship of potentially disproportionate imbalance. However feeling exploited by the other party leads towards terminating the relationship (Ekeh 1974, p. 56). Perceived exploitation can also arise through extravagant gift giving that places the recipient into excessive debt, leading to breakdown of the relationship.

When exchanges do not occur successfully, parties can experience emotional downs. Negative emotions include sadness, shame, and anger.
Negative emotions produced by exchange structures and processes are likely to inhibit solidarity of the exchange relationship (Lawler 2001), leading towards destabilisation. Whether the relationship is temporarily disrupted or permanently dissolved seems to be influenced by external social reinforcement contingencies (Molm 1981).

Social exchange theory originated as a theory of interpersonal relationships. Ekeh (1974, pp. 37-60) collectivised the theory extending it to include social groups, as followed by Molm (2003), Widegren (1997), and Zafirovski (2003; 2005). Likewise I intend to use the theory more structurally, specifically in destabilising such relationships, focussing on the cultural element.

The Railway Provided Symbolic Currency

City–country railways combine infrastructure and train services, bestowed material, economic, and social benefits, and, at least historically also carried powerful symbolism. In transporting goods and people bi-directionally between country and city railways tend to stabilise city–country relationships.

The literature on railways is replete with analyses of railway symbolism, constructed over many years across the globe. Sternberger ([1955] 1977) presented the steam locomotive as an allegorical union of nature and culture. Rhetoric of technological expansion motivated Canadians to build railways to solve their perceived economic backwardness relative to the United States (den Otter 1997). As new railways transformed the landscape and economics of nineteenth-century Britain, they arguably transformed the very culture itself (Freeman 1999). More than just providing long distance land transport, railways metaphorically reminded passengers of wider cultural transformations taking place (Freeman 1999a). Railway openings and operation were prominent images in the cultural production of the British cartoon (Esbester 2002). In the Eastern culture of Japan, the railway symbolised modernity and civilisation (Ericson 1996; Fujii 1997).

American and Canadian railways symbolised national unity, industry, co-operation, and pride (Fournier 2000; Flynn 2002). Drawing on
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newspaper coverage of constructing the Adelaide–Darwin railway, Bishop (2000) likewise argued that Australian media reporting followed an agenda of nation building, based on a vision of technological federalism – an ideology of development through large-scale engineering. Engineering in the landscape had symbolic impact.

In England, the branch line railway, through time, came to be seen as part of picturesque English country scenery (Pacey 2000). The rolling green granitic hills of the New England landscape, cradling a meandering single track railway, relate well to similar English rural landscapes (Lee 2000) – the train in the landscape style imagineering (Fry & Bourke 1995). The wide brown flat lands of the NSW grain-line landscapes, with long lengths of straight railway track, related notably well to similar American western prairie landscapes (Deane 1900).

However in America, Leo Marx (1964) argued the machine, or industrialization as so well represented by the steam locomotive, spoilt, or at least “interrupted” (Marx 1964, p. 374), the American pastoral arcadia. Appearing quickly almost from nowhere, the machine linked and juxtaposed technological progress and Eden as represented in the pastoral ideal. The machine was more than urban versus rural; those were geographically defined and fixed. The steam locomotive represented mechanical technology which transcended urban–rural differentiation. However he was concerned with the railway steam locomotive as a machine more than with railway infrastructure and diesel trains.

Recent expansion of passenger rail in Los Angeles was promoted on the basis of its appealing mythological symbolism (Richmond 1998). Provocative metaphors of the need to connect communities, and to restore a mythical balance to the dysfunctional transportation system of Los Angeles, combined with symbols of escaping from poverty, urban success, power, and sexual acumen all surfaced around railways (Richmond 1991). Despite declining from the grand Victorian era of cultural prominence, railways still evoke creative cultural responses (Carter 2000).

While Carter (2001) argued that the railway represented modernity in Victorian Britain; he concluded by questioning whether the railway was still a force in modern British cultural representation, raising similar questions about railway representation in current Australian culture.
The railways of NSW have been likened to a giant tree, where its feeder root-like branch lines tapped vast natural resources, maintaining vigorous growth of a metaphoric externalised Tree of State (Winsor 1935). Later when Commissioner, Winsor likened the NSW railway to a national life-line, cornerstone of defence, and main artery of industry (Paddison 1955). The railway used symbolism to foster acceptance of itself as a symbol of progress. Belief in such a symbol reinforced legitimacy of wider belief systems (Lewins 1989), within which the symbolic railway was embedded.

Railway and country are symbolically linked in Australian popular culture. Blainey (2001) asserted the railway in country Australia, was like opening a magician’s act in overcoming the ‘tyranny of distance’. Wide absorption of the term into Australian popular culture suggests it verbalised a community-wide held belief. Referring specifically to country politics, Blainey suggested that if the farmers’ Country Party had a coat of arms ‘a black steam locomotive … should be the centrepiece’ (2001, p.266). He posited the steam locomotive as a more powerful symbol of country than the more common symbols of Golden Fleece or sheaf of wheat. The railway mediated agricultural expansion and country wellbeing.

Australian railway symbolism drew power from the pioneer era of expanding the network across mountains and plains, and developing the relatively great power of steam. Lines (1991) said the railway was the very symbol of man’s triumph, through technology, over nature. Australian country historians generally relegate railway’s symbolism to the past. Gammage (1986), for example, wrote that railways were the great nineteenth century symbols of progress. Lines (1991) likewise described the railway in Australia as the most pervasive and compelling image of the nineteenth century. However, roadside level crossing signs currently depict a steam locomotive (NSW Motor Traffic Handbook, n.d.). Yet steam locomotives were last used in revenue earning service in NSW forty years ago. Symbols of the old railway remain powerful.

Hawkes (2005) argued that the railway presence in Australian literature was overt or subtle. The railway can be seen as a metaphoric vehicle for uncovering a sense of making connections and gathering in. Hamilton (1997) gave cover page prominence to symbolically linking
railway and country in Australia. Surrealistic imagery posed the Mayor of Port Augusta, Joy Baluch, in full mayoral regalia and leather thigh boots, standing triumphantly over a length of railway track. Bishop (2002) argued the recently constructed Alice Springs–Darwin line can be seen as a gathering of politics, landscape, culture, local concerns, and personal experiences. Country railways in Australia were deeply implicated in an ongoing re-signification of transport technology and associated cultural imagery.

Images of railways frequently appear in wide ranging sites of Australian popular culture: newspapers; TV programs; cartoons; photographs; novels; poetry; films; advertisements; roadside signs; restaurant décor; playgrounds; toys; magazines; cultural tourism; local museums; and histories. Many images focus on the railway as the subject matter. Some images incorporate the railway symbolically while referring to non-railway subjects. Witte (1984) noted the possibilities of the railway symbolising speed, power, and exciting drama to tell stories, particularly of an imaginary past. Railway museums can signify the past, which in cultural tourism can be mythologised into the good old days (Longworth 1991; 1992). Railway symbolism need not be limited to symbolism of providing mass long-distance land transport. However imagery of railways in Australian popular culture remains largely unexplored.

Railways can still carry symbolic weight, and be a popular source of powerful symbolism across global and Australian cultures. The NSW railway gave material and symbolic importance to country culture; despite the railway being controlled from the city. Given the shrinking railway network; yet vision of railways as transport for the future (Laird et al. 2001), analysis of railway symbolism warrants re-examination. Railway symbolism across country Australia leads to looking at the railway to illuminate more theoretical issues for this study. Railway closure might be an equally powerful symbol, an open text for the reading, and possibly provide elements which might be significant in destabilising the exchange relationship.
Railway Closure in NSW


Railway historiography generally agrees that there was a Great Railway Age in Australia. Rates of railway line and station opening and closing between 1855 and 2003 were not constant, but were concentrated into imprecisely defined periods. Lee (1988) suggested that the period 1848–1889 was the railways’ greatest public work. Blainey (2001) identified 1872–1920 as the railway boom. Lee (2003) described 1874–1920 as the railway age in Australia. The NSW Rail Transport Museum nominated the 1875–1885 decade as the great railway years (NSW RTM n.d.). Wotherspoon (1979) suggested there was a boom of major proportions from the late-1870s to the late-1880s. Paddison (1955) nominated 1880–1885 as the great railway years. Gunn (1989) said the great railway years were 1881–1884. Bromby (2004) left the boundaries of the railway age in Australia blurry, suggesting the 1880s–1960s. There is no consensus on when was the period of great railway prominence in Australian history or culture.

At some date the railway stopped expanding and started shrinking. The Productivity Commission (2000) stated that railway dominance of the transport market began declining after World War I. Lamb (1972) argued that the railway lost its potency in history during the 1920s. Paddison (1955) predicted that after 1955 railways would only consolidate on the previous hard pioneering work. Gunn (1989) described the 1973–1979 period as reflecting constraints of government policy. The literature does not agree when the railway started to lose prominence in Australian history.
NSW railway legislation obscures what ‘railway closure’ actually means. Railway closure has been legally defined as ‘if the land concerned is sold or otherwise disposed of or the railway tracks and other works concerned are removed’ (s.99A(2), NSW Transport Administration Act 1988). Neither was quantified as a definitional trigger. Both acts occur regularly in routine railway administration and maintenance; yet railways remain open. Legally, railway closure did not refer to ceasing to run trains. Railway closure legally required an Act of Parliament (s.99A(1), NSW TAA 1988) so involved more than an administrative decision to cease running trains. Just ceasing to run trains leaves the track in place and retains the line as a legal part of the railway network. However, trains were not required to be run on a line, nor were lines required to be maintained over which train services were not run (s.99, NSW TAA 1988). Railway infrastructure and train running have been partially separated. However, communities focussing on a railway transport service could see any of these acts as railway closure.

The literature does not explore possible different meanings of railway closure; though difference in meaning has been noted in the popular press (TB 29 September 1981). Tulk (2008) described railway closure as government disposing of the ‘contract’ made with early settlers. However, the relationship could at best be described as a social contract. I argue it was more like a social exchange. Legal definition of railway closure need not necessarily be the polar opposite of an open railway in popular culture. Ambiguity of the term ‘railway closure’ blurs conceptual boundaries. Government could claim to keep a line ‘open’, by not legally ‘closing’ it, while no trains were run on the line. Railway administration developed a suite of euphemisms for their own use to describe railway lines that were legally open but on which no trains were run: ‘booked out of use’; ‘ceased operating’; ‘decommissioned’; ‘disused’; ‘mothballed’; ‘temporarily closed’; ‘truncated’. Station yards were ‘rationalised’. Train services were ‘suspended’ or ‘adjusted’ (author’s personal experience). Government presenting such ambiguous, spun, obtusified, or misinforming information about a railway closure may make it difficult for communities to identify or confront railway closure as an agent of threat (Barnett & Barnett 2003).
Sourcing data from annual reports, Webb (1962) calculated that twenty-seven miles of line were ‘closed’ in NSW between 1946-47 and 1959-60, representing only 0.4% of the network as at 1946-47. Within two years the length of ‘closed’ line had nearly tripled to seventy-six miles, but still represented only 1.2% of the route mileage open in 1946. Compared to other Australian states the figure was low, which Webb (1963) found surprising. He suggested many uneconomic country lines were heavily subsidised by state government. Webb later (1971) concluded that NSW government had not seriously tackled the issue of line ‘closure’, fearing ‘closure’ might generate public opposition.

The most recent quantitative data on railway ‘closure’ in NSW has been compiled by Bozier (n.d.), Quinlan & Newland (2000), and Laidley (2002). However, the Bozier (n.d.) and Quinlan & Newland (2000) data includes government and private railways. Neither referenced their sources or analysed their data. Laidley (2002) scanned government railway Annual Reports and Weekly Notices (Laidley 2004 personal discussion) to produce chronologies of line openings and ‘closures’ (n.93), and quantified the total length of ‘closed’ government line as 2,883.32km at 30 June 1996. However his data contained lines that had been relocated, deviated around, and converted from a line into siding.

Only Webb (1963; 1971) considered why NSW railways had their services withdrawn, his term ‘closed’. His interpretation of government reasoning was:

1. The line had been constructed for political reasons in an area that subsequently failed to develop.
2. Loss of traffic to road transport.
3. The line had been constructed to develop resources that were subsequently exhausted or abandoned.
4. The line had been constructed to pioneer standards (Deane 1900; Roberts 1897) that subsequently became uneconomic to maintain.
5. Decline of regional ports.

Reasons 1, 2 and 4 are not mutually exclusive and can be empirically indistinguishable. Reason 3 would be most applicable to lines that had been built to serve specific point sources of rail traffic such as a mine, and could be expanded to include specific industrial sites. Service withdrawal because
of changes in more diffuse resource utilisation such as agriculture would be
difficult to distinguish from reasons 1, 2 and 4. Reason 5 was not relevant to
NSW country government lines, but has been relevant to ‘closing’ sidings to
country ports e.g., Byron Bay; Coffs Harbour; Lismore; Grafton; Macksville; Menindee. Bromby (2004) suggested many uneconomic lines
were truncated or ‘closed’ when damaged by flood, implying government
took the damage as an opportunity to ‘close’ the line, or had maintenance
neglected until the line had to be ‘closed’ implying deliberate neglect.
Communities could see any of these changes for whatever reason as railway
closure.

Webb (1963) concluded that minor ‘closures’ were of little
economic benefit to the overall railway organisation. This was in direct
conflict with reasoning then being promoted in Britain for closing branch
lines on the basis of their individual economic performance (British
Railways Board 1963). British reasoning failed to account for socially
regressive consequences (Whitelegg 1987), but foreshadowed increasing
‘closures’ in NSW during the 1970s (NSW railway’s Annual Reports
various).

Only Laidley (2002) considered how NSW railways had their train
services withdrawn, his term ‘disuse’, giving mechanisms of:

2. Decommissioning by management [for which this study follows
   Sharp (1997) reading as railway administration] involving minor
   physical and/or operational alterations, but leaving railway
   infrastructure substantially intact.
3. Conversion into a siding by abolishing the safe-working equipment.
4. Damage by natural phenomena.
5. Ceasing to operate, but involving no physical works on the ground.
6. Dismantling the track.

Very few NSW railway lines, on which trains no longer run, have been
closed by an Act of Parliament (Appendix 4.9). Decommissioning and
ceasing to operate are essentially similar. Conversion into a siding depends
on an obscure administrative differentiation between what is a railway and
what is a siding, and only applies to relatively short lengths of line. Damage
by natural phenomena may interrupt running trains, but not necessarily lead
to long term closure of the line. While all six mechanisms stop trains running, the first five leave the infrastructure substantially intact and potentially operable. Preventing trains from running only required subtle administrative changes and minor physical works.\(^5\) Communities could see any of these changes to infrastructure or train services, by whatever mechanism, as railway closure. Railway language can be obfuscating in public discourse.

Like ‘railway closure’, station ‘closure’ has multiple meanings. Stations can be closed to goods traffic, while remaining open for passenger traffic. Many country stations have been closed to passenger traffic, while remaining open for goods traffic. Others have been closed to both types of traffic. Some stations are closed on active lines. Other stations are closed through closing the section of line. Stations can be de-staffed, but remain open for traffic as halts. Stations can remain open only as ticket booths though passenger trains do not stop. Closed railway stations can be reused and operated as bus stations. The apparently innocuous term of ‘station closure’ remains undefined and wide open to community interpretation.

Railway administrators and communities can easily differ in their understandings of a line’s status (*TB* 29 September 1981), leading to government–community confusion and disagreement over matters pertaining to railway closure. Understanding the history and nature of railway closure in NSW helps us understand country community reaction.

**Assessing Impacts of Railway Closure**

Environmental impact assessment literature throws some light on the matter of whether or not local community reaction to railway closure is likely to seem warranted. American studies of railway closure have been undertaken prior to closure to predict likely impacts, or post-closure to analyse actual impacts (Allen & Due 1977). British and Australian studies tend to have

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\(^5\) Railway administration could simply place a note in the railway *Weekly Notice* (e.g., WN 45-1989). Physical works included: placing a stop block across the track; removing a length of rail; pulling out, straight-railing, or spiking over a set of points; or removing the requisite safe-working equipment. Prevention was deeply rooted in the organisation’s safe-working culture, wherein a train did not move unless the line ahead had been certified safe for rail traffic to proceed.
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been post-closure. Environmental impact assessment in NSW for planning purposes is undertaken at the proposal stage of a project (DUAP 1999).

Parolin & Filan (1993); Parolin, Filan & Ilias (1992; 1993); Parolin (1996); Wissing (1976); M&A & Kronos Corporate (2002) assessed railway closure as a discrete issue. However Australian literature also places railway closure into wider socio-economic frames, including decline in country services (e.g., McKenzie 1999). Wissing’s (1976) cost-benefit analysis of closing the Victor Harbour–Mount Barker Junction line in South Australia was based only on financial resource costs and supported closing that line. However the author concluded that by including non-quantified social costs, keeping the line open might be politically justifiable. Parolin, Filan & Ilias (1992) started their research into spatial and economic impacts of closing the Tamworth–Manilla line (Appendix 2.1), from a similar premise that economic and social impacts had not been integrated into holistic environmental impact assessment and public debate. Parolin (1996) referred twice to country communities seeing railway closure as part of their larger concerns about withdrawing public-sector services and removing infrastructure. Railway closure can be seen as one of many rural disinvestments, with wider ramifications than just a single policy decision (Whitelegg 1987).

Delegates to the Transport in Rural & Remote Australia Conference stressed the need for government to fully assess social impacts of microeconomic structural adjustment policies in rural and remote areas e.g., railway closure (DOT&C/DPI&E 1991). In NSW impacts of major changes by government agencies on rural communities are specifically to be assessed (Cabinet Office [NSW] 1996; NSW Agriculture 1997). State government policy (DUAP 1999) and legislation (NSW Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979) requires assessment of environmental impact of development.6

BTE (1984) recommended including a non-monetary descriptive comment and subjective evaluation of importance for so-called general public social costs and benefits of a new railway. Railway closure was not

6 Whether railway closure in itself constitutes ‘development’ under the current NSW EP&AA (1979) is yet to be determined. A related concept of social auditing may also have application for assessing railway closure (BTE 1984); but is yet to be tried.
considered; but could be included, like including popular, economic, and political overlapping influences in transport decision making processes (Mackie & Nellthorp 2000). The Productivity Commission (1999a) considered the main groups of railway stakeholders to be consumers, shareholders, and labour; but overlooked communities along a line. However Jessup & Casavant (2003) argued any individual or group would be a stakeholder if they were going to experience positive or negative impacts of railway closure. Thus indirect costs and benefits of railway closure can be incorporated into cost-benefit analysis (Else & Howe 1969).

Bio-physical, economic, and social environmental impacts of railway closure have been identified in the literature. The scope for environmental impact assessment is widening to include cultural issues.

**Bio-physical Impacts of Railway Closure**

Transport physically interacts with the bio-physical environment, so a change in mode logically results in a change in impact. M&A & Kronos Corporate (2002) and NSW Farmers’ Association (2002) forecast adverse bio-physical impacts from increased road truck traffic following railway closure including additional greenhouse gas emissions, generating dust, and increased fuel consumption. Comparative data between country passenger train and bus per passenger is ambiguous. Williams (1990) and Laird et al. (2001) aggregated many discrete impacts to obtain overall impact/mode comparisons demonstrating lesser impacts of rail. Bio-physical impacts of railway closure can be taken as axiomatic.

Writers have only considered bio-physical benefits of railway closure from the perspective of increasing biodiversity. Gulliver (1980) and Smart (1989) argued for retaining some abandoned railway corridors as wildlife refuges. However high edge/area ratios leave the corridor habitat highly exposed to weedy invasion (Harrington & Leach 1989). Bio-physical benefits seem very limited.

**Economic Impacts of Railway Closure**

Following closure, Due & Sidhu (1974) reported impacts on local economics, business turnover, property valuation, and employment. Fruin (1992) reviewed three American PhD studies and nine major university...
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studies into economic impacts of railway abandonment. He concluded that very few firms went out of business directly because of railway closure. Parolin, Filan & Ilias (1992) concluded closure had only very small impacts on transport costs, business turnover, employment, and economic viability of the NSW grain-line township of Manilla.

Australian assessments of the economic impacts of railway closure focus on changing the mode of transporting bulk freight from rail wagons to road trucks. During the late 1980s, NSW railway administrators claimed (Australian Railway February 1987) closing twenty-one grain lines would result in a 25% reduction in freight cost to growers across the state. But this calculation was confined to the rail component of transport costs. M&A & Kronos Corporate (2002) forecast increased trucking kilometres and increased size of trucks following railway closure, leading to a net economic loss to the local community through direct cost to farmers and cost to local councils. Road damage and transport costs were identified as the principal economic costs.

State government funds maintaining railway lines. Local Council, State, and Federal government funds maintaining country roads. Additional costs imposed by road trucks fall most heavily on local government (Laird 2010). Roads used by increased truck traffic can include lengths of state or federally funded roads (Graham 2004). Thus cost shifting is influenced by the proportion of each entity’s financial responsibility for maintaining sections of the affected transport routes. Nevertheless, increasing local road wear after railway closure shifts some costs from state to local government.

Railway closure can have some economic benefits. Abandoned railway land can be assimilated into the surrounding countryside to be reused for agriculture, roadways, or urban development (Gray & Laidley 1976; The Staff 24 June 1926; Turnock 1979). Based on questionnaires and interviews, McKenzie (1999) found general acknowledgement by farmers that road freight was more convenient and economic than rail freight. Railway closure made some farm and business deliveries more efficient. Conversion of a closed line into a recreation pathway may result in some economic benefits. Beeton (2003) calculated from survey data, that $51-10 per day per rail-trail user was injected into the economy by trail-users along the Murray to Mountains, Warburton, and East Gippsland trails in Victoria.
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Railway closure can have economic costs and some benefits, but outcomes are probably directed towards different community sectors.

Social Impacts of Railway Closure

In the seminal study into the social impacts of railway closure, Cottrell (1951) examined local community impacts of closing the steam locomotive depot at Caliente, Nevada. The railroad was converting from steam to diesel locomotives so no longer needed the servicing depot. Economic benefits would accrue to the wider society; while social costs would be borne by the local community. Cottrell analysed the local newspaper, reporting reactions of: changes in personal attitudes and values; personal demoralisation; disillusionment with the conventional social system; and irreconcilable differences between expectations and realisation. Community members clearly vocalised long-standing cultural expectations of how they felt the railroad should value and act towards the community. The community saw itself in an exchange relationship with the railroad. Norms of expected good corporate behaviour had been absorbed from wider American culture.

Social impacts in Britain included loss of amenity, changing the patterns of life, and changing the perceived quality of rural life (Loft 2006, p. 2; 11). In developing a cost-benefit model for railway abandonment, community wide feelings of injury and loss of prestige arguably should also be added (Due & Sidhu 1974). Based on 843 post-closure interviews, Hillman & Whalley (1980) concluded closure of ten rural railways in England resulted in widespread ill-feeling, disappointment, and upset. Closure of the Milwaukee railroad in Montana led to disruption in local social structures, increases in some crimes, increases in personal problems; yet the closure also increased some social integration (Brock; Schwaller; Swinth 1985). Community impacts can be seen as generally more psychological than economic (Fruin 1992). Residents of Batesville, Mississippi, described a general sense of loss following withdrawal of their passenger train service (Brown 1997). The Bishop’s Falls, Newfoundland, community could not envisage a future without its operating railway. It was deeply set in their own history, and held meaning to local people. Local reaction to railway closure seemed out of proportion to the loss of the seventy-five jobs. Residents reacted to closure of the railway as a
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breakdown in their cultural system. The railway had been the community’s main object of symbolisation (Nielsen 2001), so powerful it contained the community’s potential for self-change. Symbolism extends concern beyond economic loss. In effecting impacts of the common threat of railway closure in Canadian prairie communities’, perception of severity varied inversely with the structural diversification of the community’s economic base, and directly with the length of a member’s residence (Mozersky 1973).

A commonly reported concern of Australian country communities has been the loss of permanent government funded jobs, pointing to a government–community link. Social dislocation, notably loss of jobs, resulting from railway closure is likely to be most apparent in specific local and regional communities (Michael & Rimmer 1991). Australian Bureau of Statistics data recorded the number of NSW railway employees in non-metropolitan, full-time employment dropped by 9,600 between 1986 and 1998 (Productivity Commission 1999a). Between 1988 and 1998 railway employment in Australia dropped by 44% in capital cities, and 73% elsewhere. During public consultation, the Commission was told that closure of railway workshops had created major unemployment problems for the Port Augusta community in South Australia. Beyond railway employees, rail-using industries would suffer similar losses (Michael & Rimmer 1991), especially rail-dependent ones. The Productivity Commission (1999b) concluded that while there had been job losses in certain country communities, rail reforms had produced cost savings and improved services for the economy in general and particularly for rail users in country Australia. A general national interest was being placed above specific regional interests.

Road traffic safety appears as a perennial community concern. M&A & Kronos Corporate (2002) and NSW Farmers’ Association (2002) forecast increased social costs of road truck traffic following railway closure. Costs included increased road accident rates. The Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics (1992) estimated that road transport accounted for 94% of total transport accident costs in Australia, compared to 1% from rail. Honeyman, Bangsund & Leistritz (1996) identified a reduced quality of road travel after railway abandonment; but impact remained economically
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unquantified. Railway advertising promotes rail as safe and comfortable travel, so counterpoising road travel as less safe and less comfortable.

Including noise, negative effects on tourism, and local complaint spreads attention to include assessing cultural aspects of the country environment. Noise and vibration have not been traditional inclusions in environmental impact assessment in country areas, but are increasingly being included (M&A & Kronos Corporate 2002). Cultural issues appear in concerns expressed about future economic growth, jeopardising the future viability of country towns, and further widening the gap between city and country communities (NSW Farmers’ Association 2002). As well as loss of actual services, loss of ‘perceived’ service to rural NSW was cited as a reason for not closing-down the railway Trackfast parcels operation (ICAC 1992). Social impacts can include cultural issues.

Social impacts can arise from generally reduced access to public transport for the elderly, disabled, poor, aborigines, women, sick, youth, and those without cars (Croce 1994; Foskey 1998), leading to social isolation and possibly exclusion. Waller (n.d.) asked likewise, what are the social costs of transport that is not provided? Closure of Polish passenger lines resulted in reducing employment choice, worsening access to education, healthcare, shopping, leisure, and entertainment, leading to social disadvantage (Taylor 2006). However Hodge (1968) concluded railway closure would not turn Canadian prairie towns into ghost towns.

Chairman of the Victorian Railway Commissioners, Harold Clapp noted country towns in Victoria immediately ‘cried’ that railway closure would adversely affect the town’s interests and diminish its importance (Clapp 1930). While alternative road transport may then have had a relatively high cost, the community feeling of being impacted on remained in Australian country culture. Nearly fifty years later, Stiles (1979) noted from her professional experience in the NSW Public Transport Commission Planning Division, that country people saw railway closure as synonymous with decline, their community becoming a backwater. Community status has long been subjectively important to country communities.

Forth (2000) suggested railway closure contributed to the demise of some country towns. Witherby (1993) alleged that social costs of railway closure arises from some Australian country communities having been
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historically established and maintained by subsidised rail transport. Present and future railway-community relationships were inexorably linked to similar past relationships.

Moving into more socio-cultural impacts, country people report deep-seated feelings of isolation, sometimes quite intensely, enduring for a considerable time after closure (Abbott 1986). Isolation is a prime symbol in much Australian country mythology (Blainey 2001). Reporting on their post-closure interview survey of 208 residents in northern NSW, Raimond & Parolin (1992) echoed the theme of increased feelings of isolation following line closure. They suggested that people saw loss of the rail service increase their perception of distance to the next major service town. The authors suggested following up perceived isolation through railway closure as an interesting area for further research. Isolation being perceived, involves more than just dependence on geographic distance.

Impacts extend towards the psychological. Widespread emotional concern in country communities has been acknowledged in environmental impact assessments of NSW railway closure (Parolin, Filan & Ilias 1992; Parolin & Filan 1993; Parolin 1996). These authors dismissed such concerns on the basis of being just emotional feelings, lacking in empirical assessment. Henshaw (1994) presented an image of people opposing railway closure as emotionally retarded adolescents, as if communities intended the railway be run as a full-size toy train set. Yet an emotional reaction to railway closure is a consistent community reaction (Johnson 1976). Due to potential relationships with culture and traditions, glib dismissals of the emotional elements warrant reassessment, albeit without attempting to quantitatively measure emotion.

Railway closure can have some social benefits. Case studies demonstrate closed lines being converted into recreation ways (Colquhoun, McCooke & McCrohan 1999) and museums (Ellsmore 1996). Closed stations can be reused for non-railway community purposes (Brady & Longworth 1996). Using NSW Heritage Office criteria, Higginbotham (2002) assessed the closed Thornleigh Zig Zag line (Appendix 2.1) as having local cultural heritage significance. The zig zag is listed in the Hornsby Council Local Environmental Plan as a cultural heritage item based on it being a significant symbol of the importance of the railway in
creating Hornsby Shire, and being an integral part of the life of current residents and visitors (NSW Heritage Office Heritage Listings database, accessed 29/2/2010). Guide books for exploring closed railways, e.g., Colquhoun, McCooke & McCrohan (1999) support that leisure time activity. Railway closure has a wide range of social costs and benefits, many of which are tied to culture. Culture becomes visible through community expression.

Some local community reaction to railway closure is likely to be warranted. Literature on railway closure implicates culture but doesn’t follow through. There is much to be understood beyond biophysical and economic impacts.

**Community Reaction to Railway Closure**

Writers such as Tilly (1973; 1978), Cohen (1982; 1989), and Wild (1983) take communities to be single conceptual entities. Communities, as they employ the concept, are durable populations based in a definable locality, which act on behalf of their whole population through applying pooled resources.

From the earliest study of community reaction to railway closure (Cottrell 1951), railway closure led country people to take communal action. That community’s first reaction took the form of an effort at community self-preservation. The community became visible to its inhabitants as a real entity. There was a change in sentiment, away from glib statements about impacts on other people and communities, towards those more personally felt. Resolution was sought to their dilemma between past social norms and their current experience. Citizens realised that they could not achieve their objectives individually or corporately, so sought support from external organisations. Government intervention to provide ‘justice’ was called for. Based on Hirschman (1970), communities faced with declining railway services could exit their relationship with the railway provider, and change their transport behaviour; or voice concern, but remain in the relationship. The decision would be moderated by the community’s degree of loyalty to the railway provider, and/or to the relationship itself, and the range of realistic alternatives. Herbert-Cheshire (2003) presents a third option, where
the small freight centre at the Austin railway station, in outback Queensland, was to be withdrawn. Success of the local action group in keeping the freight centre open cannot be understood as outright resistance to, or passive acceptance of, government’s proposed closure. Rather the group formed a partnership with government, taking a more entrepreneurial and proactive approach to local development.

In scholarly terms, large scale closures in Britain during the 1960s “undoubtedly raised the temperature of concern” (Gourvish 1986, p. 414). Early opposition to closures ranged from the informed and aggressive, to the marginal, and mildly absurd, later becoming more authoritative and formidable, and widened their spectrum of interests (Gourvish 1986, p. 454; 456). In popular history (Jones 2011), reaction to British Beeching’s ‘axe’ closures typically included written proposals for making lines viable, vociferous protest marches, and banner-waving demonstrations at stations. Community reactions were commonly described as angry. Stronger symbolic reactions included loading a coffin onto the last train, top-hatted mourners processing through town, hampering the last train by placing bales of burning straw across the rails, protestors standing on the tracks, tampering with a set of points, padlocking level crossing gates, and burning an effigy of the Minister of Transport.

Australian reaction seems to most commonly take the forms of: public complaint (e.g., Clapp 1930); protest meetings (e.g., Stiles 1977); media coverage (e.g., Parolin & Filan 1993; Raimond & Parolin 1992); and production of government (e.g., McKenzie 1999), or industry-funded reports (e.g., Grain Growers Association 2002; M&A & Kronos Corporate 2002). Closure stimulating community protest, vigorous media debate, and political concern is often noted in-passing in literature on closure (e.g., Parolin 1996; Parolin, Filan & Ilias 1992). Political opposition by special-interest community groups is arguably the most significant factor in preventing railway closure (Dodgson 1984).

Following government withdrawal of train services from the Cowra–Woodstock line (Appendix 2.1), a local private train operating company, Lachlan Valley Railway, took over the operation of grain haulage (Ryan 1993). This was a thus far unique outcome of railway closure in NSW.
In response to concerns over closure of the Casino–Murwillumbah line during 2003 (Figure 3.1), the state government acted unusually in calling a General Purpose Standing Committee No.4 Inquiry (Gardiner 2004). The report recommended reopening of the line; but the recommendation was not implemented. A private group, TOOT, Trains On Our Tracks, attempted to establish a replacement train service; thus far without success. Community reactions along both the Cowra–Woodstock and Casino–Murwillumbah lines could be predictable from the Hirschman (1970) model.

Country communities have displayed a range of reactions to railway closure. However, empirical literature on the environmental impacts of railway closure does not seem to explain all of the observed community reactions. Australian and overseas literature suggests the importance of researching how subjective contextual forces influence community reaction.

Symbolism of Railway Closure

The railway has provided symbolic currency across much of the world, including Australia. Tulk (2008) suggested tying symbolism of railway closure in Queensland to traditional symbolism of the open railway. Railway closure, and especially its symbolism, could be a significant factor in prompting a community reaction explicable in cultural terms.

Constructing a railway introduces new material into a landscape; but railway closure rarely removes all material trace from the landscape. Paul (2000) used visual analysis of physical remains along multiple closed lines as case studies, developing the term ‘railscapes of abandonment’ to describe the visual landscape of abandoned railways. Using maps, photographs and historical perspectives of 122 case study communities, Schwieterman (2001; 2004) demonstrated consequences of railway abandonment on social, economic, and physical landscapes across America. His writings were the product of documentary research, interviews with public officials, historians, and former users, plus field inspection. Documentary sources included more significant government reports, company documents, newspaper articles, newsmagazine features, pamphlets, and videos. He concluded that some people were deeply affected. Railway abandonment
symbolised passing of time, fleeting glory, discarding work of previous generations, bygone industrial prosperity, and changes over which local residents had no control. Auster (1997) used a landscape aesthetic of ruin and decay, along the closed line from Dumaresq to Wallan-garra (Figure 3.2), to generate a poetic emotion of melancholia. He suggested abandoned railway structures added value to a landscape by speaking of past generations. He described the closed line as a linear monument to the economic history of the area, imbuing the landscape with a sense of emptiness and times past. This study asks what the locals were conscious of, and how they saw railway closure.

Government reducing supply of public rail transport for reasons of cost reduction (Mormont 1983), can be seen to symbolise marginalisation of country communities, harking back to country mindedness. Stiles (1977) concluded, from field survey along the North Australia railway in the Northern Territory, that outcry about closing that railway was based on more intangible values than just closure of that particular transport mode. Outcry was a protest against lack of local control over local community affairs, a feeling of ‘them’ distant managers against ‘us’ local residents.

Loft (2006, p. 12; 13) argued that railway closure symbolised the intrusion of urban modernization on country resident’s imagined sense of living in a rural idyll. Railway closure came to symbolise the destruction of the idealised ‘real’ [old] rural England in English culture (Loft 2006, p. 157).

Kirk (2002) identified a perception-reality gap between what the public was concerned about, and what politicians thought the public was concerned about regarding railway closure. Such a gap can be problematic for government policy makers working within frames of reference that many country people might not necessarily agree with. Government can seem aloof and not understanding the real issues of country communities (McKenzie 1999). Lack of understanding of regional values underlies a metrocentric perception (Archer 2000), which would be inconsistent with a country-minded ideology, but catered for within country mindedness. Imposing external ‘objective’ decision making, constructs opposing voices of self-identity as subjective and less relevant to government policy-driven
Existing Knowledge

closure (Kearns et al. 2009). Government policy makers and country communities can easily see railway closure through differing lenses.

Despite numerous country railway closures with likelihood of a strong cultural element, subjectivity has not been explored in the literature. These bodies of literature indicated there were significant gaps in our knowledge about railway closure and subjective values. A conclusion also reached by Raimond & Parolin (1992), Ferry et al. (2001), and Schwieterman (2004). Like the railway of old (Carter 2001, p.314), the question arises does modern representation of railway closure present a closed or open text to individual or communal readers?

Railway Closure and Countrymindedness

Countrymindedness (Aitkin 1985) asserted that people should be encouraged to settle in the country, and that city and all Australia are indebted to country for their high standard of living, so should support improving the position of primary industries. Government support included giving railways to country communities. In arguing that the railway also mediated a government–country social exchange relationship provides for a deeper perspective into the processes.

Government taking away its offering of a railway from the government–country relationship would make no sense to communities looking through the lens of countrymindedness; though countrymindedness provided explanation for such an act. Such a seemingly senselessness act might even threaten stability of the relationship.

Railway closure was overtly service withdrawal, as in ceasing to continue the status quo, similar to the closing of country hospitals (Barnett & Barnett 2003), or bank branches (Argent & Rolley 2000). Country communities could also easily see service withdrawal as indirectly threatening less tangible country-minded values.

Tilly (1978, p. 133) identified threat as a powerful stimulant to collective action. Threat is the extent to which another group makes claims which, if successful, would reduce the defending group’s prospects of realising its interests. Following Barnett & Barnett’s (2003) suggestion to follow a cultural approach in studying local community responses to closure
of a government service, frames this study by country ideology. Asserting country’s perceived rights to retain access to goods and services can stimulate country protest (Mormont 1983). Applying Wieloch’s (2002) focus on perceived threat to collective identity in motivating collective action ties railway closure to collective Australian country identity, and in turn ideology. Shared countryminded ideology identifies, defines, bounds, and differentiates country communities; and is expressed in everyday meanings attached to cultural symbols (Cohen 1989), such as a railway.

Symbols can be powerful triggers of human action (Barthes [1957], 1988). However, meanings of symbols do not so much reside in the symbol, as are brought to the symbol by the symbol reader. Readers’ meanings attached to symbols are strongly influenced by characteristic bodies of ideas, systems of beliefs, or sets of values held by the reader – in part their ideology. Meanings are substantially particular to, and shared by, members of a community of symbol readers who read the symbol alike (Cohen 1985; Eagleton 1991; Lewins 1989).

Collective identity establishes partly by self-definition of who the people see themselves as and partly by opposition of who the people see themselves as not being (Cohen 1989). Country communities attaching countryminded meanings to the railway would see communities attaching other meanings differentiate such readers from those reading the railway countrymindedly. Country communities would see different meanings attached to the railway as bounding countryminded communities off from non-countryminded communities. Though this is not to say all country readers would ascribe consistent meaning to the railway. Country may be made up of varying sub-cultures (Mules 1997; Mules, Shirato, Wigman 1995; Mules & Miller 1997).

Seeing community reaction as a desire to confirm a cherished collective identity (Friedman & McAdam 1992), allows community identity to model the mythical iconic Australian countryman (Aitkin 1985), or similarly the Australian legend (Ward 1958) character. Country communities identifying their generalised country community through shared belief in countrymindedness bounded by powerful countryminded symbolism; would identify those not sharing such belief as ‘others’, though the degree of otherness could be relative.
Mobilisation theory as presented by Tilly (1978, pp. 69-90) links community action to members’ perceptions of the threat and historic trend of like interactions. Collective action results in part from historic interactions between the subject group and other groups, in terms of group interests; organisation; mobilisation; repression/facilitation; power; and opportunity/threat of other groups interacted with. Historic government–country interaction becomes important to communities and helps explain their reactions to individual railway closures. This study should place specific railway closure into historic contexts as seen by the subject communities.

A Significant Gap in Existing Knowledge

Having examined a range of theoretical and empirical literature setting a context for this study, a common thematic gap emerged. The existing literature on railway closure suggests looking beyond the structural economic approach to provide a richer explanation for the observed community reactions.

Bio-physical, economic, and social impacts of railway closure have been assessed by adopting objectivist paradigms. Researchers assessed impacts as residing inherently within material transport, inputs, and outputs. However railways carry powerful symbolic meanings, and have strong subjective values. Country community symbolic reading and subjective reaction to railway closure have been noted in the literature; but not explored. The literature seems to accept that community reaction to railway closure could be explained by anticipated threats or losses; but fails to explore significant cultural elements in relation to the object of loss. Evidence points towards there being a significant cultural element in explaining country community reaction.

Interpreting community reaction to railway closure almost exclusively through rationalist, behaviourist paradigms limits analysis. Attempting to divide community action into rational versus emotional; or more extremely rational v irrational types, denies the complexity of
subjective community behaviour.\textsuperscript{7} Community reaction can also be understood in relation to perceived threats to community ideas, ideologies, identities, boundaries (Cohen 1989; Wieloch 2002). Barnett & Barnett (2003) said likewise, insightfully suggesting that the crucial part played by values, norms, and beliefs, that is, ideologies, underpinning country culture should be included in analysing community reaction to threat of service withdrawal.

The theoretical springboard for this study was Gray & Lawrence’s (2001, p.124) suggestion, in the context of power relationships between metropolitan and regional Australia, that city was occasionally able to dress support for country in ways which made the support resemble a ‘gift’. There is value to be seen in the apparent social stability, provided by culture in striving to maintain the status quo. However government exercising centralised power from the city can threaten instability. Looking at railway closure in the light of social exchange theory highlights stabilising transactions and the circumstances in which city–country stability is destabilised. Railway closure provides a window into city–country, central–local relationships (Herbert-Cheshire 2003). This study seeks to interpret such transactions through cultural lenses, especially that provided by countrymindedness.

To further develop our understanding of country community action, especially in relation to economic rationalist or neoliberal service closure (Gray & Lawrence 2001), we need to further understand the fuller meanings of government services and particularly their loss from economic rationalist or neoliberal reasoning. The terms are defined variously, and sometimes conflated, but are often used in such circumstances with critical, negative, or pejorative associations.”

\textsuperscript{7} Ascribing sharp distinctions between ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ behaviour, and implicitly, at least, mapping these onto ‘objective’, ‘irrational’, or ‘subjective’ ways of framing
Conceptual Framework

This study’s principal research question implied a causal relationship between railway closure and community protest. Causality seemed to be mediated by a range of variables, called by me factors, which were pointed to by theoretical constructs as informed by the above review of existing documented knowledge. The three sets of variables can be well displayed graphically, Figure 2.1. Intervening Factors are conceived of as a field of filters and forces through which the idea of railway closure passed, was given meaning, and which influenced action. In so passing, empirical data was linked to abstract theory, and the study was contextualised within existing knowledge.

Figure 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEPENDENT VARIABLE</th>
<th>INTERVENING FACTORS</th>
<th>DEPENDENT VARIABLE</th>
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The study was designed to identify the extent to which observed community interpretations and protest against railway closure was consistent with expectations arising from existing knowledge of similar events, and whether existing knowledge provides adequate interpretation and explanation of those events, so making a significant contribution to our knowledge and understanding of rural reactions to government service closure, particularly closure of country railways. The above conceptual framework also guided attitudes and decision making has limitations in academic writing. Where used herein the words came from original source materials or have been used cautiously in a critical light.
Existing Knowledge

development of the research methodology. What was needed was a way to collect data on how country communities interpreted and reacted to railway closure. The study research methodology will be described in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

From reviewing existing knowledge in the previous chapter, the main focus of this study became explaining the significant cultural elements in country community reaction to railway closure.

This chapter describes the study: springboard; information needs; data collection; and data analysis used to address the principal research question of: Why do NSW country communities react so strongly to railway closure when their supposedly objective interests are not threatened?

To explain community reaction I needed data on what happened, and identification of the cultural elements in the process.

Study Springboard

Schwieterman (2001) concluded that closing railways had implications beyond those discernible through quantitative means. This study followed that lead, so selected a qualitative methodology (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Neuman 1997) to understand how railway closure generated meaning in country communities.

Consistent with Tilly’s (1978, p. 5; 133), Schwieterman’s (2001), and Barnett & Barnett’s (2003) recommendations to think about community reactions through specific spaces and times, this study focused on the single issue of railway closure along specific lines in NSW during 2003. Approaching countrymindedness by concentrating on its content assisted in explaining variations in the influence of the ideology through time and across space (Lewins 1989).

This study sought to examine the experiences of ordinary people in the past. The study focussed on social structures and processes, notably negative social costs of political, agricultural, technological, and economic changes commonly identified with so-called ‘progress’. Attention is focussed on cultural and representational aspects shaping twenty-first
century rural life – a form of social history, or more particularly countryside history (Burchardt 2007). This is history populated with people linked to a range of other historiographies, but does not follow the historian’s traditional narrative style of writing.

During 2003 the communities reacted to messages about possible railway closures; not to material railway closures. Reacting to messages led me to analyse the messages and community reactions as communication events.

Answering the study research question required finding a way of looking at the observed reactions through the eyes of country communities. Locally produced contemporaneous written records would provide such a means. Without access to confidential government documents, the study sought to find out who proposed what railway closure when, by researching published reports and newspapers. To examine country community reactions to railway closure I analysed newspaper texts about railway closure, for evidence of cultural ideology. I adopted textual research theory and methodology, specifically thematic analysis. Thematic analysis provided an objective, systematic method using open coding to allow categories of themes to emerge from the data (Ezzy 2002).

The researcher was not personally involved in the activity being studied. Being detached enabled the researcher to observe from a distance.

**Information Needs**

This study required information on:

1. Evidence of the railway in government–country social exchange.
2. Communication about railway closure between government and country communities.
3. Comparable country situations between a clear rationale for community protest, and an unclear situation, as a means to help identify cultural elements.
5. Evidence of relevant ideological frames in country community reaction to railway closure.
Data Collection

Choosing a method of data collection required considering two dimensions about sources of suitable data evidencing country community reaction to railway closure. The first concerned the railways subject to threatened closure. The second concerned sources of evidence pertaining to those railway closures.

Sampling Strategy

NSW was my geographic area of interest. Ownership of the railway, state government policy making, railway administration, and environmental impact assessment were bounded by state borders.

During 2003 eighteen railway lines were mentioned in the NSW press for possible closure. Closure was proposed on the grounds of high maintenance costs and low usage. Seventeen of the eighteen were in country areas. Fifteen were grain-only so-called Restricted lines (Graham 2004), three were passenger-only, Figure 3.1. Closing those lines would close seventy-two passenger and/or goods stations (Appendix 1.1).

Figure 3.1. Lines Mentioned for Possible Closure During 2003

(Newspapers various)
This study required railway situations where closure would allow analysis of a subjective element. Proposed closure and strong vocalisation in New England during 2003 suggested studying that section of line, Figure 3.2. Serious agitation for railways in New England began during the 1860s (Harman 1970). Much lobbying was based on the symbolic value of getting a railway. The Tamworth–Wallan-garra line was the last Great Trunk Railway built in NSW, and among the last built by John Whitton to the grand Victorian style (Lee 2000). Many routes to link New England to the far north coast and west to the Inverell areas were proposed. Some were surveyed, and a few investigated. Only the line to Wallan-garra was completed. Construction work started on the Guyra–Dorrigo line; but was stopped on 14 February 1930, prior to completion or opening. Early history of the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section of line, Figure 3.2, has been studied by Cameron (2002); Harman (1970); Laszlo (1956); McDonald (1954); and Rowe (1980; 1986). The section of railway between Wallan-garra and Armidale [Dumaresq] has been closed.

Figure 3.2. The Great Northern Railway: Tamworth–Wallan-garra

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8 By 2003, the: Tamworth–Armidale; Casino–Murwillumbah; and Broadmeadow–Newcastle lines were effectively passenger-only lines.
9 Yarraford between Glen Innes and Dundee had been closed in 1959 prior to drafting the plan in 1963.
New England has a long history of political activism. Separatist agitation began in the region during the 1840s, and extended into the twentieth century in the New State Movement. Popular culture and local tourist promotion claim Sir Henry Parkes speech at Tenterfield (Figure 3.2) in 1889 began the process of constitution-making leading to proclaiming the Australian Commonwealth. The region aligned itself with the country-minded political parties during the 1910s, and retained strong Country Party, later, National Party political support until 1999. Aitkin (1985; 2005a) theorised countrymindedness after studying New England voting behaviour. Granted a fully independent identity in 1954, the University of New England in Armidale (Figure 3.2) gave New England academic status as the first Australian university to be established outside of a capital city. New England has proclaimed its rurality in many ways. New England claimed association with the bush through the Oracles of the Bush annual poetry event at Tenterfield and the Bush Balladeer Quest at Tamworth (Figure 3.2). Tamworth positioned itself in Australian popular culture as Country at Heart, marketing itself as the Country Music Capital of Australia. The local council went further in promoting Tamworth as the Heart of Country (Gibson & Davidson 2004; Richardson 2000). Country-city relations have been prominent in local community life and history. New England offered this study a place where a subjective response to railway closure would likely occur.

In contrast to the line in New England, the fifteen grain-only lines threatened with closure were opened predominantly during the first three decades of the twentieth century (Appendix 1.1). They were constructed to much more economical engineering standards, for the prime purpose of settling the land and hauling grain grown in areas between the main trunk railways out to the mainlines, thence to Sydney (Deane 1900; Fraser 1995; Pollard 2010; Wotherspoon 1979). Passenger services and general freight haulage on these lines ceased many years before 2003.

Sourcing Evidence
Following the methodology of Cottrell’s (1951) seminal study, this study analyses local newspapers as its principal source of evidence. Henshaw
(1994) and Parolin and Filan (1993) also drew on community concerns over railway closure as expressed in local newspapers.

Communication about railway closure between government and country communities flowed through many formal and informal channels including: media releases; Ministerial statements; government reports; presentations at community forums; public behaviour; petitions; conversations; signs; and the popular media. Local country newspapers became a conduit for representation.

Agitation for New England railways had come from landowners, businessmen, mine-owners, and newspapers, of which newspapers were the most persistent (Harman 1970). Country newspapers played a central role in country people developing a countryminded ideology (Kirkpatrick R 2000a). New England newspapers provided a forum for presenting local views and debate, providing opportunities for the expression and transmission of views (Aitkin 2005a; Blacklow 1999; Ewart 2000; Kirkpatrick R 2000; MacDonald 2004; McGregor 1998; Mules, Shirato, Wigman 1995; Schultz 2003; Windschuttle 1988). Veracity of the published texts was verified during a discussion with a Northern Daily Leader newspaper reporter who had covered the subject events in New England during 2003.

Providing a public forum for speaking about railway closure made country newspapers particularly suitable for my analysis. Seeking to protect communities from potential threats, country newspapers can play a watchdog role as institutional ombudsmen, a community forum arguing against development (MacDonald 2004). Country newspapers provided a repeatable, referable, and lasting source of data. Sourcing data from the local newspapers reduced the mass of material to be analysed to a manageable size and brought methodological coherence, while allowing valid conclusions to be drawn for wider generalisation.

Australian country sociology relies extensively on analysing country newspapers (e.g., Fitzgerald 2004; MacDonald 2004; McGregor 1998; Share & Lawrence 1995). In introducing a local history of Uralla (Figure 3.2), Ward (1988) suggested historic social attitudes and beliefs may be best sourced from documented folk or oral history e.g., local contemporaneous newspapers. New England railway historians (e.g.: Farrell 1997; 1998;
Ferry et al. 2001; Harman 1970; Rowe 1980; Walker 1966) relied on analysis of local newspapers. Analysing newspaper texts accessed ideas circulating publicly at a community level. Local newspapers are products of local interpretation, a community voice with a country focus, providing a window onto local culture. Possible newspaper editorial revision and filtering of content are acknowledged; but were controlled through drawing texts from many newspapers gathered from across a wide range of editorial regimes.

Strangleman (2002) highlighted the potential for using the rich material available in working-class autobiographies by railway workers. Analysing published local histories included more reflective local culture making. Analysing parliamentary debates gave access to public records of the government railway owner.

Analysing documentary sources provided advantages of: ease and speed in accessing voluminous material; overcame spatial separation between subjects and researcher; allowed an empirical study to be made reflecting community themes; and provided data to be analysed at times convenient to the researcher (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Newspaper clippings were collected by scanning four sources:

1. Local country newspapers published around known dates of potential interest.
2. Ex-State Rail Authority (SRA) clippings held by the Australian Railway Historical Society Railway Resource Centre (ARHS RRC).
3. The Rail Infrastructure Corporation (RIC) and SRA clipping services from 1 January to 31 December 2003.¹⁰
4. Local country newspaper website archives.

Analysing sources 2 and 3 gave direct access to newspaper clippings known to have been circulating within the NSW railway administration at the time. Thus the researcher was aware of information that was available to railway administrators about the consequences of the decisions on the proposed closures (Brent 1979).

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¹⁰ Copies of the RIC and SRA 2003 clipping service collections were supplied by the relevant railway Communications Sections upon my request.
Comparing Data Sources

NSW country railway lines can be characterised as: mixed-traffic; passenger-only; and essentially grain-only. There was no mixed-traffic line mentioned for closure during 2003. New England communities claimed to be representing NSW-wide country communities (NDL 10 December 2003). Casino–Murwillumbah (Figure 3.1) was the only other passenger-only line in country NSW.\(^\text{11}\) The other country lines mentioned for closure in 2003 were essentially grain-only. To enable me to gather sufficient data to compare with New England, I treated the grain-only lines as a group. Therefore, I compared and contrasted New England data with data compiled from notionally across the Wheat Belt (DT 4 August 2003).

Data Analysis

Recognising that ideas expressed about country in city newspapers might be urban constructs (Davison 1992; Share & Lawrence 1995; White 1981), I sought to analyse ideas about closing country railways produced by country communities themselves. This followed Tilly’s (1978, p. 228) preferred empirical procedure for determining collective interests by paying attention to what the people say are their grievances, aspirations, and rights. To identify what country communities said railway closure meant I used thematic analysis (Boyatzis 1998; Lewins 1989) of the collected newspapers. Thematic analysis offered an inductive method for coding qualitative information, enabling use of many types of information in a systematic manner increasing researcher accuracy and sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observations about people, events, situations, and organisations. Thematic analysis involves four stages of increasing abstraction:

1. Sensing themes.
2. Encoding the themes.
3. Developing codes.
4. Interpreting the information and themes.

\(^{11}\) This line was also considered for closure; but was excluded from this study because it passes through a peri-urban area and was not as readily identifiable as having a strongly country culture.
Research Methodology

This study asked what meanings, associations, values, and ideas, were attached to the message of railway closure in the encoding process within the communities that produced the newspaper texts. Interpreting the information and themes in the context of an emerging theory or conceptual framework, grounded the theory in the data. By aggregating texts from many individuals, and comparing texts from different communities along different types of railway lines across country NSW, valid inferences can be drawn from the content data.

Clippings about railway closure, or service withdrawal from lines that would as a consequence be closed, were allocated by geographic area of newspaper or report circulation: New England; or grain-line. Clippings from state-wide newspapers and reports were allocated by location of the principal subject matter. Thematic analysis was undertaken on each bundle of clippings separately, and emerging themes compared for similarities and differences.

Using thematic analysis, the clippings were read, re-read, and openly coded to identify ideas associated with railway closure. An idea was taken to be a recognisably codeable moment in data, consisting of a prominently expressed meaning, to complete the notional sentence ‘Railway closure means ...’, such that it would make sense to the writer. I used manual coding consistent with Holsti’s (1969) warning that computers might not be appropriate for thematic analysis. Holsti’s (1969) warning may be now somewhat dated through improved software. My source of data was from photocopied newspaper pages. Converting them to electronically readable texts would have provided little advantage. Also manual coding provided creative value of the researcher personally interacting with the data to induce theoretical clusters of ideas (Boyatzis 1998).

Each text became the unit of coding to be assessed for ideas. Texts included: editorials; articles; letters; and graphics. Each idea was recorded becoming the recording unit for analysis. As each successive idea emerged it was compared with ideas already transcribed for similarities and differences, and transcribed beside ideas that the idea was conceptually most similar to. After starting with a wide variety of ideas, as reading progressed clusters of ideas became decidedly lumpy. As open coding progressed I noted several of my emerging themes were remarkably similar to some
elements of countrymindedness (Aitkin 1985). The elements of countrymindedness appeared to be suitable organising principles, so were adopted as themes. The clippings were re-read and recoded using countrymindedness elements. However, some emerging ideas did not fit comfortably with countrymindedness elements. Non-conforming ideas were not forced into pre-theorised themes; but were separated out to initiate possible new clusters. Data providing evidence of social exchange and destabilising the government–country relationship emerged. Balance was sought between clustering ideas with maximal theoretical precision and minimising the number of clusters for practical management of the study within available resources.

While examining cultural perspectives can provide insight into the language of discourse used by community resistance, questions remain about the symbolic rootedness of the language. Adopting countrymindedness tied my analysis of language firmly to Australian country culture.

Newspaper writers often said they read railway closure as a sign, ascribing denoted and connoted meaning to the railway and railway closure. Government spoke about railway closure to country communities. Country communities replied through communal action, including writing newspaper texts. Government–country interaction observed during 2003 seemed conversational. Matters included knowledge; power; responses to the exercise of power reflecting particular ideologies; and reinforcing speaker’s views of reality. Following Else & Howe (1969) and Jessup & Casavant (2003), I did not require communities to materially benefit or be disadvantaged by railway closure for railway closure to carry meaning for them.

Themes that emerged from the New England data were compared with themes that emerged from the grain-line data. Thematic analysis limited accusations of researcher bias in identifying what ideas railway closure seemed to signify to the communities, so enhanced validity of the results. Generalisability beyond the survey group and time is argued through logical ability of ideas and clusters to explain, rather than to typify.
CHAPTER 4

Government Gave Country a Railway

Figure 4.1
Railway Openings Were Major Civic Celebrations

George Dibbs, Colonial Treasurer and Acting Minister for Works, addressed the large crowd gathered for the opening ceremony for the extension to Glen Innes. Inset 6: The Big Cutting at Ben Lomond presented the railway as slicing through so taming the natural environment (T&CJ, 30 August 1884).

Introduction

The previous chapter described my methodology of using content analysis to read meaning from published texts about the railway and later railway closure, within a framework of social exchange theory.

This chapter argues that the railway can be interpreted as effectively acting as a government ‘gift’ to country communities. The argument focuses on New England, with reference to state-wide activities including grain lines, and is structured around five points addressing each in turn. First, government owned the railway, and the railway acted as a government agent. Second, New England communities asked government for a railway.
Government Gave Country a Railway

Third, government effectively ‘gave’ New England communities a railway. Fourth, government expected New England communities to settle the land and develop national wealth. Fifth, the railway can be considered as acting as a social exchange relationship initiator. Using the railway was implicit in that it was assumed that the railway would be used. The railway had wider external benefits beyond those accruing just to the recipient communities.

Government Owned the Railway

Colonial, later state, NSW governments owned and operated the NSW public railway. Though that is generally known (Gunn 1989; Lee 1988); emphasising it here focuses attention of this study on the significance of government ownership in the government–country relationship.

The NSW railway started as two private enterprises. Both became a government business when the railway promoters ran short of funds so could not complete constructing their proposed lines. The colonial government took over the Hunter River Railway Company and Sydney Railway Company during 1855, before either line was opened for traffic. Government had already accepted the somewhat revolutionary recommendations that: private companies could not construct railways without massive government aid; future railway construction should be by Act of parliament; and the work should be carried out by a government department (AR 1864; NSW LC V&P 1854). There was no national government with railway powers or responsibilities until Australian Federation in 1901. For over 150 years the NSW railway has been and been seen as a state government railway.¹

Government managed the railway according to Westminster conventions of responsible government. An elected member of parliament was appointed to be responsible to parliament for railway management, giving the minister power over senior railway administrators and staff. Until 1888 railway construction and operation were branches of the state government Public Works Department (PWD). After 1888, PWD continued to construct new lines, while a separate, but still government, railway

¹ Railways opened in NSW prior to 1855 were private industrial lines used only for internal transport, e.g., of coal. Non-government railways opened after 1855 were either only for internal transport e.g., of sugar cane, or where providing a public passenger service e.g., South Maitland Railways, have been closed (ABS 2002).
Department operated the opened lines. Railways were presented and seen as a public work (Lee 1988) for the benefit of the state-wide community. Government, in the city, took credit for railway development in the country.

Deliberately displaying powerful regal and government symbolism, Figure 4.2, associated the railway with the highest levels of government. The British Crown was moulded into or painted onto rolling stock, displayed on buildings, printed on railway stationary, posters, signs, and cast onto the top of staff identification badges.

Figure 4.2.
The Locomotive Coat of Arms tied the Railway to Government

Featuring the Golden Fleece and sheaf of wheat on the shield, visibly demonstrated government’s high valuation of NSW’s primary industries, and hence country. Parading the coat of arms on locomotives showed railway support for the valuation.

Royalty travelled by train along the New England line in 1901, 1920, and 1927. The royal coat-of-arms was prominently displayed on the sides of carriages. Official receptions for the Prince of Wales at Tenterfield, Figure 4.3, and Wallan-garra were held at the railway station. Government flags flew from stations and trains.
Figure 4.3.
Government Identities Traditionally Associated with the Railway

The Prince of Wales addressed the crowd assembled in the forecourt of Tenterfield railway station, 1920. The Prince arrived by train, alighted from a railway carriage, spoke in front of the handsome railway station building, and left by train, showing royal endorsement of railway transport over alternative modes. The Prince and station read as a single coherent image (State Library of NSW collection)

Government claimed the railway in the organisation’s name, including: Railway Department; Railways of NSW; NSW Government Railways; Department of Railways; Department of Transport; Public Transport Commission of NSW; State Rail Authority; Railway Services Authority.

A Government Agency
The railway was an agent of government and was visibly so to country communities.

The government railway was a common carrier under the NSW Common Carriers Act (1902). In 1984, Transport Minister, Peter Cox, said the railway was required by law to provide a small freight business as a service to country people. As a common carrier government required the railway to carry all goods offered to it if accommodation was available and the established rate were paid. The railway would have to carry country goods irrespective of profitability – a public service; not a commercial undertaking offering discretionary service to maximise profit. Professor C.J.
Savage described, and the railway industry endorsed, common carrier legal status and public service obligations as ‘an attitude of mind held by the electorate’ (AE 21 March 1984; RT January 1967; s.90 (1) NSW Transport Administration Act (1988). Common carrier obligations, in ‘giving’ a service, presented elements of the gift relationship beyond the economic intrinsic value of railway transportation.

Railway Commissioners said they could ‘report and make recommendations on new lines from a commercial point of view; but whether a line should be constructed was a matter for parliament to determine’ (SMH 3 February 1902). Railway administration had forecast the New England Guyra–Dorrigo line (Appendix 2.1) would lose £117,000 per annum; but as an obedient agent started construction work.

Day to day internal administration of the railway was entrusted to the chief executive; but commissioners repeatedly said, railway freight rates on agricultural produce and mineral ores were set by government policy. Road freight rates were set commercially; railway freight rates were set by government. A Commissioner claimed the railway was not a commercial concern because it was ‘an instrument of government policy’ (Paddison 1955; R&TS 1 December 1919; 21 October 1935).

In this context, building infrastructure like railways and providing public services like running trains were inevitably seen as inherently government functions in Australian culture (Rogers & Walker 2005; Tanner 1999). Government funded the railway by parliamentary appropriation from State Treasury. Railway revenue was paid into Treasury. Railway administration claimed its mounting capital debt was not its fault, but that its financial performance resulted largely from administering government policy. Railway operational losses were taken for granted, and at least partially, compensated from Treasury, thereby amortising railway losses across state-wide government accounting. Treasury also took over the railway financial debt in 1960, so wiping the railway accounts clean of accumulated inherited debt (Gunn 1989). The concept of ‘Community Service Obligations’ (CSOs) was introduced to identify commercial business as discrete from providing public services. CSOs explicitly stated partial funding of the railway was a government service obligation to the community.
After opening the Glen Innes freight centre in 1979, Public Transport Commission (PTC) Area Sales Manager, Doug Cross, told the Glen Innes Chamber of Commerce that the centre ‘was not a money-making venture’. ‘It was the aim of the Public Transport Commission to provide the best possible service to the Glen Innes, Deepwater, Tenterfield, Inverell and Delungra areas (Figure 3.2) at the lowest possible cost to the consumer’ (GIE 13 July 1979). National Country Party nominee, John Tregurtha, said the party ‘regards the State Rail System as a service to the community’ (AR 1928; 1991; Paddison 1955; R&TS 22 September 1930; TI 13 March 1878; TS 10 February 1972; 12 May 1981). NSW state government accepted the idea of government involvement in providing a wide range of services including rail transport.

Corporatisation in 1996 significantly increased private freight train ownership and introduced large scale contract maintenance; but ownership of the network, network operations, and operating passenger trains remained with state-owned corporations. The NSW railway was visibly changing from essentially a government administration to a mixed government/private operation.

New England Asked Government for a Railway

Government gave in response to local communities repeatedly asking for a railway. Much dialogue between the government-party and the community-party focussed on rail and a relationship was forming between them.

Serious agitation for a New England railway began in the region during the late-1860s following construction of the line from Newcastle (Appendix 2.1) up the Hunter Valley. The Armidale Railway League was formed in 1867. Townsfolk tended to be the principal proponents, stressing the need for direct and reliable communication with the commercial capital of and port in Sydney. Town communities lobbied vociferously for the line to pass through their locale, to the extent that some politicians ‘condemned the policy of carrying trunk railways by circuitous routes to meet the views of certain townspeople’. New England communities said a railway connection would overcome ‘the remoteness of the district which they inhabit from the metropolis’, and sought the associated cultural status which flowed from having a station in elevating them above the surrounding
communities without rail. There was ‘a good deal of local jealousy as to which particular line should be adopted’ (SMH 16 May 1878; 22 April 1880; TI 31 July 1878). Lobbying for railway development came from the same groups which argued for free selection, so tying the railway to closer settlement based on more intensive agriculture rather than more extensive grazing. A few years later, graziers and miners lent their support for obtaining a railway, wanting better transport to the best possible markets (Harman 1970; McDonald 1954). Local newspapers were instrumental in community lobbying (Gunn 1989; Harman 1970; Walker 1966; McDonald 1954; Wotherspoon 1979). Debate was not about whether there should be railways; but about where the railways should be built. Power of the state was not absolute (Herbert-Cheshire 2003). Deviating the proposed line along the longer route via Armidale (SMH 22 April 1880) showed that the locals had real influence over the location of some lengths of line. New England–government dialogue and interaction about railways established.

New England communities also lobbied government for a line to connect the tablelands with shipping ports along the north coast (TI 13 March; 12 June 1878), and a line to the west to connect the tablelands with the wheat growing centre of Inverell (GIE 26 August 1884; TS 4 May 1887). Government started construction work on two lines to the coast, but stopped work during the Great Depression.

Further, New England communities lobbied government against building the North Coast Line, which would have connected the north coast of NSW to Sydney; rather than New England to the north coast, on the grounds of it being inappropriate government spending. However, community reasoning was more concerned with the North Coast line militating against government building a New England–North Coast line (AE 19; TS 29 September 1905).

New England claimed its local revenue, already paid to government, justified asking for the line and threatened the NSW government with otherwise sending local trade across the state border to Brisbane in Queensland to the north (TI 13 March; 24 April 1878). New England communities were in a local-central relationship with state government in which the locals had some bargaining power.
Government Gave Country a Railway

Lobbying to complete the Guyra–Dorrigo line, which would have connected New England to the north coast, continued into the post-Second World War era (UT 30 October 1975); but failed to secure government support (Farrell 1998; Harman 1970). By then, New England had a railway connection with Sydney that suited government based in Sydney. Giving new railways to New England had lost value to state government.

Government Gave New England a Railway

Government Gave Symbolically

Government ‘gave’ to recipient communities highly visibly, ceremonially, and symbolically. ‘Giving’, as used by Gray and Lawrence (2001), was in the sense that government provision of a railway could be made to resemble a gift; not that the railway was an actual free will gift.

Government ceremonially turned the-first-turf for railways and railway extensions. The first ceremony in NSW was performed in 1850 while the railway was still owned privately by the Sydney Railway Company. Nevertheless, Mrs. Keith Stewart, daughter of Charles FitzRoy, His Excellency the Governor-in-Chief of NSW – the then highest ranking government official in Australia, officially turned the first turf.² The turf was excavated and placed into a barrow, which the company Manager wheeled away. His Excellency bowed and doffed his hat. A ceremony charged with symbolism, with government taking ceremonial primacy. Even though country communities had initiated the work (Lee 1988); government symbolically started railway construction. Government also associated ceremonially with railway openings. The first official train from Sydney to Parramatta carried Sir W.T. Denison and party.³

The Governor was present at turning the-first-turf for the Newcastle–Maitland line, genesis of the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section. His Excellency Sir W.T. Denison, Governor-General of the Australian Colonies, Vice-Admiral of the same, and Governor-in-Chief of NSW – the then

² Inserting that spade then and excavating that particular divot of turf had been preceded by other minor construction earthworks (Hagarty 2005). That turf was not the actual first turf to be turned towards building the railway; but it was ceremonially the first.
³ Trains had been run during construction of the line. A train ran earlier on 26 September 1855 (Hagarty 2005); but Denison’s was ceremonially the first train.
Government Gave Country a Railway

highest ranking government official in Australia, opened the line. Government was strongly represented and prominent at four of the six railway openings along the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section (Appendix 4.1). Through unveiling the railway in the opening ceremony, Figure 4.1, politicians were presented as transforming closed engineering infrastructure into an open future, offering expansive possibilities to local communities (AE 3 March 1882; 2 February 1883; NSW Parliamentary Debates, 1884, 47 & 48 (first series) XIV; SMH 29 June; 3 August 1882; 9 September 1885; TO 11 January 1882; TS 4 September 1886; T&CJ 9 July 1881).

Local press criticised the lack of ceremonial performance to open the extension to Moonbi, the next stage in building the Tamworth–Wallan-garra line. The AE editorialised non-arrival of the Governor for the opening at Armidale was disappointing to the area, suggesting his absence would lose him local popularity. New England communities had fought to have the NSW-Queensland gauge, 4ft 8½in-3ft 6in, interchange located at Tenterfield, 11miles 29chains (18.29km) short of the NSW/Qld. border. Therefore Tenterfield residents parochially said they were unconcerned about the lack of any celebration or ceremony to open the extension to Wallan-garra on the border. Newspaper descriptions of performances, celebrations, and ceremonies ascribed symbolic significance to the events (AE 2 February 1883; TO 11 January 1882; TS 21 September 1887). New England communities expected a strong political presence at local railway openings, and reacted adversely if government did not meet their expectation. Being suspicious of city motives, New England communities wanted government recognition of the importance of the country side of their developing relationship with government.

Australian popular culture absorbed close association between government and railway opening. ‘Banjo’ Patterson’s (n.d.) The First Surveyor described a typical scene repeated across NSW: ‘The opening of the railway line!—the Governor and all! With flags and banners down the street, a banquet and a ball’. Communities responded to opening of the government gift with positive emotions (Lawler 2001). The NMH published its faultless account of the official opening ceremony of the line to Armidale the day before the opening actually took place (AE 2 February; NMH 31 January 1883)! Newspaper formulaic presentation demonstrated
community-wide understandings of the local significance of getting a railway and the developing government–country relationship.

The Minister for Public Works and Railways, E.A. Buttenshaw, continued the governmental tradition by turning the first turf on the Guyra–Dorrigo railway in 1928. However Buttenshaw admitted he was ‘usurping the place’ of the New England communities which had lobbied for constructing the line (GA 25 October 1928). Both government and communities were acknowledged as the parties in the relationship. The government–New England relationship carried an element of mutual deference.

After withdrawing the Tamworth–Armidale passenger train service in 1990 (AE 13; 14 February 1990), in response to local communities asking, government announced it would be reinstating the service in 1993. There was prominent political presence on arrival of the new train (AE 1; 3 September; NE 15 June; NDL 16 July 1993). Premier, John Fahey, and Transport Minister, Bruce Baird, officially launched the new Xplorer train service. Bruce Baird and Member for the Northern Tablelands, Ray Chappell, were prominently associated with the reinstatement. Five Councillors; the Mayor; General Managers from two Councils; and StateRail’s General Manager greeted the Xplorer on arrival (AE 1 September; 19; 24 November; State Rail News October 1993). Throughout local history, New England communities received a railway service only from government. Government ‘giving’ was material, economic, and symbolic.

Prominent political behaviour constructed a message of government giving the railway to New England communities, acknowledging importance of the communities to the project, and the importance of New England to government and the overall state. Railway openings were government–country relationship cementing events. Politicisation of railway turning-the-turf and opening ceremonies encouraged the communities to reciprocal voting for the politicians who gave them the railway. Politicising the railway gift visibly reinforced that the relationship was between government and New England communities.
The Railway Gave State-wide Connection

A railway connection was a scarce and valuable asset to a community. The railway visibly, materially, economically, and socially connected individual country communities with each other and the city.

The railway network expanded rapidly between 1850 and 1932, Figure 4.4. From turning-the-first-turf in 1850, to opening the Unanderra–Moss Vale line in 1932, 9,966.85km of government railway line was constructed in NSW. Growth averaged 121.55km/year. The era included constructing the Tamworth–Wallangarra section over 1878–1888, straddling Gunn’s (1989) ‘The Great Railway Years’ of 1881–1884.

**Figure 4.4.**
Length of Railway Line Open for Use in NSW: 1855–2003

![Length of Railway Line Open for Use in NSW: 1855–2003](image)

(Quinlan & Newland 2000; Laidley 2002; NSW government railway Weekly Notices)

The Great Northern Railway connected the thirty-two stations in New England (Figure 3.2) with 1,416 (Forsyth 1993, as amended by researcher’s notes) other railway stations, and hence communities, across NSW, Figure 4.5.
Connection was notably centralist, with lines radiating out of the Newcastle–Sydney–Wollongong hub (Figure 4.5). Trackwork layouts at railway junction stations tended to channel the flow of rail traffic towards the city. Primary produce concentrated or pooled (Ekeh 1974, p.53) while
being transported by rail to the city. Commissioner Winsor told local
government clerks that branch lines ‘might well be likened to the roots
tapping our vast resources and maintaining in vigorous growth the tree of
State’ (Winsor 1935). Individual lines functioned as and were seen as parts
of a whole railway network, in turn contributing to achieving larger
colonial, later national, agendas.

The Railway was an Expensive Gift

Giving and continuing to give a railway to New England communities cost
government a lot of money.

By 1878 when the railway reached (West) Tamworth, government
was committed to constructing any further extension as a standard gauge
line in the grand Victorian style (Lee 2000). Government did not choose the
railway gauge as a result of a disciplined search for the best value-for-
money option. The choice was based on seeking colonial autonomy and
identity, and as a basis for political re/election (Mills 2006), likewise with
appurtenant infrastructure. The Tamworth–Wallan-garra section was built at
the considerable capital cost of £2,754,492 (Coghlan 1899), Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.
Expenditure on Tamworth–Wallan-garra as at 31 December 1887

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Total Expenditure to 31 December 1887</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth–Uralla</td>
<td>£951,147-18-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uralla–Glen Innes</td>
<td>£735,418-9-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes–Tenterfield</td>
<td>£772,796-9-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield–Wallan-garra</td>
<td>£103,304-1-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(AD&HS 1977)

Greater construction and operating costs over narrower gauges and cheaper
building styles increased the financial cost, and symbolic power, of the
government gift. Grand railway construction created an immense cost-
recovery gap for the line. A railway commissioner later admitted that early
railway construction had ‘little regard for achieving balanced operating
results’ (GIE 25 February 1959). Butlin (1962) argued similarly that by the
time of constructing the Tamworth–Wallan-garra line, the criteria for railway investment had deteriorated to the point of there being no chance of a direct return on investment. However the line’s individual economics could at least be accepted as a political cost. Yet, government in giving such an expensive gift to New England communities, which can be seen as overwhelming benefaction placing country under crushing obligation to government, potentially moved towards the bounds of what was practically achievable reciprocity (Blau 1964, p. 106; 108; Ekeh 1974, p. 57).

During the 1880s expanding the railway accounted for 55-56% of NSW gross capital formation (Lamb 1972). Government gave an expensive railway to country NSW through borrowing heavily on overseas financial markets and entering into significant foreign debt (Gunn 1989). Within a few decades, government realised the imbalance between railway construction costs and country’s ability to use railways economically, i.e., financially reciprocate at some sort of practical equilibrium (Homans 1958, p. 600). Implicit reciprocity was causing problems in the exchange relationship. Making branch lines pay working expenses and interest on capital was described as ‘The Railway Problem’ [upper case in original] (R&TS March 1893). Government responded by introducing lighter-engineered so-called ‘Pioneer Lines’, as commonly built in the wheat belt, so reducing railway construction costs where returns were expected to be minimal (Deane 1900). Reducing railway construction costs highlighted an almost unrepayable debt which was accruing along the more expensive lines that had been built earlier, such as in New England. Quantifying the debt would have been virtually impossible, and had been unwarranted because reciprocity was implicit and externalised as a contribution to the state economy. Length of line/person and capacity of the railways generally exceeded demand for railway services, so much so that the railway could be charged with responsibility for the overall deficits of state government (Whitlam 1931).

The railway was also an expensive gift for government to keep open and operating. Railway annual reporting identified each country station’s operating costs and income, highlighting country’s contribution to the railway’s financial performance. The Tamworth–Wallan-garra section was continually operated at considerable financial loss for decades (Appendix
Government Gave Country a Railway

4.2). Government relied on massive financial cross-subsidy (Gunn 1989) to keep the railway network open. However supporting a rural economy was seen as obtaining greater externalised state-wide material and economic benefit than the cost of subsidising individual line and overall railway losses. Large scale financial subsidy symbolically demonstrated government’s deep commitment to New England communities and to the larger government–country relationship (Cook & Emerson 1978; Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a); rather than focussing on the economic intrinsic value of any particular line of the railway gift.

Government giving a railway to the New England community continued long after the initial construction. Government was very keen to be seen as giving liberally to country, Figure 4.6. Incremental development of station infrastructure to benefit primary industries continued into the 1960s (Appendix 6.2). The longevity of government’s voluntary giving symbolically communicated government commitment to, trust in, affective regard for, and solidarity (Molm, Schaefer, Collett 2007; Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a) with country.

Figure 4.6.

![New Trains for New South Wales](image)

(Publicity brochure for the Northern Tablelands Express, post-1948.4)

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4 Locomotive No.3823 entered service during 1948, dating the image to after then. The 38 Class locomotives were considered to be the very latest in railway technology, carrying with them considerable prestige.

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Ceremonial gift giving inside the relationship continued into more recent times. Premier, N. Wran, made the 1981 announcement to introduce the new Express Passenger Train (XPT) train service to the Northern Tablelands. Later the *AE* editorialised that Armidale had been promised the new train by the NSW Premier. The *NM* pictured Minister for Transport, Peter Cox, sitting in the driver’s seat of a new XPT, under a caption stating the new XPT would service the New England. The *NDL* linked trains and government politics noting the XPT toured New England just before the state election. The *AE* photographically depicted arrival of the XPT with the Minister for Transport, Peter Cox, and Member for Northern Tablelands, Bill McCarthy, posed at the controls in the drivers’ cabin. Free tickets were available from the Member for Northern Tablelands office. People had to interact with state political machinery in exchange for a free train ride. Peter Cox and Bill McCarthy were prominent actors during celebrations at Armidale on arrival of the XPT service. Both recounted how bringing the XPT had fulfilled an election promise, and denied the XPT was an election gimmick (*AE* 1 April 1981; 5; 12; 14; 16; 19; 21 March 1984; *GIE* 7 May; *NDL* 9 November; *NM* 3 May 1981). Their denial tried to counter a perception of expecting voting reciprocity, and in so doing highlighted the exchange nature of the relationship. The country–government exchange relationship extended into electoral politics – an aspect of the relationship mediated by the democratic process.

Arriving at Armidale station in 1984, the XPT broke through a commemorative ribbon stretched across the track emblazoned with: ARMIDALE XPT. The *AE* headlined: ‘COMING … COMING … ARRIVED!’ A photograph centred on the locomotive name, named by government, scripted City of Armidale (*AE* 19 March 1984), so linking the train to Armidale’s identity. However, local concerns had been expressed about goods rate and passenger fare increases, and possible service withdrawals (*AE* 30 March 1981; *GIE* 19 April; 18 September 1979; *TS* 27 March 1981). Cracks in the harmony of the government–New England relationship were appearing. Giving the train to Armidale would help stabilise the relationship.
Following rumours of pending cuts to rail services, government announced that passenger train services north of Tamworth would be withdrawn from February 1990 (AE 11; GIE 18 July 1989). Reacting to the announcement local communities mobilised, demanding the service be reinstated. Local mobilisation (Tilly 1978, p. 69) included forming the lobby group Friends of the Northern Railway; organising public awareness campaigns, information days, signing petitions; public meetings; protest meetings; commemorative events (AE 5 July; 10 August; SMH 23 October 1989). Local people’s interests were represented communally through the: Member for the Northern Tablelands; Member for Tamworth; Mayor of Glen Inness; Armidale Chamber of Commerce; Guyra Shire Council; Dumaresq Shire Council; individual Councillors; Friends of the Northern Railway; railway union representatives; NSW Farmers Association; University of New England’s Student Representative Council; General Manager of New England Electricity; individuals; newspaper editorials; and local newspaper coverage (AE 5; 11; 18; 26; 28 July; 10; 24 August; 30; GIE 31 October 1989).

Following successful lobbying of government, an Xplorer passenger train service was reinstated to Armidale three years later. Sydney-based government presented the train as something significant. Newspaper advertisements described the train as ‘your new train’ and ‘your new XPLORER train’. Railway administration saying ‘we’re bringing Australia’s newest train to your station’ presented New England communities as geographically static, while railway administration brought the train to the communities, as with bringing a gift to a valued recipient – a votive handing over. Railway advertisements proclaimed reinstating the passenger train service would be celebrated at a party, which government would organise, to which the community was invited (AE 3 November 1993; 17 September 1993; GIE 26 August 1993). Railway gift giving was placed into traditional cultural gift-giving ceremonial practice, and associated with positive emotions (Lawler 2001).

New England communities described the train service as being ‘brought back’, ‘return of’, or ‘resumption of’ (AE 17 September; 15; 19; 24 November; GIE 26 August; 2 November 1993) claiming their right to a
Government Gave Country a Railway

passenger train service as historically theirs. Communities saw government’s earlier railway closure as a taking away from them.

To Settle the Land and Develop National Wealth

Government gave New England communities a railway, with the expectations that country would settle the land and develop national wealth. This section uses the elements of countrymindedness as an organising platform arguing that seeing the railway through a countryminded lens would make sense to country communities within a reciprocal exchange relationship.

Settling the Land

Australia was seen as a very large area of land, sparsely populated, with the population sprinkled around the coastal fringe. Increasing the density of inland settlements and size of their populations could only be achieved through finding a fast form of long distance land transport – the railway. The railway encouraged country settlement through: employing staff in country areas; facilitating closer settlement; and improving the quality of life for settlers.

Railway construction in the second half of the nineteenth century was a labour intensive activity. Thousands of navvies moved across New England as railway construction proceeded northwards. From 1882 to 1888 an average of 6,500 people/year were employed on railway construction in NSW, many of them on the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section. Railway contractors hoping to attract labour held out promises of there being land open for selection. Some navvies died on the job, after which a collection of money helped the widow settle and set up a local business. George Perrin a navvy on the Glen Innes–Tenterfield construction, settled on a small acreage near Bolivia station. Local historians report descendants of navvies as remaining in local communities (AE 23 July 1880; Coghlan 1894; GIE 5 July 1881; Hartman 1979).

Between 1889-90 and 1893-94 the Commissioners reduced staff by 23% reportedly without impairing efficiency in any way, so revealing previous overstaffing. Overstaffing developed through government and administrative ideological consent. Critics said government used the railway
Government Gave Country a Railway

to provide employment (AR 1889; DE 16 October 2003; DL 26 September 1991; Lansley 1989; O’Connor 2005; TB 18 December 1921). Government and railway administration expected the railway to provide employment as a public service to country communities and aid in decentralisation. However acceptance and action were apparently not consistent through time.

The railway traditionally populated country areas not otherwise settled. By specifying where employees were to report for work, the railway encouraged large numbers of staff to settle in railway towns. Railway Towns were developed at railway termini and major line junctions. The railway encouraged settlement at locations, such as Werris Creek and Junee, otherwise not settled by agriculturally based country town settlement processes (Manning 1966). However, because railway towns existed primarily to serve railway needs, not agricultural needs, railway towns were not well integrated into local agricultural economies.

During the late nineteenth century Fettlers were spread along the line at an average of 0.75man/mile (AR 1952; GIE 29 June 1886; TS 2 March 1887). There were at least ninety railway houses along the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section (Appendix 4.4). Early railway residences in New England used high quality materials with sophisticated finishes compared to much non-railway domestic housing (AE 10 September 1886; R&TS 2 March 1908; TS 18 June 1887). Chambers (2007) calculated that railway employees made up 9.2% of Armidale’s income-earners in 1927. Employees were encouraged to settle where they had worked (W.N. 32-1932). The railway employed a maximum of 60,091 staff in 1951–52, hundreds in New England (International Railway Congress 1900; Love 1988; AE 21 March 1984). Railway employees made up large groups of employees in settlements, and remained so for decades, commonly imparting a railway connection to what became subsequently long-established town families.

Following passage of the Robertson Land Acts in 1861, people of moderate wealth could purchase land for farming (Robinson 1974). New farms were created at the expense of pastoralists occupying large tracts of land under cheap crown leases. However, high cost and difficulties with

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5 Numbers of track maintenance men/mile between Newcastle and Wallan-garra were for 1888: 0.74; 1889: 0.78; 1890: 0.81; 1891: 0.81; 1892: 0.82; 1893: 0.74; 1894: 0.68; 1895: 0.62 (AR various).
transporting goods and produce were major constraints on land selectors. Wheat farmers were dependent on local consumption for a market. Following opening of a railway, wheat output, and associated closer settlement, increased rapidly. During the second half of the nineteenth century railway building in Australia followed rather than preceded initial European settlement (Butlin 1962). Many settlements along the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section had been established before the opening of their local stations (Appendix 4.6). However the railway encouraged more intensive closer agricultural settlement, as shown by the insertion of additional stations after the line had been opened.

The SM claimed it knew of nothing better to induce settlement than an assurance that intending selectors would have rapid and safe transport for sending their produce or stock to market. The paper argued for railways to even precede settlement in some country areas. Newspapers said railways were the chief agents of settlement. The railway agreed saying goods business made settlement in far off places possible because it carried the farmer’s produce, so should be encouraged (R&TS 20 June 1924; SM 27 September 1905; SMH 8 February 1902).

Government said extending railway lines was a prerequisite for closer settlement. Passage of the NSW Closer Settlement (Amendment) Act (1907) provided (s.5 (1)) for government resumption of land for division into small allotments for farming purposes where within fifteen miles on either side of a proposed railway line. The NSW Closer Settlement (Amendment) (No 2) Act (1912) allowed for leases under the NSW Crown Lands Act (1903) to be resumed. The land would then be made available for closer settlement, providing the whole or part of the land was within fifteen miles of an existing or sanctioned railway line. To meet demand for housing and businesses close to railway lines, sites were purchased for designation as Villages, followed by subdivision and auction of individual blocks.

In debating construction of a line from Clarence to Tenterfield, the Minister for Works, John Southerland, proclaimed ‘the great object in constructing railways should be to open up the best country for settlement’ (TI 12 June 1878). Arguing for a Grafton–New England line (Appendix 2.1) the GIE asserted (17 January 1888) ‘that the true policy of railway extension for this country is that which will open up for settlement the lands lying
back from our available ports and navigable rivers’. Railway economics was often overlooked; while country reciprocity was implied. Seventy years later, the Railway Commissioners reminded Glen Innes that in ‘the early days of colonisation when capital investment in railway installations was of necessity directed towards providing the means of opening up the country and paving the way for closer settlement’ (GIE 25 February 1959). Official recognition of these specific goals for the railway grounded the relationship and was long lasting.

Railway administration told staff: ‘The one great duty before the people of this State is the filling up of the waste places with sturdy, thrifty and prosperous settlers’ (R&TS 1 September 1905) – pure agrarianism. Having said what should be done, the railway encouraged New England settlement, directly through staff settling in New England, and indirectly and numerically more significantly, through providing improved transport for New England settlers.

Railway income to a town was relatively regular, being largely independent of the vagaries of season, weather, and agricultural production, so provided some economic stability to local New England economies. Transport Minister, Peter Cox, told the Armidale community in 1984, that wages paid to 142 railway staff in the Armidale, Glen Innes, and Tenterfield railway districts injected $2,920,000 into the local economy (AE 21 March 1984). A century after the initial sleeper cutting for construction purposes, six railway staff were employed part-time at Tenterfield boring dog-spike holes in timber sleepers, injecting $5,000-$10,000 per month into the local economy (TS 1 December 1988). Tenterfield acknowledged its dependency on the railway as a source of employment and income. As at September 1991, there were 298 sleeper cutters contracted to supply timber sleepers to the railway. New England communities protested against loss of sleeper cutting jobs. Even though sleeper cutters were contractors not employees, the cutters said that the railway had a moral obligation to pay them compensation because they were good, hard-working, family people. Drawing on their long history of sleeper cutting, sleeper cutters said politicians had to be compassionate towards them. On terminating supply contracts the railway offered to pay cutters compensation because the Transport Minister said he had sympathy for them (AE 21 March 1984; MC
Government Gave Country a Railway

3 September 1991; *MRT* 30 August 1991; *NDL* 16 September 1991; *NVI* 10 September; *NWM(i)* 16 September 1991; *SMH* 13 May 1993; *TS* 1 December 1988). Government’s railway agent stepped outside of contract law, to subsidise the continuation of New England settlements. Railway behaviour showed affective regard (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a) for country communities.

The railway became a real and symbolic lifeline to country communities. Delivery of potable water by trains of water tankers to far western NSW towns was mythologised in NSW popular culture (Martin & Martin 1947). More recently the service was described as ‘the railway showing a concern felt for those in rural Australia’. An apparently old photograph showed two children being handed a pail of water from a railway tank wagon. The accompanying text established the image as traditional railway action; which was then contrasted with the then current reducing the number of railway employees. In New England, two pairs of steam locomotive tenders were used to supplement the water supply to Guyra when the local town water supply failed (*AR* 1958; *CT* 23 January 2003; Love 1988; Martin & Martin 1947; Paddison 1955). In providing a vital necessity for life, government displayed affective regard for country communities. Country communities became materially dependant on the railway for survival, accompanied by powerful symbolic imagery. Country communities and railway administration described the railway as a country lifeline, Figure 4.7, mediating life itself.
Endorsement reinforced mutualistic ties between railway and country organisations (TRm September 1958)

Country railway staff regularly acted as initial first aiders pending arrival of the local doctor (AR 1934; Bright 2003; GIE 28 January 1955; R&TS 1 September 1904; Longworth 2008). Local railway staff mediated provision of country medical services.

The railway and railway unions actively supported and promoted government policy of decentralisation. Unions said increasing the population in country areas was essential for public health and better
working conditions (*Railway & Tramway Officers Gazette* August 1946). Following the Second World War, funds were allocated to new railway works, deferred railway maintenance, and electrification specifically to distribute the state’s population more evenly. The railway promoted its assistance in the cause of decentralisation by: reopening closed lines; extending lines; providing special reduced freight rates; and providing rail services. Enabling legislation required railway organisations to exhibit a sense of responsibility towards country development and decentralisation (*NSW Transport Administration Act* 1988; *R&TS* August 1946; February-March 1964). Railway administration told staff that opening a new freight terminal at Tamworth was an investment which helped to create local jobs and support local businesses (*State Wide* August 1983).

The railway provided stations for many small country communities (Figure 4.5). Published timetables, announcing arrival and departure times of passenger trains to the minute, implied the railway could be relied upon, trusted, to discharge its obligation (Blau 1964, p. 94) to run trains predictably into the foreseeable future. By running trains on-offer to timetable along little used country lines, rather than according to demand or volume of trade on offer, the railway symbolised government willingness to give public services to country communities, rather than follow commercial profit-making principles. The *GIE* (18 March 1955) agreed, editorialising that the train had always been at hand ready for settlers to use whenever they wanted it. Government continued to demonstrate its commitment to country communities into the early-1970s. The Public Transport Commission (PTC) was operating about 15,000 country branch line passenger train services/year. PTC acknowledged that despite declining patronage the number of country passenger train kilometres being run had not changed since 1961. More than half of the branch line services carried less than six passengers, many of whom travelled on concessional fares. Some passenger services carried no passengers. The *AE* said New England passengers deserved a good train service irrespective of the financial implications (*AE* 25 May 1984; 12 January 1990; PTC 1974). Country wanted – government provided, so contributing to developing an exchange relationship.
The railway traditionally brought metropolitan benefits to country communities. Carriages were gutted, refitted, and toured the network, spending weeks parked in station yards at small New England communities to provide: dental; Far West Children’s Health Scheme; mobile instructional units for the Department of Technical Education; shopping; museum exhibitions; and amusements. Railway expenses were defrayed by government subsidy. The railway mediated provision of social and cultural events improving the quality of life in New England settlements, and demonstrating affective regard for country communities.

The railway traditionally assisted in children’s education. The afternoon Up Fast Stock train from Wallan-garra, and Up Goods train from Tenterfield were timetabled to stop at Sandy Flat and Bolivia if required to set down school children travelling home from school in Tenterfield (Working Timetable 1949). Students travelled for free. Educational tours to other areas were by train. The railway advertised train travel as educational. The railway mediated educating children to equip them for later life so seemed future oriented.

The railway cooperated with the Armidale Tourist Bureau to bring tourists to Armidale. Special tourist trains were run between Sydney and Armidale during 1960 and 1961 (AE 8; 11 April 1960; 27; 30 January 1961).

The railway connected New England communities. Parallel steel rails were depicted as carrying the eye and mind hypnotically towards an invisible goal beyond the horizon (Figure 4.7). Irrespective of actual loading, the sight and sound of trains passing through the landscape was a

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6 One unit, equipped for teaching welding, was stationed at Tenterfield for half each year. Thus expensive equipment and technical knowledge were made available on a part-time basis in sparsely populated areas that did not provide sufficient demand to justify a full-time fixed teaching establishment.
7 The DT (20 July 1957) described Email’s showroom train as bringing city facilities to the bush. H.W. Rice & Co. used converted railway vans as travelling showrooms to display their range of children’s toys to potential country customers.
8 In 1970 a Captain Cook Exhibition train travelled in carriages modified for the Department of Education. A Colonial Exhibition train was operated for the Australian Museum for country school children to see exhibits from the Sydney Natural History Museum, during 1981. Between 1980 and 1987 the Powerhouse Museum operated several exhibition trains including a New South Wales Exhibition train, Museum on the Move train, and a Futurescan train. As recently as 1990, SRA co-sponsored a Rugby Union Express museum train to visit Armidale station (AE 31 January 1990).
9 Cheap tickets were available for locals to attend agricultural shows at Tenterfield. Special trains were run to bring people from surrounding areas to the Glen Innes Show, and the Chinese Picnic at Woolbrook (WN 9-1908; 10; 39-1921).
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A powerful symbol of connection. General goods arrived at and left via the railway station. Early small country Post Offices did not deliver mail or telegrams to home or business addresses, so people had to visit the station to communicate with those far away. Small parcels were dispatched from and collected at the station. Communication via the railway allowed farmers and graziers rapid contact with city-based buyers and bankers. Mail trains carried letters and parcels from and to people far away. A postal slot in the side of Travelling Post Office carriages and Rail Motors allowed people to physically post a letter directly into the train as if the train were a travelling letterbox. Newspaper Trains brought news from Sydney and beyond. Along the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section many stations provided postal/telegraphic services and other non-railway community services (Appendix 4.7). In 1929 the All Black rugby union team travelled by rail, playing the NSW Country XV at Armidale (AC 20 July 1929). Traditionally the railway materially and symbolically connected New England and metropolis, and via Sydney’s port with the wider world. The railway reduced the remoteness of New England settlements so encouraging settlement.

The railway supported New England geographic identity. Passenger trains were named after country areas: *Northern Tablelands Express; North Mail; Northern Tablelander*, or after towns: *Armidale Mail; the Glen Innes Mail*. When the XPT was introduced on the line, naming one of the locomotives as the *City of Armidale* was highlighted in local press. Naming trains demonstrated cultural assumptions about what was important to commemorate, i.e., New England identity, and the sort of values that the government railway should demonstrate. The railway demonstrated affective regard for New England communities. Large framed photographs in carriages depicted idyllic country scenes and named their location, so reinforcing country self image. Naming country identities supported cultural significance of the named. Armidale said it appreciated the railway bringing train-loads of tourists to see the country’s sights, buy local produce, and experience country culture (AE 27; 30 January 1961; 19 March 1984). Government named New England railway stations after locally significant people, places, and events (Appendix 4.8). The two stations on the railway’s model railway, displayed at the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Sydney
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Royal Easter Show, were named Rural and Civic (AR 1950). Naming significant sites and institutions with strong symbolic connotations moulded reader perceptions of what was to be celebrated. Railway naming mediated country cultural identity.

In speaking against railway closure, as a government policy impacting on rural communities, the Leader of the Nationals, Andrew Stoner, told parliament that rural communities were ‘incredibly important to this State not only because of their contribution to the State’s economy and culture but because it is important to encourage population decentralisation from our cities’ (Legislative Assembly Hansard #33 3 December 2003, http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au, accessed 22/3/2004). Countryminded rhetoric was long lasting and remained current in the political arena into the new millennium.

The railway employed large numbers of staff; encouraged closer settlement; promoted decentralisation; provided faster and safer transport; materially and symbolically connected; improved quality of life; shared metropolitan benefits with country; assisted in country education; and offered socio-cultural support. Seen through a countryminded lens, the railway supporting settling of the land made sense.

Developing National Wealth through Primary Industry

Developing national wealth in newly-colonised Australia could only be achieved through finding a cheap form of long distance land transport – the railway. The railway improved the position of primary industries through: providing fast and cheap transport; building specialised infrastructure and rolling stock; cooperating in agricultural endeavours; financially subsidising agricultural costs; and taming the Australian environment.

The railway dramatically increased the speed of travel, Table 4.2, and reduced the cost of transporting primary produce from New England.
Cost of transporting one ton of general merchandise 100 miles by teams on a road was calculated to be 12d. per ton per mile. Coghlan (1899) calculated the cost by rail to be 2¼d. per ton per mile, a saving of over 81% in favour of rail.

Railway un/loading infrastructure facilitated development of the railway service which directly improved the position of primary industries. The railway built specialised single-purpose infrastructure for un/loading primary produce at twenty-two of the thirty-two, 69%, New England stations (Appendix 4.3). Stockyards; stock-races; bi-level wool loading banks; silos for bulk grain; abattoir sidings, materially provided for the particular needs of transporting primary produce. Infrastructure provided protective environments to keep perishable primary produce in good physical condition so maximising price at sale. Most was provided prior to the Second World War (Appendix 4.3), indicating a reduction in government giving from around that period. During the 1950s–60s topdressing New England soils with superphosphate and White Clover seed significantly improved pasture productivity. Clover was said to grow up to your knees (Sale, McCaskill, Blair 1987). The railway built superphosphate bulk unloaders at Dumaresq and Walcha Road. Railway support visibly overcame the environmental constraint of nutrient-deficient New England soils so improved the position of New England primary industries. Locating goods facilities on single-purpose dedicated sidings (Appendix 4.3), eased shunting of wagons to and from the facility, avoided interruption during un/loading, and minimised vibrating the produce. However the work increased railway expenditure through laying plain track, points, and
interlockings. Dedicated sidings imposed additional operational and maintenance costs.

Designs for sheep and cattle wagons were submitted to the NSW Stock and Station Agents’ Association and other interested country bodies for suggested modification and final approval. Primary industry institutions directly influenced design of railway rolling stock, becoming intimate partners in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Railway boundary fencing was erected and maintained at considerable cost to the railway to protect livestock from adjoining properties against harm by the railway. Protecting the railway against harm by livestock was neither an engineering requirement nor a stated aim (s.106 (ii) NSW Public Works Act, 1888; NSW State Reports, 1932, Vol.33). The railway modified its existing railway fencing to prevent spread of the rabbit pest. Following conferences on rabbits in 1885 and 1886, hundreds of miles of rabbit proof fencing was attached to railway boundary fencing to form a continuous rabbit proof fence across NSW along the Bourke–Narromine–Blayney–Murrumburrah–Corowa railway lines. Rabbit stops were installed to limit spread of the pests where railways, roads, and waterways passed through rabbit-proofed railway fencing. Construction of rabbit stops at Stonehenge in 1906 at a cost of £64 was paid for by the railway from its Additions Vote (RailEstate Working Plans, various; SMH 3 April 1895; Station Expenditure History Card). Material benefits to the railway were minor. The prime economic benefit went to local farmer G.M. Simpson. The railway was demonstrably willing to work towards solving rural problems, beyond just minimising the cost of freight.

During 1916 the Commonwealth Government acquired land between Tamworth and Armidale around and south of the then existing Kentucky Railway Station to establish a Soldier Settler farming scheme. Growing fruit commenced the following year. The railway laid in a siding and built a fruit packing shed specifically for the scheme in 1920. A gantry crane and weighbridge were installed in 1921. South of Kentucky Station the railway installed a platform and waiting shed named Kentucky South specifically to serve nearby Soldier Settlements. A loop siding with metallled approach

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10 Boundary fencing cost around 2-3% of total construction cost/mile and 2% of annual maintenance cost/mile.
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road was laid in specifically for loading Settlement fruit traffic at a cost of £1,272 in 1926. A passenger platform and waiting shed were opened the same year. A shelter shed for fruit and office accommodation were provided at a cost of £204 during 1929. Concession fares were made available to farmers to attend agricultural training (Forsyth 1999; Railway plan No.A457, 22 March 1921; Shaw 1962; Station History Expenditure Cards; Sparkes 1997; W.N. 11; 12-1926; 31-1929) showing government commitment (Cook & Emerson 1978; Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a) to country industry.

Extending the point above about rabbit control, the railway cooperated with government agricultural authorities in quarantining New England primary industries against agricultural pests and diseases. The railway instructed (Department of Railways NSW Coaching & Goods Instructions 1940) staff to refuse to accept consignments of prohibited fruit; trees; plants; etc. Railway staff were instructed to insist on inspecting containers and packages for conformance to stipulated quarantine requirements. Certification was not a requirement of the railway, but became a condition of railed transport. Second-hand packing cases were not to be accepted for consignment to stations between Wollun and Black Mountain. No fruit was to be accepted for consignment to stations between Danglemah and Ben Lomond during October to March inclusive. The railway refused to carry possibly contaminated primary produce, becoming part of local country culture – sharing country issues and concerns and forming a seemingly solid unit.

The railway ran special trains to improve primary industries. The Better Farming Train of 1927 made scientific work of the NSW Department of Agriculture more accessible to primary producers demonstrating that applying tested scientific methods would result in higher production, so secure greater wealth to producers and state. During 1987 the Department of Industrial Development and Decentralisation and Office of Small Business ran a Small Business train to promote business by supplying country communities with access to business services (NSWGR, Overseas Bulletin, No.34, April 1927; PP 27 October 1987). The train stopped at Armidale and Glen Innes. The Australian Made Preference League train visited Tamworth and Armidale during January 1926. Advancing the interests of primary
producers was a notable objective of the League. Shops in towns organised window displays to complement themes on the train (AE 1 January 1926), so linking railway and town activity. The Reso Train toured NSW during 1929 and 1930 to promote NSW agricultural resources, particularly the dairying industry.

The railway traditionally subsidised country development costs. Railway accounting knowingly underrepresented capital costs, to the benefit of primary industries. Adding new infrastructure or improving existing structures added to the account book value of the asset or increased its capacity, so additions or improvements were to be regarded as capital expenditures; but were often not accounted for accordingly. Railway accounting established separate accounts for capital expenditure known as “Additions”, and routine maintenance known as “Working Expenses”. The railway said it knowingly debited the cost of some capital works, or more commonly portions of capital works, to maintenance accounts (Appendix 4.5) – so-called double accounting (AR 1885). Double accounting was an anomalous survivor of attitudes towards capital and income from Britain that made capital invisible by not accounting for it on a continuing basis by not providing reserves for depreciation (Napier 1997). By double accounting, the railway accessed funds quickly and easily without involving time consuming written submissions tied to parliament’s annual budgeting cycle and vote of funds. Costs for capital improvements were effectively transferred from a State Treasury capital account to a railway maintenance account. While the accounting process would have been invisible to locals, railway staff perpetuated the practice so overcoming a deleterious aspect of the organisation’s agency status. However, inflating line maintenance costs carried adverse implications for the financial viability of the line.

Freight rates on more valuable manufactured products were set higher than on low-value per unit and bulky agricultural products. The Assistant Chief Traffic Manager explained this logic as those lines of commerce which were able to do so should subsidise others because welfare of the state depended more upon primary production than on any other source (R&TS 22 September 1930). Government attributed a very high value to country reciprocity.
From before the first railway was opened in NSW, government had realised that running a railway could not be economically profitable (V&P LC 1854). Freight and passengers would have to be carried at a loss. The Department admitted that only 17.5% of railway traffic was carried at profitable accounting rates. Cost of constructing and operating different lines varied enormously with length, topography traversed, and volume of traffic carried; but variations were not factored into differential rate structures. Freight was carried at uniform rates across the network, irrespective of cost to the railway in providing the transport and only loosely based on what the traffic would bear. A Railway Commissioner said railway freight rates were designed and reduced to assist primary industries. He also said, as a matter of State policy, 90% of the traffic was carried at less than the cost of haulage. Transport costs to primary producers were minimised to develop national wealth. New England communities recognised that railway rate concessions opened up markets for primary produce and, importantly for the government–country relationship, provided incentive to farming pursuits in the agricultural interest. The TS highlighted setting freight charges lower than the cost of transporting the commodities gave assistance to primary industry. Grain, stock licks, linseed meal, and poultry food were noted as specifically exempt from rate increases so protecting the interests of primary producers. Favourably low rates were offered on transporting superphosphate and wheat over long distances. When railway administration tried to withdraw from hauling cattle during the late-1980s, allegedly due to financial losses, government offered to pay its agent a subsidy of $500 per wagon (Fay, Raven 1924; Paddison 1955; RD August 1989; R&TS 21 October 1935; TR 1 August 1890; TS 24 March 1941; 22 September 1955). Single rate pricing and subsidising primary industry transport costs demonstrated perceived government distributive justice (Homans 1958, p.603) towards primary industries.

Starving livestock and fodder to feed to starving stock, during drought, were carried by rail at further discounted freight rates. Rail offered a 50% rebate, later reduced to 25%, in both directions. When stock was forcibly moved for sale or sheep for boiling-down the rebate was 25%. Fodder for feeding to starving stock was carried at a 25% rebate. Through additional subsidising of freight rates during drought, the railway
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contributed to keeping starving stock alive, so improved the dire position of primary producers. Railway administration recognised country dependence on the railway saying the railways had been a great factor in minimising the effects of the disastrous season. The SM said the cost of providing country lines would be saved through survival of stock during one great drought. The railway said subsidised carrying of starving stock was a public service, so rightly the business of government (NSWGR Merchandise and Live Stock Rates various dates; R&TS 1 January 1903; SM 27 September 1905; SMH 19 December 1929). Savings would accrue to the primary producers. Costs would accrue to the railway. The economic modelling required a financial conduit between money saved by graziers and cost born by the railway – traditionally a role of government financial processes. In mitigating adverse impacts of powerful environmental forces the railway partially tamed the environment, and showed affective regard for, social unity with, and commitment to country.

The Minister for Transport emphasised the rate on manure was less than half its transport cost, while the rate on building materials varied from 87% to 96% of transport cost. The argument was based on an assumption of limited impact from increased rates on small loads of high value products; coupled with a philosophy that rates should be set by the relative value of the transport service more than the cost of providing the transport. The stated reasoning was ‘thus protecting the interests of the primary producer’ (TS 22 September 1955). A precarious balance was possible under the NSW railway’s traditional monopoly on long-distance mass land transport. The Liberal Party’s Rural Committee urged government to separate goods and passenger accounts. The committee wanted to stop what it saw as profits made on hauling goods cross-subsidising losses incurred from carrying passengers. The committee argued that by reducing internal leakage of goods receipts rates on primary produce could be reduced even further (TS 24 February 1972).

Railway administration said staff living on the fringe of the Empire helped to subdue nature to the needs of humanity. The reputedly dense bush and dreary plains were transformed into more attractive variegated farm lands and waving cornfields. A Railway Commissioner asserted that the railways had made possible the development of the state’s great
primary industries, had opened up vast tracts of fertile land, and had made practical and profitable industries in centres in which otherwise it would have been impossible for them to develop. The railway persisted in claiming it was the principal means of opening up the unproductive interior for primary production (AR 1957; R&TS 1 April 1911; 21 October 1935).

The New England railway dramatically tamed the local bio-physical environment and wider Australian environmental constraints. Taming was to be seen in excavating massive cuttings (Figures 4.1 insert 6 and 4.8); building embankments, Figure 4.8; constructing awe inspiring bridges; erecting neat, crisp, painted, symmetrical station buildings, Figure 4.9; and harnessing the relatively enormous power of steam to drive machines. The T& CJ described extending the line to Glen Innes as ‘bringing civilised life into the dead wilderness’ (T&CJ 9 July 1881). The railway was a visually impressive object which people came to know as such.

Figure 4.8.
Railway Construction in New England

Railway construction filled in the hollows and cut through the ridges cutting a swathe through the wild New England landscape, near Bluff Rock (UNE Archives, P11820)
Taming included more than just subjugating the physical environment to railway engineering requirements. While squatters and pastoralists followed European exploration, lone nomadic shepherds, drovers, and grazing animals sparsely scattered across expansive native New England grasslands, did not construct an image of civilisation according to English understanding (Waterhouse 2005); but the railway did. Agriculture could replace pastoralism.

Railway taming the environment entered Australian popular culture. The famous Australian Impressionist painting “Fire's On”, Lapstone Tunnel’ (Streton 1891), depicted a railway being tunnelled through a mountain as an act of human progress. The natural landscape represented primal force. The railway represented civilising culture. In ‘The First Surveyor’ (‘Banjo’ Patterson n.d.) the railway engineer successfully “brought the railway through” the natural physiographic barrier of the Great Dividing Range. Appleton (1963) argued the Great Dividing Range was not an insuperable obstacle to crossing by railways. Nevertheless,
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graphic and written images in popular culture conveyed railway civil engineering skill as conquering the natural Australian environment.

The railway overcame strong environmental forces. Environmental damage regularly interrupted running trains, but rarely closed lines permanently. Sections of track between Tamworth and Wallan-garra were washed away in 1939; 1941; 1942; and 1947; but each time the line was quickly reopened for traffic. Flooding in February 1955 closed 2,046 miles of line, including the Main Northern line as far as Glen Innes. Track was washed away between: Nemingha–Tintinhull; Tintinhull–Kootingal; Woolbrook–Walcha Road; Uralla–Kellys Plains; Stonehenge–Glen Innes. The GIE described railway staff repairing the damage as ‘struggling against natural difficulties’. Like farmers, and element 5 [a] of countrymindedness, New England railway workers struggled against powerful forces of the natural environment. Within four days of the damage trains could be worked to Glen Innes and on to Wallan-garra a few days later. The GIE described railway efforts to take livestock and produce to the Royal Easter Show in Sydney as ‘Herculean’. Following another washout, the AE praised railway staff for working around the clock to repair the washaway (AE 24 February 1984; AR 1949; 1952; 1955; GIE 25 February; 21 March 1955; NSWR Areas Affected by Floods of February 1955 plan 80/42564 n.d.; Plans NSWR Washaways various dates; RT May 1955). People came to expect that the railway service would continue to be provided regardless of natural environmental disasters.

The railway tamed geographic distance. Australian popular culture claims the railway tamed the environmental constraint of Australia’s ‘tyranny of distance’ (Blainey 2001). On opening the extension to Armidale the Minister for Public Works described the Great Northern Railway as having ‘to some extent annihilated space and time’. The SMH said the railways shortened our vast Australian distances. The railway advertised itself using the slogan ‘Conquest of Space’ above a drawing of a straight railway track disappearing towards the horizon over a flat desolate plain (AR 1960; Schivelbusch 1986; SMH 2 February 1883; 8 February 1902). The railway didn’t actually annihilate space and time or shorten linear distance. The railway mediated a new relationship between space and time. Compared to previous modes of foot, horse, or bullock, railway travel
shrank the apparent distance by travelling over it faster (Table 4.2). Distance was seen to be tyrannical because the enormous land distances were an environmental constraint on profitable settlement. In reducing travel time between primary producers and markets the railway mediated taming the deleterious effects of the environment on primary produce.

The railway further reduced travel times between New England and Sydney (Table 4.2), Table 4.3.

Table 4.3.
Railway Travel Times: Tenterfield–Sydney

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Travel Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>21hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>21hr 35min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>18hr 15min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>15hr 19min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>15hr 44min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>12hr 40min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(MM 29 October 1889; Forsyth 1999; TS 17 April 1972; Public Timetable 1891; 1931; 1969; 1981)*

Trains were traditionally timetabled to improve the position of primary industries. Some stock trains were given priority over other forms of traffic. To speed up delivery of perishable produce and minimise harm to livestock in transit, perishables and livestock could be attached to express passenger trains. Giving priority and rapid transit to primary produce illustrated the railway working for country interests.

Concession fares were offered to delegates attending agricultural conferences, e.g., the Winter School for Farmers at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College. A return ticket could be purchased for 1 1/3 the price of a single fare (W.N. 28-1922). Reducing the cost of acquiring agricultural knowledge improved the position of primary industry, so supported a view of the importance of agriculture to the state. Government was knowingly committed to supporting country.

Government improved the position of primary industry rather than balancing railway accounts. The Premier said government would even cut its own railway’s protective taxation (*NSW Transport (Co-ordination) Act* 1931) to afford country industries relief from the burden of adverse
transport costs (TS 24 January; 9 March 1972). Government would sacrifice its own agent’s financial protection to benefit government’s country partner.

Railway administration instructed staff to provide Drovers with: the more comfortable bogie brake vans to travel in; vans with toilets; with windows in good condition; clean compartments; effective lighting; fresh water; towelling; and hot water (Department of Railways NSW Coaching & Goods Instructions 1940). Giving Drovers special facilities recognised their status as cultural icons, and displayed affective regard for them.

Railway administration, in common with many others, asserted that Australian wealth came exclusively from primary industry so supported developing primary industry. Under a headline of ‘Agriculture and the Railways’, the railway proclaimed: ‘It is an undeniable truism that “the land is the source of all wealth”’ [original emphasis]. Railway advertisements described NSW as the ‘Land of Plenty’ (AR 1958; R&TS 1 July 1905). The countryminded idea that all Australians should support policies aimed at improving the position of primary industries became so entrenched in Australian culture it was overwhelmingly accepted. Acceptance included creating, maintaining, and operating country railway lines almost regardless of their individual economic cost. The New England railway was a socio-cultural product of nation-building.

During the late 1950s, railway administration knowingly presented introducing diesel locomotives on the line as specifically benefiting local primary industry. Local Traffic Inspector, T. Dickinson, told Armidale and Glen Innes communities that the departmental policy of introducing faster services was especially for the transit of meat, stock, and other perishables. Reducing transit times would allow Tancred’s and Anderson’s abattoir at Wallan-garra to load their meat three hours later than previously. Livestock loaded at Glen Innes on Thursday could be at Flemington saleyards in Sydney on Friday (GIE 2 March 1959).

Agrarianism supported government intervention in the agricultural sector (Buttel & Flinn 1976; Molnar & Wu 1989), so did countrymindedness. The railway improved the position of primary industries through reducing damage to primary produce while in transit, speeding up transport to market, and subsidising transport costs. In a state economy based on primary industries, with a large proportion of the
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population living in country areas, government support made sound economic and political sense. Seen through a countryminded lens, railway support for developing national wealth through primary industry made sense. A supportive country railway administration and railway service came to be expected.

Railway Staff Acted Countrymindedly

As well as providing infrastructure and trains, railway staff were profoundly part of local country culture. Many railway staff came from country areas. Railway construction contractors advertised in country newspapers for: fencers; carriers; bushmen; sawyers; axe-men; splitters. Country occupations and skills were transferred from rural to railway pursuits. A Fettler, Rex Rosser, described the transfer process: ‘ – it [railway work] was hard work, but most of us were from a farming background – knew about hard work and we weren’t afraid of it’ (AE 4 March; 29 July; 19 August 1881; O’Connnor 2005; TO 28 June 1879). Ideas transferred with the people from farm to railway.

New England railway staff lived in isolated single dwellings along the line, in small clusters of railway houses near interlockings similar to small country settlements, and in towns. Railway house styles were similar to country house styles, with similar low level conveniences and country views. Railway staff living in country environments personally equated their living conditions with other country residents (Jenkins 1995).

Railway staff also farmed. Ken Ames recounted (2001) how he used to milk 5gallons from his cow every morning before starting work at the railway station. On his days off Shunter/Driver Claude Martin sheared prize-winning fleeces on district properties for graziers to display at country shows (Payne 2004). Through being personally involved in rural pursuits, and working closely with those who were, country railway staff absorbed country-minded ideology.

Railway staff could be converted to country-mindedness. The AE gloated that working in the country gave Station Master, Jack Quick, ‘something he has never lost … a taste for country life’. ‘[H]aving left the city all those years ago the Quicks have no yen to return … country life they believe is much better’. The GIE commended SM, J. Paul, for participating
in local boxing matches and rugby league games. Railway staff interacted at leisure with New England communities. Officer-in-Charge at Dundee and Bolivia Railway Stations, Sarah Alt, purchased a grazing property and married a grazier (AE 25 May 1984; GIE 28 January 1955). New England railway staff were socially and culturally accepted into country communities.

Railway staff interacted with country communities at work and at leisure. Staff arriving at a new location and relief staff boarded with country families on farms, in towns, or in country hotels. During the 1950’s the Glen Innes Railway Social Club extended its range of social activities for railway staff to include playing cricket and tennis matches against local communities (GIE 7; 21 January 1959). Living in similar environments and interacting with country communities engendered country cultural values in New England railway staff. Railway staff and farmers had common elements in their cultures and shared attachment to the same rural communities (Gray 2000).

Railway staff lobbied for completion of the incomplete Sandy Hollow–Maryvale line (Appendix 2.1) on the basis of the line’s usefulness to exporting wheat from the central-west wheat belt. Railway staff continued to survey and work on designs for a possible Inverell–Glen Innes railway, producing detailed engineering plans for such a line in 1938; 1950; and 1952 (RailCorp Plan Room; un-provenanced newspaper clipping author’s collection). Railway staff argued extending the railway network would benefit New England. Local railway staff became part of the local country community sharing country culture. Railway staff were united in purpose and interests with local country communities perceptually forming a subjectively solid social unit (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a).

Traditional characteristics of a good railway employee have been identified as: longevity of service; civility; popularity; community service; and skill/knowledge (Gray 2005). Newspapers identified and praised acts by individual railway staff. The TO said Goods Clerk at Tamworth, Mat Kenny’s, obliging disposition at work and interest in civic activities earned him respect of the community. The T&CJ described Glen Innes SM, A. Brackenrig, as courteous. A Glen Innes resident described on-train staff as very courteous. The TS praised the railway’s Mr Hall for his courtesy in
personally transporting stranded train passengers. The \textit{GA} reported Ben Lomond SM, Richard Hawker, as acting as a de-facto Police Officer. The \textit{TS} praised railway staff for their service and cooperation. Glen Innes SM, W. Challen, went beyond his official role to publicly lobby his employer to seal the station access road. The \textit{GIE} praised Quirindi station staff for doing all in their power to help stranded passengers. Tenterfield SM, Max Cooper, and staff were awarded a Rotary International award for their pride in workmanship. The \textit{AE} reported an Armidale train driver say ‘driving a train in Sydney would be pretty miserable compared to driving in New England’.

An Armidale resident described traditional New England railway staff as positive, efficient, and having a great spirit (\textit{AE} 9 February 1990; \textit{AR} 1952; Bright 2003; \textit{GA} 17 October 1907; 21 November 1907; \textit{GIE} 16; 25 February 1955; 25 September; 24 October 2003; \textit{TO} 29 July 1882; \textit{TS} 6 January 1941; 10 February 1972; 17 July 1989; \textit{T&CJ} 21 December 1901). Country expectation of railway staff to share rural values was met.

Senior railway administrators sought to maintain the railway–country relationship, inspiring staff to embrace and share official values. Railway symbolism drew on conservative cultural values tied to geographic place and culturally significant primary industries of wool, wheat, and mining, Figure 4.10.

\textbf{Figure 4.10.}\newline\textit{NSW Railway’s Emblem}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure4.10.jpg}
\caption{NSW Railway’s Emblem}
\end{figure}

\textit{RailCorp heritage collection (P. Neve, 2006)}
A ship symbol associated the railway with connecting primary industries and overseas trade. All were associated with country advancing Australian national wealth.

An Armidale SM reminisced about the old days when trains were run whether they were profitable or not, and stations were manned twenty-four hours a day. A subsequent Armidale SM described ending passenger services as a sad day for Armidale. Country railway staff gathered evidence of passenger usage to lobby for keeping threatened branch line passenger train services operating. When the Armidale XPT was threatened with closure an XPT driver argued rhetorically ‘What is a railway if it is not a public service?’ Public services should arguably be offered independent of individual service finances. Railway unions opposed railway closure, organising protest rallies in country locations seeking support from local communities against railway closures and country job losses. Unions said closure of the railway’s Trackfast small item service and flow on loss of jobs would particularly hit country areas. Unions cited job losses in country areas for fighting against ARTC leasing the country network. Railway unions expressed industrial concerns consistent with a countryminded perspective. Armidale railway staff initiated a local survey to increase local usage of rail for freight transport. Like New England railway lobby groups, local railway staff said transporting freight was critical to keeping the line open (AE 25 May 1984; 31 March 1989; 9 February 1990; http://www.greenleft.org.au/1992/62/2927, accessed 1/12/2006; SMH 6 May 1975; 21 October 2002; SS 29 April 1987). Railway staff displayed a sense of commitment to New England.

Senior railway administrators sought to retain country railway corridors intact for possible reopening, by deliberately not recommending to the Minister for Railways to legally close lines (D. Hill SRA ex-CEO personal discussion 2006). Of all closed lines across NSW, there have been only eight lines legally ‘closed’ by Act (Appendix 4.9). Lines closed by Act total 171.36km, only 5.95% of the total length of line no longer operational. Apart from the special case of closing the Dorrigo–Glenreagh line
Government Gave Country a Railway

(Appendix 2.1),\textsuperscript{11} the last closure by Act was of the Campbelltown–Camden line (Appendix 2.1) in 1963 (Campbelltown to Camden Tramway and Jerrilderie towards Denellequin Railway Act 1963). Some administrative non-decisions have the potential to benefit country in the future. Government not legally closing lines demonstrated a degree of government integrity and trustworthiness within the relationship.

Aitkin’s (1985) countrymindedness was sufficiently elastic to include a wide range of occupations, including that of railway worker. Much official railway narrative promoting country-minded values was demonstrated forcefully, maintained consistently over a long period of time, and disseminated via a patriarchal, hierarchical, and instruction-driven organisation imparting senses of obligation and predictability to staff and communities.

Railway actions made sense to country railway staff who acted accordingly (Hearn n.d.). Working on the railway came to be viewed in New England communities as a form of country labour. Working on the country railway brought out the best in railway staff, as differentiated from the kind of work city people allegedly do. Local railway staff shared country values. Seen through a countryminded lens, railway staff sharing countryminded values made sense.

A Social Exchange Initiator

Government giving New England communities a railway, which in many ways demonstrated countryminded values, in response to community asking, effectively initiated a government–New England social exchange relationship. Giving the railway can be seen as part of the development stage in the life cycle of this relationship (Molm 1981). My discussion of this point is arranged around the characteristics of a social exchange relationship as identified in the literature review (Chapter 2) of: distributive justice; procedural justice; affective regard; loyalty and commitment; trustworthiness to discharge obligations; and symbolic exchange.

\textsuperscript{11} The NSW Glenreagh to Dorrigo Railway (Closure) Act 1993 was enacted solely to facilitate development and operation of proposed tourist railways by private interests on the disused branch line (NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard, 27 October 1993).
The railway displayed government’s distributive justice (Homans 1958, p.603) towards New England. Large sums of money were spent on building and operating the New England railway, commensurate with its part in country’s material and economic importance to developing the state. Large numbers of railway staff were encouraged to settle in New England, so more evenly distributing railway staff into country areas. A dense network of lines was laid across country NSW. The network distributed ready, fast, comfortable, and safe connection, seemingly irrespective of a community’s location. Local station access points were provided at widely dispersed communities across country NSW (Figure 4.5), seemingly irrespective of the community’s population size. Many minor stations had no attendant town; they were just localities amongst dispersed farms. Specialised railway infrastructure and rolling stock were provided for primary industries. Government subsidised the cost of transporting bulky low value per ton primary produce. Manufacturing industries had to pay more for the same transport service than did primary industries. Country passenger fares were often concessional. Passenger trains running on country branch lines made distribution of passenger train services visibly just. Government distributive justice equated New England’s rewards to its costs of being country in a seemingly just manner. New England communities could evaluate the reward distributions of government giving them a railway as ‘fair’.

The railway displayed government’s procedural justice (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 2003). Government gave the New England line in response to local communities asking. Fine railway buildings were built along the New England line, commensurate with New England’s cultural significance. Government, via it operating agent, sought approval on rolling stock design from primary industry representatives. Government reopened the New England line at the request of local communities. Overt use of power was negligible. Justice in giving New England a railway was, not only a function of distributing material and economic costs and rewards fairly; but, was seen to be fair in the process of how the outcome was obtained (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 2003).

The railway displayed government’s affective regard for New England (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a). Stations and trains were named
after local New England identities. The railway supported New England cultural identity. At times of drought already subsidised transport charges were further subsidised. The railway brought some metropolitan cultural and educational benefits to New England communities. Disused country railway lines were not sold off; but the corridors were kept in government ownership, implying the possibility of being reopened. The railway was under no contractual obligation to compensate sleeper cutters for loss of future income; but paid up. Government’s positive feelings for and evaluation of New England extended the relationship from rational to include the subjective. Subjectivity provided a structural factor encouraging government–country interaction.

The railway displayed government’s loyalty and commitment (Cook & Emerson 1978; Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a) to New England. Government went into considerable debt to build the railway line. The rugged tableland geography and wild natural environment were tamed. The railway would presumably be operated for a long time into the future. Government operated the line at considerable financial cost. Flood damage to railway tracks was quickly restored, and train running was reinstated very soon after. Special trains were run promoting primary industry and New England tourism. Passenger trains were run seemingly irrespective of use.

Government’s loyalty and commitment to New England communities, and to establishing the government–country relationship, contributed to developing a form of government–country solidarity (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a). Government had chosen the country to partner with for achieving government’s larger state-wide goals.

The railway displayed government’s trustworthiness that it would discharge its obligations (Molm, Takahashi, Peterson 2000) towards New England. The railway was given to a largely under-developed region. Trains were run to a predetermined and published timetable; rather than purely according to demand. Agricultural pest species were controlled and their spread hindered. Primary industries and New England settlement were supported. The cost of the railway was borne by the government party and distributed across the wider society outside of the exchange, rather than just to individual receiver parties inside the exchange relationship. As New England community obligation did not extend to making their local railway
line financially profitable, the place of the railway in government–country relationships was left open to country interpretation. Government might expect reciprocal use; but that expectation was only a government expectation of what country might reciprocate. New England could rely on government to discharge its obligations under the relationship irrespective of the individual line’s financial profitability. Government’s behaviour in giving New England a railway signalled government’s trustworthiness as a suitable partner with which New England could further develop a social exchange relationship. However, government–country dialogue on this matter would become increasingly vexed during the latter decades of the twentieth century, as discussed later in Chapter 6.

Government expected New England communities to use the railway in the future. Railway infrastructure was built on a generous scale anticipating greatly increased use in the future. However government left New England’s future obligations to use the railway as diffuse, imprecise, and ambiguous. Usage was left up to the New England community’s discretion (Blau 1964, p. 93). Lack of assured reciprocity, hence greater displayed trust, contributed towards integrating the two parties in a relationship; but allowed space for New England to minimise its reciprocity, if using the railway at all.

Government giving New England a railway, explicitly irrespective of expecting a profitable financial return, showed that the relationship was not negotiated; but implicitly based on trust (Ekeh 1974, p. 56; Molm, Takahashi, Peterson 2000; Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a). It was in many ways consistent with government providing other country services, e.g., agricultural advice; hospitals; schools; wharfage; roads; policing; irrigation schemes; postal services; and telephonic networks.

The railway displayed government’s symbolic exchange with New England communities. Railway openings generated predominantly positive emotions in New England communities (Lawler 2001). Railway opening ceremonies imbued with powerful symbolism added a non-material layer to government’s giving, elevating the relationship from the material to social exchange (Homans 1958, p. 606). Railway iconography incorporated icons of primary industry into the railway’s own identity. Station names and named train names replicated New England nomenclature. Much railway
advertising adopted country themes and imagery. Government’s symbolic exchange with New England communities contributed towards integrating the two parties, based on shared reading of the symbols (Cohen 1989).

Government was dependent on country to reach its goals. Country’s offerings correlated closely with the government’s needs. Government giving a railway to New England communities was a relationship initiating offering. Exchange characteristics of: distributive and procedural justice; affective regard, loyalty and commitment; trustworthiness in discharging its obligations; symbolism; and dependency, directed the initial relationship towards developing into a non-negotiated social exchange; rather than a negotiated economic exchange relationship. Government behaviour throughout the initiation stage remained constant demonstrating government commitment and trustworthiness. Commitment and trustworthiness contributed towards integrating the two parties in a relationship.

**Railway Use Was Implicit**

Railway usage was not negotiated; but fulfilled the function of reciprocity.

To increase country population and develop primary industry, paucity of navigable rivers, poor dirt roads, and reliance on animal power (*TI* 13 March 1878; Wotherspoon 1979) meant that the railway was the obvious preferred mode for long distance land transport. Government had already acknowledged that superiority of rail over ordinary dirt or best macadamised road transport was too obvious to require much attention (*NSW LA V&P* 1870, Vol.2).

Despite railways significantly assisting in settling the land and developing national wealth, government did not explicitly tie giving communities a railway to railway usage. Indeed government refused to make such a connection. On opening the line to Tenterfield the Governor, Charles Carrington, acknowledged ‘that in opening railways very large extensions of traffic to sustain them is not simultaneously created’ (*AE* 22 October 1886); but it was expected to follow. The railway was given to create country development; rather than respond to it – an example of the idea of development by excess. Giving more than communities could then use presented elements of railway giftedness, and displayed government trust in future country reciprocity.
Externalised Benefits to the Larger Society

Railway usage shed benefits beyond the immediate railway administration and those individual country communities which had been given access to a local railway station, to benefit the larger state.

A commissioner said that ‘the highest aim of the railway was to serve the state as a whole, that all may derive the greatest benefit’. The railway was run as a public service, making subsidies to other businesses, private and public. State-wide service was institutionalised when a railway commissioner set ‘Service to the people of the State’ as the ideal to guide railway staff (AR 1933). The railway advertised itself as no other enterprise serves ‘the people’ so well as does the railway. Railway administration said that the railway ‘is a component in the process of production contributing to the sum of total social wealth’. A railway commissioner said the railway valued opening of the Tamworth–Armidale section because it added ‘50,000 bales of wool and 120,000 bags of wheat to the national wealth’ (R&TS 21 October 1935). Government valued highly country’s reciprocity. Therefore ‘every additional engine and truck and carriage put upon the lines is an increase in State wealth’ (RT September 1955; R&TS 1 April 1911; 22 September 1930; SMH 19 December 1929). While railways were owned by the agent and given to discrete communities, benefits of progress and prosperity were externalised across the wider society of NSW, and extrapolated into the future, e.g., Figures 4.11 and 4.12.

Railway administration claimed economic development of the state was linked to its railway system. The rail industry asserted NSW grew to greatness on the railway network, and forecast on such NSW would continue to grow. The SMH said the railway was ‘developing the natural wealth of this country’ (AR 1958; GIE 23 March 1955; RT July 1961; R&TS 2 March 1914; 22 September 1930; SMH 13 January 1902).

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12 Infrastructure and rolling stock produced by the railway were inputs to bring about the output of rail-based transport, which in turn provided services to support those who produced physical goods. Railway production of physical goods for external clients was minor and irrelevant to my argument.
Government Gave Country a Railway

Figures 4.11 (left); 4.12 (right).
The Railway Would Bring Progress and Prosperity to NSW

(Public Time Table Country Services 1937; 1962; *RT* July 1961)

The *GIE* asked rhetorically so what if a line did not pay? The Editor argued making a financial loss would be a cheap price for benefiting the externalised values of decentralisation and defence (*GIE* 10 January; 18 March 1955). Railway linking country and city benefitted the larger state through generalised exchange (Molm, Collet, Schaefer 2007a).

**Conclusion**

During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, New England communities asked the colonial government for a railway. Government responded by funding and constructing a line from Newcastle/Sydney through the length of New England. The railway connected an agricultural hinterland, including New England on the outer periphery, with the markets and ports of Newcastle and Sydney. Despite being effectively given to New England communities; the railway remained under government ownership and operation, acting as a government agent.
Government Gave Country a Railway

Initial giving at the opening ceremonies, of an apparently expensive railway, was subsequently reinforced by decades of further government financial giving which continued well into the middle decades of the twentieth century. The enormous financial cost of government giving demonstrated government’s deep commitment to its relationship with New England. Decades of continuing to provide a railway service produced a pattern of government giving to New England communities. The pattern signified government distributional and procedural justice towards, affective regard for, loyalty and commitment towards, and trustworthiness in discharging its obligations towards New England.

Government expected New England communities to settle the land and develop national wealth through primary industry; but using the railway to do so was left as implicit. Anticipated benefits were expected to be externalised across the larger state and national societies. Government apparently giving a railway to New England communities effectively initiated developing a social exchange relationship.
CHAPTER 5

Country Reciprocated

Introduction

The previous chapter argued that, by looking through social exchange theory, in government apparently giving a railway to New England communities effectively initiated a social exchange relationship.

This chapter argues that New England communities used the railway to reciprocate through settling the land and developing national wealth. The argument focuses on New England and is structured around four points addressing each in turn. First, New England received the railway communally. Second, New England used the railway to settle the land. Third, New England used the railway to develop national wealth through primary industry. Fourth, in government apparently giving a railway to New England communities (Chapter 4) and in the communities reciprocating a government–New England community social exchange relationship effectively developed.

A Community Railway

The New England railway was received by the locals through their community representatives. At the Uralla opening ceremony the government representative was welcomed by ‘We, the Mayor and Aldermen of the Municipality of Uralla, on behalf of ourselves and the inhabitants of this town’. At Armidale the Minister for Works, Henry Copeland, was welcomed by ‘We, the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Armidale, desire to express our welcome to you and your colleagues in office’. At Tenterfield the local Mayor spoke ‘On behalf of the residents of the town and district of Tenterfield, we desire to convey to you’ (AE 2 February 1883; 22 October 1886; U&WT 9 August 1882). A century after the initial openings, the XPT train was received by the Member for Northern Tablelands, Bill Mcarthy, in
1984 (AE 19 March 1984), and the Xplorer train by Armidale City Mayor, Joe Harrold, and Dumaresq Mayor, Peter Monley, in 1993 (AE 24 November 1993).

The GIE (18 March 1955) editorialised that ‘The railways have always been part of us.’, so claiming railway–community integration, community ownership, and the railway contributing to community identity. However the line to Glen Innes and Glen Innes station were opened in 1884, twenty-one years after the local school and thirty years after the local post office (Appendix 4.6). The Glen Innes community predated the railway by decades, yet the railway developed a long symbolic connection in community tradition. The GIE editor admitted that the “‘unhonoured and unsung’” [in original] ‘gargantuan [railway] organisation is taken for granted’. The community saw the railway as part of their tradition, if not their consciousness. A local historian described it more aptly, headlining ‘Coming of the Railway: The greatest event in the history of Glen Innes’ (1922 facsimile in St. Clair Cameron 1972).

Introducing the XPT in 1984 and Xplorer in 1993 were celebrated communally. Champagne, performances by school bands, and a sausage sizzle celebrated arrival of the Xplorer train. The community gave the event permanent historic status by unveiling a commemorative plaque on Armidale station (AE 15 November 1993). New England communities took railway actions as significant socio-cultural historic markers, giving the events ritualistic celebration.

New England communities said they were shareholders in the government railway through paying taxes (AE 29; GIE 30 October; MC 20 November 2003). Railway Commissioner, N. McCusker, the last commissioner to rise through the ranks so imbued with the relationship, sided with the Glen Innes community in describing them as ‘the people [of Glen Innes] who really were co-owners of the railways’ (GIE 8 May 1959). Twenty years later, the Member for Armidale, Dr. D. Leitch, argued people were prepared to accept very big deficits in the railways, because it was a public service (UT 24 April 1975). Both agent and New England communities saw the communities, not as holders of tradeable shares as in a private corporate entity; but as shareholding-owners through a government–country relationship.
New England communities said even closed railways had community value. The Tenterfield Railway Preservation Society described restoring the closed station as ‘worth it for the community’. ‘Many townspeople consider it a community asset that they wanted to keep’ (TS 21 January; 19 December 1991). Open or closed, the railway seemed communally theirs and beneficial.

New England communities appropriated railway nomenclature into local cultural landscapes as signposts along the Tamworth–Wallan-garra line (Appendix 5.1). One of the distinctly styled railway station nameboards, from the closed Wollun station, has been reused as the front-gate sign for the nearby property of the same name. Reuse perpetuated the power of railway symbolism over thirty years after the railway station was closed. Longevity of naming perpetuated a railway presence long after the railway closed. Including railway names as geographic identifiers on signs, maps, and as local reference points reinforced railway significance in local culture. The names remained independent of the railway being open or closed. The railway features prominently in local New England history writing (e.g.: AD&HS 1977; ADC n.d.; Farrell 1997; 1998; Ferry 1999; 2001; Hartmann 1979; Milner 1923; St. Clair Cameron 1972). Many railway items are listed as heritage items (Appendix 5.2) acknowledging their significant cultural status as items communities want to keep. In guiding tours, local historians’ now interpret local history at least partly through railway remains (Cooper 1993).

New England communities received the railway communally indicating communal acceptance of the offered gift. The railway element in the exchange was given cultural as well as practical transport significance. The government–country railway relationship became normalised in New England tradition.

**Settling the Land**

While not pioneering settlement (Appendix 4.6), railways performed an important role in developing countrymindedness through facilitating economic defeat of the squattocracy. Arguing for a Glen Innes–Grafton line, the *TI* (3 July 1878) editorialised that: ‘The principal effect a railway would have would be the cutting up of the large princely domains ejecting the
Country Reciprocated

drones and supplanting them with the busy hive of an industrious population’. In lobbying for a Grafton–New England railway the GIE (17 January 1888) asserted: ‘that the true policy for railway extension for this country is that which will open up for settlement the lands lying back from the ports and navigable rivers’.

New England townspeople lobbied vigorously to have railways routed through their town, rather than through other nearby towns (Farrell 1997; Harman 1970). Townspeople anticipated benefits from becoming agricultural service centres. Towns located along railway lines served as nodes on transport conduits facilitating flow of country products outwards to larger towns and cities, and flow of manufactured goods and services from larger towns and cities inwards to New England. The people of Armidale entertained the opinion that the importance of their town, entitled them to railway communication, besides adding to its importance and standing as one of the leading towns of the colony (Milner 1923). Having a railway connection imparted social status so contributed to town growth.

The railway provided safer personal transport, than travel by road which was exposed to predation by bushrangers. F.W. Ward, ‘Captain Thunderbolt’, was notorious for holding up mail coaches on the New England roads. Compared to predation by bushrangers, only three train hold-ups are recorded across the entire NSW railway network over a hundred and fifty years of railway operation.\(^\text{13}\) The GA reported robbing of the Mudgee Mail in astounded tones – railway robbery was abnormal (AE 25 September 1883; GA 10 April 1930). Also rail transport provided more comfortable travel than horse or wagon, so improved the quality of ride over long country distances.

Products previously unavailable were made available to New England communities. Coal for domestic and industrial purposes could only be imported economically into New England by rail. Rail provided cheaper transport for importing better quality flour from further away. Elaborate marble cemetery monuments could by imported only by rail. Improving living conditions encouraged settlers to settle in New England. In 1975, 49% of Armidale and 83% of Tamworth residents reported the quality of

\(^{13}\) The: Mudgee Mail (SMH 9 April 1930); Canberra Mail (SMH 2 May 1931); and Railway Paybus (DT 9 December 1941).
public transport as satisfactory. However in lobbying for additional train services the TS said additional railway facilities ‘would naturally make more contented settlers’ (CC/SOD 1975; Ferry 1999; SM 27 September 1905; TS 24 April 1972). A railway improved the quality of life for settlers.

The tonnages of goods, coal, and other minerals hauled inward to all stations along the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section, for example, during 1941 totalled 86,819 tons (Appendix 5.3). Assuming haulage was in the ubiquitous NSW railway 4-wheel, open, 15⅓-ton capacity, S trucks (Preston 2002), would equate to 5,693 trucks per year. Averaging at about 110 trucks per week for local business, excluding military at the time, would have been visually impressive, a barometer of local economic activity. In reporting on the large number of livestock wagons passing through Tenterfield the TS gave front page prominence to the benefits of the railway to local abattoir and agistment businesses (RT February 1961; TS 8 July 1963; 22 January 1973). Local communities saw railway activity as providing a visible indicator of New England agricultural activity. Goods travelled in both directions, e.g., Table 5.1.

Table 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Goods Out (t)</th>
<th>Goods In (t)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>3,034</td>
<td>12,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>6,980</td>
<td>9,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>8,266</td>
<td>7,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>6,887</td>
<td>10,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>6,879</td>
<td>10,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>7,110</td>
<td>10,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>8,106</td>
<td>9,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>7,586</td>
<td>13,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>5,611</td>
<td>9,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>6,588</td>
<td>14,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>5,861</td>
<td>15,413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goods tonnages (t) included: general goods; wool; hay; straw; chaff, excluding: coal and other minerals (AR dates as indicated, data not published after 1941)

Significant settlement resulted in inwards goods loadings exceeding outwards goods loadings.

The railway encouraged further settlement. Ten of the thirty-two stations along the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section were opened subsequent
Country Reciprocated
to opening the relevant section of line (Appendix 4.6). For example, Limbri
station was opened three years after opening of that section of line, and
Nemingha station fourteen years after, but just as goods sidings. Passenger
platforms were provided respectively six and eleven years later. Incremental
development of railway stations and station infrastructure reflected
development of settlements subsequent to opening of the line.

Presence of a railway station stimulated subdivisions. Within two
years of opening the line through Ben Lomond, there were twenty-three
claims for free selection in the Parish (Ellsmore 2002). Local newspapers
advertised subdivisions as investment opportunities, anticipating annual
increases in value. Tenterfield explicitly promoted town subdivisions on the
basis of the land adjoining the railway station (AE 22 October 1886; TR 17
July; 6 November 1885), Figure 5.1. The railway stimulated New England
settlement.

**Figure 5.1.**
Town Subdivision Marketing Proximity to the Railway

![Clifford and Stonehenge Estates](image)

*(TR 6 November 1886)*

The railway encouraged New England business. Entrepreneurs
anticipated increased trade. On opening of the station, the community at
Black Mountain relocated from the then existing vehicular track between
Armidale and Glen Innes, to around the newly opened railway station. It
offered improved community services. Not just relocation with no net growth. The railway improving community services attracted settlers to New England. Businesses established in New England specifically because the railway came to town, Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2.
Businesses Established Consequential to the Railway

*Left (U&WT 2 August 1882); right (TR 11 December 1885)*

Passenger usage of the line, e.g., Armidale, Table 5.2, grew initially, peaked around 1917, and declined thereafter.
Country Reciprocated

Table 5.2.

Armidale Station Passenger Tickets/year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Passenger Tickets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>8,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>6,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>11,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>16,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>40,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>46,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>32,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>25,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>17,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>19,733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>18,992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(AR dates as indicated, data not published after 1941)

Despite undoubted railway use, declining ticket sales suggests the Armidale community was beginning to devalue the railway gift as the preferred mode for personal transport.

Railway stations provided social hubs. Railway buildings were used as facilities for non-railway related cultural activities. Communities used the Waiting Room at Ben Lomond for church services prior to erection of a chapel, and the Goods Shed as a community hall. Communities used the Goods Shed at Black Mountain for school concerts, and the Goods Shed at Dundee for dances (GA 3 September 1902; 1 September 1904; 15 December 1905; 11 August 1908; Hartman 1979). Locals traditionally interacted with others while waiting at the station or un/loading goods.\(^{14}\) Railway stations traditionally formed a community focus analogous to a village square or meeting place, Figure 5.3. The railway mediated New England communities’ pursuit of social objectives.

\(^{14}\) Grain-truck drivers still interact with other truck drivers while waiting to unload at railway silos.
Using the railway to settle the land made countryminded sense.

**Settling Tamed the Environment**

New England newspapers described in detail the railway earthworks constructed along the line ‘to fill in the gaps left by nature’ (Figure 4.8), bridges spanning the valleys, and enormous harnessed power of the construction equipment as conquering nature (AE 2 February 1883; TO 23 December 1876; 26 October 1881; 23 August 1882). New England communities saw the railway symbolism similarly to government (Chapter 4).

New England railway staff personally tamed their surrounding environment. Railway administration encouraged staff to garden around stations and depots, which staff enthusiastically and zealously pursued. Railway press said the railway gardens at Tenterfield made Commission property ‘attractive’. The SMH advised Bungulla had won the annual award for ‘beautifying’ railway stations. Other Tamworth–Wallan-garra station gardens to be praised included: Black Mountain (1926; 1972); Bolivia (1906; 1907); Guyra (1906; 1907); Nemingha (1962); Walcha Road (1906; 1907; 1908; 1927). New England railway staff were commended for their gardening efforts because the climate was severe (R&TS 15 September
Country Reciprocated

1892; 1 December 1905; 1 December 1906; SMH 1 November 1905; Transport News February 1974). A local station wining a railway gardening award was accorded front page photographic coverage in the GIE (28 December 1959). Self initiated expressive behaviour of gardening used intense horticultural effort to impose patterns of civilisation on nature. Mass planted floral displays, geometric bed layouts, solid hard edging, and tightly clipped topiary imposed an engineering view of civilisation on the drab grey-green wild Australian bush.

Newspapers and recent New England historians (Ferry et al. 2001) presented the railway as imposing civilisation through civil engineering onto a largely natural environment. Reinstating the passenger train service to Armidale in 1993 was described in terms of reasserting civilisation over the natural forces of decay. Work on the station building prior to reopening was said ‘to restore the station to its former glory’. ‘Fixing up’ the station referred to restoring the dilapidated building to what presumptively should have been its proper condition, so re-normalising how the ornately civilised structure should appear (NDL 3; 16 July 1993).

The railway visibly conquered the natural environment, the tyranny of distance, increased primary production, encouraged settlement, and overcame environmental damage and stresses. As with country Australians the railway battled the land (Linn 1999). Seen through a countryminded lens, railway mediation of the country–environment relationship aligned the railway with country culture.

Developing National Wealth

New England communities used the railway to produce primary produce to increase Australia’s standard of living and to sell overseas to earn export income, both adding to national wealth. On opening of the line to Uralla the Mayor said he believed the railway ‘will tend to develop the large and varied resources of the tableland, and materially advance prosperity of the people’. On opening of the line to Glen Innes the Mayor asserted that ‘we confidently expect occasion of the current assemblage to be the great development of our agricultural, commercial, and mineral wealth’. On opening of the line to Tenterfield the Mayor claimed that the ‘railway extension will have the effect of rapidly developing the natural resources of
Without railways, the SM said, much of the land that was devoted to farming would have remained uncultivated, and comparatively speaking, unproductive. The paper said Government policy was to use the railway to open up country, not primarily to make the railway profitable in its own accounts. Years later, the TS said Government had consistently used the railway as a medium to develop the country rather than as a means of making rail-specific profit (SM 27 September 1905; TS 24 March 1931). New England communities used the railway to improve primary production through transporting wire for fencing; fertilizer to improve the soil; genetically improved seed for sowing; better quality livestock for breeding; larger farming equipment to prepare the soil; bigger harvesting machines; and the latest agricultural knowledge.

New England communities also used the railway to transport primary produce, notably wool, Figure 5.4 (Appendix 5.3), and meat. In transporting vast numbers of sheep and enormous quantities of wool from New England communities to Sydney markets the railway mediated the larger Australia symbolically riding to prosperity on the sheep’s back (Martin & Martin 1947; Watson 1980), and developed a national identity based on country themes and figures.

Country Reciprocated

the district’ (AE 22 October 1886; GIE 26 August 1884; SMH 31 March 1857; U&WT 9 August 1882).
Within four years of the line reaching Tenterfield, local stock was being slaughtered in a local abattoir. Newly developed refrigerated rail wagons carried chilled carcasses to markets in Sydney. Even highly fragile eggs were transported by rail from Tenterfield to Sydney markets – hitherto impossible due to rough roads and poor springing of road wagons (TR 1 August 1890). Reducing damage and spoilage of perishable primary produce increased price at sale. Within six years of opening the line through Black Mountain, a cooperative dairy had been established at the station (AE 11 December 1891). Locals used the railway to develop primary industries in country areas where the industries had previously been unviable.

A Government–New England Social Exchange Relationship Developed

New England’s reciprocal use of the government railway can be interpreted, for my analytical purposes, as effectively developing a government–New England social exchange relationship. New England’s reciprocity exchanged for the government’s apparent gift (Chapter 4), in the form of railway usage to settle the land and develop national wealth, was part of
what Molm (1981) called the development stage in the life cycle of this relationship. My discussion of this point is arranged around the characteristics of social exchange relationships identified in the literature review (Chapter 2) of: distributive justice; reciprocity; trustworthiness to discharge obligations; symbolic exchange; and affective regard.

Construction and operation of the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section relied heavily on sourcing natural resources from the region that was being passed through. Rather than using the cheapest materials; the contract specified that local materials were to be used.\footnote{Contracts for timber to fence 420 miles of corridor, specified that the timber was to be from the district through which the railway passed. Local soil was made into millions of bricks. Ballast was obtained from local quarries. Water was sourced from natural supplies at Kootingal; Woolbrook; Armidale; Guyra; Ben Lomond; Glen Innes; Deepwater; Tenterfield; and Wallan-garra \cite{AE 4 March 1881; TO 28 June 1879; RailCorp Drawing No.1231/33,675, March 1943}. Construction contractors A&R Amos advertised in the local newspaper for supply and delivery of hardwood sleepers. David Proudfoot advertised locally for 180,000 hardwood sleepers. In 1935, a future Commissioner, Reg Windsor told local government officers that railway dependency on transporting country natural resources and manufactured goods was good for developing industries in country areas. Fifty years later, country newspapers criticised the railway converting from timber to concrete sleepers for ending the traditional railway sleeper cutting industry. During the late-1980s–early-1990s, New England communities claimed their future survival depended on supplying timber railway sleepers, acknowledging their economic dependence on the railway. New England communities wanted security of work and the railway wanted security of sleeper supply, which they had traditionally exchanged \cite{AE 4 March 1881; NWM(ii) 16 September 1991; SMH 14 July 1989; TM 11 September 1991; TO 28 June 1879; TS 1 December 1988}.} Sourcing many natural resources locally, rather than importing them from further away, showed distributive justice \cite{Homans 1958, p. 603} towards New England.

New England communities reciprocated by sending large volumes of primary produce, notably wool \cite{Figure 5.4; Appendix 5.3} and meat, from New England to city, and importing manufactured goods in the reverse direction \cite{Table 5.1; Appendix 5.3}. The communities also reciprocated by travelling by rail \cite{Table 5.2}, though after 1917 to a declining extent. Government seemed to evaluate New England’s reciprocal reward as adequate to justify government’s costs.

New England used the railway to settle the land and contribute to developing national wealth. Railway usage showed government New England communities could be trusted to discharge their obligations \cite{Molm, Takahashi, Peterson 2000} towards government. Both parties shared a common reading of the railway symbol \cite{Cohen 1989}. 

15 Contracts for timber to fence 420 miles of corridor, specified that the timber was to be from the district through which the railway passed. Local soil was made into millions of bricks. Ballast was obtained from local quarries. Water was sourced from natural supplies at Kootingal; Woolbrook; Armidale; Guyra; Ben Lomond; Glen Innes; Deepwater; Tenterfield; and Wallan-garra \cite{AE 4 March 1881; TO 28 June 1879; RailCorp Drawing No.1231/33,675, March 1943}. Construction contractors A&R Amos advertised in the local newspaper for supply and delivery of hardwood sleepers. David Proudfoot advertised locally for 180,000 hardwood sleepers. In 1935, a future Commissioner, Reg Windsor told local government officers that railway dependency on transporting country natural resources and manufactured goods was good for developing industries in country areas. Fifty years later, country newspapers criticised the railway converting from timber to concrete sleepers for ending the traditional railway sleeper cutting industry. During the late-1980s–early-1990s, New England communities claimed their future survival depended on supplying timber railway sleepers, acknowledging their economic dependence on the railway. New England communities wanted security of work and the railway wanted security of sleeper supply, which they had traditionally exchanged \cite{AE 4 March 1881; NWM(ii) 16 September 1991; SMH 14 July 1989; TM 11 September 1991; TO 28 June 1879; TS 1 December 1988}.
New England community adoption of railway symbolism into local geographic identity showed affective regard (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a) for the government railway. New England communities responded to receiving and re-receiving the government gift with positive emotions (Lawler 2001). The railway gift remained consistently visible to New England communities for a long time.

Government’s initial giving and New England’s reciprocity can be considered as effectively developing a social exchange relationship (Molm 1981). Rewards from the other party correlated closely with each party’s needs. Government and country were interdependent to reach each party’s respective goals. New England’s behaviour in using the government railway signalled New England’s trustworthiness (Molm, Takahashi, Peterson 2000) as a suitable partner with which government could remain in relationship with. Once initiated, establishment of the relationship was almost instantaneous. During the establishment stage the behaviour of both parties remained relatively consistent. The relationship can be characterised as a non-negotiated social exchange. Through time the relationship achieved a state of ‘practical equilibrium’ (Homans 1958, p. 600) or ‘stable maintenance’ (Molm 1981) which continued for a long time.

The Exchange was Generalised

Railway usage shed benefits beyond the immediate New England tableland and government administration, to benefit the larger state of NSW. Government and New England communities agreed that the railway would advance the ‘country at large’; add to the ‘general prosperity’; and develop the ‘general welfare of the colony, and the happiness of its people’ (SMH 31 March 1857; TI 19 June 1878; U&WT 9 August 1882). In lobbying for an individual railway the GIE (17 January 1888) claimed: ‘The line from Grafton to Glen Innes is an urgent national necessity’. In debating extension of the line to Tenterfield in the Legislative Council, Mr Dillon said the route should be ‘for the best interests of the colony, not from a local point of view, but generally on national grounds’ (SMH 16 May 1878). Benefit of the extension was also generalised by the Governor Charles Carrington in that ‘such an extension as this one [is] of universal importance to the colony’ as a whole; the view in turn being re-echoed by the local Mayor
saying railways ‘tend to the advancement and prosperity of the whole colony’ (GIE 26 October 1886).

New England writers agreed with Windsor (1935) and Paddison (1955), in describing the railway as a part, not an end. The GIE editorialised railways ‘are a means to an end – essential components in a balanced development of the State’, earning the accolade of being ‘one of the great indispensable national institutions’ (GIE 10 January; 18 March 1955; R&TS 1 April 1911; 22 September 1930). The Mayor of Glen Innes said opening the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section of line integrated New England into NSW, to the advancement and prosperity of the ‘whole colony’. The Commissioner said railway rates and fares were set with consideration for the primary producers with the ultimate goal of economic stability ‘for the whole State’. The railway claimed it had been saddled with the problem of providing passenger services that were unprofitable for the benefit of the community generally (AE 22 October 1886; GIE 26 October 1886; Paddison 1955; TS 10 February 1972) – saddled referred to government making policy decisions to provide railway passenger services which the administrative agent had to account for.

Railway advertisements acknowledged the railway depended for its continuance and extension upon the receipt of adequate country support (GIE 23 March 1955). Support was to come via community use. Passenger fares and highly rated freight were particularly desirable to balance subsidising freight rates for transporting low value per unit primary produce.

Countrymindedness’s city parasitism of country drew on ecological concepts of population symbiosis, i.e., adversely affecting the New England host population by direct feeding though dependent on it (adapted from Odum 1971). Countrymindedness asserted the city lived well on the hospitality of New England (the chubby faced, fat jowled prosperous Sydney businessman in Figure 6.2), without making a useful or fitting return (adapted from MD 1995). However, the government–country relationship mediated by the railway could be better described as mutualistic dependency, i.e., benefiting growth and survival of both city and New England communities through mutual inter-dependence (adapted from Odum 1971). Government and New England sought individual and
collective well-being through mutual dependence (adapted from MD 1995; Molm 2003).

The SMH (18 January 1902) said railway proponents displayed ‘faith in the future of this land’. Railways were to prepare the way for the population of the future, which would make them pay on a much larger scale than initially. Railway administration told staff that the organisation’s success was closely wrapped up with success of primary industry. Administration advertised the railway as ‘The Goose that lays the Golden Eggs’ (GIE 23 March 1955). The golden eggs included assistance to: deserving individuals; community organisations; industry; and primary producers.

The railway gave to country communities more than just the provision of material transport. Railway advertisements proclaimed to country readers ‘Your Interests are Our Interests’ (GIE 25 February 1955). Railway corporate relations described the country–railway relationship as a mutually profitable partnership. The railway benefitting country would benefit itself and hence government in the city.

Railway commissioners rebuffed accusations of railway financial losses being ‘a burden on the state’, arguing that the railway was a government undertaking to provide a service to the state. New England communities asserted making railways was a duty of the state, the state having received revenue from New England economies. The SM said success of agriculture and railway almost entirely depend on success of the other. Railway administration said prosperity of both primary and manufacturing industries were mutually dependent, and both were dependent on the railway providing low cost, government subsidised transport. Railway administration acknowledged railway dependence on New England to their mutual advantage – an exchange relationship (DL 26 September 1991; Paddison 1955; RT February 1953; R&TS 22 September 1930; SM 27 September 1905; TI 13 March 1878). The relationship included exchanging non-identically valued items so went beyond economic exchange.

Railway business benefited from New England cultural resources. The railway brought trains with tourists to visit New England. Advertising the Northern Tablelands Express described the attractive natural and
agricultural scenery to be seen from the trains, to enhance passenger experiences. New England residents agreed, saying train travel allowed travellers to enjoy the local scenery. Railway advertising drew on country cultural icons. One advertisement showed a train driver and drover waving to each other over the caption: ‘“where the western drovers go ...”’, quoting directly from A.B. Patterson’s ‘Clancy of the Overflow’ (n.d.). Railway staff used the Guyra Show Ground for annual railway picnics (AE 8; 11 April 1960; AE 1 October 2003; 27; 30 January 1961; AR 1958; GA 16 January 1930; publicity flier n.d.).

Railway administration said the government–country relationship affected railway staff who had lost jobs, and other staff who had had their pay increases stopped so shared the burden of the bad times (R&TS 1 January 1903; 1 August 1904). The burden of drought was shared by railway staff, and not left to country communities alone.

Railway unions told railway staff, country NSW was the core Australian national character. Under a headline of ‘The Real Australia’, the union told readers that ‘Travelling between Moree and Narrabri is quite an experience for the city dweller. [Country is] the real Australia’ (Transport Officers’ Gazette March-April 1969). Expressing element 5 of countrymindedness, country, not city, characterised Australia.

Government and New England communities did not see the relationship as a restricted exchange, i.e., being limited to those two parties. Rather, both explicitly said that a railway to New England would benefit the larger colony as a whole. Both agreed the relationship included at least three parties: government; New England communities; and the larger colony of NSW, i.e., a generalised exchange (Ekeh 1974, p. 52). Railway mediation included activities directly expressing otherwise unexpressed relations between government, country communities, and nation (Williams 1976).

The railway and settling the land and state/national wealth were so intertwined that benefits of a railway could be expressed by both government and country communities as certainties, in statements of faith. In effect, the railway gift mediated (Williams 1976) a generalised government–country social exchange relationship, bringing agreement, peace, mutual and national growth, and social stability. The railway mediated the relationship through being a government agent in reality, and
as interpreted by New England communities looking through a countryminded lens. While involving clear government financial subsidy; there was general government–country agreement that railways benefitted overall economic and social activity. Railway mediation was not entirely impartial, because government owned the mediator. The relationship was more than economic or political; it involved a social exchange of symbolically powerful items.

The railway was more than just a physical link transporting primary produce, manufactured items, and people between New England communities, other country communities, and city. The railway took intermediary action bringing about agreement (Williams 1976) between government and country communities. The railway linked country community interests and city government interests with colonial/state/national interests.

**Conclusion**

Shared countryminded ideology formed a basis for country communities interpreting the railway, the meanings country communities attached to the railway.

In exchange for government giving country communities a railway, the communities used the railway to settle the land and develop national wealth through primary industry. Mutual dependency between state and country for achieving individual and shared goals remained constantly throughout the period under discussion. However the degree of dependence and flow of dependency changed. Within social exchange theory, government giving and country reciprocity were mutual exchanges which, though not necessarily expected to be simultaneous, through time yielded a pattern of reciprocal obligations for each party, effectively forming a social exchange relationship mediated by the railway. Anticipated benefits would be externalised across the larger NSW state and national societies. There had been no great change, through the line’s history, in the values of the gifts exchanged. The government–country social exchange relationship was in a long-lasting state of practical equilibrium or stable maintenance.
CHAPTER 6

Implicit Usage Became Explicit

Introduction

Chapter 5 argued that New England communities used the government railway to settle the land and develop national wealth, effectively establishing a social exchange relationship with government in the city.

This chapter examines the first evidence of New England countryminded framing of railway closure.

My argument in this chapter again focuses on New England, with reference to state wide activities including grain lines, and is structured around six points addressing each in turn. First, the railway remained as a
government agent, and railway power resided in Sydney. Second, implicit usage became explicit use. Third, government limited its railway giving and closed lines across the state including New England. Fourth, New England communities seemed to interpret railway closure through a countryminded lens. Fifth, the traditional government–country social exchange relationship became stressed. Sixth, country communities reacted.

**The Railway Remained a Government Agent**

Late in 1974, the Public Transport Commission (PTC) Regional Transport Manager told Armidale that passenger train services north of Armidale would be cut. A PTC spokesperson overrode that advice, telling Guyra that ‘No action could be taken until the proposals were put before the State Government’ (*GG* 10 July 1974; *UT* 30 January 1975). In January 1981, rumour again spread that government was considering permanently terminating passenger trains, this time at Tamworth. Press Secretary for the Minister for Transport, Peter Cox, repeated that ‘Nothing can happen, however, without Mr Cox giving his concurrence’ (*AE* 16 January 1981). Government ministers claimed sole responsibility for decisions about railway closure. Community representatives sought to talk about averting railway closure directly with government ministers and not the railway administration (*AE* 16 January 1981; 16 May 1984; 23 January; 14 February 1990). The railway remained effectively as, and was seen as, an agent of government.

**Railway Power Resided in Sydney**

Both the central meeting place for government and headquarters of its railway agent were physically located in the city of Sydney. New England communities referred to government as ‘Sydney-based politicians’ (*AE* 16 April 1992). Decision making power over the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section was based in Parliament House in Sydney. Physical separation of giver and receiver of the railway gift reinforced the railway’s role in mediating the relationship. New England communities complained about; but seemed to accept physical separation as a given.

Traditionally the railway’s organisational structure was departmental, based on function and centred in Head Office in Sydney; not
divisional based on geography and located in country areas. The 1924 Royal Commission into railway management recommended establishing positions of Area Commissioners to reduce the distance between the organisation and its customers and to position senior staff in closer contact with the public. They were to co-ordinate all work in their respective geographic areas, and plan development. Four Commissioners were appointed, but given no authority to co-ordinate inter-departmental work and minimal financial delegation. Railway administration complied with the letter, but not intent, of the recommendation. The administration abolished the positions in 1932 claiming the concept was unsuccessful, and established nine functional branches, headed in Sydney (Fay, Raven 1924; Garside 1940).

Fifty-six years later, regionalisation was tried again. Following a world-wide trend in the 1980s to reform railway administration towards divisional organisations, Booz-Allen & Hamilton (1989) recommended reorganising the railway administration based on geographic areas. Four regionally based management structures were again introduced. The railway announced to staff, that regionalisation marked the beginning of a better rail service – particularly for the state’s rural community. The plan was to decentralise decision making, giving the rural community much greater access to senior administrators to provide a faster, more responsive, service. Railway administration admitted power based in Sydney ‘had created a faceless bureaucracy’ (AR 1989; StateWide June 1989). However the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section was managed from Newcastle, which was still closer to Sydney than to New England. During 1996 further reorganisation replaced the geographic management structure with functional management again centralised in Sydney. By 2003 railway administrative power had resided in Sydney for 132 of its 148 year history.

Annual tours of inspection by Railway Commissioners gave New England communities direct access to the organisation’s chief administrator. Arriving in his plush carriage pulled as a special train visibly showed country communities the awesome power of the Sydney-based administration. Direct country–Commissioner dialogue sidelined local country railway staff. Having minimal delegation, local railway staff had to refer even minor matters to Sydney for determination (GIE 17; 20; 22 April 1959; Sharp 1997).
Hagarty (2005) described trains as travelling “Up” to the more important centre of Sydney, and “Down” to the less important country. So-called Sydney time was imposed across New England, regulated by telegram issued daily from Sydney station. Trains ran to a centrally organised timetable, more than local demand (General Appendix 1894; *NSW Government Gazette* 26 August 1891). New England communities said their geographic separation isolated them from Sydney-based power (AE 19; 24 November 1993). Railway Sydney-centricity was a fact of life. New England communities were involved in a continuing centre–peripheral power struggle with Sydney, involving more than railways, and saw railway decisions in light of such beliefs.

Without pre-existing large inland towns to connect to, the expanding railway network in NSW penetrated an inland hinterland creating a radiating fan of lines centred on Sydney. The Tamworth–Wallan-garra section was an outer extremity of one such line. Viewed from McMichael’s (1984) perspective of worldwide systems theory, Sydney itself was peripheral to power concentrated on the other side of the globe in Britain and Europe. New England was at the outer boundary of the antipodean hinterland. Change in railway gauge at the Queensland border tended to make the outer boundary fairly rigid, so maintained integrity of the NSW railway network mediating the transport of goods via Sydney (Smith 1960; 1963; Wotherspoon 1979).

The NSW economy could not afford the funds to build the railways that were wanted by country communities and by government. Building the New England line was funded in Britain to transport primary produce from New England to the export port of Sydney, and from Sydney thence to factories in Britain (Hendrick 1981). Henry Lawson noted insightfully in *The Roaring Days* (1889) that ‘The flaunting flag of progress is in the West unfurled, The mighty bush with iron rails is tethered to the world’. ‘Tethered’ carried meanings of Australia’s wild hinterland places, such as New England, being tied, through Sydney, to worldwide economic systems.

The *TR* characterised failure to locally advertise tenders to erect railway buildings in Wallan-garra, as ‘the chances of local men competing for the job are cleverly blocked again’ – implying a Sydney-centric conspiracy. The *GA* explained delay in constructing the Guyra–Dorrigo
railway (Appendix 2.1) was because ‘the city was right up against these lines’ (GA 18 April 1929; TR 3 October 1890). Sydney supposedly opposed the cross-country line because it would divert New England traffic to a port on the far north coast; rather than via Sydney. Not only was the power seen to physically reside in Sydney, the power was seen to make Sydney-centric decisions. New England communities suspected the railway’s centralised connective relationships benefited Sydney more than New England. Figure 6.2.

![Figure 6.2. 'The Centralisation Curse at a Glance'](image)

(New State Magazine, 7 June 1923)

The New State Magazine was published in Tamworth, so the cartoon depicted a particularly New England countryminded view of the country–railway–city–shipping–overseas trading relationships. One of the railway lines was drawn as descending from New England. All of the trains were heavily loaded with bales of wool and bags of wheat, moving from country to, and becoming concentrated in, Sydney. The Sydney man’s right hand...
was drawn as tightly clasped around the strings pulling the trains into Sydney – his action was deliberate. Ships were being towed past Coffs Harbour and Port Stephens, so-called ‘natural’ ports for New England. The chubby faced, fat jowled, elegantly dressed Sydney businessman was portrayed as prospering on trading country produce, i.e., parasitic. He smirked with success. The lean, long legged, brawny armed, gruff, scowling countryman appeared suspicious of the Sydney business interests. Sydney was the intermediary, mediating the country–market relationship. The railway had no control over itself (Sharp 1997) – it was a mere operating agent of city.

Gaining a railway had some negative local impacts. New England property owners along the route of the line had their land holdings dissected by a narrow fenced corridor. Stage coach operators and bullock teamsters lost business in the shift from dirt-track to rail-based transport. Demand for large hotels with stables and buggy houses slumped, forcing some to close. While the railway carried settlers to New England, the railway also carried country people away to live in cities. A Current Affairs Bulletin cover featured a dead straight railway track receding into the distance, as a powerful symbol of country population drifting to the cities (CAB January 1946; T&CJ 10 January 1906). Rabbits allegedly infested railway land which allegedly acted as a safe area for their breeding. Sparks from steam locomotives started bushfires. Trains occasionally killed livestock, sometimes in large number (AE 18 January 1961; GA 19 September 1929; T&CJ 10 January 1906). Primary produce, processed primary produce, and manufactured items could also be transported from Sydney via the railway to New England, so competed with New England industries. Within a few years of the railway being opened to Tenterfield, the Tenterfield community accepted that locally grown wheat could not compete with better quality flour railed in from Sydney and beyond. The Tenterfield and Armidale milling industries collapsed. Large breweries in capital cities utilised the expanding railway network to expand their markets. Beer was filtered, artificially carbonated, and pasteurised to allow for railway transport over long distances. The Armidale Brewery was constructed in 1881; but following opening of the railway in 1883, importing ale from places such as Sydney, Newcastle, and Maitland became much cheaper. The brewery could
not compete so closed down (Stubbs 1999; TS 1 February 1899; Wilson, 1994). Henry Lawson stated unequivocally in the Cherry Tree Inn (n.d.) that ‘the railroad hath ruined the Cherry-tree Inn’. In bypassing the inn’s existing location beside a road and speeding up passenger travel, the new railway diverted customers away from the inn leading to its economic ruin. Spread of the railway through the latter half of the nineteenth century had such an effect on imagery of the Australian bush, that within four decades, Lawson lamented in The Roaring Days (1889) that progress cost. A by-product of the railway was the romanticised bush would no longer be seen as the free space it previously had been. The railway carried some dis-benefits to country; but the benefits of having a railway outweighed the costs. One party suffering loss was consistent with social exchange relationship behaviour where it showed commitment to the other party.

New England communities needed an even more countryminded political party to manage the railway. If government would not build a New England–North Coast railway, New England communities would through their countryminded political party – the Country Party, Figure 6.3 (Geno & Urquhart 2001; Ward 1958).
Implicit Usage Became Explicit

Figure 6.3.
‘A Job for the Country Party:
Diverting the Railways to the Natural Sea Ports’

(AC 2 May 1923)

‘Natural’ in the cartoon caption positioned Sydney as an unnatural port, from a New England perspective. New England communities described Sydney as a port created artificially by and for Sydney-centric interests. The cartoon depicted New England people taking the initiative and doing the

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Ironically the cartoon does not make geographical sense. Any train loaded with New England wheat and wool would have to divert to the left, not to the right, off the mainline to Sydney if it were to travel generally eastward to a north coast port.
Implicit Usage Became Explicit

hard work of constructing the deviation. Railway staff were depicted as not interfering with the unauthorised deviation – implying countryminded local railway staff support. New England country communities maintained that New England interests should be served because the railway was justified for the external benefits accruing to the larger grouping of NSW/Australia; yet were suspicious of city motives.

Implicit Usage Became Explicit Use

As rail was the logical transport mode to use (NSW LA V&P 1870, Vol.2), government’s initial railway gift could implicitly anticipate country usage.

New England communities traditionally suspected the railway gift benefited Sydney more than country (Figure 6.2). However the cartoon can also be read as hinting at an explanation for New England community adverse reaction to, having received the government’s railway gift, feeling a government expectation to use the railway.

Over the latter half of the twentieth century, government behaviour towards New England community use of the railway changed from gentle encouragement to outright threat. Increasingly overt use of power changed the relationship from social towards economic exchange, from reciprocal towards negotiated exchange (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 1999).

In contrast, during 1983 a $5billion program for NSW roads was announced. NSW attracted further federal assistance through the Wage Pause Employment and Steel Regions Assistance programs. The guaranteed funding over a prolonged period allowed for improved planning, scheduling, coordination, and road construction. In 1986, the program Roads 2000 covered the whole state with its main focus being a huge maintenance catch-up in resheeting highways and replacing bridges in rural areas. From 1995-96 a ten year upgrade of the Pacific Highway was financed. A five-year $129million program to restore or replace 140 timber bridges was commenced in 1998 to meet the needs of road freight carriers. (NSW Road History, http://www.ozroads.com.au/NSW/history.htm, accessed 22/2/2013).

17 This was in contrast to Figure 6.2, which showed the New England countryman with both hands stuffed firmly in his pockets, signifying a personal resolve to do nothing about the curse. He was relying on government, as giver of the railway, to resolve the issue.
Killing the Golden Goose

Government promoted government–country mutual dependency (Molm 2003). During the 1950s railway advertising presented the railway as benefiting New England communities, government, and nation. Railway advertisements admonished New England communities for using non-railway modes of transport, likening such actions to the man who killed ‘The Goose that lays the Golden Eggs’. Users of railway services were described as ‘responsible members of the community’; implying through oppositional logic that non-users were irresponsible. In the changing ideological climate assistance rendered by the railway depended for its continuance on receiving adequate usage by New England communities. Railway advertising described those who travelled by, or consigned highly-rated freight, by other forms of transport when trains were available to give the required service, as acting ‘foolishly’ (GIE 23 March 1955). Government placed country users under an obligation to reciprocate through using the railway.

Railway advertisements headlined that ‘Your Interests are Our Interests’ and pleaded ‘We want your business’ (GIE 25 February 1955). Such apparently open and honest admissions suggested an administrative understanding that it was in a beneficial mutualistic exchange relationship with users; but opened the future to possible change. Implicit usage was becoming explicit.

To compete against trucking wool from northern NSW interstate to Brisbane in Queensland, the railway undertook to carry wool from farm to wool store in Sydney or Newcastle. But the agreement carried reciprocal obligations on the grower (Smith 1963). Once a grower forsook rail, the grower lost rights to claim railway rebates on transporting animals, animal products, and starving stock (Golledge 1961). Not using rail carried related costs. The Road Hauliers’ Association interpreted this as the railway threatening graziers into using rail transport (AE 23 January 1961; GIE 23 March 1955). In 1931, state government had imposed a tax on trucks operating in direct competition with the railway to protect its agent’s market. Forty years later, the TS bemoaned that with road tax to protect the railway against private road transport the railway made a profit on country
freight. A decade later the Minister for Transport Peter Cox still described local bus services as ‘unwarranted competition’ to the railway (*AE* 6 February 1981; *NSW Transport (Co-ordination) Act* 1931; *TS* 13 January 1972). Government reinterpreted the relationship as government giving country a railway and country should use it. However, New England communities interpreted the relationship as government should give country a railway irrespective of cost.

**State Crises and Poor Patronage**

State wealth became increasingly independent of country communities using the railway.

The frequency of New England public passenger train services was reduced during World War II. However newspaper discourse was about loss of individual passenger trains, while others would continue running (*TS* 27 April 1942). Temporary but vastly increased military rail traffic along the line masked the line’s changing status.

Withdrawing the amalgamated mail train to Glen Innes and Tenterfield and the Northern Tablelands Express train to Glen Innes during the 1974 fuel crisis, did not generate adverse newspaper comment. Self-sacrificially suffering necessary, but temporary, emergency measures for the greater good made countryminded sense. Country willingness to make sacrifices for government exemplified the long-term nature of their relationship. Cutting the passenger train services was presented to Glen Innes as suspending services; rather than complete withdrawal. However service re-introduction was to be reviewed in light of subsequent operating conditions. Guyra was told the PTC was transferring locomotives away from ‘poorly patronised’ freight and passenger services. The communities were told that the line was selected ‘because of poor patronage over a long period’. Train services were restored once the fuel crisis passed, so poor patronage must have been an acceptable operating condition to the administration (*GIE* 18 July; *SS* 21 August; *SMH*; *SS* 12 September 1974). On closure of the Black Mountain station in 1987, the SM remarked understatedly that ‘there never had been a great many passengers use the station’ (*GSC* 20 February 1987). Nevertheless the station had been kept open for 103 years.
Implicit Usage Became Explicit

Government accepted poor patronage over a long period as normal railway business exemplifying government countrymindedness, and reinforcing local community understanding that the railway was a government gift to them irrespective of local usage. Government did not use the temporary withdrawals to permanently withdraw New England train services. Government did not do anything to implicitly question a countryminded interpretation of the railway gift. Temporary losses were not framed by a rationalist idea prompting railway closure.

Progress
For government, progress no longer arose from providing passenger train services and especially not to small country communities (Figure 4.12).

One local resident decried closing the local Kentucky station ‘in the name of progress’ (AE 25 May 1984). She had been using the long-distance passenger trains, which stopped at minor stations, as a commuter service to visit larger communities along the line. Railway closure meant she would be socially isolated. Her reaction to the loss of a very real service seemed to be the first recorded instance of disruption to a previous railway practice framing railway closure in New England.

So-called progress was becoming associated with reducing government deficit and service rationalisation – a very different view to the railway and progress traditionally bringing wide-spread betterment (Figure 4.11).

Losing $3million a day
Government became unwilling to continue subsidising losses on individual lines, and overall state-wide railway losses. The New England line had been operated at a considerable loss for a long time (Appendix 4.2). However, during the 1970s-80s government increasingly proposed rising costs and low patronage as reasons for cutting country passenger rail services, especially on remote branch lines. Minister for Transport, Milton Morris, approved terminating the Brisbane Mail train at Tenterfield rather than at Wallan-garra to reduce losses on country passenger services (TS 31 January; 3 February 1972) – a minor cutback of only 18.328km. Closure seemed more symbolic than economically significant. Government, not just talked...
about, but actually tied passenger train provision to usage, cost, and loss (TS 13; 31 January 1972). Yet local reaction seemed mild, from newspaper reports.

Minister for Transport, Bruce Baird, advised cancelling of the New England night train because the State Rail Authority was losing more than $3 million a day. ‘A significant proportion of this loss is due to the costs of running under-patronised night train services’. Baird also claimed sole responsibility for withdrawing the passenger train service saying he simply must do something to contain the Authority’s growing $3 million a day operational losses. The railway retained its position of traditional government agency. Government claimed closure was an ‘inevitable’ (TS 17 October 1988) consequence of financial loss – a newly accepted criterion for government decision making, and big change in government interpreting the exchange.

Government presented its new economic decision making as ‘responsible government’. Member for the Northern Tablelands, Ray Chappell, justified railway service closure on the grounds of ‘the first priority of the government was to provide a viable and efficient public transport system’ (AE 4; GWN 5 July 1989). Government focussed on economic viability and apportioned blame for railway closure on under-usage by country communities.

**A Broader Economic View**

Traditional interpretation of a specific line benefiting the general network (Chapter 4); was reinterpreted to become the poor health of the general network impinging on the operation of individual lines.

On the closure of Black Mountain station in 1987, the railway Regional Inspector explained the closure on the basis of closing small uneconomic stations was a trend across the state (GSC 20 February 1987) – part observation, part rationalisation. Minister for Transport, Bruce Baird, argued society must take a broader economic view. The NSW tax-payer could no longer sustain the Authority’s loss. Assistant Minister for Transport, Tim Moore, argued for individual station closure to obtain overall required improvements. SRA CEO, Ross Sayers, expressed concern that future NSW taxpayers would have to contribute to the cost of providing
railway freight and country passenger operations over the next decade (*AE* 20 May 1981; *GIE* 18; *TS* 17 July; *WN* 6 April 1989). Railway closure presented as a radical inversion of the traditional externalisation cross-subsidy argument of what’s good for the railway was good for the state. Seen through a country-minded lens, there was little room for questioning the relative value of country provision towards the common good – railway closure made no sense.

Local resistance appeared in: articles and letters in local newspapers; University of New England (UNE) Student Representative Council protest to the Minister; local parliamentarian representations to the Minister; discussion at local meetings; community sponsored public awareness campaigns; and calling local meetings (*AE* 31 March; 4; 5; 11 July; *NDL* 5; *WN* 6 April 1989). Local community reaction was increasing.

**Commercialism**

Government imposed a new requirement of financial profitability, in the guise of commercialism, on individual lines. SRA CEO, Ross Sayers, acknowledged that rail was ‘ideal for transporting freight’, but told New England communities; ‘however, it must be an economic proposition’. Unlike reasons for constructing the Great Northern Railway (Chapter 4), government now required a direct economic return on investment, rather than the more indirect return via a network of social relationships resulting in the greater good. The railway’s common carrier obligation was removed in 1988, with legislation specifically stating ‘A State rail operator is not a common carrier’ so ending that form of the government gift. SRA announced freight services would continue to Glen Innes ‘on a commercial basis’ (s.90, *NSW TAA* 1988; *TS* 14 November 1988; *NDL* 14 July 1989). Requiring railway freight to be commercial, with implied financial profitability, indicated an ongoing change in the rationales for railway service provision. The railway was moving away from traditionally offering services through relying on government cross-subsidy. Government was withdrawing its offering from the exchange.

SRA Freight Business Manager, Stan Beevor, told the Glen Innes Chamber of Commerce that increased charges were ‘justified by increasing costs’. Customers sending more than 1,000t/year could negotiate charges for
it. SRA GM, Lucio Di Bartolomeo, defended rate increases on the grounds that hauling wool recovered less than half its running costs. He spoke of the railways’ ‘commercial charter’ (GIE 4 June 1981; SMH 14 July 1989). Basing charges on cost overturned traditional pricing rationales. Government was changing from traditional common-carrier freight rate pricing, towards an increasingly commercial approach.

Government would withdraw cross-subsidy of passenger rail. SRA CEO, David Hill, asserted sleeping passengers were “Hopelessly over-subsidised” [original emphasis] – connoting a degree of un-justifiability. Tim Moore told Armidale residents government was no longer prepared to support the enormous cost of operating country passenger services (AE 1 April 1981; 24 August 1989). Withdrawing cross-subsidy did not make countryminded sense. Government was telling New England communities, that giving them a railway was not worth the cost of the giving. Government was implicitly questioning the reciprocal value of what New England exchanged for the railway ‘gift’.

MP, Tim Moore, told Walcha residents that the SRA was to be made a ‘viable and commercially competitive organisation’. Traditionally the railway organisation was not required to be viable in itself. Viability might be a state-wide or national goal; but requiring viability of the individual service organisation was a change in railway justification. Commercial competitiveness reflected a change away from traditional government service provision. Moore went on to say rail freight services between Tamworth and Glen Innes would operate ‘according to traffic demand’ – reflecting a change from traditionally providing timetabled freight services on-offer irrespective of demand. At best it meant a change in train status from regular timetabled goods train, around which communities could organise their goods handling; to a conditional train, running only as required. At worst it meant: uncommercial demand = no train. Moore described closing the then extant goods facilities at Armidale and Glen Innes as ‘rationalisation’ (AE 16 May 1984; 24 August 1989; WN 6 April 1989). Insisting on railway financial viability shifted benefits of the railway gift from New England community recipients to the government giver.

Minister for Transport, Robert Webster, reiterated Tim Moore’s logic for closing the line north of Glen Innes as SRA endeavouring to
become a more viable and commercially competitive organisation – connoting a change in financial direction. Webster said freight would only be carried by rail north of Dumaresq if sufficient revenue was gained from the available freight ‘to cover all the unavoidable costs’ (AE 18 July; GIE 31 October; NDL 14 July 1989). Premier, Nick Greiner, told Armidale, that government would not go on running railway freight services if they ‘did not make commercial sense’ (AE 15 August 1989).

Railway staffing policy changed. Reducing country staff numbers contradicted traditional railway staffing practices, like overstaffing. SRA CEO, Ross Sayers, advised Armidale that closure was to reduce local staff, Table 6.1, so lower the organisation’s overall operating costs. The railway was diluting government presence in and staff contribution to New England communities. SRA General Manager, Fay Powell, announced that during the following few months a number of country station booking offices would be closed and ticket sales offered to local accredited travel agents (GIE 31 August 1989). While recognising the availability of satisfactory local skills and business capacity, government withdrew its on-going support for the railway gift.

Table 6.1.
Identified Staff Losses (1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Staff Losses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walcha Road</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uralla</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale Freight Centre</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes Freight Centre</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater (track staff)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(SMH 14 July 1989)

Sayers said rationalising the Armidale and Glen Innes goods sheds would lead to more efficient use of SRA resources (AE 4; GIE 14 July 1989). If New England communities would not use the railway as government expected, government would reduce the services being offered, so its side of the exchange. Receiving a government railway was becoming conditional on its own commercial success.
Government stopped marketing rail in New England. The local group Friends of the Northern Rail said the SRA was not prepared to advertise these train services, so the group would. Traditionally the railway had regularly advertised passenger and freight services in local newspapers. However, now government was deliberately discouraging New England communities from using the railway (AE 30 March 1960; 30 August 1989; GIE 25 February; 23 March 1955). New England communities filled the gap left by government withdrawal. In offering to market the railway, the local community group willingly complied with the new railway administrative act, but contradicted the legitimacy of the underlying thinking. The group showed willingness to make-do-and-mend city’s error, so supported running the railway according to what they saw as good business practice.

Railway administration euphemistically described 1988–1989 as a watershed year for the organisation, involving a new strategic direction, complete change in mission, organisation, management structure, and philosophy (AR 1989). Railway administration acknowledged increasing commercialisation was a change from traditional railway country minded actions, denying the value of the New England communities’ gift-in-exchange.

**Persistently Under-patronised**

Withdrawning the night train was based on ‘the costs of running under-patronised night rail services’. The Northern tablelands mail/passenger train was withdrawn ‘because not enough people used the trains’ (TS 17 October; 28 November 1988). Government expressed concern about underutilising the railway carrying capacity; not about the absolute fact of any usage.

In preparing for the arrival of the XPT, the Minister for Transport, Barrie Unsworth, warned New England ‘I hope that residents in the Armidale-Tenterfield area will take advantage of XPT services and increase their patronage’. He had figures that the average loading on trains beyond Armidale was twenty-five or less; while the XPT could carry about 300 passengers. Likewise the Minister for Transport, Bruce Baird, later said ‘only 14 people were using non-XPT services north of Tamworth’ (AE 16 May 1984; 18 July 1989).
On introducing the XPT, Unsworth complained about the relative values in having ‘a $10 million train taking one little old lady’ to Tenterfield (SS 29 April 1987). Less than three decades previously the railway had explicitly said carrying such light traffic in ‘little trains’ was the railway’s contribution to NSW prosperity and progress (Figure 4.12). Government values of the New England railway had inverted. Government questioned legitimacy of its own gift.

Apart from a small amount of superphosphate being carried to Uralla, freight traffic had ‘virtually disappeared’ from the line (RD December 1990). In August 1989, freight trains north of Uralla were reclassified and only operated on an ‘as required’ basis. New England under-utilisation was made responsible for government withdrawing train services. The communities were being made responsible for closure of their local railways.

**Use it; or Lose it**

Government tried to bargain explicitly with New England communities. To replace out-dated, wood bodied, locomotive-hauled, passenger rolling stock, government proposed introducing an XPT. While faster and more luxurious than previous passenger trains, the XPT would not stop at smaller New England stations. SRA spokesman, Pat Prendergast, said business transactions and traffic of the smaller stations would be studied to assess the need for stopping (AE 20 May 1981). Government would determine New England community’s need for the train to stop. Tying train stopping to volume of station business transactions was a change from traditional practice, when some long-distance passenger trains stopped at minor stations.

An *AE* headline blared ‘Warning: Use XPT’, followed by ‘New Englanders: A warning on the new XPT service – use it or lose it’. The *AE* editorialised the people of New England have been warned. Use the new XPT service or the service may be withdrawn – a hard hitting ultimatum. If New England communities didn’t increase patronage on the line, the Minister would consider reallocating this, then, modern train to other lines (*AE* 16 May 1984). New England’s traditional reciprocity was increasingly irrelevant to government. Government denied the value of what New
England offered back in exchange for a railway. Government tried to redefine the nature of the exchange to include actual usage.

Premier, Nick Greiner, told Armidale that government was ‘anxious to keep railway freight services going, however that will only happen if people use it’. The ‘service will have to be used by the community’ (AE 15 August 1989). Government’s railway gift had to be used materially, not just enjoyed subjectively. Government claimed the rational high moral ground, and blamed railway closure on country community lack of use.

The *GIE* offered New England communities a resolution to the apparent paradox of what railway closure actually meant saying the Minister for Transport, Bruce Baird’s pronouncement that while train services have been withdrawn, the Tamworth–Glen Innes section of line has not been officially closed was a ‘lingering death’. The railway was open; but as if already closed – alive; but as if already dead. Similarly the *TS* told New England communities that keeping the Warwick–Wallan-garra line, in Queensland, open was a six month stay of execution, likewise likening railway closure to death – postponed but certain (*GIE* 2 April 1992; *TS* 29 July 1993). Government saying a railway was open, while no trains were being run on the line (Figure 6.1), exploited subtle definitional differences. Ceasing to run trains on the line took functionality away from the railway. Unused railway infrastructure remained as an empty symbol, open for communities to re-fill with new meanings.

Reintroducing passenger services with an Xplorer train in 1993 was accompanied by an official warning that the train must be patronised to maintain the services (*AE* 24 November 1993). Government repeatedly told New England of its changed, and specific, requirements for reciprocal use under the exchange. In New England traditional implicit railway use had become explicit expectation of commercial usage. But commercial usage was not part of the traditional exchange relationship. Government was trying to renegotiate the relationship from a reciprocal exchange towards a negotiated exchange. Including commercialism threatened to move the relationship from social towards economic exchange. Government was changing the rules of relating.
Government Limited its Railway Giving

State-wide

Government limited its railway giving through limiting expansion of the network, closing lines, and closing stations. Between 1855 and 2003 the rates of railway line and station closures per year varied enormously; but formed a recognisable pattern.

Between 1855 and 1932, the period of major expansion, only six lines, totalling 113.71km, were closed, 1% of the then network, an average of only one line per thirteen years. Most closures and length of line closed were branch lines connecting mines with main lines (Appendix 6.1). These lines were closed after closure of a mine or relocation of mining facilities removed the line’s principal source of traffic. Only the general-carriage Westmead–Rogan’s Hill line (Appendix 2.1) was closed because of poor operating economics. Closure of that line was vocally resisted; but while communities wanted the railway to remain open, few were willing to use it (Irwin 2005; Singleton 1955).

Following onset of the Great Depression, work on constructing new lines slowed; though stopping construction took nearly three years to take effect. The commercially focussed Chief Commissioner, Mr Cleary, asserted that railways differed from a business in that the government had the final say in the laying down of lines, but the Commissioners had to carry the interest on those lines in their final statement of revenue and expenses (GA 20 February 1930; SMH 19 December 1929). After opening the Unanderra–Moss Vale line (Appendix 2.1) on 20 August 1932, length of the network plateaued until 1983 (Figure 4.4). Across the fifty year long plateau only 220.92km was added, an average of only 4.42km/year. The single 102.85km long Sandy Hollow–Ulan line (Appendix 2.1) opened in 1982, accounted for nearly half the increased length. No new line was constructed during many of the years.

Railway closures across the 1933–1983 plateau included cemetery, racecourse, and general carriage lines (Appendix 6.1). These closures did not follow closure of the principal sources of traffic which continued to trade after line closure. While use of motor transport increased dramatically, railway closure lagged significantly behind. Minor expansion of the railway network coupled with minimal line closure reflected a transitional period
while government re-evaluated its willingness to continue giving country railways. However railways were kept open largely independent of demand, reinforcing community understanding that the railway was a government gift independent of usage. Government manoeuvred to alter, but not destroy, the exchange relationship. Later railway closure would be a much more precipitous act.

Over the twenty year period between 1983 and 2003 only 62.78km of line was opened in NSW, an average of 3.14km/year. Four of the eight extensions were in Sydney, totalling 23.66km, 37.7%. Minor expansion of the railway network, focussed on the city, accompanied accelerating and significant line closure.

The length of the open network shrank notably over the decade following 1983, Figure 6.4. Density of lines was reduced from that in 1963 (Figure 4.5), to that in 1977, Figure 6.6. Line closure involved withdrawing passenger and freight train services, withdrawing significant parts of government’s railway gift, and threatening country’s ability to reciprocate usage in transporting settlers, primary produce, and manufactured items.
Prior to major line closures, many small but traditionally open country stations and unattended platforms had been closed to passenger traffic during the 1970s, peaking around 1974–1976, Figure 6.5. Geographic spread of open country passenger stations served by rail contracted. Open country passenger stations along lines which otherwise remained open for traffic thinned. However impacts of passenger station closure could be managed, in part, through government providing alternative road bus services. Despite having passenger stations closed, the lines remained open for freight. Trains continued to operate along the lines so the lines were still open. Symbolically, the lines did not appear to have been closed.

Figure 6.5.
NSW Stations Opened & Closed/Year: 1855–2003

(Forsyth 1993)
Along Grain Lines
The NSW railway network is divided up according to the type of rail traffic carried and class of line based on condition of the per-way. Grain lines, are commonly Class 4 or 5 lines, or referred to as ‘restricted lines’. They have the lowest quality of per-way and are restricted to supporting light axle loadings and slow speed travel (Graham 2004). Grain lines typically carry bulk grain from local town collection silos to mainlines for pickup and transport to port or domestic end user. NSW Farmers’ Association (2002) said the lines are ‘crucial to the grain supply chain’. The grain industry recognised rail as its primary logistical supplier (Kronos Corporate 2004).

Guaranteeing to reduce transport charges to grain growers, in 1986 SRA proposed suspending traffic on twenty-one low volume branch lines under its so-called Option 3. SRA offered wheat-growers a $30m deal on rail freight – cheaper transport for some growers in exchange for line closures. Railway administration claimed improved roads and trucks made maintaining a dense network of country grain-only lines unnecessary. Grain
transport was to be restructured (ARw February; N July, August, September 1987; SMH 3 December 1986).

Option 3 proposed closing multiple lines in a single bundle – introducing systematic closures into the government–country relationship. Government told grain-line communities they did not need the railway gift, and the giver knew that the recipient didn’t. Government was consciously analysing the relationship with country, introducing financial incentives, and potentially dividing the grain-growing community. Being closely analysed by the other party would bring suspicion into the relationship so weaken it (Lawler 2001). Expressing the gifts in monetary terms changed the nature of the exchange from social towards economic (Ekeh 1974, p. 56; Zafirovski 2005). Dividing the other party would undercut a shared sense of interdependent responsibility for maintaining the relationship (Lawler 2001).

Grain had traditionally been a major country contribution to the exchange relationship. Debate moved on to be about the very existence of operating railways. Government took about thirteen years to transition from closing individual passenger stations, along lines where the line remained open for freight and/or through passenger traffic (1974–76); to closing whole lines or sections of lines which peaked during 1987–89.

The number of open railway stations and length of open line shrank significantly during the 1974–1989 period; though legal closure ceased. Gunn (1989) suggested the David Hill era, 1980–86, changed the face of railway operations in NSW. By 2003 many grain and other lines and country stations had been closed across the state, Figure 6.7.
Railway closures through time and across the state yielded a consistent pattern expressing government economic rationality. The pattern of government actions was inconsistent with countryminded expectations of government support for country industries and communities. Individual railway closures were forming a recognisable pattern of unsatisfactory exchanges within the relationship.

**In New England**

Focussing on New England, the so-called trunk line failed to send out any branch lines. Infrastructure was removed from stations, and sections of the main trunk line were closed.

No section of the New England line was double tracked, or station developed as a junction. The trunk failed to develop a finely-branched pervasive root ball as according to Winsor’s (1935) metaphoric Tree of State. New England communities protested against building the Maitland–Grafton North Coast line (Appendix 2.1), primarily on the basis that it would practically annihilate any chance of constructing a Casino–
Tenterfield line (AE 19; TS 26; 29 September 1905). Work started on building a Guyra–Dorrigo line; but was stopped during the Great Depression (GA 20 February 1930). Only a few earthworks were completed. Work was not recommenced after the depression passed. There were limits on how much railway government would give to New England. The GIE (21 August 1934) editorialised recognition of government limitations ‘It seems safe enough now to forecast that it [the Grafton–Glen Innes line] never will be built’. However proposing to remove the Glen Innes Mail train service was greeted with a ‘storm of protest’ (GA 6; 27 February 1930). Taking away what had already been given appeared to stimulate stronger community response than just not building proposed lines.

Building new stations in New England ceased. Of the thirty-two stations eventually built, ten were built after the opening of their section of line. All stations were opened before opening of the North Coast Line in 1932. Kentucky South, opened in 1926, was the last new station to be opened. Only three station buildings were enlarged: a waiting room at Black Mountain in 1890; a refreshment room at Glen Innes c.1927; an out-of-room at Armidale c.1949 (Plans D96/50; EDMS CV0059731; CV0060498, RailCorp Plan Room). 91% of the station buildings were never extended. The original large and ornate timber station building at Kootingal was replaced in 1983 with a much smaller and quite austere brick waiting shed.

Fire destroyed the original 108ft x 22ft goods shed at Moonbi around 1910. The shed was replaced with a new 60ft x 16ft shed, providing 960ft² of covered floor area, which was less than half the original 2,376ft² of shedded area (Plan EDMS CV0241827, RailCorp Plan Room). After opening the North Coast Line in 1932, few items of goods or passenger handling infrastructure were added along the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section (Appendix 6.2). Of those that were many were service quality improvements, not increasing traffic capacity; or were installing crossing loops and re-signalling during World War II (Harper 1997). The original goods and passenger handling infrastructure proved adequate for, and later too large for, rail traffic as it actually developed, echoing a development-by-excess idea. After opening of the through North Coast Line, the Tamworth–Wallan-garra section of the original Great Northern Railway (GNR) downgraded from a trunk line to a sort of branch line. The GNR was
becoming an excessive gift with a transport capacity far in excess of the local community’s capability, or willingness, to use it fully.

Limiting giving and warnings became actual closures in New England. While there had been some infrastructure added to the line post-1932 (Appendix 6.2); additions were vastly outnumbered by infrastructure removals (Appendix 6.3). After the Second World War only fertiliser unloaders and abattoirs were added specifically to support primary industries (Appendix 4.3). Community usage was less than government’s designed railway capacity. Removal demonstrated government willingness to remove under-utilised railway infrastructure – taking back fragments of the gift.

During 1988 an SRA spokesperson claimed shortage of suitable rolling stock was the main reason the North Mail was to be withdrawn. SRA described its rolling stock as antiquated and long past its useful life; but the cost of replacing this stock could not be justified in terms of the low patronage the service attracted most of the year. Ultimately line closure was ascribed to the larger issue of SRA loosing more than $3 million a day (TS 17; 31 October 1988). Withdrawal and closure contradicted traditional railway financing of accepting losses on individual lines and services.

One hundred years after the line was opened to Wallan-garra, the last Up passenger train left Wallan-garra on 18 November 1988. By 1988-89, three passenger trains ran between Tamworth and Armidale per week. Each carried an average of only fifteen passengers. Only 500tons of freight was moving to and from Tenterfield annually, while there were four enginemen being paid for the one freight train a month (SMH 14 July 1989). The Glen Innes–Wallan-garra section was administratively (W.N. 45-1989), but not legally, closed to passenger and goods trains a year later on 26 October 1989.

What seemed to be the last Up passenger train from Armidale left on 10 February 1990 (AE 13; 14 February 1990). Notionally closing the Tamworth–Armidale section also closed the Armidale–Glen Innes section. However the Tamworth–Armidale section was reopened on 1 September 1993 (AE 1 September 1993), for a special passenger train to run to Glen Innes for a Bush Music Festival in October 1993 (GIE 5 October 1993). Its return Up trip on 4 October 1993 constituted the last passenger train to run
over the Glen Innes–Armidale section (Laidley 2002). As with gaining a rail link with the south had been seen as very significant (AE 9 February 1990), loss of the Tamworth–Armidale link seemed much more significant than closures of the link with communities further north. Closure with the south threatened the Armidale–Sydney connection. The line remained open for superphosphate traffic to Dumaresq, Figure 6.8; beyond which the track was operationally though not legally closed, Figure 6.9.

Figure 6.8.
Primary Industry Support Infrastructure

Bulk Superphosphate receiving shed, with its now unused and backfilled unloading pit, in the Dumaresq railway station goods yard. Looking in the Up direction south towards Armidale. Passenger station building on the right, January 2006 (J. Longworth)
Individual closures formed a larger pattern. Member for Northern Tablelands, Ray Chappell, claimed that withdrawing the night train service from Tenterfield indicated ‘the State Rail Authority was determined to cut all rail services north of Tamworth’. Responding to rumours of closing Armidale and Guyra stations, writers reiterated histories of local station closures. ‘The history of activity in Tenterfield has been one of winding down and closing operations’ (AE 31 March; 11 July; GIE 1 March 1989; TS 17 October; 1 December 1988). Individual railway closures were forming a recognisable pattern of unsatisfactory exchanges within the relationship.

**New England Seemed to Interpret Railway Closure Through a Countryminded Lens**

New England communities seemed to use a countryminded lens to interpret local closures (Appendix 6.4). This will be examined under each element of Aitkin’s (1985) countrymindedness.
Threatening National Wealth

Railway closure countered a history of giving railways for country and state-wide betterment. Spokesperson for the Werris Creek Rail and Rural Committee said railway closure was ‘not in [the] long term interest of the state’. The SMH reported ‘saddened townsfolk doubted whether the closure of another rail service advanced the state of the nation’ (AE 26 July 1989; SMH 23 October 1989). Rhetorical phrasing implied railway closure did not, and added emphasis. Local closure threatened to produce generalised external losses.

Focussing on the local, a resident forecast railway closure would ‘set New England back 112 years’. The General Manager New England Electricity said closure ‘will represent a major catastrophe for this region and will certainly prejudice the future potential for the development of Armidale’. Friends of the Northern Railway said railway closure was ‘not for the better’. The AE headlined a ‘sad day’ and ‘end of an era’ for Armidale (AE 26 July 1989; 9; 14 February 1990; NDL 10 August 1989).

University of New England Student Representative Council (UNE SRC) President, Peter Ellston, claimed ‘that the viability of the Armidale economy was dependent on the region’s transport infrastructure’ (AE 31 March 1989). Including rail in the local transport infrastructure normalised the existing railway and, unlike government, communities refused to separate railway infrastructure from train services. New England continued to frame an operating railway as providing benefits beyond just material transport.

Degrading Primary Industry

Rare references to primary industry included that railway closure ‘offered no joy to the hard strapped farmers of the Glen Innes district who will just have to bear the brunt of increased freight charges for superphosphate.’ Potential railing of lime, from Attunga to Glen Innes, for graziers to use as a soil conditioner would also be prevented (GIE 2 April 1992; NDL 30 December 1991). Railway closure degraded the position of primary industry. New England’s primary focus was on passenger transport. Neither degrading passenger transport nor primary industry made countryminded
sense. Referencing primary industry was rare in New England discourse, tacitly acknowledging the community’s not using the line for freight.

**Demonstrating Country Morality**

The *AE* (9 February 1990) editorialised that local rail preservation campaigners ‘have fought a good, honest and clean fight for something they believe this community deserves.’ New England communities were also fighting to have the proposed Eastern Seaboard National Rail Link, a new north-south inland railway, routed along the line of the existing New England railway. The *AE* (6 April 1992) editorialised the proposed line ‘is a case of greater benefit for everyone – not just the people of northern NSW. ..., all Australians will, or at least should benefit.’ Fighting for a belief, rather than material or economic advantage; for community deservedness; and for externalised nation-wide, rather than individual betterment, added moral force to their actions. Thinking was consistent with the moral elements of countrymindedness and an exchange interpretation.

**Demonstrating City Nastiness**

The *TS* asserted that curtailing New England passenger services was ‘Playing Games with passenger rail services’ across country NSW (*AE* 30 March; *TS* 27 March 1981). Government was seen to be treating railway closure flippantly.

Allegedly ‘higher authorities in the SRA used tactics to turn people against using the trains.’ New England-based railway staff felt head office staff intimidated them into taking no action against railway closure (*TS* 31 October; 28 November 1988; 18 August 1989). Local railway staff sought clarification on rumours of closure and initiated a freight survey (*AE* 31 March; 18 August; *NDL* 5 April 1989). A central–peripheral power struggle within the railway organisation became publicly visible.

President of the Armidale Chamber of Commerce accused SRA of ‘cooking’ the books to ensure that there are poor loading figures for Armidale.’ Another Armidale resident alleged ‘SRA management has a clear mission to reduce services to the Northern Tablelands to the extent that the service becomes unattractive’ to potential users. The writer described the SRA action as a ‘conspiracy perpetrated by the SRA management.’ Another
writer said government and SRA ‘have always used the worst-case example’. An Australian Railway Union organiser claimed ‘passenger figures had been considerably higher than indicated by the SRA’ (AE 11; 18 July; 15; 24 November 1989).

Dumaresq Shire Clerk Peter Straw said ‘We believe that this [service withdrawal] is discriminatory and quite unjust’, and ‘[denied] the people north of Tamworth the right to a fully operational passenger train service’. Closure was depicted as ‘vandalism’ being directed towards its public services.’ The AE editorialised about a critical Sydney TV report ‘as an insult to every member of the Armidale community. Worse, it was an indirect slur on any rural group which bands together to fight for a service.’ Locals described retaining the Armidale station Booking Office just for selling tickets, though no trains or coaches would stop at or near the station, ‘as a farce and an insult’ to the community. The AE headlined changes to the railway service as a ‘Raw deal for country train travellers’ connoting harsh or unfair dealing by government (AE 19 January; 2; 13 February 1990; 13 February 1991). President of the UNE SRC Kirsty Arnold said reducing train services ‘would be criminal’ (AE 30 March 1981).

A writer asked ‘would it be too impolite to seek the truth’ from the Greiner government, questioning the veracity of government. The AE editorialised the Minister omitting to tell the community certain information was ‘a deliberate omission.’ Saying that ‘The government has so far kept its promise’ implied government would likely break its promise to return train services to Armidale (AE 10 January 1990; 19 February 1991).

In a meeting in Sydney, SRA told organisers of the Australian Bush Music Festival in Glen Innes that the Armidale–Glen Innes track was out of use and unsafe so could not carry a passenger train. SRA then offered to allow an empty train to travel along the line while its passengers travelled in a parallel bus service. Finally the train arrived including passengers on 2 October 1993 (GIE 21 January; 2 February; 5 October 1993), inverting the original advice. These festivals were promoted to reacquaint attendees ‘with Australia’s musical and bush heritage’ (GIE 1 October 1991) claiming a generalised national value derived from a partly-distanced country past. SRA working against such iconic countryminded goals presented Sydney-based railway administration as anti-country and therefore anti-Australian.
Communities said reducing train services so discouraging country settlement, had an immoral dimension perpetrated against New England. New England communities attributed railway closure to characteristic city nastiness. Perceived government nastiness towards country threatened to diminish country trust so threaten the government–country relationship.

**Taming Civilisation**

Railway closure minimised railway maintenance, allowing natural forces to take over control over the railway infrastructure. Railway closure facilitated the natural environment taming much New England railway infrastructure, Figure 6.10, which specifically became seen as ‘an overgrown train track’ (*GIE* 5 December 1989). The original symbolism of the railway taming the environment through the imposition of built engineering and architectural forms (Figures 4.8; 4.9) was being visibly inverted.

![Environmental Taming of the Railway](image)

*Overgrown remains of the disused brick-faced platform and track at Sandy Flat, looking north in the Down direction towards Wallan-garra, illustrated nature taming what had once been seen as the civilising railway, 29 September 2001 (N. Johnston)*

Railway closure led to railway infrastructure decaying. An Armidale resident described closed stations, as depicted in newspaper photographs, as ‘derelict’. She asked rhetorically ‘Will the [Armidale] station be allowed to
decay until it was an eyesore, the platform covered in weeds, the timber rotted, the paint hanging off, and the whole place a home to vermin?’ The *SMH* illustrated an article on the last train to leave Tenterfield station, with a ground level photograph emphasising rampant weed growth across the railway track (*AE* 11 July; *SMH* 23 October 1989). Weeds can signify cultural meaning through categorising one life-form as useless and irritating, in comparison to other life-forms deemed beautiful, desirable, and worthwhile. Weeds connoted a breakdown, either a failure or refusal to fight the perfunctory battle against entropy. Weeds overgrowing a cultural construction, such as railway infrastructure, signified hopeless abandon to the forces of nature. From a perspective of traditional farmer aesthetics of tidiness and cultivation, rampant weed growth signified lack of human control over the ecosystem, carelessness, laziness, and neglect (Egoz, Bowring, Perkins 2001). Decay and rot, resulting from lack of protective maintenance work, signified lack of human stewardship of resources contradicting the designed intent for the structure. Dereliction and paint hanging off cultural railway constructions signified lack of social pride or care about complying with traditional farming cultural norms of neatness (Nassauer 1988). Vermin signified sickness and trouble. Without ongoing maintenance work the natural environment would not be kept tamed, so environmental forces would overpower the traditional civilising railway. Railway closure would produce visible damage to civilisation that had tamed the natural New England environment (Chapter 4).

Within a year of closing Armidale railway station on 11 February 1990, the station had allegedly become a mess. The community organised to ‘clean-up’ and for ‘tidying up’ the station area – re-establishing civilised orderliness. Locals took rubbish to the tip. New England communities assumed local assets should be productive and symbolically look cared for. One writer said he was ‘outraged’ and ‘disgusted’ at a ‘weed-overrun’, ‘derelict’, and ‘neglect[ed]’ building in the station yard. The buildings were described as ‘a valuable public asset’ (*AE* 6; 12 February 1991; 16 April 1992) – valuable to the wider public than just the government owner. Sufficient people and resources were rallied for the work to be described as ‘successful’. Government no longer maintained the gift on its side of the exchange relationship. Irrespective of proprietary ownership, New England
Implicit Usage Became Explicit

communities would perform work traditionally undertaken by the government agent – redistributing costs and benefits within the relationship. Even if the station wasn’t being operated in association with an open railway, it retained its local symbolic importance (Cohen 1989).

Discouraging New England Settlement

Government withdrew support, which had been provided through the railway service, for New England settlements. The Australian Museum’s What on Earth display train, which had been touring country towns including Guyra and Uralla was withdrawn in 1988. Coordinator Sally Stevens described benefit of the train in terms of the education of country ‘kids who don’t get to see this sort of thing’ (DM 26 December 1988). The GIE claimed closing the line prevented the Christmas Santa train from visiting town. Reaction was expressed in terms of ‘depriving our children’, ‘who so often miss out on the grand-scale Christmas attractions that occur in the city.’ Friends of the Northern Rail doubted that government was ‘serious about looking after country people as well as those in the city’ (AE 11 July 1989; GIE 5 December 1989). Government through its railway agent seemed to reduce New England children’s access to educational resources and cultural celebrations.

The TS described the last train as the train service ‘dying’. Closing the station ‘seemed to indicate a final nail in the coffin’. Another nail driven through the lid of the coffin would reinforce the existing nails holding the coffin lid firmly closed, so make any future service resurrection harder so less likely. Related losses were identified as losing six part-time government paid railway jobs with consequential loss of $5,000-$10,000/month income to the town economy, and relocating other train crewing jobs from Tenterfield to Tamworth (TS 24; 28 November; 1 December 1988).

The AE repeatedly published photos of a coffin being loaded onto the last train to leave Armidale (13 February 1990; 6 February 1991; 19 November 1993), so keeping the symbolism of death current. Closed stations would become ‘ghost station[s]’ (AE 11 July 1989). Symbolism of death would later be widened to railway closure killing whole country communities. Death added another layer of symbolism to railway closure, a layer likely to invoke strong subjective reaction. The culturally powerful
coffin metaphor would appear regularly in association with railway closures.

Community representatives and groups called for government to undertake environmental impact assessment of service withdrawal (AE 19 January 1990; GIE 24 October 1989) focussing on social impacts and road trauma. Assessment would have shown that government was considering impacts of withdrawing its side of the exchange. New England’s request was not granted. Government not even considering the impacts of railway closure on country communities constructed a message that government didn’t value its partner’s concerns. Government appeared to lack affective regard (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a) for New England communities.

Railway closure would reduce personal mobility in New England. Fear of road accidents would deter potential bus passengers. Coaches were seen to be less comfortable and take longer for the same journey (AE 25; GIE 24 October; 5 December 1989). ‘People have commented that the roads in this region will be ‘no go zones after dark’ because of the increased heavy vehicles’ (AE 5 July 1989). Loss of perceived personal mobility threatened to reduce attractiveness of the area to settlers.

**Demonstrating City Power**

The ultimate decision on railway closure resided with the government party in the city. Dumaresq Shire Clerk, Peter Straw, organised signatures on an open letter to the Minister for Transport, Bruce Baird, to keep the Tamworth–Armidale line open. Mayor of Armidale, Rosemary Leitch, wrote to the Premier, Nick Greiner, urging government to reconsider railway closure to Armidale (AE 19 January; 14 February 1990). Community reaction to railway closure had risen to the level of institutional responses, with local government willing to take a public lead in arguing against state government policy. Community leaders saw railway closure as a decision for government. Government, comprising both elected members of parliament and its railway agent was seen as a unit, a single party on the giver side of the relationship.

New England communities said geographic distance translated into social, political, economic, and cultural powerlessness. Being a long way from power in Sydney, the *TS* (24 April 1972) wrote ‘the people of
Tenterfield are in hopes(sic) that their remoteness to Sydney would be no bar to receiving railway facilities equal to those enjoyed by the neighbouring [but closer to Sydney] towns of Glen Innes and Armidale’. The AE headlined Guyra Shire Council Councillor, Joe George, saying ‘To them [government in Sydney] we’re just another dot on the map’. After the Minister for Police and Emergency Services visited Walcha Road station, Shire President, Dick Jane, reflected ‘that he felt sure the Minister [now] appreciated more fully the problems confronting residents in isolated areas brought about by the closure of government facilities’ (AE 11July 1989; WN 6 April 1989). Distance blinded, or at least blinkered, Sydney-based power, diminishing from a concentration in the Sydney centre out towards peripheral country. Despite the railway mythically taming the tyranny of distance (Blainey 2001); country still said distance was tyrannical over it accessing power. Railway closure deepened countryminded perception of city power.

The railway seemed inflexible towards country communities. Council’s Development Coordinator, Colin Crigg, suggested ‘the State Rail Authority could be more flexible and provide an alternative’ bus service.18 ‘[M]any local people are disadvantaged by government restrictions’, because normal scheduled railway services couldn’t vary quickly in response to fluctuating local demand. Premature commitments to a centrally fixed train timetable drove train services; rather than providing more generalised transport including use of coaches. The railway seemed unable to differentiate between it providing a specific transport service and a more general community need for country mobility. Professor Gregson, UNE Department of Psychology, asserted the need for ‘initiatives from rail management which we have never yet seen’. A resident wrote that this government ‘is not visionary’ (AE 6 February 1981; 24 January; 14 February 1990). Looking through country’s lens, the railway administration seemed overly mindful of its central requirements rather than country needs.

Reusing the Glen Innes Railway Refreshment Rooms was said to make good use of an otherwise unused facility (GIE 18 July 1989). Using, maintaining, improving the extant railway infrastructure seemed the

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18 The ‘alternative’ bus service was to be in addition to, not replacement for, the train service. It was not a possible benefit flowing from railway closure.
practical thing to do, advocating a make-do-and-mend philosophy. Practicality appeared as a defining characteristic of the typical Australian (Ward 1958), and can be identified with interpretations of rurality (Walton 1991). Likewise farmers perceived of themselves as practical people in distinguishing themselves from impractical city others (Geno & Urquhart 2001). Railway closure seemed impractical.

President of the Armidale Chamber of Commerce David Redwood described one train/bus timetable as ‘the height of bureaucratic stupidity’. Withdrawing the XPT service was ‘this government’s penny pinching stupidity’. Another resident described bussing as a ‘Gilbertian’ and ‘harebrained scheme’. Gilbertian referred to absurd, topsy-turvy situations as portrayed in Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas. Harebrained referred to the culturally established image of irrationality of the hare – railway closure seemed wrong-minded. The ‘government is failing to fix the problem instead they want to cut it off’ – suggesting government simplistic thinking. Glen Innes townsfolk described railway closure as: ‘blatant irrationality’; ‘bloody stupid’; ‘ridiculous’; ‘government bungling’; and ‘the government is really turning weird’ (AE 11 July 1989; 10 January; 13 February 1990; GIE 5 December 1989). Government seemed mindlessly simplistic, lacking thought, initiative, or creativity – the first recorded instances of mindlessness framing railway closure in New England. Reframing was part of the government–country relationship breakdown process.

Some aspects of railway closure introduced a radically different exercise of power by one party within the relationship. New England communities retained traditional country-minded meaning associated with the railway. On closure of Black Mountain station in 1987 a local penned a poem titled The Deserted Railway Station. Two verses went: ‘With city rail upgraded, made flashier by the day; The railways in the country, slowly fade away’ (G&DHSJ 20 November 1993). Locals made sense of railway closure in terms of city power and country neglect. Railway closure confirmed city power.

Government and New England communities looked at the operating railway and issue of railway closure through increasingly different lenses. Government looked through an increasing importance of reducing financial loss on that individual line. Government was taking rural settlement and
primary production out of the relationship. New England reciprocity was no longer of sufficient value for government to want to continue giving New England a railway. New England communities looked through a more traditional countryminded lens, having not left countrymindedness in the increasingly distant past as Aitkin (1985; 2005) suggested they had. Government and country communities no longer held a shared vision (Cohen 1989) of the values attached to the traditional railway.

Railway closure seemed to discourage settlement and threaten national wealth so didn’t make countryminded sense. Railway closure seemed consistent with countrymindedness’s assessment of city. No evidence emerged during this research of New England communities having fresh thoughts about countrymindedness during the 1980s-1990s.

**Railway Closure Stressed the Relationship**

Railway closure took place within the exchange relationship, which for New England communities was still extant.

Government and New England community valuation of the railway differed. Government, as the benefactor, oriented its attention towards, what was to it, the most salient property of its giving – the considerable financial cost government was incurring. Government egocentricity saw its act of giving as especially valuable. Government expected a comparable reciprocity from New England. However recipient New England communities saw the most salient property, as the value of the railway to them, not just in material and economic terms; but including symbolic terms – the benefit they received. New England communities had expectations of what sort of railway service government should give to them. Community egocentricity saw the act of receiving as historically and culturally determined. A problem arose from government giving what it saw as a costly gift that seemed to be little materially or economically valued by the New England communities. More preferable alternative transport modes had become available to the communities. Government perceived the railway gift increasingly differently to the recipient communities (Zhang & Epley 2009). To government the exchange was becoming increasingly inequitable.

Government was changing its expected terms of reciprocity. Government expressing its expectations of country use of the railway in
monetary terms pressured the relationship to move from reciprocal exchange towards economic exchange. Government’s increasing explicitness in its expectations of negotiating country reciprocity pressured the relationship to move from reciprocal towards negotiated exchange (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 1999).

Government tried to get New England communities to adopt the government perspective; but failed. The AE (30 March 1981) headlined ‘Any reduction in the rail services to the north and north-west of New South Wales would be a mistake on the Government’s behalf’. Government’s ‘mistake’ carried an implied threat of community reaction being exercised within the relationship.

New England communities increasingly associated the railway with the past. The GIE headlined nostalgically the railway was ‘A relic of the past’, and the ‘Railway Refreshment Rooms keep alive a slower bygone era’ (GIE 18 July 1989) implying an acknowledgement that railways were of much reduced functional significance into the 1980s. The writer could not see anything coming from the exchange relationship to be better than the traditional railway. Saying the railway was worth keeping, irrespective of being a relic mixed reality and symbolism. Country’s countryminded expectation of government giving country a railway was largely independent of country’s perceived obligation on itself to use the railway. A mythologised past relationship retained some appeal, and implied the then current closed railway did not meet local expectations of government giving or reciprocity for New England giving to government.

Introducing the XPT was often tied to political electioneering, e.g., headlines: ‘Election and here Comes the XPT’; ‘Election takes Spotlight: XPT Trial’ (AE 5; 12 March 1984). The train would come from government; but country suspected government motivation was more about gaining votes than honouring its exchange relationship. The suspicion was confirmed by government’s associated threat of withdrawing the train if it was not used (AE 16 May 1984). Government’s gift had changed to carry explicit political obligations as well as reciprocal usage.

The AE editorialised ‘country is playing second fiddle to city areas’ (14 January 1983). Likewise a New England writer alleged ‘the people of rural NSW are considered as second class citizens and are only there to
serve the cities’ (GWN 19 July 1989) – revealing a perceived power imbalance and hierarchy, within the relationship.

Guyra Shire Councillor, Reid, said ‘I believe it is up to both farmers and businesses to use the freight service or it will be lost’ (AE 11 July 1989). Some community leaders publicly acknowledged the relationship and country’s reciprocal obligations; but did not seem to stimulate any publicly recorded increased usage.

New England’s persistent underutilising of the railway’s potential carrying capacity failed to meet government’s expectation of country reciprocity. Government threatening to, then actually, closing the railway failed to meet New England’s expectation of government reciprocity. The government–country relationship was being stressed, by both parties.

**New England Communities Reacted**

New England communities reacted to government closing sections of the New England railway. Reaction became increasingly emotional, resulted in mobilisation, and was communal.

When the Glen Innes–Wallan-garra section was closed in 1988, locals merely looked-on, reminisced, sold tea and light snacks, and took photographs to record history. Reaction was presented primarily as a loss to ‘train enthusiast[s]’ and ‘sentimentalists’. Local newspapers headlined closure as a ‘Sign Of The Times’, and waxed that ‘time had run out’ for the railway (TS 24; 28 November; 1 December 1988). Traditionally the railway seemingly controlled time through legally imposed standard railway time, accurate clocks, and precise timetables. Now the passing of time controlled the railway. Communities reacted to that railway closure acceptingly, fatalistically, and mildly.

Less than a year later, announcement of the intention to terminate passenger rail at Tamworth (SMH 14; AE; GIE 18 July 1989) stimulated extensive and long lasting local media coverage. 1,500-2,000 signatures were attached to a petition calling to retain the service. A ‘swarm of angry protestors’ confronted the Premier on his visit (NDL 10 August 1989). A local pro-railway group started advertising that the train service was still running, distributed 10,000 leaflets to homes, and called a public meeting on the matter (AE 30 August; 17 November 1989). Departure of what was
reputedly the last Up train to leave Armidale was surrounded by a crowd of protestors, estimated at 1,500 people. People spread across the tracks waving placards. A coffin, with ‘NORTHERN RAILWAY – R.I.P. BORN 1883 – KILLED BY NATS & LIBS 1990 – LET US NOT FORGET’ sign-written onto its lid, was loaded into the cab of the locomotive (AE 13; 14 February 1990). Unlike the 1988 closure of the line to Wallan-garra north of Armidale; the 1989 closure was of the line that connected Armidale with Sydney.

Guyra Shire Councillor, Selby Dean, agreed with government that ‘if the service isn’t patronised you can’t justify the millions of dollars lost every day’. The AE editorialised ‘Based purely on the balance sheet it [withdrawing the Armidale XPT] is probably a reasonable decision to make’ (AE 11; 18 July 1989). Some local community representatives conceded government’s view, showing that railway closure was a wide open text for local meaning making.

Symbolism of the loss of the railway connection with Sydney had a far greater effect on community-level responses. Communities reacted emotionally, mobilised resources, and acted communally in applying pooled resources to a common goal of having the line reopened. Communities voiced objection, implemented embarrassing forms of political protest, and took what Barnett & Barnett (2003) described as illegal action. Community reaction, rather uncharacteristically (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 1999), exercised visible power within the exchange relationship. Railway closure sparked increasingly strong community reaction.

Actual railway closure was a significant marker in local history. Many said or wrote that railway closure ‘marked the end of an era’ or similar (AE 9 February 1990; TS 24 November 1988; WN 24 August 1989). ‘Era’ and ‘marked’, or ‘heralded’ elevated a specific railway closure event into a symbolic cultural form with relevance to the history of wider government–country relationships. Traditional social contingencies surrounding the exchange, which had been experienced during the many years of relatively stable interaction, had been altered.
Emotionally

Railway closure transcended the material and economic values of the mode of transport to become an emotional issue, as portrayed in the local newspapers at least. Headlines blared: ‘Rail catastrophe’; a ‘Gloomy future for passenger rail services’; ‘Sad loss of rail services’; ‘Rail ‘vandalism’ has Minister steaming’; a ‘Sad day’ (AE 26 July; 15 August; 30 October 1989; 9 February 1990; WN 24 August 1989). Railway closure was repeatedly framed in emotive language.

Locals behaved emotionally. Dumaresq Shire Council made a final ‘plea’ on rail services. Writers described New England collective action as ‘a swarm of angry protestors’ and ‘an emotional protest’. The AE headlined ‘Rail rally ‘sad, angry and defiant’’ (AE 19; 31 January; 13 February 1990; NDL 10 August 1989). A year later the paper editorialised ‘The people of the Tablelands were disappointed, displeased and disgusted’. Closure brought ‘tears to the eyes’, ‘anger’, and ‘despair’ (AE 19 February 1991; 1 September 1993). Community reaction was consistently described in language which used emotional terms. Graphic design techniques of bolding, underlining, full capitalisation, italicisation, and quotation marks added force to the recorded emoting.

Newspapers depicted railway closure in symbolic language. The TS headlined closing Tenterfield station as ‘Train Axed After Almost 100 Years’, and the AE headlined closing Armidale station as ‘Railway Station ‘Faces the Axe’’. The metaphor of axing was also applied to railway closure in Sydney newspapers ‘11 country rail lines face axe’, ‘Train services chopped: 34 lines come under the axe’, as happened in Britain.19 Closure was described as ‘chopping them out’, and ‘savage cuts to the railway system’ (AE 31 March 1989; 14 February 1990; 1 September 1993; SMH 3 June; 12 September 1974; TS 28 November 1988). Winsor’s (1935) metaphoric Tree of State remained powerfully symbolic. Axing connoted roughly cutting through a limb or trunk of a tree. Cutting severed the connectivity of phloem and xylem vessels, weakened the structural integrity of the trunk as a column, and destroyed the physiological mutualism of roots.

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19 The British Government proposed (British Railways Board 1963) to close thousands of miles of little used and unprofitable lines, among many other measures to save cost. Hugely controversial, resulting in an outcry from communities that would lose rail services, the program was colloquially known likewise as ‘Beeching’s axe’ after the report’s author Dr. Beeching (Gourvish 1986, p. 324; Jones 2011; Loft 2006, p. 1).
and tree crown. Referring to closure, of the connection with Sydney, as ‘axing’ drew up strong unpleasant visual imagery, and connoted an asymmetric power relationship between the government axe-wielding logger and country railway tree. Negative emotional reactions would inhibit perceived cohesion, commitment, and solidarity in the relationship (Lawler 2001).

**Mobilising**

New England communities had a long tradition of mobilising over railway matters. They had started mobilising to get a railway during the 1860s (Harman 1970), successfully gaining the Great Northern Railway. Failure to obtain a rail link to the north coast gave much impetus to the separatist New State Movement (Ferry et al. 2001), through which New England communities gained further experience in mobilising.

During the 1960s New England communities started mobilising to conserve historic railway symbols. Recalling the importance of the railway to the history of Armidale, the Folk Museum Committee twice tried to obtain an old steam locomotive for static display. The community marked the first anniversary of the last passenger train to leave Armidale station with a work-in to clean up the Armidale station and yard (AE 26 August 1964; 6; 12 February 1991). Many Tamworth–Wallan-garra communities successfully mobilised to conserve disused railway assets (Appendix 6.5) – the highest density/km in NSW (SRA Heritage Officer, Dr. S. Sharp, 2006, personal discussion). Railway administration would deal only with constituted entities, not individuals, so each instance evidenced a mobilised community group. Local railway staff mobilised to create the Armidale Bicentennial Railway Museum (*StateWide* 5(4) July 1986).

Local history museums feature railway artefacts and photographs in their displays. Local railway items are listed on state and local cultural heritage registers (Appendix 5.2). Local histories (e.g.: AD&HS 1977; Farrell 1998; Ferry 1999; Ferry et al. 2001; Love 1988; Milner 1923) feature railway events and reproduce archival images of railway subjects. Communities showed maintaining a railway–community relationship, in symbolic form, was important and successfully mobilised to achieve their goals.
New England communities drew on the long established communal history of getting a railway to Armidale. The AE linked gaining the original railway over a century before to current efforts to keep the line open. In so doing the paper then argued for not wasting the pioneers’ and more recent community effort. Too much hard work had gone into the fight, for the line to be left to disintegrate – keep the line open. The NE headlined ‘Train Axed After Almost 100 Years’ and ‘Station to Close After 103 Years’. The AE drew on one hundred and six years of passenger services to Armidale, claiming it was pathetic that government would throw away a hundred or so years of rail service (AE 18 July 1989; 30 January; 9 February 1990; TS 28 November 1988; 17 July 1989). New England communities linked recent railway events through their long communal history into an ongoing relationship. Communities placed reflection on local railway history into an emotional frame, extolling readers to ‘recall the dark days’ of February 10, 1990. The AE gave front page coverage to the reinstatement, opening its article with ‘On Monday it will be 100 years, 10 months and 22 days since the first train steamed into Armidale Railway Station on February 1, 1883’ (AE 13 February 1990; 1; 6 September; 19 November 1993). Communities mobilised their railway history as precedent and extrapolated their having an open railway into the future. They were concerned about the loss of future government reciprocity. The relationship was still important to them.

New England lobby groups sought to mobilise broad community support through calling public meetings (AE 7 February 1990; GIE 5 December 1989). Friends of the Northern Railway mobilised resources to fund, print, and distribute 10,000 leaflets to homes in Armidale and Uralla (AE 17 November 1989). Railway closure prompted New England communities to reconsider their valuation of the railway, reflect on what it symbolised to them, and mobilise.

New England communities also tried to acquire control over railway resources. During 1989, SRA removed fish-plates20 from a section of track and bent the rails inwards to prevent trains passing north of Glen Innes. Stopping trains could have easily be prevented by minor internal administrative mechanisms (Chapter 2; Laidley 2002), or the more usual practice of installing a stop block across the track. The railway physically

20 Fish-plates hold adjoining lengths of rail together in alignment.
bending the rails was more symbolic than operationally necessary. Locals and local MPs sought to have the track reinstated in case circumstances were to change and the line be reopened. Likewise, a meeting sought to prevent earthworks on the New England Highway from cutting the railway track at Bluff Rock (AE 30 October 1989; 19 January 1990; GIE 31 October 1989). An intact track, albeit unmaintained, seemed more likely to be reopened than track with sections missing.\textsuperscript{21} Communal control of the resource was to be acquired by having local government, state government, and SRA representatives agree to retain the track intact. Such agreement could also become a useful resource. Having set railway closure into an ongoing pattern, New England communities sought to acquire resources for possible future mobilisation.

The \textit{AE} editorialised under a headline ‘Rail decision should be open ended’ (AE 18 July 1989), arguing that railway closure should not be seen as a permanent mindless decision. Rather government should see railway closure open-mindedly. Government open-mindedness could be a valuable resource in the future, for having hearers take desired meaning from community messages about an open railway.

New England communities lobbied the Federal government to produce a report supporting reopening the Glen Innes–Wallan-garra line (AE 19 January 1990). The federal government seemed like a potentially powerful ally in making claims on an intermediary State government. Seeking powerful allies, from outside the exchange relationship, indicated a lack of trust in the government party. In lobbying for federal support, New England communities were tacitly redefining the key parties in the country–city relationship.

New England communities tried to acquire collective control over resources, so can be seen as mobilising (Tilly 1973, p. 214). New England newspapers consistently headlined the government–country relationship as a fight or battle (AE 11 July; 17 November 1989; 9 February 1990), making government the ‘other’. Reciprocal exchange was being replaced with open hostility within the relationship.

\textsuperscript{21} Such intactness was superficial and only visual. Reopening would require significant reconditioning of the infrastructure.
Implicit Usage Became Explicit

**Communally**

While people reacted individually, they acted communally. Reacting to proposed closure, local representatives, representatives from state and local government, railway spokesmen, and railway unions formed a committee for the Promotion of the Great Northern Railway Line. Member for Tamworth, Noel Park, and representatives from other local government authorities in New England sought dialogue with SRA CEO, Ross Sayers. However all of the committee proposals required the SRA to take the necessary action – consistent with a traditional countryminded expectation of government giving the railway gift. Residents said they believed the committee was an appropriate reaction – evidencing a preference for communal action. Reacting to release of the Booz-Allen Hamilton report into SRA losses, an Armidale group organised a public awareness campaign, information day, and public meeting at Armidale. Friends of the Northern Rail said it was essential that the issues be fully understood by the community and action taken to ensure that rail services were continued (*AE* 5 July 1989; *TS* 31 October; 14 November 1988). Action was to be at least seen as communal.

Two thousand signatures were obtained on a petition to keep the line open. Protestors reportedly as included students, local residents, a community group, teachers, and Family and Community Service staff – emphasising representativeness of the crowd. The Armidale Chamber of Commerce supported the local group. Headlines consistently described New England action as: ‘Local community opposes’; ‘the public’; ‘we get our trains cut’; ‘Guyra slam[s] rail cuts’ (*AE* 5; 10; 11 July 1989; 5 January 1990; *GIE* 5 December; *NDL* 10 August 1989). The *AE* editorialised about ‘the collective hearts of the community’ (1 September 1993).

Friends of the Northern Railway was described as ‘a group’. They were well organised, persistent, and imparted the uncomfortable assurance to authorities that the group wouldn’t go away. The campaign was distinguished from other groups in that they got organised a long time before government cut the trains. The group chose its name because it was a soft title; not indicating a hardline action group. Members had decided to form a group which would be popular at its base. They collected petitions, called public meetings, met with authorities, joined a Dumaresq Shire
deputation to Transport Minister Baird in Sydney and kept the campaign alive by constant reminders to the government and public via the local media (AE 1; 3; 6 September; 19 November 1993). Action was to be communal.

On reinstating the passenger train service using an Xplorer train, New England claimed communal credit. ‘Our community must recognise the efforts of a band of citizens [Friends of the Northern Railway] who have fought a long battle’. The AE headlined ‘Passenger train has arrived – thanks to public’ (AE 1; 3; 6 September; 19 November 1993). New England communities presented themselves as acting communally.

While the line was being closed from the south, New England communities mobilised to get the line re-opened to Wallan-garra in the north, echoing communal action to obtain the line a century before. Local communities met together and met with community representatives from Queensland (AE 16 January; NDL 11 January 1990). Country was pushing the traditional NSW government–country railway relationship outwards to expand across state borders, subsume inter-state rivalry, and bridge the traditional break-of-gauge track barrier.

**Government Gave a Partial Reinstatement**

Government reacted to New England’s reaction to closure, and reinstated a Tamworth–Armidale passenger train service in 1993. New England’s communal exercising power seemed to have been effective. Social exchange was being augmented with political power.

The events became significant markers in New England community history. When faced with railway closure in 2003, New England communities had a local, seemingly successful, model of community action to draw on. Community action was being led by a vocal special interest group, with community support. New England communities were learning that mutual dependency in their social exchange relationship involved what Molm (1994) called serial dependency. Sequential transactions were dependent in part on their previous transactions, as shown mathematically through time as: government → community → government → community. The relationship of continuing to exchange allowed each party to use their
contingent actions to influence the subsequent behaviour of their exchange party.

**Grain Line Communities Reacted**

Like closure of lines in New England, closure of individual grain lines typically generated concern among country media, local progress associations, and country politicians about a range of economic and social impacts.

Beyond New England and individual grain lines, the most significant closure of country lines was that associated with Option 3 (referred to earlier). Yet, despite railway closure contradicting significant elements of countrymindedness, responding to Option 3, the Grain Officer with the NSW Livestock and Grain Producers’ Association reportedly ‘welcomed the plan’. ‘“Its the most imaginative rural initiative the SRA has taken”’. ‘Mr Wilkinson expected “some parochial grumblings”, but said: “Ninety-nine per cent of growers will accept the plan like a shot”’ (SMH 3 December 1986). No evidence emerged during this research to indicate substantial protest. Within social exchange theory one party can readily accept losses at the benefit of the other party towards reaching the relationship’s larger goals.

New England and grain line community reactions to railway closure differed significantly. While grain line reactions varied historically; they can well be described as primarily voluble (Clapp 1930; Parolin & Filan 1993; Raimond & Parolin 1992; Stiles 1977). However New England reactions seemed to be stronger, according to Cohen’s (1982) criteria of extraordinariness.

**Conclusion**

During the middle through later decades of the twentieth century government’s implicit expectations of railway usage became explicit expectations of use producing improved commercial returns. Government reframed the railway, taking it out of the context of social exchange, or at least denying the exchange relationship existed. Government explicitly valued the railway primarily through a financial lens.
New England communities ceased using the railway for freight and supposedly only lightly for passenger transport. However while arguably of slight material value; the railway remained of significant symbolic value to local communities.

Government’s changing expectations of reciprocity manifested in limiting further giving, removing pieces of infrastructure, and closing railways and stations across the state including in New England. Change in government giving, was not steady but, was focussed in particular periods of closures. Likewise community reaction in New England, was not steady but, increased in intensity notably during 1989 following the proposed withdrawing of passenger services north of Tamworth. Grain line community reaction seemed much steadier. At certain points New England communities reacted. New England community protest started with passive acceptance. Communities were willing to accept some decline in government support. Protest later intensified, resulting in government reintroducing a train service. Yet the country–government relationship seemed to remain in practical equilibrium. Practical equilibrium was not a static state. Rather it was the researcher’s observation of their being ‘no great change in the values of the variables we [i.e. the observer/researcher] choose to measure’ (Homans 1958, p. 600).

Differences between New England and grain line community reactions were emerging. Differences would appear to be greater in community reactions to the closures of 2003, as will be discussed in Chapter 8. The traditional government–country social exchange relationship was being stressed by both parties.
CHAPTER 7

Country Remained Countryminded

Figure 7.1

State needs good regional network’

*Headlined the NDL (6 November 2003)*

Introduction

Chapter 6 argued that, during the second half of the twentieth century, government changed the lens through which it looked at the New England railway from primarily that of a social relationship towards a more explicitly financial one. This chapter argues that during 2003, country communities persisted in interpreting railway closure through a countryminded lens, despite government trying to change the terms of the government–country relationship.

My argument in this chapter embraces both New England and grain line, i.e., country, communities, focuses on 2003, and is structured around four points addressing each in turn. First, government seemed to continue to interpret railway closure primarily through a financial policy lens. Second, country communities seemed to interpret railway closure primarily through a countryminded lens. Third, country communities added four related themes to their lens. Fourth, railway closure could be interpreted as countrymindedless.

New England communities presented the Parry report (2003a) as government proposing to close the Tamworth–Armidale (Dumaresq) line. However, what Parry (2003a) actually said was that ‘replacing some rail services [e.g., 'branch lines to Armidale and Murwillumbah’] with CountryLink bus services must be considered’. Country communities reacted to a recommendation to consider as if it was a firm proposal
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effective imminently. They reacted to the very idea of railway closure. Closure of grain lines in 2003 continued a, then existing, long-running discourse.

**Government’s Financial Lens**

Four of the five terms of reference for the Ministerial Inquiry into Public Passenger Transport highlighted: ‘revenue needs’ and ‘costs’; ‘funding options’ and ‘revenue needs’; ‘fares’; and ‘targeting of funding’ (Parry 2003a). Government clearly expected the report to focus on financial issues.

Parry (2003a) described the train service to Armidale as moving passengers ‘at considerable cost’, which required ‘high levels of government subsidy’. The report asserted that replacing passenger trains with buses ‘is much more cost-effective’, and sustainable transport has to give priority to ‘cost-effective services’. In addressing the protestors at Armidale, the Minister for Transport, Michael Costa asserted the train service was ‘very expensive’ costing $6.4 million per year or $17,000 per day (AE 24 October 2003). The *NDL* asserted (24 October 2003) Costa would ‘base his decision on [financial] figures’, ‘Figures were the whole basis of his responses to protestors’.

Along the grain lines, the *TL* (2 January 2003) headlined that the lines for closure were ‘Unprofitable grain lines’. The previous Minister for Transport, Karl Scully, described the lines as having no ‘prospect of communities getting value for money’ (*CN* 15 January 2003). The *T&CM(i)* (9 June 2003) described them as ‘low profit’ lines. ‘Cost impacts are the reasons for [government] wanting to close restricted lines’ asserted the Mayor of the Coonabarabran Shire (*CT* 3 July 2003).

Government expressed, and country communities saw government express, its value of railway closure primarily in financial terms. Exchange could still be reciprocal; but the terms were being redefined such that only revenue to the railway was being credited on the government’s benefit side, while country’s contribution, seen more broadly, was being discounted. Financial accounting appearing as a focus in the relationship threatened to shift the relationship from reciprocal towards economic exchange.
Country’s Countryminded Lens

I argue that, as with previous railway closures (Chapter 6), during 2003 country communities seemed to interpret railway closure by looking through a lens with attributes associated with a countryminded (Aitkin 1985) perspective cast in the older terms of the exchange relationship.

Threatening National Wealth

New England, Figure 7.1, and grain line communities, identified the country railway network as necessary for adding to generalised NSW and Australia-wide wealth.

New England communities were told of railway closure leading to adverse impacts on grain growing farmers. The NSW Farmers Association spoke likewise and focussed attention on impacts into the future. Leader of the Nationals, Andrew Stoner, focussed attention on railway closure adversely impacting on 40% of total grain production and 67% of grain destined for export (NDL 10 March; 2 June; 21 October; 11 December 2003). New England claimed to be dealing with rail issues and leading reaction across the state (NDL 10 December 2003). Interaction between New England and grain producing areas extended New England reaction to railway closure to embrace grain line community concerns.

The countryminded idea of primary producers developing national wealth also appeared in a modified form in New England discourse. Rather than threatening the production of physical goods for export, the UNE argued railway closure threatened the export industry in tertiary qualifications. UNE Marketing and Public Affairs Director, Ingrid Rothe, said railway closure would result in perceived inconvenience and discomfort for students in travelling to Armidale. 3.6% of on-campus students were ‘international students who are dependent on public transport’ (NDL 25; UNE News Release No.185/03 24 October 2003). Railway closure threatened UNE’s ability to attract overseas students, so threatened New England’s reciprocal contribution to adding to national wealth.

Referring to grain lines, Leader of the Nationals, Duncan Gay, said ‘Branch and restricted lines are a vital component of moving grain from farmers to the consumer’ (CG 21; DL 13 November 2003). Dubbo MP, Tony McGrane, based keeping the Bogan Gate–Tottenham line open on it
carrying ‘grain from bulk silo to the sea port’, like a grain farmer boasting ‘this is an export industry’ (http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au, accessed 6/11/2003; TL 6 February 2003). Grain grower, Dan Mangelsdorf, said branch lines are ‘so important to the long term sustainability of the grains industry, which makes such an important contribution to the NSW economy’ (WWA 31 October 2003). The fifteen lines under threat of closure ‘move 3.5 million tonnes of grain a year, or 67pc of annual wheat exports, worth about $915 million in gross revenue’ (L 3 July 2003). Grain-line closure would break the grain industry export supply chain, so threatened grain line’s reciprocal contribution in adding to national wealth.

Railway closure threatened Australian wealth so didn’t make countryminded sense, and was counter to the relationship contributing to externalised betterment.

**Degrad ing the Position of Primary Industry**

Grain production traditionally depended on the cheap mass transport provided by rail. Grain line communities admitted a dependence on rail, Figure 7.2, vitalising the relationship (CG 21; DL 13 November 2003), and imputing power to the government party.

![Grain needs rail](Headlined the WM(i) (22 September 2003)](image)

Railway closure would ‘lead[ing] to major reductions in grain areas, especially on the western fringe of the grain belt’ said the spokesmen for the Tottenham-Bogan Gate Rail Line Action Committee (L 30 October 2003). The western fringe of the grain belt was environmentally marginal land for grain growing, which had been made economically viable by availability of cheap rail transport. Railway closure would reduce grain growing. ‘Without the continued operation of branch and restricted [grain] lines, growers in NSW will suffer higher transportation costs’ said Leader of the Nationals, Duncan Gay, (CG 21 November 2003). Increasing farmer’s costs threatened primary industry’s ability to reciprocate.
Railway closure of 2003 was contrasted against the countryminded reasoning behind government’s historic giving (Chapter 4). Representative of the Gwabegar/Binnaway Action Committee, Jamie O’Brien, asserted ‘You have to remember that when this railway was built, it was built by people [...] who really wanted to open the country up. They were interested in [...] rural development’ (CT 9 October 2003). Railway closure implied a reversal in government’s commitment to the country party via traditional countryminded railway giving.

**Demonstrating Country Morality**

New England communities saw themselves as morally virtuous. After the decision to keep the line open, Richard Torbay said the protestors ‘were magnificent’; and communities of ‘the Armidale region fought long and hard’. Even the Transport Minister’s Chief of Staff, Jack Whelan, publicly admitted ‘These were decent people with genuine concerns’. Such an admission by a government opponent from the city added weight to the description. Community willingness to compromise and be reasonable appeared repeatedly as morally virtuous characteristics of the New England communities (AE 12; AI 12; NDL 11 November; GIE 12; NDL 10; 12 December 2003).

Richard Torbay and Don Martin presented New England communities as ‘dealing with rail issues around the state’. ‘They [Armidale] led it for the State’. ‘We were arguing the case for regional rail, not just the Armidale service’ (NDL 10 December 2003). Fighting against railway closure on behalf of other country communities, and for a social ideal; rather than individual economic betterment, displayed moral virtue. New England community thinking was consistent with the traditional exchange interpretation and demonstrated countryminded morality.

**Demonstrating City Nastiness**

Torbay spoke bluntly ‘There has been a deliberate attempt to run down this service, and many aspects of the report are what the government wants to hear’ (GIE 25 September 2003). Railway closure was seen as a conscious goal of government, and the Parry Report was seen as a premeditated rationalised cover-up. As well as looking back into history, communities
extrapolated their suspicions forward into the future. One resident forecasted that if the passenger service is taken away the rail line will deteriorate and become unusable’ (NDL 23 September 2003; Parry 2003a; 2003b). Government would withhold maintenance work into the future so making the Tamworth–Dumaresq section seem incapable of remaining open – closure through deliberate neglect. Deliberate neglect of a valuable asset, that the community claimed ownership of, seemed immoral.

Railway closure seemed irresponsible. UNE Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ingrid Moses, said ‘the Government is irresponsible in proposing to cut a city like Armidale off from rail transport’ (SMH 24 October 2003). Railway closure seemed incompatible with New England community expectations of government fulfilling its obligations within the relationship.

Contrasting railway closure with keeping the railway open, one resident described the open railway as ‘an echo of social values perhaps!’ A local based her argument against railway closure on morality, exclaiming ‘For goodness sake keep CountryLink’ (AE 29 October; DT 15 September 2003). Government providing a railway service seemed morally excellent and virtuous; closure seemed immoral.

Reducing train services so discouraging country settlement seemed to have an immoral dimension perpetrated against New England, attributed to characteristic city nastiness. City nastiness made countryminded sense, and indicated degradation in the relationship.

Reducing Country's Distinctiveness
New England and grain line communities saw themselves and their environment as ‘country’; quite different to the ‘city’. In providing discrete named station nodes strung out along the line (Appendix 4.8) the railway had helped to create community identity, and focus community grouping (Chapter 4). More generally, New England communities identified themselves as ‘country’; ‘the bush’; ‘rural’; ‘regional’; non-city; and non-Sydney (AE 1; 29 October; 5 November; GIE 30 October; NDL 9; 10; 11; 12; 16; 20; 23; 25 September; 3; 27 October; 3; 6 November; 4 December; SMH 9 December; ST 26 October 2003). New England community identity was constructed by where and what they were, and where and what they were not.
Grain line communities also identified themselves as ‘country’, ‘the bush’, ‘rural’, and ‘regional’ (CT 24 July; 9 October; DL 12; DT 4 August; T&CM(i) 9 June; TI 24 October; WWA 3 June 2003). Grain line writers identified themselves as and associated themselves with ‘farmers’ and ‘grain growers’ (WWA 3 June; 31 October 2003). ‘Farmer’ and ‘grain grower’ were literal occupational descriptions. Demographically the 2003 grain line discourse seemed to be voiced by speakers associating themselves closely with agricultural pursuits. Grain line newspapers emphasised the railways were ‘grain line/s’; even ‘Grain rail lines’ (BN(i) 2 June; TL 2 January; DA 9; WWA 14 March; WM(i) 2 June 2003). Writers tied farming grain and railway together, and acknowledged the single-traffic use of the lines. Grain line communities said their railway lines were ‘branch lines’. Use of the term branch line/s was common (DL 5 February; TL 3 July; WM(i) 3 February; WS 4 June 2003). A branch of a tree cannot be a trunk. In railway terms the line of interest must not be a mainline, so must implicitly be more peripheral, away from a city from where main trunk lines originated. Grain line community identity was constructed by where and what they were, and implicitly where and what they were not.

New England and grain line communities had a sense of their country identity. A country identity was a dependent sub-set of a countryminded ideology, irrespective of whether countrymindedness was formal, elaborate, or not (Eagleton 1991). In communities identifying as communities of a certain type New England and grain line communities identified with other country communities, and significant symbolic objects (Hummon 1990), in this case, the local railway.

One New England local tied closing Armidale railway station to so-called McDonaldization (Ritzer 1996) of society. She said ‘I fear that our beautiful Victorian railway station in Armidale will quickly transform into another fast food restaurant’ (AE 29 October 2003). McDonaldization was not confined to efficient food delivery; but threatened locally distinctive Australian country townscapes and culture. Railway closure threatened to absorb country into a globalised, relatively uniform, city-centric community, dominated by American culture. Mentioning fast food implied a local perception of a process of global change having local impacts. Railway
closure would remove an accepted and expected traditional use and replace it with something new and largely rationalistic.

New England communities said railway closure would increase environmental problems, specifically ‘more greenhouse gas emissions’ (AE 1; NDL 24 October 2003). The New England response pointed towards local concern over global climate change issues. In ‘Clancy of the Overflow’ Banjo Patterson (n.d.) had described the scene as: “And the foetid air and gritty of the dusty, dirty city – Through the open window floating, spreads its foulness over all”. Country concern about air pollution in the city was consistent with a countryminded characterisation of the city; as distinct from country having clean air. Spreading air pollution to country could be interpreted as distributive injustice (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2006).

Railway closure reduced country distinctiveness so didn’t make countryminded sense. Some city characteristics should not be distributed to country.

**Discouraging Country Settlement**

Country communities believed in encouraging population decentralisation. A UNE spokesperson described railway closure as ‘the axing of a service that is essential’, i.e., for country settlement. The local MP and the Mayor of Armidale called on country communities to protect the train service against government (AI 12 November; Armidale Dumaresq press release 16 September; Member for Northern Tablelands media release 8 September; NDL 8 October 2003). Railway closure was metaphorically like a logger felling a tree. Like trees needing conservationists to protect them, the railway needed country community support to keep it open.

A New England resident said ‘the train service to Armidale should be a service that is provided for our country town because we need it not because it brings in money’. New England politicians said needs of country communities should be considered before finances. Country Labor MLC, Christine Robertson, said keeping the railway open would ‘most importantly, put country families first’ because ‘public transport was about providing for families, not making a buck’. Country and government framings of the railway were diverging. Together with Christine Robertson Richard Torbay accepted country dependence on government as axiomatic,
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saying ‘even if trains were full all or most of the time, they would still need to be helped by a Government subsidy’, and ‘even if the train took its full complement of 160 passengers it would not make a profit’ (AE 1; DT 24 October; NDL 4 December 2003). Editor of the AE front-paged ‘Having access to a satisfactory public train service shouldn’t be a privilege for a city the size of Armidale – it’s a right’; and ‘surely we [Armidale] have as much right to a public rail service as people in Sydney do’ (AE 22 October 2003). Country right did not exclude city right, but was based on Australian expectation of government giving services to citizens as equally as possible irrespective of geography or economics. The rewards of having a railway should be distributed justly as Homans (1958, p. 604) would argue.

By 2003 New England communities were already concerned about terminal effects of railway closure. The local Member suggested government ‘won’t rest until it’s turned every country railway station into a cemetery’. Communities displayed coffins to symbolise railway closure (AE 17 October; NDL 12 September 2003). Without the railway as a symbolic lifeline, country community leaders presented the issue emotionally as communities dying.

Railway closure threatened grain line communities by reducing the economic viability of grain producers on which the communities depended. MP, Tony McGrane, said the ‘Carr Government has delivered a death sentence’ (DL 8 March 2003) to country communities. Leader of the National Party, George Souris, also accused government of delivering ‘a death sentence’ by closing lines. ‘Rail infrastructure is vitally important for farmers and the rural communities that depend on them’. Project and Analysis Manager for the Grain Grower’s Association, Terrence Farrell, said railways are ‘important for the survival of rural communities’ (CT 9 October 2003). Therefore railway closure ‘could mean the difference between survival and [community] closure’ (CT 3 July; 9 October; DL 8 March; WM(i) 21 July; 22 September; WWA 31; RN(i) 31 October 2003).

Imputing Power to The City

The railway was associated with city power. One writer described railway closure as government ‘dictating to the people’ (GIE 29 September 2003).
The traditional practical equilibrium of government and city power in the relationship now seemed severely asymmetric.

Railway closure seemed ‘Sydney-centric’ (*NDL* 27 October 2003). Centring on Sydney was more than a reflection on traditional fan-like railway network geography (Figure 4.5). Focussing on Sydney created a social hierarchy. In notionally elevating Sydney over New England communities, the *NDL* Editor editorialised that railway closure would ‘effectively make public transport users in the bush second-class citizens’ (*NDL* 11 September 2003). Distributional justice was being undone. Becoming second-class would transform New England communities into the Australian mythical battler or underdog without a fair go. An apparently new power structure was appearing. Power appearing in the relationship threatened to shift the relationship from reciprocal towards negotiated exchange (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 1999)

A local lobbyist said ‘Regional and rural communities deserve better than a bus service’. The UNE Students’ Association said ‘Regional communities deserve better than this’ railway closure. Communities said Armidale deserved a passenger train service, because of its population size and regional status as a university city (*AE* 17; *GIE* 2; *NDL* 20; 25; *S-H* 19 October 2003). Exercising city power disrespected country status.

The metaphoric link of the railway linking the country in the railway’s name of ‘CountryLink’ remained. After government decided to extend the service for a year, the *NDL* headlined ‘Rail link safe for now’, and ‘Trains will remain the missing link’. A *SMH* page 1 headline likewise presented keeping the railway open as ‘no tinkering with country links’ (*NDL* 10; 30; *SMH* 9 December 2003). Despite city having the power to close the line, country had demonstrably exercised some power in the relationship resulting in keeping the inter-party link intact.

Grain line communities consistently ascribed closure to being a ‘government’, and occasionally a ‘government and State Rail’ decision (*TL* 2 January; *CT* 24 July; *CG* 21 November 2003). Grain line communities ascribed railway closure to government, which resided in the city.
Beyond Countrymindedness

During 2003 railway closure also carried meanings, to both New England and grain line communities, beyond those comfortably aligning with Aitkin’s (1985) seven elements of countrymindedness. Railway closure carried meanings of:

1. further cuts to country services;
2. wasting resources;
3. jeopardising the future;
4. senseless decision making.

A Precursor

This theme label was drawn from the New England newspaper texts that closure of the Tamworth–Armidale section “is just a precursor to further cuts” (*NDL* 29, p.3; *AE* 31 October 2003, p.2).

Richard Torbay said ‘Every CountryLink train is under attack’ and ‘if the Armidale service goes it will signal the collapse of many other rail services in NSW’. New England Railway Inc. Spokesman, Richard Rowe, said likewise ‘If they had implemented the changes government had in mind, then it would have resulted in many other country rail services being done away with’. The Local Member said ‘the whole CountryLink service is under threat and that removing links here and there as the Parry Inquiry has proposed is just a precursor to further cuts’. Richard Torbay forecast that if the Tamworth–Armidale section ‘does go, every CountryLink service across NSW is going to face the same thing [closure]’, and ‘if the Armidale link was axed then many other country services across the State would follow’.

‘Many other country based MPs see that the whole CountryLink service is at risk through this current restructure’. A local Councillor said ‘this [closure] could well be the first step in a negative campaign to close progressively pieces of the CountryLink service’ (*AE* 31 October; 17 November; *DT* 24 October; *GIE* 12 September; 12 December; *NDL* 24 October; *TS* 6 November 2003).

Richard Torbay also described railway closure as ‘a matter of testing the water before making even further inroads into the CountryLink service’. Richard Rowe spoke likewise as ‘attempts to shut down the service was a “testing of the waters” for government’; and ‘they [government] were testing
the waters’. Testing the water connoted a government lack of knowledge about the country party’s concerns, and carried a sense of purposefulness or intent. Richard Rowe also described closure as ‘a test case for the State Government’ (GIE 12 December; NDL 3 October 2003). Country communities knew law is tested case by case. If the test case was successful, then following cases could be built on the precedent established by first successful case.

This specific closure symbolised other rail closures beyond passenger carrying CountryLink services. The National Party leader, Andrew Stoner, said ‘if passenger rail services are abolished it would be all too easy for the Government to then shut down country rail lines’ – ‘all too easy’ connoted government intent. Richard Rowe spoke similarly if this line is closed then ‘it will be another line, and then another’ (GIE 25; SMH 9 September 2003). Government seemed to be looking for a country weak point to start closing lines. The National Party leader called ‘any move to axe rail services “the thin edge of the wedge”’ (SMH 9 September 2003). If government encountered little resistance to this particular railway closure it would proceed to close further lines, so splitting apart the, previously holistic, state-wide railway network.

New England presented closing its line as linked to other non-rail country concerns including: taking autonomy away from councils; restructuring local government; rate pegging; councils carrying more state burdens; size of catchment management areas; stacking of Catchment Management Authorities; over-abundance of regulations; and definitions of clearing, remnant vegetation, and regrowth (NDL 19 November; 4 December; WN 20 November 2003). One specific railway closure was associated with much wider whole-of-country concerns.

Along the grain lines, grain grower, Mick Ley, forecasted ‘If the branch line is closed its just a matter of time before the Gwabegar silo is closed and possibly the Baradine one as well’. The Tottenham–Bogan Gate Rail Line Action Committee forecast likewise ‘If the branch line closes, we will eventually lose all [of] the grains storage infrastructure along the line’ (TL 3 July; 30 October 2003). Railway closure was linked to other grain industry concerns.
Other grain industry trends were linked to railway closure. A grain grower near Greenethorpe feared building major storage silos on mainlines ‘could lead to the closure of branch lines across the country’ (SWM(i) 17 February 2003). Grain line user community interest groups said rail was more efficient than road at transporting grain. The Progressive Rail Association said rail was an integral part of the grain transport industry. ‘If we don’t have an efficient rail network we don’t have an efficient transport industry’ (DA 7 November 2003). Railway closure seemed to influence grain industry trends and be influenced by grain industry trends. Railway lines were important connecting links in the grain industry logistical chain connecting silos to mills or ports. Therefore decisions on any individual line should be made in industry-wide contexts.

The WM(i) (3 February 2003) headlined ‘Test case for branch rail’s future’. Mayor of Bogan Shire, Ray Donald’s, statement that government was making progress towards line closure expressed a similar goal. Member for Lachlan, Ian Armstrong, hypothesised that ‘the government is hell bent on closing branch lines and ignoring the needs of farmers’. Mayor of Young, John Walker, called on communities to ‘be continually vigilant in the attitude of governments to centralise services out of regional NSW’ into Sydney. ‘The likelihood of closures becomes greater with the passing of every day’ (CT 24 July; BN(i) 27 October; DL 24 September; WWA 3 June; YW 4 July 2003). Dubbo MP, Tony McGrane, described closing one line as a ‘test case’. Elsewhere he spoke of railway closure being the “tip of the iceberg” [original emphasis]. If it [the Bogan Gate–Tottenham line] goes all the others could follow’. McGrane said his experience told him ‘we are on the brink of track closures on branch lines in the next few years’. ‘Country rail at crossroads’ headlined the DT. Selecting the correct road now would influence the future extent of the railway network and availability of train services. McGrane argued in parliament that the Bogan Gate–Tottenham line ‘falling over’ would be the first of many subsequent branch line closures (Legislative Assembly Hansard #25 17 October 2003, http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au, accessed 6/11/2003), as with the so-called domino effect. The railway would remain materially present, but in a form not fit for its purpose of transport. Railway infrastructure would remain, but trains would not be run on it. Ian Armstrong agreed saying
‘there were grave fears locally that a number of other grain lines will also be closed’. Railway closure impacted on transportation across the grain growing industry. The effect of closing one line would be exponential. The former Deputy Prime Minister, Tim Fischer, said railway closure was “death by a thousand cuts” [original emphasis], echoed by Ian Armstrong in parliament as ‘slow death by a thousand cuts’ (CP 10 March; DL 5 February; DT 3 August; TL 31 July; WM(i) 3 February; WWA 3 June 2003; Legislative Assembly Hansard #7 16 October 2003, http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au, accessed 29/10/2003). Death would wait for a final stabbing as the coup-de-grace. Railway closure threatened a slow cruel torture.

Metaphors like thin edge of the wedge, tip of the iceberg, testing the water, and test case, connoted a secondary meaning of government planning further withdrawals/closures. Railway closures mentioned during 2003 (Figure 3.1) were not the first line closures in New England (Chapter 6) or along grain lines (Appendix 6.1). When foregrounded, railway closure fitted consistently into bigger frames of understanding. Railway closure heralding further cuts to country rail and non-rail services did not make countryminded sense. Carrying a sense of purposefulness indicated government loss of commitment to the country party in the relationship.

Wasting Resources
This theme label was adapted from a grain-line writer saying bluntly (TL 3 July 2003, p.19) closure was governmental “stupidity not to use this existing infrastructure (the rail line)”. ‘Stupidity’ implied lacking common sense; not lacking intellectual capacity.

An Armidale resident wrote ‘there will be a [railway] track in the middle of nowhere doing nothing!’ (AE 1 October 2003). The exclamation mark signified palpable lack of apparent logic. To country, the purpose for having railway track was to run trains on. Disused railway infrastructure was highly visible from the main New England Highway, Figure 7.3, secondary public roads, and private properties along the Dumaresq–Wallangarra section.
Railway closure made no economic sense. An Armidale resident said ‘with proper planning, it would be far less costly to maintain rail than road’. New England Railway Inc. said railway closure ‘would be very sad if they apply the negative approach of this report [Parry 2003a] to an asset that already exists and can be restored with not significant funding’ (DT 24 October; GIE 25 September; NDL 2 June; ST 26 October 2003). There was an arguable case for maintaining rail services on the grounds that the railway would retain value and the avoidable cost of closure was less than what would otherwise have to be spent additionally on roads. Taking the less expensive option made sense in this situation. The existing railway possessed significant economic capital – capital that railway closure would cease using, so waste (Appendix 7.1).²² Not using the economic capital already sunk in constructing and maintaining the railway through railway closure made no economic sense (Laird et al. 2001). This contrasts with a straight economic analysis which would say old losses on capital had been

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²² Some railway resources have been reused for non-railway purposes; but the assertion remains valid on the basis of underutilising sunk capital.
written off the account books long ago. Karl Marx reportedly described a railway on which no trains run; hence which is not used up, or not consumed, as a railway only potentially, not in reality (Nickolaus 1993). Such a railway was economically worthless because its production was without purpose.

Beyond economic waste, railway closure ‘would undo years of positive work to get the line re-opened to Glen Innes’ said New England Railway Inc. Spokesman, Richard Rowe (GIE 25 September 2003). Government railway closure devalued New England community efforts, and displayed affective disregard for the other party in the relationship (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a), so was likely to spark an emotional reaction.

Reporting on closure of the Gwabegar grain line, Nationals Member for Barwon, Ian Slack-Smith, drew attention to the existing open railway being ‘already in place’. The Transport ‘Minister should be making use of [the] wealth of rail infrastructure, a network of branch lines across the State, instead of letting them fall to wrack and ruin’. He argued ‘the cost of rebuilding and sealing the road would have to be more than keeping the existing branch line open’. A/CEO of SRA and A/ Coordinator General of Rail, Vince Graham (2004), was more equivocal, saying that the economics depended on the specifics of each line. MP, Ian Armstrong, argued in parliament that ‘Those branch lines are an asset’, stating ‘I cannot see the point in throwing out an asset’ (Legislative Assembly Hansard #7 16 October 2003, http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au, accessed 29/10/2003). A Lake Cargelligo farmer said likewise ‘The irony is you wouldn’t need to spend a fortune to bring this [railway] track up to scratch’. The Tottenham to Bogan Gate Rail Line Upgrade Committee and a Lachlan Shire Councillor agreed, and set the idea in a longer time frame. They said ‘the cost of the branch line upgrade would be cheaper in the long term than a road upgrade’. GrainCorp’s Central Division Manager, Murray Wilkinson, agreed in taking a long-term view, saying the railway was ‘a valuable piece of infrastructure that needs a small investment to get a long term benefit out of’ (AN 6 October; DT 4 August; WM(i) 22 September; WS 4 June 2003). Keeping the railway open was cheaper than preparing roads to carry the
Country Remained Countryminded

grain. Not building on the economic capital already sunk in constructing and maintaining the railway to date, seemed economically mindless.

Government would no longer even maintain its previously given gift. Railway closure wasted past government investment, resources, and community effort. Government counted its gift as worthless, and by implication also country’s reciprocity.

Jeopardising the Future

This cluster label was drawn from the UNE news release that railway closure would “jeopardise Armidale’s future as a university and convention city” (UNE News Release No.185/03 24; NDL 25 October 2003, p.2). Grain line using communities extended the idea saying (DL 8 March 2003, p.5) “the Carr Government has delivered a death sentence” to country NSW.

A New England resident described closing the line as ‘pulling the plug’ and ‘shut[ting] down’ (AE 1 October 2003) – pulling the plug carried imagery of government letting water out of a bath or sink. The container would remain, but not the held water. The railway track would remain, but not the more valuable function of running trains. ‘Shutting down’ connoted a deliberate decision to deviate from the status quo by stopping trains running.

Richard Torbay in addressing Parliament described the Tenterfield railway station as ‘these magnificent station buildings symbolise the confidence of that time in the development and opening up of the inland’. In contrast railway closure was headlined as the ‘Parry report lacks vision’. LGA President, Sara Murray, said likewise that a ‘visionary strategy for investment in rail infrastructure’ was needed; not railway closure. A resident repeated an assertion made fourteen years previously that railway closure was ‘short-sighted […] not in the long-term best interests of the regions’. Richard Torbay accused government of preferring to spend railway funds on building the Australian Railway Monument at Werris Creek, to railway staff killed on-the-job, rather than spending the money on an open railway (ABC Online New England North West NSW 11 November, http://www.abc.net.au/newengland/news, accessed 9/3/2004; DT 10 September; GIE 2; Legislative Assembly Hansard #39 5 May 2004, http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au, accessed 27/7/2004; NDL 21 October
Country Remained Countryminded

2003). Government seemed to associate the railway more strongly with death in the past than life into the future.

The UNE objected to ‘axing of a service that is essential to our region’s continued economic growth’. Armidale Mayor, Brian Chetwynd, said railway closure would hinder ‘us in accessing the growing backpacker market, as well as other regional tourism and business opportunities’. Leader of the NSW National Party said abolition of rail services ‘would represent a serious blow to regional development’ (AI 12 November; NDL 25 May; WN 20 November 2003). Railway closure limited future growth, countering what was seen unquestionably as desirable development.

New England Railway Inc. said freight services, in addition to passenger services, would only return to Glen Innes if the line north of Tamworth stayed open for passenger trains (GIE 25 September 2003). Railway closure limited the range of possible future development options.

NSW Liberal Leader, John Brogden, described railway closure as a ‘plan to scrap the train’. Senior Vice-president of The Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WESROC), Danny Mackin, said ‘If country rail services were scrapped, ground travel to major NSW regional centres would be forever limited to the maximum speed available on the roads’ (NDL 6; AE 26 November 2003). Scrapping connoted government devaluing its own gift to the point of country passenger rail having no practical value into the future. Despite being an old technology and by 2006 an hour slower than car, Table 7.1, railway closure stopped the potential for further speeding up of land transport. Community representatives and government valued passenger rail very differently.

Table 7.1.
Travel Times for Armidale–Sydney in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Travel Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>9hr 55min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>8hr 13min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>7hr 24min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plane</td>
<td>1hr 10min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


23 2006 was the nearest data I could find to 2003.
New England communities said railway closure would reduce ride quality. Many writers said they preferred the conveniences on board trains to those on coaches, nominating: space for children to play; a strategically placed in-train buffet bar, being able to stand or walk around to relieve arthritic joint pain; and spaciousness (AI 15 October; GIE 25 September; 2; 21 October; NDL 23 September; 6 November 2003). The Member for Northern Tablelands, Ray Chappell, asserted ‘replacing trains with busses is a reduction in service quality for regional communities’. Senior Vice-president of WESROC, Danny Mackin, said trains ‘offer better station facilities [and] disabled access, […] which are important for the elderly and the disabled’. One passenger said railway closure ‘will deprive people of such a nice way to travel’. A writer enjoyed rail travel because of ritual and enjoyment of the travel event, democratic and egalitarian travel through communities mixing and mingling (AE 29; GIE 2 October; NDL 23 September; 6 November 2003). Images drew on the idea that country communities already travelled considerable distances because of the Australian tyranny of distance. Travel between home and destination, was a whole of journey travel experience. Valuing subjective assessments of ride quality went beyond mere provision of material transport. Bus travel seemed less appealing so would limit New England community perceived freedom to travel, leading towards perceived social isolation. Scarcity of good travel ride-quality for individual travellers, in coming best from rail, promoted intervention by the community to retain its availability at a community-wide level.

Leader of the Nationals, Andrew Stoner, said abolition of rail services ‘would be a dire step backwards for regional communities such as Walcha’. Member for Northern Tablelands, Ray Chappell, likewise described railway closure as ‘a retrograde step’, ‘a very backward step’, and ‘winding the clock back’. Richard Torbay said ‘NSW appears to be taking a step back to the dark ages by suggesting everybody should go back on the road’ (AE 17; NDL 24 October; WN 20 November 2003). Railway closure seemed historically regressive.

New England communities said railway closure would reduce road safety so increasing the road death toll. A Glen Innes resident referred to horrific bus accidents in 1990, implying railway closure would lead to
increased road accidents. Richard Torbay said bluntly ‘more traffic on the State’s roads [...] endangers lives’. An Armidale resident agreed, saying huge trucks ‘drastically shortened the lives of many road users’ (*DT* 24; *GIE* 2; *NDL* 21; *ST* 26 October 2003). Government seemingly didn’t value the lives of the other party’s settlers.


Grain line communities called for traditional railway actions to continue into the future ‘The railway has been part of the supply chain for decades’ (*CT* 9 October 2003). Railway closure broke the traditional exchange relationship.

Acting SRA CEO, Vince Graham, described railway branch line maintenance as ‘the fix-when-fail approach’. He forecast the approach ‘was “not sustainable”’ [original emphasis], and ‘will inevitably lead to their progressive closure’. According to the Tottenham to Bogan Gate Rail Line Upgrade Action Committee, Terry Fishpool, the railway was following ‘a “wait and see” attitude’. Government following industry trends rather than leading NSW into the future lacked vision. Likewise Grain Growers Association, Terrence Farrell, advocated impressing on government a need for foresight, vision, and commitment for the future. ‘Too many members of parliament have neglected rail and lost the plot’ (*CT* 9 October; *DA* 7 November; *WM*(i) 22 September 2003) – ‘lost the plot’ connoted myopic, short-sighted government thinking, displaying no understanding of larger cultural themes in Australian history. Government had forgotten the basic tenets of the original relationship.

The *DL* headlined ‘Rural development dependent on rail lines’ (*DL* 12 August 2003). Country communities saw themselves as still in the process of development, with further development to be achieved in the future. Government limiting its other party’s betterment was counter to the relationship’s original purpose of mutual betterment.
Tony McGrane argued in the negative, so giving extra force, that railway closure ‘would certainly not be to the benefit of regional communities’. Talking about closing individual lines he said ‘We have got to take a longer term view’; ‘we need to take a generational view on branch lines’. SunRice General Manager Grower Services, Mike Hedditch, said ‘Our interest in the line is from a longer term perspective’. Decisions about individual lines should be made in a temporal context, including intergenerational issues. Several newspapers reported a cereal grower from Burren Junction saying railway ‘infrastructure is so important to the long term sustainability of the grains industry’. The TL headlined ‘Pay now – or a lot later’. The railway had been originally built ‘by people with a lot of foresight’ for future beneficiaries (AN 6; I 7 October; CP 10 March; CT 9; CWD 30 October; DL 5 February; TL 30 October; WA 30; WWA 31 October 2003). Railways were not owned by the present generation but held in trust, on loan, for future generations. Some traditional railway administrators had thought likewise (Chapter 4).

A Gwabegar grain grower described closing the line as ‘shutting’ (TL 3 July 2003). ‘Shutting’ carried agricultural imagery of closing a farm gate across a pathway. The material path would remain, but not the functional passage. Railway infrastructure would remain; but not the more important function of running trains. Railway closure deliberately stopped grain growers pursuing their normal business practices and reciprocating within the relationship. The General Manager Grower Services & Communications, SunRice, Mike Hedditch, said ‘it would be a tragedy if closure of the line removed that prospect’ (AN 6; I 7 October 2003). The prospect, to which he referred, was developing a major grain terminal at Willbriggie. Railway closure limited future agronomic development.

Grain line communities said railway closure was counter to the historic trend of betterment, further expressed as ‘negative development in the bush’. The NSW Farmers Association was concerned ‘to show the human cost of neglecting investment in country branch lines’ (DL 12 August; TL 3 July 2003). Grain line communities said railway closure jeopardised their future literally as well as economically. Railway closure would cost lives through being a ‘Branch line road ‘bomb’’. NSW Farmers’ Association Angus MacNeil agreed saying ‘there’s a safety time bomb
waiting to go off” (CWD 29; NDL 29 August; TL 3 July 2003). Increasing road traffic would lead to increased road accidents, resulting in more country deaths. The government–country relationship was ultimately about people. Railway closure now would result in loss of country settlers in the future.

Railway closure signified government displaying poor stewardship of existing resources invested in country railways. Railway closure jeopardised a better future, was a step backwards, and in more extreme writings precluded any future. The future seemed worse than the present – a fearful prospect. Railway closure jeopardising the future didn’t make countryminded sense.

**Seeming Senseless**

This theme label was drawn from the *AE* headline “Pulling the plug on train makes no sense” (1 October 2003, p.6), Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4.

*Pulling the plug on train makes no sense*  
(AE 1 October 2003)

Keeping the Tamworth–Armidale line open made common sense. A Glen Innes writer exasperatedly hoped for ‘a sensible and logical set of solutions’ to the future of the line, i.e., keep it open. Friends of the Northern Railways described the decision to keep the line open as ‘a victory for the people and common sense’. Richard Torbay described the Solutions Team recommendations to keep the line open as ‘sensible proposals’ – sensible in
contrast to government’s senseless closure. Country communities described railway closure as ‘this nonsense’ \((AE\ 29;\ GIE\ 2\ October;\ NDL\ 10\ December\ 2003)\).

New England communities ridiculed railway closure. Richard Torbay described railway closure as ‘ridiculous’. The \(GIE\) described closing the Tamworth–Armidale section as ‘a ridiculous idea’, and later as ‘ludicrous in the extreme’. Member for Northern Tablelands, Ray Chappell, described railway closure as ‘silly’ – in lacking good sense. An Armidale resident asked rhetorically ‘How absurd is it for the State Government to be considering further cutting of regional rail services?’ \((AE\ 17;\ DT\ 24\ October;\ GIE\ 25\ September;\ 2;\ ST\ 26\ October;\ Torbay\ media\ release\ 8\ September\ 2003)\). Ideas make, or do not make, sense from the speaker’s perspective. To New England communities’ government railway closure seemed senseless.

SRA CEO, Vince Graham, ‘questioned the wisdom of [AWB] spending almost 60million dollars building two, big grain storage facilities at Werris Creek and Stockinbingal’. ‘Wisdom’ connoted more than just intelligence. Wisdom included knowledge of what is true and right, coupled with judgement as to action \((Macquarie\ Dictionary\ 1991)\). He suggested ‘the money could be better spent’ keeping grain lines open, to better serve the grain industry’s competitiveness. Railway closure was against ‘the broader interest of grain growers’. ‘Broader interest’ connoted taking a wider perspective on railway closure than just single line economics, as had been the case in the traditional relationship \((Chapter\ 4)\). Agri-business GrainCorp Ltd. questioned the benefit of spending money on Grain Consolidation Facilities located along mainlines so reducing the volumes of grain to be hauled along grain lines. Managing Director, Tom Keene, said the money ‘would benefit grain growers more if it was applied to branch line improvements’. Member of the Grain Growers Association, Dan Manglesdorf, agreed the money ‘should be reallocated to ensure existing rail infrastructure is not lost’ \((NWM(i)\ 10\ November;\ RN(i)\ 31\ October;\ SWM(i)\ 3\ November\ 2003)\). The issue was not what technically could be done; but what sensibly should be done.

Grain line communities wanted government to act sensibly. Communities saw rail as simply the all-encompassing ‘best method of
transporting bulk commodities such as grain’. As the best available technology, then keeping railway lines open made more sense than railway closure. Tim Fischer called for ‘a “sensible” agreement between’ ARTC and RIC to keep grain-only lines open (CT 9 October; TL 31 July 2003). Use of quotation marks drew reader’s attention to the connoted meanings of shared values. Sense to him and the readers was to keep lines open.

Like New England communities, grain line communities ridiculed the idea of railway closure. One grain grower described the idea as ludicrous and stupid. The TL described decisions to close lines as taking ‘the easy option’, connoting intellectual laziness or personal cowardice. Another writer echoed the idea of taking the easy option, in describing closure as government would simply ‘dump many country branch lines’. Not worth keeping open, the lines would be dumped as if waste (CT 24; TL 3 July 2003). Government devalued its gift to the point of worthlessness.

Government allegedly had a ‘fix when fail’ policy which kept railway infrastructure, and therefore train services, at the lowest possible standard. ‘The government’s ‘fix-when-fail’ approach to grain branch lines has resulted in a less than satisfactory [railway] infrastructure’ (CG 21 November; CT 9 October; DT 4 August; WWA 3 June 2003). With structural failure being the trigger for maintenance work, poor quality track could not be improved to a standard commensurate with countryminded expectations.

Railway closure seemed senseless government decision making so didn’t make countryminded sense.

**Mindless Railway Closure**

Traditionally government and country communities can be considered as two parties within a single relationship bounded by shared-meanings of the railway. Their exchange of gifts was based on trust. However railway closure seemed un-imaginary, rigid, and narrow minded; and inclined and disposed towards government in the city.

Railway closure seemed unimaginative. One Sydney writer drew on popular mythology of the unimaginative accountant, saying Parry ‘shows all the attributes of an accountant […] the same head-in-the-sand approach. […] It’s all too hard: just get rid of it’ (SMH 16 September 2003). Opposition Transport Spokesperson, Mike Gallacher, described railway
Closure as simplistic ‘the it’s too hard, so just shut it down’ approach’. A resident echoed an idea from decades previously, suggesting sarcastically ‘we should do the unthinkable – expand it [i.e., the line through New England and from Wallan-garra on to Brisbane]’. Introducing sarcasm into a growing difference of opinion between government and country hinted at destabilising the relationship. Another argued government lacked ‘a rail management strategy’ so used ‘country and branch line closures as a management tool’. Country Labor MLC, Catherine Robertson, said saving the train service required ‘intelligent cost cutting’ – closure was unintelligent. A Sydney resident said he was ‘sick of the Government’s excuses for why things can’t be done’ (AE 29 October; 5 November; GIE 30; NDL 8 October; 4 December 2003). Railway closure lacked thought, initiative, creativity, and imagination.

Government would no longer provide railway services on offer. Communities had to fully use the train services. Black and white, use it or lose it, policy setting seemed mindlessly simplistic. Consideration seemed binary, absolute, rigid, and broadcast certainty of consequence.

New England community representatives said railways have social benefits. Country Labor, Dr. Greg Smith, economist at UNE said ‘The Parry report failed to recognise the vital ‘social capital’ role provided by Countrylink for country communities’, and ‘questioned the logic of [Parry 2003a]’. Friends of the Northern Railway agreed saying ‘it is not only an economic decision: it is also a social and an environmental decision’ (AE 17 October; NDL 20 September; 8 October 2003). Closing grain lines because of individual line financial performance was too narrow a focus (CP 10 March 2003). Focussing on the single issue of finance was narrow-minded.

Railway closure discriminated against country through inclination and disposition towards the city and away from country. Railway closure seemed careless towards country needs, and heedless of country voices. Country railway closure can be seen as signifying mindlessness towards country, country-mindlessness – countrymindlessness.

Country communities looking at railway closure through a countryminded lens, including my additional identified elements, focussed on the other, on the government party’s obligations towards country. Communities basing their argument on elements of countrymindedness
implicitly overestimated similarities between their own perspective and that of the other government party. There was an egocentric empathy gap (Dunning, Van Boven & Loewenstein 2001) between country communities and government. Neither party displayed evidence of seriously empathising with the other party’s perspective, needs, or wants.

**Conclusion**

Government and country communities seemed to see railway closure through very different lenses. Government looked primarily through a financial lens. Country communities drew heavily on elements of countrymindedness in their 2003 discourse. New England and grain line communities shared some countryminded elements and did not share others. Both shared a range of additional elements. Railway closure seemed mindless towards country – countrymindless. Countrymindless railway closure threatened some stabilising elements of the traditional government–country social exchange relationship.
CHAPTER 8

Destabilising the Government–Country Social Exchange Relationship

Country to feel pinch of transport plan

*Headlined the NDL* (9 September 2003)

Introduction

Following release of the Parry Report (2003a) and the possible closure of fifteen grain lines (Figure 3.1) many country communities reacted. Much of the reaction seemed to express elements of the Australian country culture referred to as countrymindedness (Aitkin 1985). Chapter 7 concluded that country communities interpreted railway closure through a countryminded lens to some extent. That contrasted starkly with government valuing railway closure primarily through a financial policy lens.

This chapter presents a novel application of social exchange theory to large community groups, examines destabilising of the relationship which had seemed to be in a form of practical equilibrium, and is applied in a real-world situation. The chapter embraces both New England and grain line, i.e., country, communities, and focuses on 2003. The chapter is structured around six points, addressing each in turn. First, railway closure destabilised the relationship. Second, country communities had resources at their disposal and chose to mobilise them. Third, collective action was a significant part of that mobilisation. Fourth, New England communities reacted strongly. Fifth, New England communities reflected. Sixth, country communities and government moved towards restabilising the relationship.
Destabilising the Relationship

I argue that government’s countrymindless railway closure destabilised, for a while at least, what Homans (1958, p. 600) called a ‘practical equilibrium’, in the traditional government–country social exchange relationship (Chapters 4; 5). Destabilisation can be considered as part of what Molm (1981, p.730) called the ‘disruption’ stage in the life cycle of this relationship.

Discussion of this point is arranged around the destabilising elements identified in the literature review (Chapter 2) of: government marginalising country’s reciprocal value; government withholding country’s reward; government lacking affective regard for country; government focussing on finance; government’s distributive injustice; government’s procedural injustice; government’s interactional injustice; country losing trust in government discharging its obligations towards country; country losing trust in government’s integrity; government lacking commitment towards country; government-country social solidarity; government introducing negotiation; and country’s negative emotions. While each element can be considered discretely they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. I will deal with each element one at a time in order as above.

Government Marginalised Country’s Reciprocal Value

Decentralisation remained a legislated objective of the SRA (NSW Transport Administration Act 1988). The legal drafters and approving politicians had paid at least some regard to the exchange relationship, at least implicitly. However railway closure suggested that government saw use of the railway as contributing little of practical value in achieving that objective. Michael Costa descreid New England train use as generally ‘poorly patronised’ (AE 24 October 2003). Specifically he quantified use as low, being ‘for just 68 passengers’ (AE 24; GIE 28 October 2003). Government valued New England’s reciprocal usage as marginal.

However, one resident said ‘she had moved to Armidale two years ago because it had a regular train service to Sydney’ (NDL 23 September 2003). The railway could still be significant in the sense of settlement. Therefore, ‘a reduction in service quality for regional communities’ would make New England less attractive to potential settlers and encourage
Destabilising the Government–Country Social Exchange Relationship

resettlement elsewhere (GIE 2; NDL 20; 24 October 2003). Headlining ‘Train service vital for some’ (GIE 21 October 2003) attempted to justify ongoing operation; but ‘for some’ acknowledged minimal quantified use. Material users, such as the elderly or disabled, seemed to value the service highly, more so than some others. To New England communities the fact of some railway use overrode the low quantum of usage. People valued the potential usefulness of the railway rather than its material usefulness to them as would be derived from actual use of it.

Grain line communities were not using the railway directly to extend settlement. Closure of passenger stations had peaked during the 1970s (Figure 6.5), suggesting that use of rail to achieve that reciprocal offering, unintentionally or deliberately, had ceased at least three decades before 2003. Rising transport costs would affect more distant grain growing most, so reducing the area of economically profitable grain production around the margins. A flow on effect of reducing grain production, through increasing transport costs, would be to contribute towards shrinking of the attendant farming communities (Chapter 7).

New England community choice of transport modes could not be predicted, from the available alternatives, by its traditional relationship with the government railway (Chapter 5); but could be extrapolated from more recent (Chapter 6) and then current usage in 2003. In preferring to use other modes of personal transport the community minimised use of passenger trains. Using the railway to maintain the land in its already settled condition was of minimal value to government in the exchange, as it would be happening regardless of train services, generating problems of inequality between the cost of giving the gift and value of the reciprocity. Government had withdrawn most country branch line passenger train services long ago (Chapter 6), so reformatting, from rail to road, its giving of personal transport as part of the exchange relationship. Providing long-distance public passenger transport in and to New England could seemingly be maintained cheaper by substituting buses, as had already happened along many grain lines and some other NSW branch lines. However in the New England media, bus travel was negatively associated with bus crashes, physical discomfort, and loss of social status. In addition, UNE claimed it was using the railway through use by university students including
international students. Railway closure threatened to reduce student numbers so retard producing national wealth and export income.

Grain line communities were still using the railway to develop national wealth through hauling primary produce to market and port. Grain line communities saw the railway as having significant material and economic value to themselves, to the state, and to Australia (Chapter 7).

One grain line area newspaper editor argued that ‘the railways did work’ (CT 24 July 2003) – ‘did’ placed work into the past, contrasted with not working now. Representative of the Gwabegar/Binnaway action committee, Jamie O’Brien, asserted ‘The railway has been part of the supply chain for decades [since 10 September 1923]’ (CT 9 October 2003) which closure would end. The CT headed (9 October 2003) ‘The once busy sheds and railway yards in the towns of Binnaway, Coonabarabran, Baradine and Gwabegar are a reminder of a time when rural industry figured more importantly in the affairs of the state’. The writer saw features of the disused railways as symbolic. Grain line communities saw and articulated government marginalisation of primary industry. Changes in world commodity markets meant the contribution of export grain to Australian national wealth was relatively minor (ABS 2001). In terms of reciprocity, government seemed reluctant to invest in maintaining grain line railways because its direct financial return on the investment would be marginal. The issue was not marginal to grain growers’ business costs, however.

Government no longer behaved in ways which tended to increase country outcomes that government valued positively, consistent with social exchange theory’s assumption about the parties that they behave in ways to increase outcomes they value and decrease outcomes they do not value (Molm 1994). To government, cost of giving seemed to outweigh its reward from country. Government profit, that is reward less cost, in a social not just financial sense, tended towards minimal, if not being negative, so increasing the likelihood of government’s behavioural change as proposed by Homans (1958, p. 606). Marginalisation of government’s dependence on country for increasing settlement and national wealth made the exchange increasingly risky for country and the relationship potentially unstable. As Molm, Peterson, Takahashi (1999) noted, power in exchange networks is assumed to derive from the availability of alternative relations. Thus government
marginalising the value it placed, or felt obliged to place, on country’s reciprocal gifts also imputed power to government to focus on other relationships with alternative parties to achieve its goals.

**Government Withheld Country's Reward**

Unlike government defining an open railway as just infrastructure (Chapter 2); country communities defined their railway as infrastructure and attendant operating train services (Figure 6.1). Communities saw government as the source of a transport service; not just the owner of the facilities and trains.

The railway was a reward that country enjoyed from participating in the social exchange relationship with government. The reward had been considerable and long-lasting (Chapter 4). The reward implied country dependence on government; but not necessarily powerlessness within the relationship.

Many railway items along the Tamworth–Wallan-garra line had been listed as cultural heritage (Appendix 5.2). These were items that the communities wanted to keep for senses of past and cultural identity (NSW HO 1996). A Glen Innes resident said the ‘railway infrastructure and services we believe to be part of our economic and social heritage have been paid for by our past and present taxes and earned as a regional asset’ (AE 29; GIE 30 October 2003). The writer clearly saw the railway in the context of a New England–government exchange, and implied that there was some sort of perceived practical equilibrium in that exchange.

A New England resident described the local railway as ‘our much loved’ train and ‘our beautiful Victorian railway station’. The AE Editor headlined ‘our train is special’. Friends of the Northern Railway asserted ‘It’s not just any train that is under threat, but our train, Armidale’s train’ (AE 17; 29 October 2003). The AI (12 November 2003) headlined ‘Hands Off Our Train’. New England communities expressed a strong sense of local attachment to the railway, so indicating how railway closure was seen as a threat, prompting reaction.

A resident hypothesised that if ‘the service is taken away the rail line will deteriorate and become unusable’. Another pictured ‘Taking the train away from them is like cutting off their lifeline to the outside world’. The
Shires Association said ‘don’t take our trains too’. The *NDL* editorialised railway services ‘should [not] be taken away simply in the name of economic rationalism’. The *GIE* claimed ‘governments should be investing in rail services; not taking them away’. The local Member said ‘the NSW Government is [...] intent on taking away Armidale’s CountryLink rail service’. The Member for Northern Tablelands expressed concern that ‘government would take away our service’ (*AE* 29 September; 17 October; *GIE* 25 September; *NDL* 11; 12; 23 September 2003). New England communities interpreted government withholding the reward (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 1999) through railway closure as government ‘taking away’ the reward.

Richard Torbay said railway closure would ‘deprive our region of its most affordable system of public transport’. A passenger said railway closure would ‘deprive people of such a nice way to travel’ (*NDL* 23; Torbay media release 8 September 2003). Deprive appeared as taking away something New England communities expected to have.

Likewise grain line communities saw railway closure as government taking away. A Narrabri Shire Councillor described railway closure as ‘another government facility is taken away from Gwabegar’. GrainCorp Central Division Manager, Murray Wilkinson, said railway closure ‘takes away a valuable piece of infrastructure’ used to transport grain (*AN* 6 October; *NC* 10 July 2003).

Railway closure exercised government power through withholding the reward country enjoyed from participating in the relationship. By withholding reward from the exchange partner, contingent on the prior behaviour of the partner (Chapter 6), government sought to influence the exchange outcome in the relationship; but was seen by country communities as ‘taking away’ from them. Molm (2003) asserted gains and loss are not seen as equivalent. Communities are loss averse, subjectively seeing loss weigh more heavily than gain, and in this case there was no perceivable gain. Until the offer of the proposed CountryLink Solutions Team, which might have been seen as a gain, government offered nothing which might have helped maintain the deal and therefore stability. The CountryLink Solutions Team initiative was a consultative initiative of the Minister for Transport Services, Michael Costa. SRA CEO Vince Graham said that SRA
was but a participant in the process, later saying that he was not involved with the team. That was a matter that was being dealt with locally and by the Ministry of Transport. It was a community group; not a RailCorp group. (General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4, 14 November 2003, http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/e62d3b66180beb32ca256de0008808a5a/FILE/Transcript%202014%20November%202003%20-%20Budget%20Estimates%20202003-2004%20-%20Transport.pdf; General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4, 10 February 2005, http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/5de782d41de92c70ca256fa5001b7f41/FILE/Transport%20-%205B10February2005%5D.pdf, both accessed 1/1/2013). The community was dealing directly with the elected government. The SRA remained as but an agent. The offers of coaches in New England and grain receiving depots along mainlines (Chapter 7) were unacceptable. Scaling down financial support for the railway services conveyed perceived government disrespect of country (Wear 2000).

**Government Lacked Affective Regard**

Railway closure seemed to lack affective regard, i.e., positive feelings for and evaluations of the other party (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a), for country communities. Traditionally government had shown considerable and long-lasting affective regard for country communities through giving and operating the railway, and in image making (Chapter 4). Mass closure of stations and lines through the 1970s into the 1990s (Figures 4.4; 6.4; 6.5) which were, for long periods of time, known to have been individually uneconomic, suggests there were reasons, other than just economics, behind government’s increasing willingness to close them. Declining economic importance of agriculture, declining rural population, increasing cultural diversity in cities, growing environmental concerns about how land was being managed, all contributed to a shift in the way Australian’s imagined, and felt towards, their nation away from an ‘old-style agricultural country’ (Brett 2007, p. 10). Government’s affective regard for country, in general, seemed to be declining.

Armidale claimed prestige flowing from being a ‘university city’ and ‘a city the size of Armidale’ (AE 17; 22; S-H 19 October 2003). Armidale
residents described trains as ‘proper facilities’, and ‘proper’ transport (*NDL* 24 October 2003) for their community. ‘Proper’ connoted appropriately befitting their status as country communities. Therefore, ‘Railway closure was a smack in the face to Armidale’ (Curator of the Armidale Folk Museum, Peter Chambers, 2009, personal discussion). Closure could be seen as insulting – a potentially destabilising attitude.

A New England resident described railway closure as ‘outright discrimination to those of us who live in the country’ (*AE* 1 October 2003). Country Labor’s Greg Smith, an economist at UNE, described comparing country rail and city ferry services so as ‘to place CountryLink in an unfavourable light’ (*NDL* 20 September 2003), implying government purposefulness. Similarly, the *GIE* (2 October 2003) described ‘to single out Armidale[’s] railway link as a panacea for the ills of our State public transport system is ludicrous in the extreme and a slight on regional communities’. The *NDL* (11 September 2003) editorialised that railway closure would ‘effectively make public transport users in the bush second-class citizens’; irrespective of possible coach transport, and assumed a subservient country in the relationship. A Friends of the Northern Railway spokesperson said ‘State Government was trying to shift the blame for the huge blowout in the costs of city rail services to the country’; and ‘make us [country] the scapegoats’ (*NDL* 16 September 2003).

Government failed to display positive feelings for or evaluations of country indicating a lack of affective regard for country, so eroding government–country integrative bonds (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a).

**Government Focussed on Financial Exchange**

Government expressing its values of the railway primarily in financial terms continued reformatting (Chapter 6) its view of the nature of the relationship away from accepting financial losses on individual lines, for their contribution to the overall transport network (Chapter 4).

\(^1\) Country Labor is the country wing of the NSW Branch of the Australian Labor Party. It is the voice of the Labor Party in rural NSW and in turn the voice of rural NSW in Parliament and within the party ([http://www.nswalp.com/member-central/party-units/country-labor/](http://www.nswalp.com/member-central/party-units/country-labor/), accessed 12/3/2012).
Transport Minister, Michael Costa argued ‘We have a very expensive and poorly patronised train service’, costing ‘nearly $6.4 million each year and $17000 a day to run for just 68 passengers’ (AE; NDL 24; GIE 28 October 2003). The railway transporting ‘just’ sixty-eight passengers per day was presented as being minimal and significantly less than an acceptable quantum of reciprocal use. Government made country communities feel like they were being blamed for railway closure; while they saw themselves as the victims of railway closure.

New England recognised government’s focus on financial quantification. ‘Figures were the whole basis of his [Michael Costa’s] responses to protestors – economic rationalism’. Several writers identified ‘economic rationalists in the government’ as responsible for the closure. Economist at UNE, Greg Smith, described railway closure as a ‘crude cost-cutting option’, as did others (NDL 12 September; 24; WN 30 October 2003). Government’s instrumental approach to valuing the railway contrasted starkly with the more expressive approach to valuing the same railway by the New England communities. Government failed to understand the non-material value of the train service and its place in the long term exchange relationship. The train was culturally valued highly, something which the passenger figures alone would not indicate. While the government was counting, New England communities were not thinking quantitatively at all. Government proposing closure based solely on finances was bound to fail to be acceptable to the other exchange party.

Likewise along the grain lines. The Land headlined ‘Unprofitable grain lines frozen out’ i.e., closed, followed by ‘the NSW Government is most unlikely to spend anything like the $500 million’ needed to keep restricted lines open (2 January 2003). Closing lines would ‘rip funds from country freight [lines]’. ‘Cost impacts are the reasons for wanting to close restricted lines’, and ‘Cost impacts are the reasons cited for the closures’ of grain lines (CT 3; NC 10 July; TL 3 July 2003). ‘Bringing in a privatised commercial system into what was previously a State-owned, cross subsidised system’ (L 30 October 2003) highlighted community recognition of government’s change away from traditional railway economics (Chapter 4).
In New England, focussing on finance blinkered government against anticipating local reaction. Government even miscalculated the very form of currency being used in the exchange. When Michael Costa stepped out of the Armidale railway station and was confronted by the crowd he was visibly stunned. When Barry Makepeace, a wheelchair-bound resident, offered to swap chairs with Costa (NDL 24 October 2003), Costa went silent (NDL journalist, 2009 personal discussion). Michael Torbay later claimed the demonstration ‘took the government completely by surprise’ (GIE 12 December 2003). Government had apparently not considered the socio-cultural impacts, or at least the popular interpretations of government’s intentions. He said it was ‘The turning point’ implying a definable shift from government’s previous position, and ‘After the rally he [Costa] changed tack’ (NDL 10 December 2003). Chairman of the New England Rail Inc., Richard Rowe asserted ‘I am sure they [government] couldn’t have imagined the upheaval their proposal created’. The government’s view was rejected and the relationship entered a different arena. It was taken out of the usual realms of parliament and government departments into a very public arena.

Government focus on financial exchange made the exchanged resources divisible and quantifiable, making the value of the reciprocity more easily comparable and actively controllable, in turn making fairness in the exchange a more readily identifiable issue. Government advising New England communities of the financial cost of keeping the line open overcame, in part, Zhang & Epley’s (2009) contention that receivers of benefits in social exchange may not be aware of the cost of giving that is born by the other party. The financial cost incurred by government became highly visible to both parties. Some sections of New England communities became more sensitive to the cost incurred by government when calculating the value of the reciprocity that would be appropriate in exchange. This resulted in some saying local communities should start using rail for freight and increase their use of rail for passenger transport. Government seemed to have made some progress in convincing some of the community of government’s argument. Increased use eventuating would indicate that the communities had achieved a level of understanding of the other party’s wants. Improved taking of the other party’s perspective should lead to a
more mutually satisfactory and stable relationship. Country communities saw railway closure in a much wider set of terms than did government.

**Government’s Distributive Injustice**

Country communities traditionally saw government distribute the rewards from the relationship across the whole railway network in a seemingly country-mindedly just manner (Chapter 4). Country communities now interpreted railway closure as government unjustly distributing rewards from and costs of participating in the relationship as predictable from (Homans (1958, p. 604) and Molm, Collett, Schaefer (2006)).

Drawing on Australian egalitarianism, the *NDL* (11 November) editorialised that railway closure was counter to ‘the role of any government to ensure equality of access to services for people, regardless of where they may live’. Richard Torbay said ‘country services should [not] be scrapped to pay for metropolitan upgrades’ (Torbay media release 8 September 2003). A local said ‘the Carr Government’s intention is to harvest rail budget funds to spend on road tunnels, expressways and sporting complexes to woo its Sydney voter base’ (*NDL* 20 September 2003). The National’s Member for Barwon, Ian Slack-Smith, said ‘every man, woman and child living outside Sydney [already] pays $480 to subsidise the people who use Sydney public transport’ (*NDL* 27 October 2003). The ‘Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association claimed it [railway closure] was unfair to penalise one group [New England] to benefit another [city]’ (*NDL* 10 September 2003). Under such interpretations, parties in the relationship became more separably identifiable, and railway closure would redistribute rewards away from country and towards the city.

Member for Northern Tablelands, Ray Chappell, described railway closure as unfair (*AE* 17 October 2003). The *AE* Editor suggested (22 October 2003) ‘And there is the principle of fairness – surely we [Armidale] have as much right to a public rail service as people in Sydney do’. Unfairness would undermine country’s trust in government.

While participating in the relationship rewarded country communities; participation through railway closure cost them. Armidale Mayor, Brian Chetwynd, said railway closure was ‘a huge economic disadvantage to the region’. A UNE spokesperson said ‘the UNE would be
greatly disadvantaged if rail services to Armidale were cut’. A local claimed that ‘Those who depend on public transport would be very disadvantaged’ (AI 15; NDL 8 October; 10 December 2003). New England communities saw disadvantage as being unequally born by themselves.

Grain line communities expressed similar concerns about unjust distribution of costs. Railway closure shifted some of the financial costs of transporting grain from State government to Local government and to grain growers (CG 21 November; TI 24; WWA 31 October 2003). Grain line communities saw financial cost shifting as unjust. Greater bio-physical and social environmental costs (Chapter 7) were also seen as being unjustly born by grain line communities.

Country expected that the rewards and costs they experienced would be, more or less, what it perceived as justly distributed within the relationship (Homans 1958, p. 603) according to broadly conceived but ill-defined cultural norms of justice. Distribution of rewards from and costs of participating in the relationship should be fair. However fairness went undefined, and country already had a perception of city benefits (Chapter 6; Figure 6.2). Fairness seemed to depend on community impressions principally aimed at benefitting themselves. Distributive injustice undermined equilibrium in the relationship. Country compared the threat of railway closure in 2003 with historic patterns (Chapter 6), patterns in the city, and patterns inter-state. Country’s previous experiences and expectations discussed in Chapter 6, fed country dissatisfaction in the relationship.

**Government's Procedural Injustice**

Beyond distributive injustice, closure of the Tamworth–Armidale railway, as interpreted locally from Parry (2003a), seemed procedurally unjust to country communities. Perceived process or procedural injustice by the other party degrades perceived fairness of the other party, creating feelings of inequality within the relationship (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 2003; Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2006).

Government had given the original Tamworth–Wallan-garra line in response to New England communities asking (Chapter 4). There had been decades of government–country dialogue about possible closure (Chapter
6). Government reopening the Tamworth–Armidale passenger service in 1993, symbolically a re-giving, had been in response to New England asking (Chapter 6).

Richard Torbay, Member for Northern Tablelands, asserted that, Transport Minister, Michael Costa ‘needs to do more than consult, he needs to listen’ (NDL 11 September 2003). After the event, Leader of the NSW Nationals, Andrew Stoner, criticised the State Labour Party for being ‘a government that refuses to even debate the issue’. Likewise Torbay said ‘what we all objected to was an arbitrary decision to remove the service without discussion or negotiation’ (NDL 20 November; GIE 12 December 2003).

Torbay wanted ‘to discuss guidelines and procedures’ for the government’s proposed CountryLink Solutions Team.² He said it would be ‘an opportunity to discuss’; and ‘a useful forum to put some [New England] solutions forward’ (AI 29; AE 31 October 2003). Torbay focussed on procedure, and implied concern that the government’s procedure might not be procedurally fair to country interests.

Grain line communities expressed similar concerns. The Tottenham–Bogan Gate Rail Line Action Committee said making major change to the relationship ‘without any real community consultation was bound to lead to some glitches’ (L 30 October 2003).³ ‘Real’ questioned the perceived inclusion of local community consultation. Shadow Minister for Transport, Peter Debnam, described lack of government consultation with local Councils as leading to ‘frustration that the government has just stone-walled them [councils] and not wanted to talk to them’ (CWD 17 January 2003).

Railway closure without perceived prior discussion between the two parties suggested that government might act unilaterally. Country community assertion that government was not communicating with them, thereby not partaking of normative discourse within the relationship, separated the parties. The communities wanted community–government discussion in the process, and judged government’s perceived failure to communicate as procedurally unfairness by government. Community leaders

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² Michael Costa announced a proposal to form this joint government and New England community representative body on 28 October 2003 (GIE).
³
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wanted to re-normalise local community–government dialogue to at least partly re-establish community’s perceived procedural justice.

**Government's Interactional Injustice**

Beyond distributional and procedural injustice, New England communities saw railway closure as unfair inter-party treatment; it was interactionally unjust (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2006). Railway closure by the government partner disrespected country’s sense of self, traditions and values, and lacked recognition of country’s capacity to contribute to country’s perceived social goals for Australia of wealth and settlement.

Torbay called on Government to ‘reverse its decision and to look after the people of country NSW’ (Legislative Assembly Hansard #33 16 September 2003, http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au, accessed 18/12/2003). The NDL (3 October 2003) headlined ‘Country Labor ‘fails country’’, going on to say Members of Country Labor ‘are failing to support regional communities’. Friends of the Northern Railway’s President, Matthew Tierney, claimed ‘the people of this region had been betrayed by the decision-makers in Sydney’ (AE 17 October 2003). Government was failing in its duty of caring for the other party in the relationship.

Grain line communities were not recorded as expressing concern about interactional injustice. They seemed to be more content to work within existing (e.g.: CWD 29 August; NWM(i) 21 July; YW 17 September 2003), and newly formed, country-government institutionalised organisations. Farmer organisations and grain-line region local government both had keen interests in railway closure; which differed in degree from the situation in New England.

Community narratives were expressed in terms of the unjust interactional treatment, indeed mistreatment, which country communities perceived they were receiving from their government partner. Feeling that government interests conflicted with their country interests, which was clearly so along grain lines; but not so obvious in New England, country blamed government for unfair treatment within the relationship. Yet New England communities’ differed from grain line communities in the height of

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3 The Grain Infrastructure Advisory Committee (GIAC) was formed by NSW government as a government–industry advisory body. GIAC included grain industry representatives,
expression of their local reaction. Emotional reaction surrounded country’s judgement of government unfairness.

Country Lost Trust that Government would Discharge its Obligations

Government and country had been exchanging for decades (Chapters 4 and 5). Government had generally discharged its obligations despite expressing concerns about declining country reciprocity (Chapter 6). Trains were running regularly to a timetable largely independent of usage. The high frequency of exchange had traditionally produced trust (Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a) in country that government would continue to discharge its obligations under the relationship (Blau 1964, p. 94; Ekeh 1974, p.56).

Government tried to remove itself from the responsibility of giver. Michael Torbay reflected that Michael Costa tried to ‘put the responsibility on the community to justify retention of the service’ (NDL 18 September 2003). Justifying retention posited the railway as no longer looking like a gift given by government; but that keeping the ‘gift’ had to be earned.

A DT (4 August 2003) writer said ‘State Government will not guarantee these lines will remain open beyond 2004’. Having entered into the relationship with an unspecified future time frame, New England saw the relationship continuing for ever; rather than indeterminably.

Richard Torbay said ‘A rail link really is one of the Government’s obligations to the rate paying public’. Country Labor’s Dr. Greg Smith, economist at UNE, said ‘public transport is a public utility that people expect the government to support’. Shadow Minister for Transport, Michael Gallacher, alleged ‘There is a moral obligation on the government to retain some services, and the rail system is one of them’ (TI 24 October 2003). Local communities agreed saying ‘as yet another State Government fails to meet its obligations in maintaining rail infrastructure and services’ (AE 29; GIE 30; NDL 21 October; 20 September 2003).

Through time the railway and its benefits had become seen as entitled rights. Tamworth MP, Peter Draper, asserted railway closure was ‘an attack on the fundamental rights of country people to access services that our city counterparts take for granted’; and was ‘abandoning country

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issued two reports in February 2003, and ran four regional workshops during April 2003.

Grain line communities expressed similar concerns. Spokespersons for the Tottenham-Bogan Gate Rail Line Action Committee asserted that ‘The present State Government, has the responsibility of providing a commercial, fit-for-purpose rail line’. However, ‘the State Government has pulled out of its obligations [to keep the line open]’ said the Manager for the Grain Growers Association, Terrence Farrell (TL 30; CT 9 October 2003). ‘The Government is placing the cost back onto the communities. The State Government has pulled out of its obligations and is passing them on to regional communities’ (CT 9 October 2003).

Obligations, responsibilities, expectations, rights, morality, and deservedness all influenced country satisfaction with the relationship. Country dissatisfaction with railway closure derived in part from loss of the train service as an outcome, plus failing in the various cultural expectations that country brought to the relationship.

Responding to the government announcement on 9 December 2003 to keep the Tamworth–Armidale line open, the NDL headlined ‘Rail link safe for now’, and quoted Richard Torbay saying ‘If the Government honours their part of the bargain’ (10 December 2003). ‘For now’ implied an uncertain long term future, with closure still a future possibility, while ‘if’ implied likely uncertainty. Torbay went on to say ‘The New England Rail Inc will continue to maintain a watching brief on the government’ (GIE 12 December 2003). Likewise Friends of the Northern Railway President, Don Martin, said ‘his group would now “keep an eye” on how the reforms progressed [original emphasis]’ (NDL 10 December 2003). ‘To maintain a watching brief’ and ‘keep an eye on’ implied the community did not trust government to maintain its side of the agreement to keep the line open.

Government was seen as failing to deliver its side of the exchange. However, country saw itself as delivering its offerings of settlement and national wealth, so generating problems of inequality in the exchange consistent with Zafirovski (2003; 2005).

Without strong extrinsic reason for the parties to remain in relationship, the loss of trust seriously destabilized the relationship. It would
offer country negligible encouragement to expend excess time and resources on delivering its exchange items, innovate in delivery, self-sacrifice for the other party, or accept greater responsibility in delivering its offerings toward serving the greater collective. Lacking trust in government undermined the previous stabilising effects of the relationship. Loss of trust allowed country to believe government was taking unfair advantage of and potentially exploiting them, which may well have generated further loss of trust. Country demanded immediate fairness, became more calculative, and focused on achieving shorter-term outcomes. All of these were counter to the traditional character of the relationship which had been based on implied use and long-term returns on the investment in the infrastructure.

**Country Lost Trust in Government's Integrity**

Country had attributed moral trustworthiness to government through decades of exchanging with its like-minded countryminded partner (Chapter 4). Now country communities interpreted railway closure as government immorality and dishonesty.


Michael Costa said he was ‘open minded’ and ‘There has been no decision made about withdrawing the rail service between Tamworth and Armidale’ (GIE 28 October 2003). Six weeks previously, Richard Torbay had stated ‘Michael Costa already intended to slash the service’. Government ‘is not telling the story as it is’ (NDL 16; 18 September 2003). Richard Torbay and New England Railway Inc. Spokesperson, Richard Rowe, described railway closure as ‘hypocritical and dishonest’. Councillor, Bev Robol, said ‘Delegates at the meeting had all expressed scepticism about the figures on passenger numbers in the Parry Report’. ‘All representatives claimed that the figures do not accurately represent the patronage of rail services’. ‘The LGA accused the Parry report of “fudging” figures about CountryLink services’. An AE Fact File claimed government patronage figures ‘appear to be deliberately misleading and in no way
representative of actual service utilisation’ – evidencing distrust of government honesty. Liberal MP, Catherine Cusack, spoke similarly, saying StateRail ‘might have mismanaged and overstated the real costs of operating CountryLink’, concluding StateRail ‘may be using accounting tricks’. ‘We can have no confidence in the Carr Government’s figures for country rail’. NSW Nationals Leader, Andrew Stoner, spoke clearly ‘I think he’s [Costa is] lying’. The NDL said Local Government Minister, Tom Kelly, was ‘again trying to play people for suckers’, by telling only half the story, misinterpreting statistics, and spin doctoring (AE 3; 20; AI 29 October; 28 November; GIE 25 September; NDL 16; 18 September; 3; 21 October; 4; 10; 11 December; WN 30 October 2003). Government was seen to be lying to its other party.

Friends of the Northern Railway said ‘we believe the government’s real intention is to close this line completely’ – ‘real’ connoted government hiding its true intent. The local Member also described government as ‘intent on taking away Armidale’s CountryLink rail service’ (AE 17 October; NDL 12 September 2003) – ‘intent’ implied a hidden objective. Train operating company Pacific National said it assumed there would be future cuts (TL 2 January 2003).

One local described railway closure as ‘pretty rotten’ (NDL 23 September 2003) – connoting a morally offensive act. Torbay described Parliamentarians not advocating to keep the line open as taking the ‘cowardly option’ (NDL 3 October 2003). On grain lines the CT claimed ‘The Government and State Rail have taken advantage of the downturn in wheat freight brought about by the drought to threaten the closures, this is a pretty weak thing to do’ (24 July 2003). Inter-party trust was cracking.

A resident described ‘the CountryLink service as “a lifeline”’ [original emphasis]. ‘Taking the train away from them is like cutting off their lifeline to the outside world’, so reimposing the tyranny of distance and increasing New England community’s sense of isolation (AE 29 October; NDL 23 September 2003). While being tied to Sydney by the railway had disadvantages, the railway tie reframed as a lifeline also had advantages. Government cutting the other party’s perceived lifeline seemed morally abhorrent.
Along grain lines, Narrabri Shire Councillor, Alan Burton, said ‘The State Rail Authority (SRA) has announced that they are assessing the situation. That means closure as far as I’m concerned’. Burton implied government was lying. TL emphasised lack of truth in under-costoing the existing road subsidy, and in calculating the railway closure cost-benefit ratio (NWM(i) 21; TL 31 July 2003). Government’s deliberate calculation of benefits to itself countered government trust in country’s implied and unspecified reciprocity.

Government lying to country communities about railway closure undermined inter-party trust. Loss of trust could be generalised from rail-specific to a government party trait. Communities attributed difficulty in the exchange to the untrustworthiness of government, anthropomorphising human characteristics and attributing such human characteristics in considering the other party’s behaviour. Country’s plummeting trust in the integrity of government undermined previous solidarity in the relationship. Instability emerged.

Government Lacked Commitment to Country
Country communities seemed to interpret closure of country railways as government lacking commitment to country communities and to their relationships (Cook & Emerson 1978; Molm, Collett, Schaefer 2007a). Richard Torbay, Member for Northern Tablelands, wanted government to honour its previous ‘commitment that this [New England railway] service would continue’, and called ‘upon the Government to honour it’s[sic] pre-election commitment of no reduction in country rail services’ (Torbay media release 8 September 2003; NDL 18 September 2003).

The Mayor of Armidale Dumaresq, Brian Chetwynd, said ‘You’ve got to have faith in regional NSW’ (AE 24 October 2003); but government seemed to have lost faith in country.

Grain line communities expressed similar concerns. Spokespersons for the Tottenham-Bogan Gate Rail Line Action Committee asserted that closure showed ‘State Government’s lack of commitment [which] is extremely disappointing’. The Editor of the CT wrote that closure ‘clearly shows the general lack of commitment to country issues by the present State Government’. The Grain Growers Association expressed concern about
government failing to keep its ‘commitment to spend approximately $80 million on [grain line] rail infrastructure’ (CT 24 July; TL 30 October; SWM(i) 10 November 2003). Government lack of commitment into the future made country’s future less predictable. Country being unable to rely on its traditional partner destabilised the future of the relationship.

**Dividing the Government and Country Parties**

Government railway closure seemed counter to government–country social solidarity (Widgren 1997) from a country community perspective. Ascribing ‘keep your hands’ to government and ‘off our rail system’ to community (TI 24 October 2003), demarcated government and country as two clearly separable parties. Government function was to keep the railway open; not to exercise proprietary right of closure. While government held the legal power to close the line, exercising that power in a reciprocal exchange would not be typical of such relationships, which are predictably characterised by low use of power (Molm, Peterson, Takahashi 1999). Government use of its power to reduce its exposure to risk would shift the relationship towards a negotiated one, thus becoming a destabilising factor. Government railway closure was taking something that country communities saw as being theirs. Country imagery of government shifted from beneficent giver to thief. Worse, the thief was stealing from the other party within the relationship.

Local communities were using the train service. However, government was more concerned with ‘the current [low] level of passenger demand’, not the fact of actual usage; but had trouble conveying that expectation. Michael Costa saying he was ‘open minded’ was more conciliatory, but did little to avert community fears (AI 29 October; NDL 12 September 2003). Country communities traditionally knew railway costs generally exceeded railway income. Making a profit, or even balancing income and cost, wasn’t the traditional value of or government expectation in running railways. Government had traditionally cross-subsidised sufficient funds to balance the accounts (Chapter 4). Now government seemed to be redefining its role in society, away from a generalised service provider, without having a New England electoral warrant to do so – destabilising the relationship’s notional agreement.
Member for Tamworth, Peter Draper, said ‘They’re [government] dividing the city from the country again’ (NDL 25 September 2003). ‘Again’ as meaning action repeated through time, referred to historic city–country divisions based on physical and psychological distance. ‘Again’ as meaning another instance within the same time period also linked railway closure to other government service withdrawals. Whether dividing was the act itself, or a result of railway closure, or both, was left as an open text for readers to interpret.

Barwon Nationals Member, Ian Slack-Smith, divided the state into those living in Sydney and ‘every man, woman and child living outside Sydney’ (NDL 27 October 2003). Adopting a sense of cultural separation made Sydney the ‘other’. At the same time, the division helped to cement country identity and unity. Country communities defined themselves partly in terms of where-they-did-not live and, by association, what culture they-did-not share. Building on a long tradition of perceived discrimination in Country–National Party political rhetoric, railway closure further divided the once more solid relationship.

Richard Torbay said government had ‘an agenda to sacrifice country rail services to bolster the city public transport system’. The National’s Member for Barwon said likewise ‘there is a very real concern that CountryLink in its entirety will be sacrificed in order to subsidise the enormous costs of public transport in Sydney’ (NDL 3; 27 October 2003). A grain grower said money allocated to branch lines was being reallocated to non-country uses. Routine budgeting was imputed with immoral money-shifting (WWA 31 October 2003).

Traditionally country communities had seen the railway as linking parts of country and other parts of country and country and city together into a single relatively unified entity, through conquering the country Australian tyranny of distance. A visitor described the Tamworth–Armidale line as ‘good for both communities to have this link with each other’. Keeping the line open connoted maintaining a degree of country perceived, if not spatial, proximity to other parts of country and city. Railway closure connoted a degree of distressful separation. A resident complained about the community ‘now being shut off’ from the rest of Australia (AE 1; 29 October; NDL 13 November 2003). Being shut off drew on country
community deep-seated long-lasting senses of physical and social isolation. Shuttin off railway services seemed deliberate. UNE Vice-Chancellor, Ingrid Moses, said railway closure would make Armidale ‘an effectively isolated region’. ‘Isolation’ carried physical, social, cultural, and economic associations. Armidale Dumaresq Councillor, Ken Walters, said he and his wife ‘wouldn’t go [to Sydney] if they had to take a bus’. Others ‘will not be able [to] travel to see friends and relations or attend medical appointments’ (AE 29; NDL 24; 25 October 2003). Catastrophising railway closure seemed to totally prevent travel, which would be the case for some people, so isolate country communities from other country communities, cities, and larger Australian society. Railway closure would seemingly result in perceived social isolation, or worse possibly contribute to perceived social exclusion.

‘Put rail system in regional hands’ and ‘Regional rail revival – lets do it’ headlined letters to the editor (AE 29; GIE 30 October 2003). The author was suggesting a local trust take over ownership/management of the local railway. As the railway was traditionally owned, maintained, and operated by government, New England saw itself as dependent on government for the gift. According to Emerson (1962) power results from such resource dependency. Government held asymmetric power over country because dependency resided implicitly, not in the actor but, in the relationship between them. Such a radical shift in responsibility for providing the railway gift would eliminate the offering of one party, and hence need for, and power of, government from the relationship. The regionalisation idea was not pursued. Country dependency on government as the railway giver formed a barrier to finding a new partner, or leaving the relationship and becoming more self reliant for providing rail transport. Social costs for New England and economic costs for grain line communities, as apportioned in their leaving the relationship, were too high. Country continued to place itself in a form of non-voluntary relationship (Thibaut & Kelly 1959) with government. Leaving the relationship seemed untenable; yet such a non-voluntary relationship would be less stable than a voluntary relationship.

Grain line communities repeatedly said railway closure would shift costs (DL 5 February; YW 17 September; TI 24 October; SWM(i) 3; CG 21 November 2003). Railway maintenance was paid by State government, road
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maintenance by a combination of Federal, State, and Local government. Shifting the mode of transport from rail to road shifted the associated costs of maintaining transport infrastructure from State to, in part, Local government. Local government aligned closely with local communities. Railway closure shifted costs from State government to local communities. They appeared as separable parties, further dividing the relationship. Shifting cost as an accounting procedure was transformed into the emotionally connotative term of ‘cost-shifting’. Costs would be apportioned to country above what country expected to be its reasonable burden.

Member for Dubbo, Tony McGrane expressed concern that increasing road truck traffic would force Councils to spend a greater proportion of their budgets on road maintenance. The Willbriggie to Yanco Rail Line Working Party said line closure ‘could result in millions of dollars being drained from the local economy’ (DL 5 February; I 7 October 2003). Government shifting costs from itself to local councils implied an underlying government focus on finance and division of responsibilities. Increasing country’s portion of the cost for transporting grain would place country into excessive debt in delivering its exchange offering.

New England headlines of ‘battle’, ‘fight’, and ‘war’ (AE 5; 12 November; Torbay media release 8 September 2003) describing the relationship between the two parties in the relationship were not characteristic of harmoniousness. The relationship was destabilising.

One grain grower asked rhetorically if railway closure would ‘not be a demonstration of yet another sign of a widening gulf between city and bush?’ Railway closure was a reality indicating a general division, if not conflicting perspectives, within the relationship. Bogan Gate Rail Line Action Committee, Terry Fishpool, argued ‘They talk about cost recovery from branch lines, but CityRail doesn’t give cost recovery’ (CT 9 October; WM(i) 22 September 2003). Having two sets of service standards divided the parties.

Community representatives linked railway closure to closing non-railway country services. A Narrabri Shire Councillor described the railway as a government service, saying ‘another government facility is taken away from Gwabegar’. A local Councillor linked railway closure to centralising education and health away from country. CT said ‘country people are facing
yet another battle to keep an essential service functioning in the bush’ (CT 3 July; 9 October; NC 10; WNM(i) 21; YW 4 July 2003) – ‘yet another’ connoted exasperation and linked railway closure to other essential services. A grain farmer described railway closure as ‘something seriously wrong’ (TL 6 February 2003). Lack of specificity in the wrongness implied concern for wider relationship issues. Government/country division was wide spread, multi-faceted, and generalised.

Local communities read railway closure, not just as an idea; but as a sign carrying meanings. Railway closure signified a wide range of meanings which were connotated and culturally understood. Meanings in New England were more than might be expected from withdrawing a transport service few people used. Yet clearly the New England community wanted government to keep the railway operating. Grain line meanings remained more rational in that they claimed to, and generally did, have an ongoing traditional use for the line which they wanted to continue.

Both the government party and the country party, within the relationship, read railway closure as a sign; but no longer shared meanings of the railway (Cohen 1989). Each ascribed very different meanings to it. To country, railway closure indicated government had lost faith in, loyalty towards, support for, and commitment to country. This went further than Kirk’s (2002) perception-reality gap between what the public was concerned about, and what politicians’ thought the public was concerned about regarding railway closure. These attributes stepped outside McKenzie’s (1999) government policy makers working within frames of reference that many country people do not necessarily agree with, and government’s apparent aloofness seeming consistent with government not understanding the real issues of country communities. Government seemed to misunderstand the power of the community’s affective state. Lack of understanding of regional needs and values underlay, or evidenced, a metrocentric (Archer 2000) perception. City-based values were seen as the norm and country values as marginalised. Country values perceived as crude or rustic, certainly as inferior to city values, extended to the implication that country residents do not have the same standard of needs as city dwellers. From this followed the assumption that country communities could make do with less. Country was losing trust in government. Uncertainty of
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government honouring the country party’s claim was a powerful incentive to collective action as proposed by Tilly (1973, p. 214).

In increasingly distinguishing their contributions towards and influences on solving the exchange tasks, the parties became identifiably more separable entities. The parties also increasingly articulated a non-shared responsibility for the success or failure of achieving the exchange task. Cohesion and solidarity in the exchange relationship were being weakened. Initial destabilisation fed deeper destabilisation as each party failed to adhere to the norm of reciprocity, so could not be relied upon to reciprocate into the future, destabilising the future of the relationship. However, dependency of country on government was not about to change.

**Government’s Negotiated Exchange**

For a long time the government–country relationship had been based on socially obligated but implicit exchange (Chapters 4 and 5), without explicit bargaining or visible joint decision making process, i.e., not negotiated but reciprocal. Reciprocity was left to the discretion of the one who made it (Blau 1964, p.93). Railway closure resulted in government proposing a formalised negotiation structure.

As mentioned before, Michael Costa proposed establishing a CountryLink Solutions Team in New England (AE 24 October; GA 6 November; GIE 28 October 2003). The team would involve local communities in seeking economic solutions to reduce government cost. Government sought to formalise the relationship through introducing a quasi-bureaucratic mediation structure and process. Government introducing the CountryLink Solutions Team, at this apparently late stage in the interaction, was cautiously taken by the community as a significant change from their earlier perceived lack of government–community consultation.

Torbay welcomed the proposed team as ‘our opportunity to put a strong case directly to the Minister’s office and the government and to hear in detail the reasons for proposed Parry Inquiry cut to the service’ (GA; NDL 6 November 2003). Torbay expected the country–government dialogue to be two way. Both parties would engage in a joint decision making process involving explicit bargaining. He saw government as more likely to continue giving the railway within a negotiated rather than a reciprocal
exchange framework. Government–country openly discussing arrangements to prevent railway closure would change a fundamental characteristic of the exchange relationship. Government had redefined the nature of reciprocity.

Along grain lines the issue forced government to form a Grains Industry Advisory Committee (GIAC) to negotiate the railway closures. The DT (4 August 2003) expected GIAC to recommend closing a number of the lines.

**Country’s Negative Emotions**

Railway closure reportedly produced widespread and invariably negative emotions (Lawler 2001) in country communities. This contrasted markedly with the positive emotions which had been prominently displayed at the original Tamworth–Wallan-garra line openings (Chapter 4) and government reopening of the Tamworth–Armidale passenger service in 1993 (Chapter 6).

Richard Torbay described people’s reaction in 2003 as expressing how ‘the community feels about keeping its train service’ (AE 20 October 2003), so acknowledged relationships between the people and railway were emotional and communal in nature. Even allowing for political and media hyperbole, local community reaction was expressed as emotional.

Newspaper reports headlined: ‘Rail line anger spirals’; and ‘Rail link fears spark angry rally by 2000 people’ (NDL 21; SMH 24 October 2003). Communities were reported as un-embarrassingly presenting their anger as an appropriate response to railway closure. Anger, unsurprisingly, would bring about reaction.

Tamworth MP, Peter Draper, said ‘country people were outraged’. Torbay referred communally to the ‘outrage of the community’. A local described train passengers as ‘outraged’ by railway closure (NDL 10; 23; Torbay Media Release 9 September 2003). The AE (5 November 2003) headlined ‘... maintain the rage on train plan’. Outrage reflected grievous violence and gross offence against local community dignity and rights.

Possible future railway closure caused much ‘angst’ in New England. A student described her reaction as ‘I was horrified to find out that Michael Costa was looking at closing down the rail link’ (GIE 21 October;
NDL 10 September 2003). Reaction was to the very idea of railway closure; not to an actual closure.

New England communities said they wanted to vent their emotion. The NDL forecast Costa’s visit as likely to ‘be a heated visit’, and headlined ‘Community lets off steam’. A resident described communities as being ‘fired up and angry’ (AE 29; NDL 21; 24 October 2003). New England communities connected their emotional response with fighting ‘people are extremely angry and prepared to fight to retain country rail services’ (NDL 10 September 2003). Local country voices, in this case in the form of a newspaper report, talked about railway closure in terms of conflict, not as a mutualistic exchange relationship of agreement, cooperation, respect, or deference.

Michael Costa said ‘people’s sentiments’ would be factored into any decisions made by the government. Likewise SRA described community emotion as ‘community sentiment’ (AE 24 October; SRA submission to Parry 2003a 2003b) – ‘sentiment’ was a much weaker word than what communities said were their strong emotions. Being ‘factored in’, downplayed strong community emotion and downgraded community feeling relative to government financial policy. Government condescension likely fuelled community reaction.

Along grain lines, the BN(i) said railway closure was ‘much to the anger of grain growers and local government bodies’ (27 October 2003). Emotionalism became seemingly institutionalised.

The NC headlined ‘Fears Gwabegar rail track is to be closed’. The NWM(i) headlined ‘Fears for the future of Baradine, Gwabegar rail’. The CT headlined ‘Fears it may be the end of the line’ – ‘the end of the line’ left readers free to read the end as including more than just a stop block placed across the end of the railway track. Such a stop block was the dominant visual focus in the foreground of a photograph accompanying a BN(i) article headlined ‘Rising concern over branch line closures’. One resident described railway closure as having frightening consequences (BN(i) 27 October; CT 3 July; NC 10 July; 23 September; NWM(i) 21 July 2003). Grain line communities said they feared more than just railway closure.

Railways don’t die; railways are closed. Nevertheless newspapers described railway closure metaphorically as dying – a much more
emotionally loaded descriptor. ‘Increased maintenance costs and government “rationalisation” are sounding the death knell for the railways’. ‘Country branch lines, seem only to be waiting for their death rites’ (CT 9 October 2003). Speaking metaphorically in ascribing death to railway closure, revealed what meaning the speaker meant to convey, and added meaning beyond the literal. Railway closure was the railway dying because communities had seen the open railway as alive. In more extreme writings communities had said the railway brought them life, imbuing country communities with vital energy. ‘Death knell’ and ‘death rites’ were cultural signs marking recognition of, normally, a person’s passing from life to death. Neither was the literal dying. Both were signs triggering emotional responses from those in relationship with the deceased, in this case country communities and their railway.

Rather than feeling satisfied from receiving what the community felt it deserved; the community felt it would receive less. Deprivation was a cost from the relationship; irrespective of the quantum received. Feeling deprived resulted in feelings of anger. Negative emotions in country communities evidenced dissatisfaction with the destabilising relationship.

Country Communities Mobilised

Historic country community mobilisation had resulted in government building railways through the New England (Laszlo 1956; Harman 1970) and across the Wheat Belt (Gunn 1989). The 1988 closure of the Armidale–Wallan-garra section had generated relatively little reaction (Chapter 6). The 2003 closure would cut the Armidale–Sydney link – setting off much stronger reaction. Armidale saw closing its railway link to Sydney in the south as being much more significant than it had seen closing its railway link to Wallan-garra in the north. Also Armidale had had fourteen years experience with community activism over railway closures, one episode of which had successfully had the line to Sydney reopened (Chapter 6). During 2003 there was mobilisation again.

Consistent with an Armidale view of being a regional capital, New England presented itself as a country-wide leader. New England communities used the region’s presumptive country-wide cultural status as a resource. ‘Selecting Armidale as a target [for railway closure] should send a
shiver down the spines of people in all country centres’ (NDL 12 September 2003). Armidale would take a leading role in fighting to keep various country lines open. President of Friends of the Northern Railway, Matthew Tierney, claimed he knew a lot of other places were looking at what happened in New England. Richard Torbay said the people of Armidale would lead regional NSW. The AE headlined ‘Armidale to lead the way in [a state-wide] battle to save rail’. Likewise Armidale Dumaresq Council said Armidale leads the fight to save CountryLink. Torbay asked rhetorically, ‘If we lose here how many other country communities will lose?’ Chair of the New England Railway lobby group agreed if they didn’t stop the cutback, it would be another line, and then another. Friends of the Northern Railway later claimed ‘the meetings we were having in Armidale were dealing with rail issues across the State. … We were arguing the case for regional rail, not just the Armidale service’ (AE 3; Armidale Dumaresq Council Media release 22; DT 24 October; GIE 25; NDL 27 October; 10 December; SMH 9 September 2003). New England communities mobilised to retain their own passenger train service to Kootingal, Walcha Road, Uralla, and Armidale stations, and identified themselves with leading the larger ill-defined cultural grouping of the, non-city, NSW-wide country community.

New England mobilised existing country institutions. Armidale Dumaresq Council and the New England Local Government Group supported fighting to retain the train service. Councils across NSW agreed to form a Local Government and Shires Association Rail Group to oppose closures. NDL headlined ‘Councils gain backing for train services’; and the AE ‘LGA [Local Government Association of NSW] backing boosts our train campaign’, proclaiming the resolution was passed unanimously by both metropolitan and regional councils (Armidale Dumaresq Council News 16 September; 22 October; AE 17 September; NDL 13 November 2003).

Gaining support from the Country Women’s Association (CWA) was highlighted as a ‘Formidable force’. The AE headlined delight in that ‘66 groups get on board’ (AE 17; NDL 3 November 2003). New England communities also tried to mobilise grain line communities (NDL 2 June; 29 August; 11 December 2003) and so make the argument country-wide.
New England communities mobilised city resources, headlining ‘City councils back rail push’ (NDL 6 November 2003). The AE headlined a Sydney suggestion to ‘Take the train fight to Sydney airwaves’. NDL headlined with delight ‘City digs in to save train’. Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WESROC) Senior Vice-president, Danny Mackin, argued CountryLink rail services should be built up rather than dismembered. Rather than welcoming greater funding for Sydney metropolitan transport, he said WESROC had taken a more strategic and long term view. He also said railway closure was counter to decentralisation (AE 5 November; NDL 23 September; 6 November 2003).

Nevertheless, the Tamworth Mayor, Councillor Trelor, doubted the seriousness of metropolitan council’s interest in country concerns (NDL 13 November 2003). Country communities remained partly suspicious of city.

New England communities also mobilised political support across-traditional political party boundaries, with the AE (20 October 2003) headlining ‘Lobbying wins cross-party support to retain service’.

Along grain lines, the NSW Farmers Association encouraged all those affected by line closure to provide details, so a catalogue of case studies could be compiled for use in arguing to keep lines open (TL 3 July 2003). Likewise the Lachlan Regional Transport Committee sought information to present to the Minister for Transport that might influence him to keep lines open (YW 17 September 2003). Dubbo MP, Tony McGrane, sent out form letters to his constituents in the Parkes and Narromine local government areas, to alert residents of pending closure of the Tullamore-Bogan Gate line. The letters were to be sent-on to the Minister for Transport lobbying to keep the line open (WM(i) 3 February 2003). Grain Growers Association representative, John Eastburn, sought grower support, and stressed the importance of protesting (CT 3 July 2003). Young Shire Mayor, John Walker, encouraged locals to support Young Council in supporting the Lachlan Regional Transport Committee and Greenethorpe Action Group in lobbying government to keep the Koorawatha–Greenethorpe line open. He consciously told locals of information that they may not have been aware of, so encouraging their support (YW 4 July 2003). Individuals were encouraged to aggregate into active groups.
MP Tony McGrane also convinced the AWB to fund an engineering and cost assessment in support of keeping the Bogan Gate–Tottenham branchline open. The Grains Infrastructure Advisory Committee called for more information and data before deciding on line closure. An unidentified source leaked the report to the press, so attracting wider community publicity, interest, and support. Former Deputy Prime Minister and well known railway supporter, Tim Fisher, called on the Annual Conference of the NSW Farmers Association to support a rail resurgence by keeping lines open and upgrading them (BN 2 June; CP 10 March; TL 31 July; WWA 3 June 2003). The Shires Association passed motions to keep lines open. It also sought to form an inter-institutional alliance with the NSW Farmers Association to present a stronger joint-case in lobbying government (CT 3; NWM(i) 21 July 2003). Grain line supporters mobilised grain-growing institutions.

NSW National Party Leader, Andrew Stoner, called on government and the Premier not to close lines (DL 30 May 2003). Lobbying was directed at government as the giver of the railway in the relationship. Private train operator Pacific National and agribusiness GrainCorp expressed private industry support for keeping the branch lines open and their upgrading (RN(i) 31 October; TL 2 January 2003).

New England and grain line communities sought to acquire control over a wide range of potentially useful cultural, institutional, and political resources towards their goal of keeping railways open. Acquiring collective control over resources required some degree of social relationship and collective identity as identified by Tilly (1973, p.213). Country communities had both.

**Country Communities Acted Communally**

Country people reacted communally to railway closure. Communities applied pooled resources to their shared goal (Tilly 1973, p. 214) of keeping the railways open.

New England individuals combined together to apparently act communally, evidenced by combining regular train users, occasional train users, and non-train users, combining people from towns with and towns
Destabilising the Government–Country Social Exchange Relationship

without rail services, self description as ‘community’, meeting together, cooperative action, unity, and sharing credit.

From the beginning of mobilisation, New England communities described their reaction to railway closure as community reaction. The AE acknowledged ‘a powerful alliance of local mayors, an MP, the University of New England, business houses, community organisations and The Express has formed in the battle to keep the train.’ The GIE described the reaction as ‘a fantastic response from the New England communities’ (AE 22 October; GIE 18 November 2003). In statements like ‘Unless we act within two weeks we are sure to lose our trains’ – ‘we’ and ‘our’ emphasised community. Torbay urged communities ‘to convince Mr Costa how strongly the community feels about keeping its train service’, and he ‘will attend the meeting to outline community attitudes’. Papers described the protest rally as the ‘solid display of community concern’, and ‘citizens joining together’ (AE 20; 29; 31; GIE 2; 28; 30 October; NDL 12; Torbay media release 8 September 2003). While individual people were or were not train users, newspapers presented New England communities as identifying and acting communally.

Local individuals organised community actions including meetings (NDL 12 September 2003), forming a ‘strategy group’ (NDL 16 September 2003), signing petitions, and participating in a protest rally.

Newspaper headlines emphasised communal action: ‘Community opinion to de-rail service cuts’; ‘Public to line up Costa rail plans’; ‘Students back rail service’; ‘Costa to face Armidale community wanting answers’; ‘Armidale goes to war to save train’; ‘Costa sparks town protest’; ‘Community lets off steam’ (AE 22; DT 23; NDL 8; 20; 21; 24; WN 16 October 2003). Communities were described as acting as single entities.

The GIE described local people dialoguing with government in the CountryLink Solutions Team as ‘community representatives’. The representatives saw themselves as sufficiently representative to be able to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people in the Armidale and district community. A UNE spokesperson spoke of ‘a delegation of leaders’, and said credit for averting closure was attributed to ‘the Armidale community and its leaders’, and ‘the active support of this community and the efforts of
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[local] organisations’ (GIE 18 November; NDL 10 December 2003). Communities said they could be represented as single communal entities.

Anthropomorphism of communities was common. The NDL referred to ‘the community’s plea’, under a headline ‘Costa to face Armidale community wanting answers’ (NDL 21 October 2003). The community, as such, couldn’t plead or want; only member people could; but the members were described as acting as a single entity.

As in originally lobbying for getting the railway (Chapter 4), New England newspapers actively lobbied for keeping it operating. New England newspapers encouraged local people to protest and to react communally. As at 2003, communities north of Armidale had no local passenger rail service. Yet newspapers from New England communities with and without rail services, and communities with rail services which were threatened and those with rail services which were not threatened all covered railway closure, Table 8.1.

Table 8.1
New England Newspaper Coverage of Railway Closure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Newspaper/s</th>
<th>Rail Service</th>
<th>Rail Service Threatened</th>
<th>Clippings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not directly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>GIE</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not directly</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not directly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walcha</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth</td>
<td>NDL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-wide</td>
<td>DT</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S-H</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(newspapers various)

Of the ninety-five clippings from New England, north of and including Tamworth, sixty-six, or 69%, were from communities which were not directly losing their town rail service. These clippings suggested a high degree of community consistency in opposition to railway closure across New England towns.

Writers emphasised collective unity. The Armidale Dumaresq Council Mayor called for the community to unite and campaign to save the
train service (Armidale Dumaresq Council News 16 September 2003). An Editor headlined ‘Call for unity to retain [rail] link’. The reporter described reaction by community leaders, business leaders, civic leaders, MPs, and local branch of the ALP as ‘a united voice’. A crowd was reported as ‘unanimous’. New England people reacting as a united community resisted potential division (*AE* 29 *AI* 29; *NDL* 8 October 2003).

Torbay shared credit collectively saying he ‘would like to thank the community for its strong response.’ ‘In Armidale the media, community leaders and Save the Rail group have done a magnificent job in keeping the issue alive and supporting the campaign’. When people heard that the line was to remain open they celebrated communally. A UNE spokesperson said success of the Save the Train campaign was ‘directly attributable to the active support of the Armidale community and its leaders, it was a testimony to the active support of the community and the efforts of its organisations.’ Country Labor’s, Christine Robertson, congratulated ‘the New England community’ on keeping the line open. Dr Martin described the decision to keep the line open as a victory for the people. Richard Torbay attributed keeping the line open to ‘People power saved the day – and the rail service’. He went on to say Armidale and other communities in the Northern Tablelands could claim much of the credit for saving CountryLink rail services, and he gave all credit to everyone who participated (*AE* 20 October; *GA* 6 November; *GIE* 12; *NDL* 10; *SMH* 9; UNE News Release, No.229/03 9 December 2003). Rather than asserting individual claims to fame, New England lobbyists and newspapers shared credit communally.

Mudgee Shire Council asked the Armidale Dumaresq Council to join Mudgee (Appendix 2.1) to save CountryLink services (Armidale Dumaresq Council News 22; *AE* 3 October; *NDL* 12 September 2003). Mudgee did not have a passenger train service. Community was not just an outward movement from affected to non-affected groups; but was offered by non-affected groups with more general country-wide community interests to defend.

Grain line individuals combined together to act communally, evidenced by self description, communal actions, meeting together, and forming lobby groups. Grain line communities said railway closure
impacted on whole communities beyond just farmers. Councillor Burton said railway closure was ‘not just a farmer’s issue’ (NC 10 July 2003). Railway closure was a community-wide issue, affecting railway users and non-railway users.

Grain line communities organised communal actions including public meetings, delegations, and petitions. Councillor John Drum motioned for Young Council to write to government over railway closures, on the basis that the more letters that were sent the more likely would be the desired result. Shadow Minister for Transport, Michael Gallacher, encouraged other groups which may be feeling isolated in regard to railway closure to follow the group example in Henty and rally together. The CT headlined on page 1 that the ‘Communities in the Coonabarabran and Narrabri Shires are expressing their considerable concerns’ about railway closure (BN(i) 27 October; CT 3 July; DL 24; NC 23 September; TmI 24 October; YW 17 September 2003). Responding individually the people reacted, presented, and were represented in newspapers as reacting communally.

Independent Member for Dubbo, the now late Tony McGrane, facilitated a meeting of stakeholders to organise a lobby campaign against railway closure. Councils sought to join together, and encouraged individuals to join with them. Council representatives organised for the Shires Association Conference to pass motions to keep lines open. Country councils agreed to join together to form a Local Government and Shires Association Rail Group. The Shires Association considered forming an alliance with the NSW Farmers to present a combined case for keeping lines open (AE 3 October; CT 3 July; DL 24 September; NWM(i) 21; TL 3 July; WM(i) 22 September; YW 4 July 2003). Objection became institutionalised.

Grain line people seeking to prevent railway closure joined together in meetings and community organisations. Action groups were formed at local meetings. ‘A committee was formed, with the full backing of the communities and Shire Council’ (BN(i) 27; CT 9 October; NWM(i) 21 July 2003). Local community groups included the: Progressive Rail Association; Greenethorpe Rail Committee; Tottenham to Bogan Gate Rail line Upgrade Action Committee; Yanco Rail Line Working Party. Some groups already existed as lobby groups, e.g., Lachlan Regional Transport Committee, and
added railway closure to their concerns. Other groups were new, formed in reaction to railway closure (AN 6 October; DL 12 August; WM(i) 22; YW 17; 19 September 2003).

Liz Cutts of Baradine wrote that ‘communities in the Coonabarabran and Narrabri Shires are concerned’. The BN(i) highlighted concern felt by individuals as ‘A rising tide of concern’ (BN(i) 27 October; NWM(i) 21 July 2003). The community, as such, couldn’t be concerned; only member people could. However, the members were described as acting as single entities with characteristics of individuals ascribed to them.

Traditionally seen within the relationship as an object of mutual benefit, the railway had become an object of struggle (Singer & de Sousa 1983). Government claimed to be closing railways on the general principle of minimising financial loss to government. Country communities resisted claims for railway closure on much more specific countryminded grounds (Chapter 7). Arguments for and against railway closure were structurally asymmetric. Being uncertain that their claims to keep the line/s open would be reciprocated by the government party provided a powerful incentive for country individuals to act communally.

Country communities made claims on other groups, of government, Australia, and city, when country interests believed, to pursue its established collective objective, country needed or had a right to resources currently controlled by others, which was consistent with Tilly (1973 p. 217). Identities deployed in New England’s political claim-making consisted of crucial differences from and contingent relationships with others, rather than just internal country traits, which was consistent with Tilly (1998, p. 460). Country communities had a countryminded ideology, a communal country identity, and a consciousness of government as the other party in the relationship.

**New England Communities Reacted Strongly**

New England’s recorded reactions during 2003 were notably stronger than its recorded reactions to previous railway closures (Chapter 6).

Strong New England community reaction seemed to manifest through: community self description; reacting quickly; using strongly symbolic language; reacting symbolically; offering sacrifices; reacting in
large number; and reacting extraordinarily. Newspaper reports indicated a concern that the resistance be strong, or at least be seen to be strong, and further indicated a potential for it being so.

**Self Description**

Working from an understanding that people are, or at least see themselves as, what they say they are, then as the communities said they were acting strongly, they were, or at least saw themselves as acting strongly.

Richard Torbay urged communities ‘to convince the Mr Costa how strongly the community feels about keeping its train service’. Communities claimed strength saying ‘Hear us, we are strong’. The *NDL* editorialised that the community view on railway closure ‘must be spoken with strength, not with pleas.’ Locals formed ‘A powerful alliance’. Strong feelings and communal strength transformed into strong reaction. ‘This is our opportunity to put a strong case directly to the Minister’s office’. ‘Strong opposition to the proposal to cut the rail link to Armidale has emerged from the University of New England.’ Richard Torbay thanked the community ‘for its strong response by opposing any cut to our rail service’ (*AE* 20; 22 October; *GA* 6 November; *NDL* 11 September; 25 October; 6 November 2003). Torbay defined strong in terms of the numbers of people attending the rally, signing petitions, writing letters, and sending submissions.

Parry (2003b, p.44) acknowledged that ‘There was strong community opposition in some areas to the option outlined in the Interim Report [(Parry 2003a)] to replace some trains with buses’

Government acknowledged strong community opposition in the other party.

Along the grain lines, the *NC* described community response as ‘The proposed move [to close lines] has drawn strong protests’ (*NC* 10 July 2003). However that was an unusual instance of self-description claiming strength of grain line community reaction.

**Reacting Quickly**

Communities reacting quickly communicated a sense of communal urgency through non-verbal action. Parry’s interim report (2003a) was released on 8 September. That same day Richard Torbay issued his media release titled
‘It’s war if Armidale loses its rail link’ – where this study began. The next day, he said his ‘phone had not stopped since the news broke’. The following day, the NDL described the response as ‘a deluge’ and ‘barrage of criticism’. Tamworth MP, Peter Draper, said ‘My office has been inundated with inquires’. Transport Minister, Michael Costa, arrived in Tamworth only three days later, on 11 September, to meet with already mobilising groups of unions, teachers, pensioners, mayors, councillors, and Chambers of Commerce. Seven days after release of the report a group of leading Armidale district citizens formed a strategy group. Within three weeks, the Friends of the Northern Railway had prepared and printed leaflets urging passengers to make submissions to the Parry inquiry. The group was mobilised sufficiently to hand the leaflets out to train passengers. Newspapers urged people to react quickly by emphasising short timeframes of having to ‘act within the next two weeks’, and to voice your opinion ‘today’ (AE 29 September; GIE 2 October; NDL 10; 16; Torbay media release 8 September 2003).

Discussion was instantaneous. Locals reacted individually and mobilised communally. Quick community mobilisation, suggests it was a near automatic community reaction to the countrymindless idea of railway closure. New England newspapers responded quickly, instantly displayed strong emotion, and directed responsibility solely at state government. Response was too quick, reaction too widespread, too consistent, and too focussed to have developed via a process of developing its own momentum through time. Response was consistently quick across many widespread country communities, spontaneous, with no evidence of action on the basis of some form of deliberate prior planning. Previous experience with railway closure (Chapter 6) equipped the community with knowledge and technology (Oliver & Marwell 1992) to mobilise quickly.

Several reports on closing grain lines became available during 2003 for community comment (CN 15 January; TL 6 February; WM(i) 2 June; CT 3 July; YW 17 September 2003). However, grain line community leaders did not seem to urge their communities to respond quickly. Grain line

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^4 The road motor vehicles to be used would be long distance coaches; not urban buses.

^5 Sixteen years before, Armidale community activism to retain the XPT service was headlined (SS 29 April 1987) as ‘War Declared’, indicating a consistent historical association of idea and expression.
community reaction was rarely described as being quick (e.g., T&CM(i) 9 June; YW 17 September 2003); rather they seemed to trust in existing and new country-government institutional organisations to respond.

Using Strongly Symbolic Language

New England communities expressed their ideas in the language of conflict. ‘Armidale ready for war’; ‘Stand up and fight’; ‘battle to save rail’; ‘up in arms’, ‘spearheading the fight’; ‘Train battle’; and ‘Residents will fight’ typified adversarial imagery. Communities engaged in the war were presented as defenders, not attackers; while government in the city was presented as the attacker. In defending the status quo, country occupied the higher moral ground. Only one editor described local communities reacting against closure as ‘crusading against the proposed stoppage’ which carried a sense of mission (AE 3 October; 12; GIE 18 November; 25 September; NDL 8; S-H 19 October; SMH 9 September 2003). ‘Crusading’ associated the actions with religious military expeditions advancing an idea or cause, carrying cultural ideological overtones relating to faith.

Communities expressed their ideas about extending the passenger train service for twelve months in symbolic language. The SMH gave the extension page one prominence, captioning a photograph as ‘CountryLink service is given a year’s reprieve’. The NDL headlined ‘Rail link safe for now’ (NDL 10; SMH 9 December 2003). ‘Reprieved’ and ‘safe’ added a layer of emotion to the reported government decision to not withhold its reward in the relationship, even if only temporarily.
Grain line newspapers rarely used strongly symbolic language in describing railway closure. Rare examples included headlines of: ‘Unprofitable grain lines frozen out’; ‘Branch line road ‘bomb’”; and ‘Country rail at crossroads’ (DT 4 August; TL 2 January; 3 July 2003). Grain line railway closure usually appeared in much more instrumental language, e.g.: ‘Guarantees being sought on future of railway branch lines’; ‘No decision made on grain lines’; and ‘Gwabegar Branch Line must stay open’ (DL 5 February; WM(i) 2; WS 4 June 2003). Rarity of strongly symbolic language along the grain lines argues against accusations of the strength of the language being just media hype.

**Reacting Symbolically**

New England communities said their physical reactions were communication using a lot of symbolism. The community acknowledged that tomorrow it needed ‘to show Michael Costa that Armidale cares about its train’. Editorials headlined ‘Shut down the town and show this man we matter’; ‘Rally sends a clear message’. The Armidale Mayor agreed the protest rally was sending a clear message today to the Transport Minister. The AE headlined assertively ‘Hear us, we are strong’. Armidale Mayor, Brian Chetwynd, ‘said the rally was a chance to send a strong notice to Transport Minister Michael Costa.’ Armidale residents gathered at the station ‘to voice their opposition’ (AE 22; 24; NDL 24 October; TS 6 November 2003) – ‘voice’ implied more than just individuals vocalising; rather the meaning was that the community spoke.

As with opening the original line, introducing new rolling stock and reopening the service, New England communities celebrated averting closure symbolically with partying at the railway station (NDL 10 December 2003). Communities turned averting train closure into a symbolic historic marker, imbued with positive emotions.

**Offering Sacrifices**

One party offering to make sacrifices tends to maintain stability in exchange relationships. Implicit offering of sacrifices became explicit in New England.
MP, Peter Draper rhetorically offered to ‘lay down his life’ to keep the line open. Following release of the interim Parry report (2003a), he said local people had told him they would accept a ticket price rise to enable the service to be saved. If an increase in prices would keep the service going they were prepared to pay – thereby maintaining stability in the relationship. Torbay reported he’d heard many people say they would agree to increased rail fares and other options that would retain a service. Member for Northern Tablelands, Ray Chappell, said railway closure was ‘regressive unnecessarily and unfairly’ – ‘unnecessarily and unfairly’ implied a willingness to agree that railway closure could hypothetically be seen as necessary and even fair. Government proposing and community willingness to accept possible railway job cuts contradicted countrymindedness.

Following meetings with Mr Costa and the first meeting of the CountryLink Solutions Team, country making personal sacrifices for rail was raised again. An NDL headline ‘Sacrifices for rail’ tied the ideas together. The Armidale community was ‘prepared to make sacrifices if they resulted in the threatened railway closure being averted’ – ‘if they result’ tied keeping the railway open to community action. Armidale offered to endure some pain to ensure the service continued. Country Labor MLC, Catherine Robertson, said lower passenger ticket subsidies would be acceptable if the service was to be saved (ABC Online New England North West NSW 11 November, http://www.abc.net.au/newengland/news, accessed 9/3/2004; AE 17 October; 12; GA 6 November; NDL 1 May; 25 September; 21 October; 11 November; 4 December 2003). New England communities recognised they had some obligations under a post-traditional government–community relationship. Community trade-offs included increasing fares, new booking arrangements, and reducing discount rates for passenger travel (AE 12 November 2003).

Despite rhetoric that railway closure was not negotiable, local communities did not insist on only one viewpoint. Torbay noted they were ready to work with the government to make the train service more efficient and financially sustainable, and Armidale community leaders would take an open-minded approach into discussions. Armidale Dumaesq Councillor, Ken Walters, said he and his wife both believed a ticket price increase was the best way to reduce financial losses on the line. Communities offered to
accept fare rises if it meant retaining Armidale’s rail service. Torbay talked of reasonable fare changes. Military metaphors of ‘Our community is prepared to give some ground to create a sustainable service’ and ‘our community is willing to give some ground’ indicated willingness to allow the opponent to improve their own position. NSW Liberal Leader, John Brogden, argued increased patronage was partly dependent on government improving the railway service (AE 20; 21; 24; 26; AI 12; DT 24 October; GIE 18 November; NDL 24 October 2003). Communities willingly offered to sacrifice some traditional country-minded benefits, as in a mutualistic exchange relationship.

One of the sacrifices was for communities to return to traditional use of the railway to transport freight. State Rail Spokesperson, Karyn Mercer, indicated that CountryLink passenger rail services were subsidised by freight services. Freight using the track helped to recover maintenance costs through increased rail access revenue. Friends of the Northern Railway acknowledged lack of freight traffic put their campaign at a major disadvantage. The Armidale Economic Development group supported railing freight. Friends of the Northern Railway issued a discussion paper on 15 September 2003 titled Rail Freight Opportunities in the Northern Tablelands. The NDL headlined ‘Freight option may save Armidale passenger service’. The AE headlined likewise ‘Return of freight could be the salvation of rail service’ – ‘return of’ acknowledged recent lack of community use, and linked proposed usage to more traditional use. The community voiced the possibility of re-establishing its traditional exchange offering. One resident suggested that government should provide a profitable and economic freight service to pay for the subsidised passenger runs, even if local communities didn’t use the freight service (AE 30 January 1991; 17 October; 12 November; NDL 25 September; 12 November; ST 26 October 2003).

New England expected government to give it a passenger train service; but was willing to, at least, consider increasing its exchange offering to re-establish greater equality in, and therefore likely continuance

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6 Freight might have included: fuel to Armidale; stock feed; grain; woodchips; meat; minerals; sand; bulk fertilizer to Dumaresq; wool out of the region; and medium sized daily freight from Sydney and Newcastle (Friends of the Northern Railway 15 September 2003).
of, the relationship. The relationship might be returned to stability with concessions coming from the New England party. The concessions seemed to be starting to redefine the relationship. Give us a railway and we’ll settle the land and develop national wealth (Chapters 4 and 5), was being replaced with give us a railway and we’ll use it more and pay more for it. New England sought to maintain; not increase passenger train operation. New England seemed to realise that there was a limit to how much reciprocity could be extracted from government under the old terms of the relationship, as I am theorising it.

Reacting in Large Number

The SMH gave front page coverage to the Parry Report (2003a) receiving 300 public submissions during drafting, followed by a further 900 within two months of releasing the initial findings (SMH 9 December 2003). Parry (2003b) recognised receiving 884 submissions over the month from 8 September to 10 October. Largeness of the numbers seemed surprising to these writers.8

The AE editor encouraged mass attendance at the rally ‘We can win this one. All it takes is enough of us to show that we care and that we matter’ (22 October 2003). ‘This is our opportunity to put a strong case directly to the Minister’s office’. Reportedly 5,000 names were on one petition, and ‘6,000 names can’t be wrong, Mr Costa’, one of the largest petitions presented (AE 31 November 2003). The large numbers of names were to send a very strong message to government. ‘I would like to thank the community for its strong response’ said Torbay. Later he said that he had no doubt the strength of the community’s response impacted government decision making (NDL 27; 29; AE 31 October; 5; 7; AI 12; GA 6 November; WN 20 November 2003). Strength was seen to come from the large numbers of protestors.

Newspapers emphasised the large number of participants in the Armidale protest rally ‘the enormous show you put on when Costa came to town’, ‘– and the numbers –’ of people who ‘rallied in their thousands to the cause’, ascribed strength to largeness of the crowd. Quantitative estimates

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8 As the New England railway had effectively become a dead end branch line with closing the Dumesq–Wallan-garra section, the only source of freight was local.
varied from: ‘about 2000’, ‘around 2000’, and ‘2000-strong crowd’; through ‘more than 2300’; ‘almost 2500’; ‘more than 3000’; ‘4000’; to ‘more than 4000’. As at 2001, the Armidale urban centre had a population of 20,068 (ABS 2006). Assuming most protestors came from the town, 2,000–4,000 participants represented a significant percentage, 10%–20%, of the local population. Others expressed size of the crowd more prosaically as ‘in their thousands’; ‘the huge crowd’; ‘a massive crowd’. While quantification varied, writers consistently presented large numbers of people as indicating a strong local reaction. A writer said he was proud that ‘so many people had voiced their views’. The rally was portrayed as a terrific example of democracy in action (AE 24 October; 7; 28 November; AI 29; DT 24; GIE 28 October; 18 November; NDL 24 October; 24 November; 10 December; SMH 24 October 2003).

New England communities consistently emphasised the large numbers of local actors in writing submissions, signing petitions, and participating in protest rallies. Enumeration signified strong reaction.

**Reacting Extraordinarily**

In following Cohen’s (1982) analysis of country communities reacting with extraordinary behaviour, New England communities’ extraordinary behaviour, in the sense that it was not the kind of thing they might normally be expected to do, reflected a strong reaction.

Passenger stations along the line had been closed over a thirty year period from Yarraford in 1959 to Glen Innes in 1989. Local New England historians typically depicted station closure (Ferry 2001; Ferry et al. 2001; Hartman 1979) as being without community emotion, local reaction, or social significance. Ditton (1988) wrote fatalistically that the passenger train ‘service [to Wallan-garra] was discontinued in January 1972 due to lack of patronage’. Ferry et al. (n.d.) accepted, with little comment, the SRA claim that Tenterfield station’s ‘closure had come about because not enough people were using the service’. ‘There was no doubt that these lines were not cost effective’. Closure of Guyra station in 1989, was merely recorded in the local region’s historical society journal (G&DHSJ 19 August 1989), by reproducing a *GWN* (1 March 1989) photograph looking along the

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8 These included submissions to the full report; not just New England matters.
disused track fading into the distance. The journal added its own non-committal caption of ‘The concern of many people at present is expressed graphically by this photograph from Guyra Weekly News, Wednesday, March 1, 1989 – will the railway, that played such a significant role in the early development of Guyra, fade into non-existence?’. Concern didn’t lead to recorded local action. Farrell (1997) didn’t even include line closures in his timeline of the Main Events in his history of The Great Northern Railway. Barratt (1984) accepted closure of Deepwater station in 1979 was because passenger traffic fell away to almost nothing as people began using their own motor transport to travel to Sydney and elsewhere. Better roads, improved car and truck engineering, and greater personal freedom to travel when people wanted to contributed to the demise of small country service towns such as Ben Lomond and its railway station, according to the Ben Lomond School Centenary Committee (1985). In marked contrast to recounting events in detail and emphasising the social significance of railway openings (Ferry 1999; Ferry 2001; Sommerlad 1922), New England local historians traditionally ascribed little if any significance to railway station or line closure.

New England community reaction to closure of Tamworth–Armidale during 2003 differed from previous community reactions to closures. There was no recorded protest over the closure in 1988. Local reaction to closure during 1990 was a bit stronger (Chapter 6); leading to reinstating the train service. However, extraordinary behaviour was manifest in 2003 in a range of unusual community actions involving: identifying its singularity; bigger protests; abnormal commercial and administrative behaviour; and greater personal effort.

From the start, Richard Torbay identified railway closure of 2003 as special. ‘I can’t think of a single issue which would raise the passions of the people of this area so much as their rail service’ (SMH 9 September 2003). The NDL likewise editorialised that ‘There should, however, be one issue overriding everything else on the agenda of those meetings Mr Costa – rail services to this region’ (11 September 2003). Despite minor use, railway closure was symbolically, if not so materially, very salient to the communities’ achieving their goals.
Destabilising the Government–Country Social Exchange Relationship

Armidale businesses and residents planned “one of the biggest protests ever” [original emphasis]. It was to be bigger than the ‘Largest protest in all rebellions’ which was how the AE had described the 1990 protest then described as ‘the state’s largest demonstration over the axing of rail services’. The 2003 reaction was so much bigger than the 1990 protest that the 2003 reaction can be taken as abnormal behaviour. People were exhorted to exceed the size of the crowd on ‘Armidale Cup afternoon’ and at a recent ‘Footy Show promotion’ (AE 17; 22 October 2003). Thousands of people gathered in front of Armidale’s railway station in ‘one of the city’s largest protest rallies’ (DT 23 October; GIE 28 October 2003).

On the day prior to the protest rally of 2003 the AE (22 October 2003) announced: ‘in a mighty gesture, Brad Edwards of Edwards Coaches, is putting on a fleet of buses throughout the morning to transport protestors free of charge to the railway station’. The gesture was described as ‘mighty’ because it was extraordinary company behaviour. Providing the buses would directly cost the company money which would be unrecoverable. Further, as a long distance bus company, the company would expect to possibly benefit from increased custom should the railway passenger train service be withdrawn, as had been the case previously.9 Supporting the 2003 protest to keep the line open was logically not in the commercial interests of Edwards Coaches’, so was extraordinary. Town businesses closed their doors and the commercial part of Armidale came to a standstill (GIE 28 October 2003).

UNE Vice-Chancellor, Ingrid Moses, gave ‘staff the go ahead to take half an hour off tomorrow to protest at the railway station’ (AE 22 October 2003). Railway closure stimulated extraordinary administrative action by senior university bureaucrats to vary an entire institution’s normal staff attendance requirements. UNE Armidale International Association President, John de Boer, rallied international students to attend the protest rally. Students walked out of classes to join others who had gathered (AE 22; GIE 28 October 2003).

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9 Edwards Coaches would derive benefit if it won the contract and the terms of the contract suited the company. During 1989, the Armidale firm of Dewhurst Bus and Coach Services had won the tender to supply bus services to the Northern Tablelands associated with the previous line closure (GWN 22 November 1989).
One elderly observer emphasised that it would have taken considerable energy and effort for people to attend the protest. Getting organised and to a rally can be difficult for the disabled or elderly. Wheelchair-bound Barry Makepease challenged Michael Costa to take a bus trip in Barry’s wheelchair (NDL 24; AE 29 October 2003).

Members of the protest were described as ‘unpractised agitators’ (AE 29 October 2003). Large numbers of ordinary people devoted time and resources in making protest placards, attending the protest rally, and waving the placards at the rally (AE; DT; NDL 24 October 2003). New England communities behaved extraordinarily in doing things they would not ordinarily do.

Railway closure was seen as one of many threats to a range of government–country relationships. Railway closure seemed consistent with, reinforced by, and reinforcing other government infrastructure closures and service withdrawals, so contributed to forming a recognisably larger generalised pattern. The pattern was both historical and wide-spread, being linked to a range of other rail and non-rail closures (Chapter 7). Having experienced previous and seemingly increasing attacks (Chapter 6), New England communities reacted to closure by anticipating more attacks, as might be expected from Tilly (1978, p. 133).

Communal Reflection

Reflexivity is increasingly seen as potentially important to the future of country Australia in offering a feed-back loop leading to behaviour more likely to be successful from a country-minded perspective (Gray & Lawrence 2000).

Government attempted to impose seemingly ‘objective’ railway closure on country communities through rational-legal domination from a position of central power. Government claimed to represent the larger community of NSW, positioning itself as representing state-wide democratic authority. Country communities were cast as the minority, seemingly acting against the larger state-wide community.

During 2003, New England writers reflected on the previous history of railway closures in New England region (Chapter 6). The AE (17 October 2003) headlined ‘How we reported the loss of the train in 1990’ and ‘That
was then, this is now’. Three days later the paper gave (20 October 2003) a ‘Timetable’ of line openings, significant events, and closures. New England communities were encouraged to reflect on their previous community actions to reopen the line. At least one writer advised ‘if we don’t [react], we stand to lose the service’ (AE 22 October 2003). New England communities analysed themselves and what they needed to do, which offers potential explanation, in part, for the apparent strength of their reaction.

New England communities reflected on their numeric lack of passenger usage. An editor stated ‘One thing that Mr Costa may have done is to actually spur more people into using the rail service’ acknowledged community under-usage of the train – highlighting significance of local people’s choice in their transport mode. The editor also forecast further community reflexion in that ‘it will be interesting to see if it [awareness of railway closure] has any effect on patronage’ (NDL 24 October 2003). Reporting the events brought community behaviour into community view. The Editor highlighted redefinition of the exchange terms, and moved towards a re-stabilisation of the relationship.

Increasing use of freight offered another opportunity to feed back into altering local behaviour. Headlines suggested ‘Freight option may save Armidale passenger service’; ‘Return of freight service could be the salvation of rail service – chamber’. Writers acknowledged lack of freight traffic on the line made closure easier for government and disadvantaged the local campaign to keep the line open (NDL 25 September; AE 12 November 2003). The community acknowledged its reciprocal obligations to use the railway for passengers and freight in their exchange relationship with government.

Communities sought to restrict the State exercising its power over railway closure. Community protest made country power visible, which country used as a base in negotiating with government. Protest forced government, in the form of the state Transport Minister, Michael Costa, to visit the country. His visit echoed the original opening ceremonies (Chapter 4), and counterpoised country sending delegations to the city (Chapter 6).

After the protest, the NDL praised the numbers and manner in which the protestors turned out. The editor said Costa was to read the ‘coordinated, colourful, and to the point’ actions, and large numbers of
protestors as signs carrying meaning. Torbay agreed, saying the community has made its attitude very clear, the petition sent a very strong message to government. One resident suggested Costa should ponder the situation reflecting on community reaction at the rally. Afterwards, Torbay said clearly the community had sent a message to government that it wants to retain the rail service. Chairman of the New England Rail Inc.,\(^{10}\) Richard Rowe, spoke similarly that the immediate community response gave government a clear signal (\textit{AE} 31 October; 7; \textit{GA} 6 November; \textit{GIE} 12 December; \textit{NDL} 24; 29 October 2003). New England communities analysed their actions.

The \textit{AE} headlined ‘How our protest rattled a Minister’. Member for Tamworth, Peter Draper, said ‘After the rally he [Costa] changed tack’. NSW Liberal Leader, John Brogden, agreed that the rally ‘had been one of the turning points in the campaign’. It ‘has been instrumental in what I feel is the Government beginning to turn the corner on this issue’ (\textit{AE} 28 November; \textit{NDL} 10 December 2003). Reflexing observers credited the large crowd with changing the Minister’s mind about closing the line.

Communities reflected on government reaction to country reaction. Torbay reflected historically about when the momentum began to turn the community’s way. Later he reflected that clearly the minister was talking a lot more softly than he had previously. The political climate had since changed for the better, and in the community favour. After aversion of the possible closure a UNE spokesperson reflected that communities working together can make a difference (\textit{AE} 20 October; 12 November; \textit{NDL} 24 October; 11 November; 10 December 2003). Reflecting identified a significant turning point in the changing New England community–government relationship over this issue, with possible extrapolation more broadly.

Communities reflected on their reaction to government reaction to country reaction. Torbay admitted being very encouraged by the good hearing he had had from Mr Whelan and Ms Mercer (\textit{AI} 12 November 2003). Individual events, were not as so much successes or failures, but were parts of an ongoing dialogue within a community–government relationship.\(^{10}\) New England Railway Inc. is a volunteer based heritage tourist railway group with bases at Armidale, Glen Innes, and Jennings/Wallangarra. The group has plans to run a tourist

\(^{10}\) New England Railway Inc. is a volunteer based heritage tourist railway group with bases at Armidale, Glen Innes, and Jennings/Wallangarra. The group has plans to run a tourist
relationship. Reflecting would give New England communities further encouragement to persevere in the relationship.

Communities acknowledged differing views on the issue and praised their adversary’s open mindedness. The NDL headlined ‘Costa leaves the door ajar on Armidale rail services’. Newspapers highlighted Costa’s open-mindedness, headlining: ‘Minister ‘open minded’”; ‘Costa says he’s ‘open minded’ on the trains’; ‘I’m open minded … but’. Costa leaving his mind open to be changed was seen in his favour. Newspapers repeatedly reported Costa’s claim that no decision on closure had yet been made. The NDL acknowledged Costa saying he looked forward to working with the community group. The AI quoted Costa saying ‘I’m here to listen to you’ (AI 29; NDL 24; WN 30 October 2003). New England communities reflected; but did not seem to change their railway-using behaviour as their government partner wanted, i.e., increase usage.

Grain line communities acknowledged a need for them to influence government (e.g.: CT 9; I 7; AN 6 October 2003). However, reports of communal reflection on previous behaviour were rare, e.g.: ‘After seeing the benefits of active community support at Henty, Mr Gallacher encouraged other groups feeling isolated in regard to this issue to follow their example and rally together’ (TI 24 October 2003). Grain line communities largely saw keeping the lines open as government’s inherent obligation (TL 30; CT 9 October 2003).

Towards Re-stabilisation

New England communities said they wanted dialogue with government. Torbay described Parry (2003a) as creating an opportunity to put New England’s case to Mr Costa for keeping the line open. New England communities willingly participated in the government’s CountryLink Solutions Team. Torbay described participation as ‘an opportunity to put a strong case directly to the Minister’s office and the government and to hear in detail the reasons for proposed closure’. He also said the meeting was to be so that they could ‘all sit down and work through the details’. An Armidale resident called for ‘exploring some options’. UNE Marketing and passenger service from Armidale to Wallangarra.
Public Affairs Director, Ingrid Rothe, said the University was optimistic that ‘the CountryLink Solutions Team could negotiate a successful outcome’. Desiring to discuss, debate, dispute, negotiate, and talk appeared commonly. Local people wrote to government ministers, newspapers, signed petitions, and presented their ideas in strategic plans to government. Newspaper photographs depicted local people talking individually with the minister. Torbay described his upcoming meetings with Costa as an opportunity to discuss how to produce a better transport future, and the Working Party would be a useful forum to put some of these New England solutions forward (AE 24 October; AI 12 November; DT 24 October; GA 6 November; NDL 11; 12 September; 23; 24; 29 October; 6; 11; 19 November; 4 December; WN 16 October 2003).

Grain line communities likewise wanted to dialogue with government. The Willbriggie to Yanko Rail Line Working Party resolved to ‘lobby’ politicians, and encouraged any concerned citizens to do likewise. Project and Analysis Manager for the Grain Growers Association, Terrence Farrell advocated communities ‘impress’ their concerns on government. The action group was formed to ‘dispute’ the issue with government. (AN 6; I 7; CT 9 October 2003).

Country communities were willing to, indeed wanting to, dialogue with their principal symbolic antagonist the other party about re-stabilising the relationship, which Molm (1981) described as the recovery after disruption stage in social relationship life cycles. Reinforcement of the community’s efforts would depend, at least partly, on the government party’s subsequent behaviour.

**Conclusion**

Country communities said railway closure was taking away railways which they seemed to see, as having been ‘given’ to them, as theirs.

Following Ekeh (1974, p. 44, quoting Levi-Strauss (1969)) ‘it is the exchange which counts and not the things exchanged’ I argue that to country communities it was country’s relationship with government which counted. The railway was a symbolically powerful case in point. Country communities saw railway closure as part of a wider process of service withdrawal. The communities were averse to loss so reacted.
Railway closure destabilised the symbolic character of the relationship, the exchange of offerings, government trustworthiness, obligatory reciprocity, and government–country unity; though the relationship did not cease to exist. Grain line communities reacted primarily to threatened material and economic loss. New England communities reacted largely to threatened symbolic loss. Railway symbolism remained a powerful motivator to community action.

Possible railway closure destabilised the apparent practical equilibrium of the traditional government–country social exchange relationship. Railway closure threatened the future continuation of the relationship, whence the country communities acted. Country communities mobilised resources in support of keeping their railways open and operating, and seemed to act communally. New England communities, which saw themselves as particularly aggrieved, reacted strongly, seemingly stronger than grain line communities.

New England communities reacted strongly to railway closure in 2003, resulting in government deciding to keep the line open within three months after the initial closure possibility was made public, compared with reinstating a train service three years after the closure of the Dumaresq–Tamworth section in 1990, and never after the closure of the Glen Innes–Wallan-garra section in 1988. Government recognised and responded reciprocally to the strong community reaction.

New England was able to exercise some power, resulting in government announcing the CountryLink Solutions Team. However, government seemed to have an important win in redefining the relationship’s exchange terms.

There were no closures of grain lines during 2003. Grain line communities continued their ongoing dialogue with government over the issue.

**Epilogue**

The New England line remained open through and after 2003 to the time of writing-up this thesis. CountryLink has continued to operate EXPLORER passenger trains to and from Armidale to a daily timetable. The Up journey takes eight hours and ten minutes, and the Down journey takes five minutes.
longer http://www.countrylink.info/timetables/northwest/armidale_to_sydney, accessed 25/8/2011). No post-2003 usage figures are known to have been published. An experimental containerised log train was run to and from Armidale during September 2004; but there has been no other recorded freight traffic beyond Tamworth. If so, then local businesses have failed to reciprocate, to any meaningful extent, to government’s request and failed to implement the local community group’s suggestions (Friends of the Northern Railway 2003). Local businesses have maintained a countryminded view of government’s obligation to keep the line open. The most recent Liberal Party Transport Minister, Gladys Berejiklian, later assured Michael Torbay that the train service to Armidale was no longer under threat (AI 23 August 2011).
CHAPTER 9

Reflection and Conclusion

This study uses social exchange theory as a lens to reveal underlying cultural factors in why NSW country communities react to railway closure. The previous chapter concluded that country communities seemed to see railway closure as taking away railways which they saw, as having been ‘given’ to them, as theirs, destabilising the relationship, and to which they reacted strongly.

This chapter embraces both New England and grain line, i.e., country, communities, and focuses on 2003. The chapter is structured around three points, addressing each in turn. First, the apparent difference in reaction between New England and grain line community reaction. Second, reflection on the empirical and theoretical literature. Third, drawing an overall conclusion from the study.

New England and Grain Line Reactions Differed

Elements of countrymindedness were expressed in both New England and grain line community protests (Chapter 7). Both communities emphasised: their contribution to adding to national wealth (element 1); their taming the environment (element 5); desirability of decentralisation (element 6); and city holding power (element 7). However, grain line communities emphasised the economics of grain adding to national wealth (element 1) more consistently; while New England communities emphasised city holding power (element 7) more consistently. Country pursuits bringing out the best in people (element 3) and city parasitism (element 4) were only expressed in New England media. That all Australians should support primary industry (element 2) was only expressed by grain line communities.

New England community reaction seemed notably stronger than that of grain line communities. New England communities drew heavily on government obligation to them and quality of life issues.
Grain line communities seemed to be defending their primarily cropping use of agriculturally productive country land. These communities drew heavily on producing grain as a physical good to add to Australian wealth.

The passenger role of the New England railway was very different to the grain-hauling role of the grain-line railway in community life and culture. Grain line community response seemed more instrumental, a more pragmatic sort of response, less emotional, and more directed towards the materially significant issue of transport costs.

Grain line headlines did not frame their relationship with government in the antagonistic terms of ‘battle’, ‘fight’, and ‘war’; which were used frequently in New England discourse. The difference in chosen descriptors suggests a difference between New England and grain line community perceptions of their relationships with government. New England’s relationship with government seemed to be destabilised differently to that of grain lines’. Grain line communities seemed more content to rely on existing, and new, country-government institutionalised organisations.

A couple of photographs depicted farmers kneeling down beside a track, sometimes with their hand placed on the rail (DT 4 August; TL 6 February; SWM(i) 17 February 2003) – implying a close relationship. Yet use of the term ‘our’ (DL 5 February; FA 31 May; WS 4 June 2003) seemed to refer to geographic location; rather than claiming ownership. Grain line community attachment to the railway seemed to be more pragmatic around minimising the cost of transport than in New England.

Both communities said the railway ‘gift’ had material and economic value to them. However grain line communities left their valuation at that; whereas New England communities inferred the railway ‘gift’ also had subjective value to them. Of the two, New England reacted stronger, consistent with Zhang & Epley’s (2009) contention that recipients react according to their perceived valuation of the ‘gift’. Subjective valuation of the railway seemed like a far more powerful stimulus to community action than material and economic valuation.

11 Only the DT headlined ‘Save my branch’ (4 August 2003).
Reflection and Conclusion

New England communities mobilised a range of community, institutional, political, cultural, and leadership resources to prevent government railway closure. Grain line communities mobilised a range of community, institutional, political, and commercial resources to prevent government railway closure. Both mobilised community, institutional, and political resources. New England’s addition of cultural and leadership resources, and grain line’s addition of commercial resources reflects differences between their perspectives on the same issue.

Both New England and grain line communities reacted emotionally, mobilised resources, and acted communally to keep their railways open and operating. New England communities mobilised their presumptive cultural status and leadership role; which grain line communities did not. Grain line communities did not use strong symbolic language much. Nor did they engage in symbolic reaction. Grain line communities did not seem reflexive. Both communities seemed to be seeking to maintain stability in their countryminded government–country social exchange relationship; but differ in their perceived values of it.

Reflection

This section reflects the results of this study back on the literature I reviewed (Chapter 2).

Country Service Closure

As reported in Britain (Gourvish 1986; Jones 2011; Loft 2006) and America (Schwieterman 2001), NSW country communities objected to railway closure even in situations where the railway seemed to be little or infrequently used. Community concern was to have the railway open for when the communities potentially or actually might use it.

The specific issue of closing an individual railway line was linked to other railway closures, and more generalised wide-ranging non-rail related country concerns, as hypothesised by Tilly’s (1978, p. 135) community generalisation from the specific.

Collits’ (2000) asked whether closures are increasing or just being more talked about? While railway line and station closures during 2003 were at rates less than decades earlier (Figures 4.4; 6.4; and 6.5); railway
closure seemed to be a lot more talked about in New England newspapers, at least.

**Australian Country Culture**

Country communities interpreted railway closure largely through a countryminded lens (Chapter 7). While countrymindedness may arguably be in decline as a political ideology (Aitkin 1985; 2005; Duncan & Epps 1992; Wear 2000; 2009); it was still largely adhered to by New England and grain line country communities. For these communities, at least, countrymindedness remained into the new millennia as a deeply rooted viable political ideology. Countrymindedness can still be a relevant theoretical lens through which to analyse Australian country culture.

Railway closure carried many meanings associated with the elements of countrymindedness which were expressed relatively consistently across New England and grain line communities, so can be taken as broadly representative of NSW country communities. As an ideology, countrymindedness could neither be empirically tested nor proved wrong (Lewins 1989); but it seemed to be indicated as an explanatory concept. Railway closure seemed to be the sort of city-centric act, countryminded country communities could expect from a city-based government. The apparent truth of countrymindedness about city communities and power seemed to be demonstrated, so could shore-up country community confidence in the ideology to explain their life situation. Railway closure more likely reinforced countrymindedness because country people seemed to use it to make sense of the events during 2003.

Unlike the New England New State Movement, of many decades before, no pressure surfaced in 2003 for a local political identity separate from the larger state of NSW. Inconsistent with countrymindedness arguing for a separate political party for country people; New England and grain line communities were content to work within existing political relationships. Destabilisation had limits, and did not extend to revolution.

New England objections expressed ideas aligning more towards Smith’s (1982) Southern agrarianism; Dalecki & Coughenour’s (1992) soft agrarianism; Beus & Dunlap’s (1994) alternative agrarianism; and Halpin & Martin’s (1996) lifestyle aspects of farming. However, grain line objections
expressed ideas aligning more towards Smith’s (1982) Yankee agrarianism; Dalecki & Coughenour’s (1992) hard agrarianism; Beus & Dunlap’s (1994) conventional agrarianism; and Halpin & Martin’s (1996) active farming. Emergence of these differences within agrarianism are consistent with Molm, Schaefer, Collett’s (2007) proposition of there being two distinct dimensions to the value of social exchange reciprocity: instrumental; and in addition the more symbolic. Grain line communities primarily valued the instrumental self-interest of transporting grain. New England communities added more symbolic values.

**Social Exchange Theory**

There are many theories which could have been used to structure analysing the observed behaviour. Each would have advantages and limitations.

Social exchange theory has proved to be appropriate and profitably useful, allowing me to build a persuasive argument. Nevertheless social exchange theory has been found to have some limits. Some of its central concepts have been difficult to test empirically. Some of the parties were probably not so much rational calculators, or self-interested participants, or as hedonistic as the theory suggests. This has been where an understanding of country culture has helped (Zafirovski 2005).

**Government–Country Social Exchange**

Railway closure would completely remove one element in the government–country social exchange relationship – the railway, which I theorise had been dressed to resemble a government ‘gift’ (Gray & Lawrence 2001). Building on Molm, Schaefer, Collett’s (2007) symbolic value of reciprocity communicating the partner’s regard and respect for the other partner and the relationship, government ceasing to reciprocate seemed to carry symbolism communicating government disregard for and lack of respect for the country partner.

Railway closure would allegedly discourage tourists, university students, and settlers, reducing New England’s ability to offer settling the land in exchange for the railway. Railway closure would threaten the UNE’s ability to attract students, especially from overseas, so reducing New England’s ability to offer its developing national wealth. Railway closure
would allegedly threaten grain line community’s ability to produce grain, and other primary produce, reducing grain line community ability to offer their developing national wealth. Also railway closure would indirectly lead to reducing the size of grain line communities, reducing grain line community ability to offer their settling the land.

Government seemed to devalue both New England and grain line community exchange items. This study is consistent with Zhang & Epley’s (2009) argument that givers tend to attend more to the costs they incur in delivering their contribution to the exchange; while receivers tend to focus more on the benefits they receive from being in the relationship. When the party’s evaluation of their costs and benefits are mismatched, their expected and actual reciprocity will be mismatched as well. Government devaluing country’s reciprocity seemed to make country’s reciprocity seem insufficient to government to warrant government continuing in the exchange relationship. Government told country that government wanted country to increase use of the railways. Country could not claim to be unaware of government’s expectation. According to Zhang & Epley (2009) the country recipients, if they valued the benefits of a railway highly, should have offered significant reciprocity commensurate with government expectations. New England communities gave verbal acknowledgement that they should increase railway usage. Grain line communities said they were already offering significant reciprocity. This study argues that generally country saw its exchange offerings as generally sufficient reciprocity. Government seemingly did not, so seeing the exchange as inequitable. Both parties were contributing to destabilising the relationship.

Government held power over operating the trains; but was increasingly independent of the instrumentality of the relationship so seemed minimally interested in it. Its minimal interest gave government even more power. Holding greater power, gave government freedom to consider a wider range of, and newer, alternatives than agricultural settlement and primary industry for achieving its goals of state development. Country held some resources to offer in exchange; but seemed to see itself as highly dependent on the relationship so remained very interested in it. Government devaluing country’s exchange items seemed to threaten to remove, or at least reduce, country’s source of power via its exchange items.
within the relationship (Cook et al. 1996). However, irrespective of ceasing to receive government’s reward, country could continue to give some of its offerings to government through using other forms of transport such as coaches in New England and trucks in grain producing areas. Allocation of power, resources, and dependencies would continue contributing to the pattern of interaction observed within the changing relationship.

Government ceasing to offer its reward conveyed instrumental significance, which for New England was relatively minor; but of powerful symbolic meaning. This supports Tilly’s (1978, p. 135) hypothesis that groups generally inflate the value of things already possessed but which are under threat of being taken away. Government had forgotten its original instrumental and symbolic values issuing from the exchange, and no longer valued highly the current country exchange, which was consistent with Aitkin’s (2005) assertion that notions of city–country interdependence have passed. By 2003 government wanted use of the train in return – something much more direct and specific than traditional agricultural and regional development. Breakdown of traditional government–country mutual dependence made social exchange potentially unstable as Molm (1994) concluded, and was being actualised in destabilising the relationship.

The literature would predict that government expressing its value of railway closure purely in financial terms would reformat a fundamental characteristic of not expressing or quantifying the monetary value (Blau 1964, p. 94; Ekeh 1974, p. 56; Zafirovski 2005) in social exchanges. Focussing on finances moved the exchange towards an economic relationship, undermining trust, and making generalised benefits to third parties invisible. Highlighting finances exposed contributions, obligations, claims, and ‘debts’ between the two principal parties, as would be forecast by Ekeh (1974, p. 57).

New England communities listened to criticism from the other party, and seemed to acknowledge low passenger use and no freight as valid criticisms. One local admitted the community conceded the immediate economic inefficiencies of the train service. But the line had been unprofitable from the beginning (Appendix 4.2). Keeping country passenger-only lines open was economically problematic, but subsidising costs had been a traditional role for government as part of the exchange
Reflection and Conclusion

Getting freight traffic back onto the line to boost usage would make closure less economically attractive, so less likely, but didn’t happen. Dunning, Van Boven, and Lowenstein’s (2001) and Zhang & Epley’s (2009) arguments that owners tend to overestimate the value of their offering, may assist in explaining why country failed to adjust its offering in response to government request. Molm (1994) argued that social exchange theory assumes transactions are serially dependent through time. But because the relationship between the two partners is relatively enduring, the individual exchange transactions are not necessarily dependent on their position in the precise sequence of transactions. This may assist in explaining why country failed to adjust its reciprocity, in 2003, according to transactions over the previous decades (Chapter 6). Communities admitted they had a responsibility to increase their use of the line; but their responsibility seemed to them minor compared to government’s responsibility to keep the line open, with passenger services on offer. New England communities seemed to see themselves as still in a government–community social exchange relationship; albeit one that was being respecified. As would be predicted by Homans (1958, p. 606), country changed little as its reward from the exchange, less cost, tended towards maximum country profit. Homans (1958, p. 606) would predict that country didn’t change its view because country would continue to profit from retaining the status quo in the relationship. Dunning, Van Boven, and Lowenstein (2001) identified egocentric empathy gaps as inhibiting successful exchange. This study suggests that the party should also materially act on its understanding of the other party’s wants and needs in order to retain stability in the relationship. New England communities acknowledged government’s desire for increased use; but are not recorded as having significantly increased their use of the railway. Lack of documented increased patronage suggests New England probably failed to bridge the empathy gap to their government partner.

Expressed concerns about differences between ‘them’ in the city and ‘us’ in the country is consistent with Stiles (1977) conclusion that the public and political outcry over closure of the North Australia Railway was a protest by locals over lacking control over their own affairs and a feeling of ‘them’ distant administrators and ‘us’ people living in the Northern
Differences between the communities’ expressed concerns and political expressed concerns supports Kirk’s (2002) argument of a perception-reality gap around desirable government spending on rail versus road. A gap appears between what communities say they want and what government thinks country communities need. Government sees a gap between what country communities need and what communities want. The differences also support McKenzie’s (1999) argument that, in reducing rural infrastructure, government works within frames of reference that communities do not identify with. Thus government can appear aloof, not seeming to understand the ‘real’ issues from a community viewpoint. These possible railway closures seemed like government ‘objective’ decision making, making country voices seem more subjective so less relevant to the decision making process, as Kearns et al. (2009) concluded when analysing community impacts of closing rural schools.

Like the coming of the railway metaphorically reminded observers of wider cultural transformations taking place (Freeman 1999; 1999a), so railway closure reminded NSW country communities of larger cultural transformations occurring around themselves.

**Railway Closure in NSW**

Communities across New England were reported as reacting consistently to railway closure (Chapters 7 and 8). Some towns had direct access to an open railway; some did not (Table 8.1). Symbolic value of the railway is not necessarily dependent on material use of the railway. When considering impacts of railway closure on symbolic value held by communities, both railway users and non-users can be impacted on. This study supports Else & Howe’s (1969) and Jessup & Casavant’s (2003) suggestion that both railway user and non-railway user groups should be included in assessing social impacts of railway closure.

**Community Reaction to Railway Closure**

This study supports Tilly’s (1978, p. 133) argument that communities act when threatened, and extends threat to include when communities perceive themselves to possibly be threatened in the future. I place Tilly’s (1978, p. 135) concept of threat from reducing the realisation of community interests,
into a context of community cultural values so widening potential threats towards the subjective. Communities reacted to how they subjectively interpreted threats; not just the material objectivity of the threat. Railway closure was consistent with imagery of country life being recast away from the traditional more romanticised rural imagery, as suggested to be happening by many writers, e.g.: Forth (2000); Pritchard & McManus (2000); Lockie & Bourke (2001); Gray & Lawrence (2001); Aitkin (2005); Cocklin & Dibden (2005); Davidson & Brodie (2005); and Richardson (2000). As with closing rural hospitals (Barnett & Barnett 2003), community protest was about preserving rail services, plus reaction to a perceived decline in the viability and sustainability of country communities.

New England occasionally attributed government economic rationalism to the reasoning for local railway closure (NDL 20 September; WN 30 October 2003). Economic rationalism is a term closely related to neoliberalism, and they are often used interchangeably. Attributing such a philosophy to railway closure automatically attached negativity to the government decision making process. Negativity found expression in negative community reaction.

This study supports Stiles’ (1977) conclusion that community reaction to railway closure was based on more intangible values than just loss of a particular transport mode. Emotional responses to railway closure in New England were consistent with responses to railway closures reported elsewhere (e.g., Gourvish 1986, p. 454; 456; Henshaw 1994; Hillman & Whalley 1980; Johnson 1976; Jones 2011; Loft 2006; Parolin, Filan & Ilias 1992; Parolin & Filan 1993; Parolin 1996). These studies were more focussed on instrumentality, so their reporting subjective responses was notable. As would be predicted by Lawler (2001), negative emotions produced by social exchanges within the government–country relationship likely inhibited solidarity between the parties. Raised voices, animated placard waving, heckling, and loud jeering were the main physical actions. Torbay encouraged communities to demonstrate their support in a peaceful manner. The communities did not resort to violence to defend their view. Community reaction of public complaint, protest meetings, media coverage, and producing reports, were consistent with other reported Australian
community reactions to railway closure (e.g.: Clapp 1930; McKenzie 1999; Parolin & Filan 1993; Raymond & Parolin 1992; and Stiles 1977).

Only one person suggested country communities take over running the railways. That was for a regional trust body to work in partnership with local government authorities (AE 29; GIE 30 October 2003). No report was found of such an entity forming during 2003. The option of operating any of the lines by a community or regionally based organisational model, like the Bendigo Bank in some rural areas (Argent & Rolley 2000), went untested. Reaction to railway closure was not proto-revolutionary, as would be flagged by Tilly (1978, p. 192), in trying to capture control of the then State-owned railway lines. Communities were content to continue relating with the existing railway organisations.

Tilly (1978, p. 231) argued for analysis to take an historical perspective in modelling community power struggles, as this study did to its benefit. Roots of the destabilisation were found to run back through many decades (Chapter 6), and the relationship to through the individual line openings and further back into the 1850s (Chapter 4). This study found that the communities also expressed their experiences of 2003 in an historical perspective to help explain it.

Country communities failed to successfully align railway closure with broader social debates, such as environmentalism or privatisation of public services, so failed to achieve successful frame extension around their single-issue concern. Community reaction was more like reactive ruralism (Woods 2003) where a self-defined ‘traditional’ country community mobilises in defence of a purportedly long-lasting and agrarian-centred country way of life in response to a perceived challenge from city interests.

According to Tilly (1978, p. 85), action is seen to be communal to the extent it tends to produce communal goods, as with the original actions to get a railway. However the communal action of 2003 was intended to continue to receive collective services that had traditionally been given by government (Chapter 4) and to preserve what they saw as a communal good in the form of ‘their’ railway. This evidences Mormont’s (1983) identifying access to public services as a growing issue around which rural struggles are

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12 Government’s Open Access scheme, introduced in 1996, explicitly provided for alternative train operators.
likely to emerge. Communal action had shifted from producing resources to keeping resources. The communities could see railway closure as a threat and themselves as under attack. Country interests which were encountering such an attack anticipated more attacks, as suggested by Tilly (1978, p. 133).

The communities looked around for institutional, political and private allies and supporters. In particular grain line communities, like the Heathcote community (Wild 1983) looked around for technical experts in fighting a toxic dump, looked to technical experts to produce reports on the wider impacts of grain line closure.

Communities voiced concern and exercised forms of political protest, enjoying some success as a result of their political opposition as would be predicted from Dodgson (1984). Of the options of exit or voice as offered by Hirschman (1970), the communities remained in the relationship.

**Symbolism of Railway Closure**

In addressing this study’s principal research question of ‘Why do NSW country communities react so strongly to railway closure when their supposedly objective interests are not threatened?”, I have sought partial explanation in the rich complexities of subjective community behaviour as implied in NSW writings such as: Parolin (1996); Parolin, Filan & Ilias (1992); Parolin & Filan (1993); and Raimond & Parolin (1992), and inferable from writings from further afield such as: Abbott (1986); Clapp (1930); Dodgson (1984); Gardiner (2004); Gourvish (1986); Henshaw (1994); Johnson (1976); Jones (2011); Loft (2006); Stiles (1977; 1979); and Wissing (1976).

Developing Carter’s (2001) question of whether the railway was still a force in modern British cultural representation, it seemed to be so in country NSW during 2003. An open railway seemed to be associated with meanings of being: a lifeline; a government obligation; a country entitlement; safe travel; comfortable travel; and future betterment. This study supports Blainey’s (2001) suggestion that the railway conceptually overcame the Australian ‘tyranny of distance’; and adds that NSW country communities seemed to see railway closure as reimposing the tyrannical
distance. The distance included aspects of quantifiable geographical length, centralisation of government in the city, and perceived social separation.

This study supports Tulk’s (2008) suggestion of tying symbolism of railway closure to traditional symbolism of the open railway. Many communities did so in expressing their objections. Some concerns were expressed via visualisation of what a disused railway line might look like. This supports use of visual analysis of disused railway landscapes to infer meanings of railway closure. Communities saw railway closure as imbuing their landscapes with senses of times past, and desolation, as had Auster (1997). Some counterpoised landscapes of open railroads with what Paul (2000) termed ‘railscapes of abandonment’. Communities feared closed railways would become an enduring symbol of socio-economic change, as Schwieterman (2001) concluded. The railway, when in use, had been a powerful symbol to country communities of connection and being valued. When not in use, it remained a powerful symbol, but new meanings were injected into the symbol. To country communities the closed railway symbolised their separation and government disrespect, becoming at least a destabilising force in the country–government relationship.

Symbolism of railway closure revolved around issues of: marginalisation of country settlement and primary production; social isolation; city power; government lacking a country perspective; imposing external so-called ‘objective’ decision making; and seemingly mindless government decision making. This study supports Archer’s (2000) contention that regional Australia was being visibly marginalised, and Dibden & Cocklin’s (2005) contention that rural Australia was being valued less. Along the grain lines there would be a quantifiable economic penalty incurred after the services would end. Railway closure highlighted the threatened withdrawal of state mediated city–country interdependence and mutual obligation, as suggested by Brett (2007), making visible the state abandoning Kelly’s (1992) state-paternalism pillar of the Australian settlement more broadly.

Building on Carter’s (2001) question of whether the railway was symbolically an open text with which communities could associate their own meanings, railway closure seemed to be so in country NSW during 2003. The railway remained symbolically powerful, closure of which
resulted in observably strong community reaction whether material transportation interests were threatened or not. Albeit loss of passenger trains was an imposition for some people, though maybe not very many, who genuinely need the trains and could suffer after closure.

**Conclusion**

During the latter half of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries countrymindedness was hegemonic in NSW country and government. The NSW government, in the city, sometimes dressed support for country in ways which made the support resemble a ‘gift’. However, the ‘gift’ did not necessarily include country ownership of or direct control of the support. Country railways can be seen as one such ‘gift’. Country communities used the railways in the ways anticipated by government – to develop wealth for the colony, state, and nation by means of primary production, and to settle the land. Country use of the railway was implicit. In such mutually-dependent reciprocal giving, government and country communities can be theorised to have effectively developed a social exchange relationship with the railway as the currency of exchange.

During the later decades of the twentieth century and into the first decade of the twenty-first century New England communities virtually ceased using the railway to further settle the land and develop greater national wealth. Grain line communities continued to use the railway to produce national wealth; but ceased using it directly to settle the land.

Implicit usage became a government explicit expectation of country use. During 2003, government raised the possibility of closing the New England and seventeen other railways. Fifteen of the eighteen possible lines were grain lines, which were still in use to facilitate primary production. Country community reactions to railway closure contradicted and confirmed a range of elements of the Australian country ideology known as countrymindedness. Closing country railways seemed mindless, country-mindedless – an expression of what I call ‘countrymindlessness’.

Railway closure threatened country material, economic, and social wellbeing, with similarities and contrasts being evidenced between New England and grain line communities. Considering just the grain lines would produce a fairly instrumental view of impacts and community reactions.
Reflection and Conclusion

This study’s including New England in the analysis adds considerably through the inclusion of significant symbolism that the communities associated with railway closure.

Countrymindless railway closure threatened what seemed to be a practical equilibrium in the traditional government–country social exchange relationship. Country communities reacted, mobilised resources, and acted communally. New England communities acted strongly; seemingly stronger than grain line communities. There was no material or legal closure, so the relationship remained, albeit in a modified form. However the idea of railway closure destabilised the relationship, for a while at least.

Recommended Further Research

Building on my argument further research might include addressing two empirical and one theoretical question:

1. During 2003 the Broadmeadow–Newcastle (Figure 3.1) passenger-only suburban line was also threatened with possible closure. Might comparing and contrasting data gathered, similarly to this study, from that city community, reveal country–city differences and similarities in communities reacting to a common act?

2. Might social exchange theory highlight the terms under which implicit government–community exchanges operate so that those terms could be respected, respecified, and negotiated in future government service closures?

3. What are the implications for social exchange relationships of one party changing from a singular entity, e.g., the previously monolithic state government railway, to multiple entities, e.g., the post-1996 mixture of government and multiple private railway organisations, as with a dyad transforming into a network (Appendix 9.1)?
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ABS – see Australian Bureau of Statistics.


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GLOSSARY

Being applied research this study defined key terms pragmatically according to legislation, policy, managerial, and administrative documents framing the research question. Definitions of words and phrases used in everyday language of newspaper texts were taken from: *The Macquarie Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms: Aussie Talk* (1984); *The Macquarie Dictionary* (1991); Wilkes, GA, 1978, *A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms*.

**Assistant Chief Traffic Manager**: Assistant to the senior administrative officer responsible for the overall flow of trains and loads.

**ARTC**: Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) was formed in 1997, after Commonwealth and State Governments agreed to form a one-stop-shop for all rail operators seeking access to the national interstate railway network.

**Community**: A group of people linked by social ties, sharing common cultural views, living in definable geographic settings. Communities can share meanings in the reading of signs, they can be conceived of a ‘communities of meaning’ (Cohen 1989, p. 70).

**Country NSW**: Non-metropolitan NSW. Defined partly by where-it-is-not, country is geographically greater than individual centres within it, but is contained within a larger nation/state. Newspaper writers used ‘country’, ‘regional’, ‘rural’ and ‘the bush’ interchangeably, seemingly without reference to definitional debate.

**Culture**: A particular population’s shared beliefs, customs, values. The way/s people live their lives and what lies behind what they do in everyday living (Gray & Phillips 2001; Vanclay 2003). A group’s communal knowledge organised and represented by symbols, implying a relationship with the accumulated shared symbols representative of and having significant meanings within a particular community - a context-dependent semiotic system. To say two people belong to the same culture says that they interpret the world in roughly the same way/s and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways understandable by each other. Culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them, and making sense of the world, in generally similar ways (Hall 1997; Jenks 1993). Shared meanings read from signs can thus delimit cultural groups.

**Down**: The direction away from Sydney by rail.

**Ideology**: A system of values and ideas that presents an idealised picture of the ‘good’ society, which has power to manifest in social action. As well as presenting a goal, ideology provides policies and procedures for purposeful action (Aitkin 1985).

**Institutional Capital**: Institutional structures and mechanisms in a community, including government agencies, private services, and non-government organisations (Dibden and Cocklin 2005).

**Interlockings**: Places along railway lines were points and signals engage with each other in a dependent interlocked system to control the passage of trains (*The Macquarie Dictionary* 1995).

**Line**: A length of railway track connecting separate geographic places that is part of a larger railway (Strathfield v SRA in Land & Environment Court of NSW, No.40087 of 1994), as distinct from a siding or yard contained within a single geographic place.
**Glossary**

**Minded:** Inclined or disposed toward (*The Macquarie Dictionary* 1995). Aitkin (1985) used the word ‘minded’ in ‘countryminded’ in its conventional ordinary everyday dictionary sense, as was appropriate for the etymology he presented.

**Mindless:** Without intelligence; senseless; unmindful; careless; heedless of (*The Macquarie Dictionary* 1995). Of these differing conventional ordinary everyday dictionary senses, ‘careless and heedless of’ most closely approximate the opposite of minded as used by Aitkin (1985).

**Out-of:** A small room or building on a platform where parcels and small goods items could be picked up from, or left for collection by, passing trains.

**Pioneer railways:** Standard gauge railways lightly engineered and cheaply constructed using minimal earthworks, earth ballast, half-round sleepers, light weight rails, timber structures, un-gated level crossings, un-fenced corridors, ground level platforms, and timber station buildings (Deane 1900; Roberts 1897).

**Railway:** A guided system designed to transport passengers or freight or both on a railway track, together with its infrastructure and associated sidings, and includes a heavy railway, light railway, inclined railway, monorail or tramway (s.4. NSW Rail Safety Act, 2002). Notably whether passengers, freight or both are or are not being transported is specifically not relevant. Railways in Regional NSW include grain-only lines, passenger only lines, mixed traffic lines, interstate lines, cross-country connecting lines, branch lines, lines permanently open, lines seasonally open, lines not open for traffic and lines reopened. The railway included: track; infrastructure; rolling stock; buildings; staff; documents, and organisation.

**Railway closure:** Deliberately ceasing to run trains on a section of railway line, along which trains had previously been regularly run. Closure usually involves managerial decision making, administrative action, and on-ground physical works to prevent trains being run. Closure is intended to be for the foreseeable future, so has a longer time frame than a temporary absence of train running, or lines seasonally closed while the annual grain harvest is not being carried. The term is used herein in its everyday meaning, not as legally defined (s.99 (1) and (2), NSW Transport Administration Act 1988).

**Squattocracy:** In Australian history, a squatter occupied a large tract of Crown land to graze livestock. Some had no legal rights to the land; but were the first, and often only, Europeans in the area. They were attributed cultural status by being long-established and reputedly wealthy landowners, who regarded themselves as an aristocracy (*The Macquarie Dictionary* 1995).

**Station:** A place at which trains stop on a railway so passengers can board or alight or goods can be loaded or unloaded. The entry point to the railway, where customers buy tickets, get information and catch trains (SRA 1996). The length of railway track, attendant sidings, and un/loading facilities between the related Up and Down Home Signals.

**Station yard:** Attendant sidings, where more than just main running line/s, and un/loading facilities between the related Up and Down Home Signals contained within a single geographic place.

**Stop Block:** A baulk of hardwood, usually c.305mm square, solidly bolted in place perpendicularly across the heads of both rails, intended to visually advise train drivers to stop and physically prevent trains from passing.

**Up:** The direction towards Sydney by rail.

**Xplorer:** Multiple carriage, double ended, diesel passenger train.

**XPT:** High speed, British, streamlined, double ended, diesel powered passenger train.
## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1.1

**Lines/Sections Mentioned for Possible Closure During 2003**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line/Section</th>
<th>Date of Opening</th>
<th>Open Stations</th>
<th>Contiguous with Previous Line Closures of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moree–Weemelah</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Garah; Weemelah</td>
<td>Weemelah–Mungindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moree–North Star</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Milguy; Crooble; Croppa Creek; North Star</td>
<td>North Star–Boggabilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burren–Merrywinebone</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Rowena; Merrywinebone</td>
<td>Merrywinebone–Pokataroo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth–Dumaresq (p-o)</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Kootingal; Walcha Road; Uralla; Armidale; Dumaresq</td>
<td>Dumaresq–Wallan-garra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binnaway–Gwabegar</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Ulamambri; Coonabarabran; Bugaldie; Baradine; Kenebri; Gwabegar</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevertire–Warren</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogan Gate–Tottenham</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Trundle; The Troffs; Kadungle; Gobondery; Tullamore; Yethera; Albert; Tottenham</td>
<td>Mine sidings (x3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowra–Trajere</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Trajere</td>
<td>Trajere–Eugowra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koorawatha–Greenethorpe</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Greenethorpe</td>
<td>Greenethorpe–Grenfell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Wyalong–Burcher</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Lake Cowal; Burcher</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barmedman–Lake Cargelligo</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Yiddah; Wyalong; West Wyalong; Calleen; Girral; Ungarie; Weja; Tullibigeal; Burgooney; Lake Cargelligo</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line/Section</th>
<th>Date of Opening</th>
<th>Open Stations</th>
<th>Contiguous with Previous Line Closures of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ungarie–Naradhan</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Youngareen; Kikoira; Naradhan</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barmedman–Rankins Springs</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Wargin; Alleena; Buddigower; Tallimba; Buralyang; Weethalie; Erigolia; Rankins Springs</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith–Hillston</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Tharbogang; Tabbita; Goolgowi; Merriwagga; Hillston</td>
<td>Hillston–Roto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanco–Willbriggie</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Whitton; Willbriggie</td>
<td>Willbriggie–Hay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rock–Boree Creek</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Tootool; Milbrulong; Lockhart; Boree Creek</td>
<td>Boree Creek–Oaklands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casino–Murwillumbah (p-o)</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Lismore; Byron Bay; Mullumbimby; Murwillumbah</td>
<td>Booyong–Ballina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadmeadow–Newcastle (p-o)</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Hamilton; Wickham; Civic; Newcastle</td>
<td>Mine lines (multiple)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals 18</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p-o = passenger-only line.* (Laidley 2002)
Appendix

Appendix 2.1

Additional Locations Mentioned in Text
# Appendix 4.1

## Government Presence at Opening Celebrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Opening &amp; Date</th>
<th>Political Presence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Tamworth–Moonbi (now Kootingal) (9 January 1882)</td>
<td>Absence of political presence was criticised in the local press.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uralla–Armidale (1 February 1883)</td>
<td>H. Copeland: Minister for Works. J.S. Farnell: Secretary for Lands. J. Moore: Mayor. Several MLAs and Members of the Legislative Council (MLC). (See under).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale–Glen Innes (Figure 4.1) (19 August 1884)</td>
<td>G. Dibbs: Colonial Treasurer and Acting Minister for Works. J.F. Utz: Mayor. Several Members of Parliament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes–Tenterfield (1 September 1886)</td>
<td>C.R.B. Carrington: Governor of NSW. C.A. Lee: MLA. T.A. Lewis: Mayor. Several MLAs and MLCs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Contemporaneous newspapers and local histories. See Figure 3.2 for locations)
### Appendix 4.2

#### Annual Financial Losses: Tamworth–Wallangarra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Loss (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>97,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>84,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>85,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>74,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>73,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>73,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>70,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>83,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>70,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>63,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>41,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>48,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>55,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>51,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>24,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>40,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>63,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>82,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>60,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>44,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>82,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>51,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>52,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>18,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>65,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>84,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>104,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>82,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>135,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>25,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>48,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>37,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>36,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>39,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>122,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>165,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>169,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>155,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>148,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>127,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>127,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>152,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>150,658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(NSW government railway Annual reports)\(^{13}\)

\(^{13}\)Figures per line ceased to be published after 1938.
## Appendix 4.3

### Railway Facilities Provided Specifically to Support Primary Industries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Primary Industry Support Facilities</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wallan-garra</td>
<td>Livestock unloading bank</td>
<td>1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>Meat chilling works on dedicated siding</td>
<td>1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separate sheep and cattle yards on dedicated stock sidings</td>
<td>1886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wool loading bank on dedicated wool siding</td>
<td>Pre-1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungulla</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluff Rock</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Flat</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Stock yards on dedicated stock siding</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater</td>
<td>Stock yards on dedicated stock siding</td>
<td>Pre-1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>Wool loading stage</td>
<td>1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarraford</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>Stock yards on dedicated stock siding</td>
<td>Pre-1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wool loading stage on general goods siding</td>
<td>Pre-1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonehenge</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glencoe</td>
<td>Stock yards on dedicated stock siding</td>
<td>Pre-1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>Stock yards on general goods siding</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llangothlin</td>
<td>Wool loading stage</td>
<td>Pre-1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>Stock yards on dedicated stock siding</td>
<td>Pre-1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wool loading bank on general goods siding</td>
<td>Pre-1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian Fertilisers Ltd. dedicated siding</td>
<td>Pre-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abattoir on dedicated sidings</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain</td>
<td>Stock yards on dedicated stock siding</td>
<td>Pre-1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumaresq</td>
<td>Stock yards on general goods siding</td>
<td>Pre-1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulk fertiliser unloading structure</td>
<td>c.1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Stock yards on dedicated stock siding</td>
<td>Pre-1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wool loading stage on dedicated wool siding</td>
<td>Pre-1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly’s Plains</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uralla</td>
<td>Stock yards on dedicated stock siding</td>
<td>Pre-1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wool loading stage on dedicated wool siding</td>
<td>Pre-1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Wool loading stage on dedicated wool siding</td>
<td>Pre-1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stock yards</td>
<td>Pre-1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Packing shed on dedicated siding</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky South</td>
<td>Siding for Soldier Settlement</td>
<td>1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shelter shed for fruit</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollun</td>
<td>Wool loading stage</td>
<td>Pre-1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walcha Road</td>
<td>Stock yards on dedicated stock siding</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wool loading stage on general goods siding</td>
<td>Pre-1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulk fertiliser unloading structure</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolbrook</td>
<td>Wool loading stage on dedicated wool siding</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danglemah</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limbi</td>
<td>Wool loading stage on dedicated wool siding</td>
<td>Pre-1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootingal</td>
<td>Stock yards on dedicated stock siding</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tintinhull</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemingha</td>
<td>Silos on dedicated silo siding</td>
<td>1934</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Forsyth 1997; Signal Diagrams; Station Expenditure cards; General Arrangement plans; detailed plans)
### Appendix 4.4

**Railway Staff Housing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>1882</th>
<th>1892</th>
<th>1902</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>1922</th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1989</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wallan-garra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gatekeeper’s house.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungulla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gatekeeper’s cottage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluff Rock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Station Master’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Flat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gatekeeper’s residence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater –</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Station Master’s house;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gatekeeper’s cottage;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gatekeeper’s cottage;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonehenge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gatekeeper’s cottage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Appendix*
## Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Number of Station Staff</th>
<th>Railway Staff Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glencoe</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llangothlin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth – Dumaresq</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly’s Plains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Glencoe: Station Master’s residence; Gatekeeper’s house; Cottage.
- Ben Lomond: Station Master’s residence; Gatekeeper’s house.
- Llangothlin: Night Officer’s residence.
- Guyra: Station Master’s residence; Gatekeeper’s cottage; Pumper’s cottage; Cottage.
- Black Mountain: Station Master’s cottage; Cottage.
- Exmouth – Dumaresq: Gatekeeper’s cottage. Station Master’s residence; Gatekeeper’s house.
- Armidale: Station Master’s residence; Gatekeeper’s house; Ganger’s house; Porter’s house; Porter’s cottage; Porter’s cottage; Porter’s cottage; Cottage; Cottage.
- Kelly’s Plains: Safeworking Porter’s
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Number of Station Staff</th>
<th>Railway Staff Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uralla</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollun</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walcha Road</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolbrook</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danglemah Limbri</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

hutment; Gatekeeper’s house; Ganger’s cottage; Hutments. Station Master’s residence; Station Master’s residence; Gatekeeper’s house; Gatekeeper’s house; Gatekeeper’s house; Cottage; Cottage. Station Master’s residence; Gatekeeper’s house; Night Officer’s cottage. Station Master’s residence; Assistant SM’s residence; Night Officer’s residence. Station Master’s residence; Pumper’s cottage; House; Cottage; Night Officer’s cabin. Station Attendant’s house; Gatekeeper’s house; Fettler’s hutment;
### Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Number of Station Staff</th>
<th>Railway Staff Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1882 1892 1902 1912 1922 1932 1941 1989</td>
<td>Porter’s cabin; Hutment. Station Master’s residence; Night Officer’s house; Gatekeeper’s house; Fettler’s cottage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootingal</td>
<td>2 6 7 7 10 6 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tintinhull</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemingha</td>
<td>2 1 1</td>
<td>Station Master’s residence; Officer’s residence; Cottage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>24 113 119 131 160 122 120 78 90 houses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Nomenclature of: residence; house; cottage; varied according to source. Accommodation for temporary use e.g., navvy tents; refreshment room staff bedrooms; train crew barracks, not included. (AR 1882 to 1941, when staff statistics ceased to be published; Forsyth 1997; General Arrangement plans, contract plans, detail plans; Station Expenditure cards; Working Plans; local histories, photographs, newspapers, field survey 2005; Ministry of Transport Media Release 13 July 1989)
Appendix 4.5

Capital Works Charged to Maintenance Accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Uralla</td>
<td>Extend siding for cattle yard</td>
<td>£288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Walcha Road</td>
<td>Replace a 10ton weighbridge with a 20ton weighbridge</td>
<td>£110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Walcha Road</td>
<td>Provide additional siding accommodation</td>
<td>£253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>Provide additional siding accommodation at stock yards</td>
<td>£88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>Provide new level crossing</td>
<td>£100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Kentucky South</td>
<td>Provide shelter shed for fruit and office</td>
<td>£204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Extend stock siding to hold additional wagons</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Danglemah</td>
<td>Extend crossing loop</td>
<td>£311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Nemingah</td>
<td>Provide crossing loop</td>
<td>£7,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Provide concrete barrow strips to platform</td>
<td>£130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>Provide new loading bank</td>
<td>£110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>Provide an additional loading bank</td>
<td>£510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Kootingal</td>
<td>Construct new loading bank</td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Station Expenditure History Cards)
### Appendix 4.6

#### Line Openings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station (date of line opening)</th>
<th>Date of Station Opening</th>
<th>Concurrent with Opening Section of Line?</th>
<th>Date of School Opening</th>
<th>Date of Post Office Opening</th>
<th>Settlement Pre, Post, Circa Station Opening?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wallan-garra (line opened 16 January 1888)</td>
<td>16 January 1888</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>8 September 1885</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>16 January 1888</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>March 1884</td>
<td>1 January 1891</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield (line opened 1 September 1886)</td>
<td>1 September 1886</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>September 1864</td>
<td>1 January 1849</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungulla</td>
<td>9 December 1891 1889</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>June 1880</td>
<td>1 October 1909</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluff Rock</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>July 1884</td>
<td>1 January 1927</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Flat</td>
<td>1 September 1886</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>August 1919</td>
<td>20 June 1887</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>1 September 1886</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>August 1883</td>
<td>30 April 1883</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater</td>
<td>1 September 1886</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>September 1884</td>
<td>1 March 1870</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>1 September 1886</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>August 1853</td>
<td>1 October 1851</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarraford</td>
<td>1 September 1886</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>June 1886</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes (line opened 19 August 1884)</td>
<td>19 August 1884</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>July 1863</td>
<td>1 August 1854</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonehenge</td>
<td>19 August 1884</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>October 1881</td>
<td>1 March 1885</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glencoe</td>
<td>19 August 1910</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>November 1880</td>
<td>1 April 1881</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>19 August 1884</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>January 1881</td>
<td>1 November 1879</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llangothlin</td>
<td>19 August 1884</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>February 1909</td>
<td>16 August 1890</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>19 August 1884</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>July 1883</td>
<td>1 May 1877</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain</td>
<td>19 August 1884</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>January 1882</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 The Queensland part of Wallan-garra railway station was opened on 4 February 1887, concurrent with opening of the 3ft 6in gauge Queensland railway line.
### Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station (date of line opening)</th>
<th>Date of Station Opening</th>
<th>Concurrent with Opening Section of Line?</th>
<th>Date of School Opening</th>
<th>Date of Post Office Opening</th>
<th>Settlement Pre, Post, Circa Station Opening?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dumaresq</td>
<td>19 August 1884</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>January 1882</td>
<td>10 September 1884</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale (line opened 3 February 1883)</td>
<td>3 February 1883</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>June 1861</td>
<td>1 March 1845</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly’s Plains</td>
<td>3 February 1883</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>December 1863</td>
<td>1 April 1884</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uralla (line opened 2 August 1882)</td>
<td>2 August 1882</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>January 1862</td>
<td>1 February 1858</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky South</td>
<td>2 August 1882</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>July 1868</td>
<td>2 August 1882</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky South</td>
<td>18 October 1926</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>January 1925</td>
<td>3 October 1927</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolloomooloo</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>July 1913</td>
<td>1 July 1914</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walcha Road</td>
<td>2 August 1882</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>June 1883</td>
<td>16 November 1882</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolbrook</td>
<td>2 August 1882</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>November 1880</td>
<td>1 December 1889</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danglemah</td>
<td>February 1897</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limbri</td>
<td>As a siding in 1885 and a platform 1 January 1891</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>January 1900</td>
<td>17 November 1902</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonbi (line opened 9 January 1882) later Kootingal Tintinhull</td>
<td>9 January 1882</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>June 1870</td>
<td>16 January 1883</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tintinhull</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>July 1882</td>
<td>1 January 1880</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemingha</td>
<td>As a siding 10 August 1896 and a platform 1907</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>May 1877</td>
<td>1 August 1897</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Forsyth 1993, 1997; Laidley 2002)
## Appendix 4.7

### Community Services Provided at Railway Stations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Community Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wallan-garra</td>
<td>Postal services; Telephone exchange; Public telephone booth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refreshment room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>Telegraphic facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungulla</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluff Rock</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Flat</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Postal services; Telegraphic facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater</td>
<td>Postal services; Telegraphic facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>Postal services; Telegraphic facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarraford</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>Telegraphic facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bar; Refreshment room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonehenge</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glencoe</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>Postal services; Telegraphic facility; Money order facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Savings bank service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglican church services held in the Waiting Room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Hall activities held in the Goods Shed, e.g., fund raising ball for victims of the Port Kembla mining disaster, annual hospital ball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reticulated town water supply drawn from the railway dam built to supply water for steam locomotives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llangothlin</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>Postal services; Telegraphic facility; Money order facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government Savings Bank service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain</td>
<td>Postal services; Telegraphic facility; Money order facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School concerts in the Goods Shed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumaquess</td>
<td>Postal services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Refreshment room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly’s Plains</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uralla</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky South</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollun</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walcha Road</td>
<td>War Memorial (1929).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolbrook</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danglemah</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limbri</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootingal</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tintinhull</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemingha</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Working Plans; contract plans; local histories)*
## Appendix 4.8
### Origin of Railway Station Names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Origin of Station Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jennings; Wallan-garra</td>
<td>Named after Sir PA Jennings, Vice President of NSW Executive Council; Aboriginal for long lagoon or big water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>After a Property of the district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>Named by SA Donaldson, Premier of NSW, after his two maiden aunts from Haddington, Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungulla</td>
<td>Aboriginal for black bream or to burn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluff Rock</td>
<td>Local very steep sided hill with bare rock at the summit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Flat</td>
<td>After an area beside a nearby river.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>This area was first occupied in 1840 by a squatter Edward Hurry who had lived in Bolivia, South America for many years. He was struck by the similarity of the country and gave this name to the landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater</td>
<td>Originally the name of a local squatting run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>After a property named after its Scottish counterpart in Fofarshire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarrarford</td>
<td>Contraction of Yarrow Ford, property name of Archibald Boyd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>After Archibald Cunes Innes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonehenge</td>
<td>After a local pastoral holding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glencoe</td>
<td>After a Scottish counterpart in Argyllshire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>After a Scottish counterpart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llangothlin</td>
<td>After property name of William Rawson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>Aboriginal for fishing place or white cockatoo, property name of Charles Marsh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain</td>
<td>After a mountain east of the station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth</td>
<td>After English counterpart in Devon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumaresq</td>
<td>After Governor Darling’s Military-Secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Named by GJ MacDonald, Commissioner for Crown Lands, after a Scottish hamlet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly’s Plains</td>
<td>After a settler in the district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uralla</td>
<td>Aboriginal of disputed meaning for at the camp; big hill; open running water; bye and bye; high mountain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>After AJ. Maister’s pastoral selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky South</td>
<td>Geographically located south of Kentucky railway station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollun</td>
<td>Aboriginal for hard substance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walcha Road</td>
<td>Aboriginal for sun, name of local property, where the Oxley Highway via Walcha crosses the line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolbrook</td>
<td>A reminder of former wool washing activity in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danglemah</td>
<td>After nearby creek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limbri</td>
<td>Unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonbi; Kootingal</td>
<td>After local pastoral selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tintinhull</td>
<td>After English counterpart in Somerset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemingha</td>
<td>Probably Aboriginal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 4.9

**NSW Lines Closed by Act: 1855-2003**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Length (km)</th>
<th>Date of Disuse</th>
<th>Date of Act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Booyong–Ballina</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>11 June 1948</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Maitland–Morepeth</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>31 August 1953</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond–Kurrajong</td>
<td>11.23</td>
<td>26 July 1952</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rock–Mangoplah</td>
<td>17.76</td>
<td>10 July 1956</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batlow–Kunama</td>
<td>8.22</td>
<td>1 February 1957</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roslyn–Taralga</td>
<td>25.39</td>
<td>1 May 1957</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbelltown–Camden</td>
<td>12.79</td>
<td>1 January 1963</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenreagh–Dorrigo</td>
<td>69.53</td>
<td>28 October 1972</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Laidley 2002)
## Appendix 5.1
### Railway Related Names in Local Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Railway Related Nomenclature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wallan-garra</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>'Railway Avenue’&lt;br&gt;'Railway Street’&lt;br&gt;'The Terminus Hotel’&lt;br&gt;'Great Northern Family Hotel’&lt;br&gt;'Railway Temperance Hotel and Boarding House’&lt;br&gt;'Railway Station/Museum’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungulla</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluff Rock</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>‘Bolivia Siding’</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>‘Dundee Railway Station Provisional School’, later ‘Dundee Rail Public School’&lt;br&gt;‘Dundee Railway Station’ post office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yarraford</td>
<td>‘Yarraford Rail Road’</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Glencoe</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>‘Ben Lomond Railway Station’ post office</td>
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<td>‘Llangothlin Railway Station’ post office</td>
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<td>‘Great Northern Railway Hotel’&lt;br&gt;‘Lyn Raanhus-Winter Railway Park’</td>
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<td>Dumaresq</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>‘Railway Parade’&lt;br&gt;‘Railway Hotel’&lt;br&gt;‘Steam Engine Hotel’&lt;br&gt;‘Locomotive Hotel’&lt;br&gt;‘The Armidale Bicentenary [of Australia] Railway Museum’</td>
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<td>Wollun</td>
<td>‘Wollun Platform’ school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walcha Road</td>
<td>‘Walcha Road Station Provisional School’, later ‘Walcha Road (Station) Public School’&lt;br&gt;‘Walcha Rail Hotel’&lt;br&gt;‘Walcha Road Railway Bar’</td>
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<td>‘Railway Crossing’ public school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limbri</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonbi Railway Station’ post office, renamed when station renamed Kootingal ‘Moonbi Railway’ post office</td>
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<td>Tintinhull</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemingha</td>
<td>‘Railway Street’</td>
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*(Forsyth 1993; 1997; Wilson 2007; field survey 2005)*
## Appendix 5.2

### Heritage Listed Railway Items

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<tr>
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<th>Heritage Listed Railway Items</th>
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<td>Wallan-garra</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>Bridge over Tenterfield Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>Station; Station Master’s residence; storage buildings; station barn; railway land; bridge over Tenterfield Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungulla</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluff Rock</td>
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<td>Sandy Flat</td>
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<td>Deepwater</td>
<td>Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>Bridge over Severn River</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>Station</td>
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<td>Llangothlin</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>Station</td>
</tr>
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<td>Black Mountain</td>
<td>Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumaresq</td>
<td>Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Station; Station Master’s residence; turntable; yard group; boiler; cottages</td>
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<td>Station; Gatekeeper’s cottage</td>
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<td>Station</td>
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(NSW Heritage Branch State Heritage Inventory, accessed 16 January 2009)
## Appendix 5.3

### Railway Loadings, 1941

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<th>Goods In</th>
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<th>Coal In</th>
<th>Other Minerals Out</th>
<th>Other Minerals In</th>
<th>Wool Out</th>
<th>Wool In</th>
<th>Hay, etc Out</th>
<th>Hay, etc In</th>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>67</strong></td>
<td><strong>869</strong></td>
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</table>

Does not include loadings for the Commonwealth war effort. Goods; coal; other minerals are expressed in tons. Wool is expressed in bales. Hay; straw; chaff are expressed in truck loads. Livestock is not accounted for. Tonnages of wool and hay were also included in goods tonnages, so bloating goods tonnage figures. Loadings in/out for stations shown as – (dash) would have been included in nearby larger station figures (AR 1941).
## Appendix 6.1

### NSW: Line Closures 1855 to 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Length (km)</th>
<th>Prime Function</th>
<th>Closure Date</th>
<th>Closure Instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matakana to Mount Hope</td>
<td>16.74</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>6 July 1924</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minemoorong Jn. to Caroline Mine</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>18 June 1926</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert to Iron Duke Mine</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>18 June 1926</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken Hill to Tarrawinge</td>
<td>63.59</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>1 January 1930</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobar to CSA Mine</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>10 September 1931</td>
<td>Decommissioned (later reopened as a private siding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmead to Rogan’s Hill</td>
<td>12.17</td>
<td>Fruit, later general carriage</td>
<td>31 January 1932</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tottenham to Mount Royal Smelters</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>22 January 1941</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutherland to Woronora Cemetery</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Funeral traffic</td>
<td>23 May 1947</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booyong to Ballina</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>11 June 1948</td>
<td>Ceased operating (later closed by Act)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lidcombe to Rookwood Cemetery</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>Funeral traffic</td>
<td>29 December 1948</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangoplah to Westby</td>
<td>23.67</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>24 January 1952</td>
<td>Ceased operating (later closed by Act)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond to Kurrajong</td>
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<td>General carriage</td>
<td>26 July 1952</td>
<td>Ceased operating (later closed by Act)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Maitland to Morpeth</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>31 August 1953</td>
<td>Closed by Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rock to Mangoplah</td>
<td>17.76</td>
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<td>10 July 1956</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roslyn to Taralga</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Line</td>
<td>Length (km)</td>
<td>Prime Function</td>
<td>Closure Date</td>
<td>Closure Instrument</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Wade’s Siding to Occidental Mine</td>
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<td>Bungendore Jn. to Captain’s Flat</td>
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<td>Gosford to Gosford Racecourse</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>Recreation traffic</td>
<td>12 May 1970</td>
<td>Converted into a Siding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenreagh to Dorrigo</td>
<td>69.53</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>28 October 1972</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrywinebone to Pokataroo</td>
<td>15.29</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>8 January 1974</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladysmith to Tumbarumba</td>
<td>110.00</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>8 October 1974</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithgow to State Coal Mine</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>28 May 1979</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarana to Oberon</td>
<td>24.28</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>27 September 1979</td>
<td>Ceased operating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byrock to Brewarrina</td>
<td>93.68</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>11 August 1982</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urana to Oaklands</td>
<td>26.28</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>24 November 1982</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cootamundra to Tumut</td>
<td>104.20</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>19 January 1984</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilmore to Batlow</td>
<td>26.48</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>19 January 1984</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weemelah to Mungindi</td>
<td>26.64</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>28 March 1984</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pippita to Abattoirs</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>Inwards livestock traffic</td>
<td>9 November 1984</td>
<td>Ceased operating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murwillumbah to Condong</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Inwards sugar traffic</td>
<td>? ? 1984</td>
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<td>Sandgate to Sandgate Cemetery</td>
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<td>Funeral traffic</td>
<td>13 October 1985</td>
<td>Ceased operating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craboon to Coolah</td>
<td>38.22</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>? ? 1985</td>
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<tr>
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<td>99.54</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>26 March 1986</td>
<td>Ceased operating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hilston to Roto</td>
<td>47.93</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>21 October 1986</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gap to Werris Creek</td>
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<td>General carriage</td>
<td>30 January 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culcairn to Holbrook</td>
<td>26.99</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>2 February 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colo Vale to Braemar</td>
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<td>24 September 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cowra to Blayney</td>
<td>75.29</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>6 October 1987</td>
<td>Ceased operating (later reopened)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>28.74</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>23 October 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walgett Wheat Siding to Walgett</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>12 November 1987</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Length (km)</td>
<td>Prime Function</td>
<td>Closure Date</td>
<td>Closure Instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westdale to Barraba</td>
<td>92.20</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>25 November 1987</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerilderie to Tocumwal</td>
<td>75.72</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>1 December 1987</td>
<td>Ceased operating</td>
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<td>Delungra to Inverell</td>
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<td>General carriage</td>
<td>2 December 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Star to Bogabilla</td>
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<td>General carriage</td>
<td>2 December 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uranquinty to Kywong</td>
<td>53.92</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>6 January 1988</td>
<td>Ceased operating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yeoval to Dubbo</td>
<td>73.51</td>
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<td>25 January 1988</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Hollow to Merriwa</td>
<td>39.85</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>10 February 1988</td>
<td>Ceased operating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullock Island Junction to Albert Street</td>
<td>0.70</td>
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<td>17 May 1988</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boree Creek to Urana</td>
<td>40.60</td>
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<td>11 November 1988</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yass Junction to Yass Town</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>14 November 1988</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagga Wagga to Ladysmith</td>
<td>19.41</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>12 December 1988</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henty to Rand</td>
<td>52.82</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>9 January 1989</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brocklesby to Corowa</td>
<td>37.36</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>9 January 1989</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyngan to Bourke</td>
<td>203.06</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>17 May 1989</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queanbeyan to Cooma</td>
<td>113.56</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>28 May 1989</td>
<td>Ceased operating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulburn to Crookwell</td>
<td>57.19</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>18 September 1989</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes to Wallangarra</td>
<td>110.85</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>26 October 1989</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willbriggie to Hay</td>
<td>111.38</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>6 December 1989</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaba to Wangi Power Station</td>
<td>8.92</td>
<td>Inwards coal traffic</td>
<td>19 December 1989</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buxton to Colo Vale</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>?? 1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fassifern to Toronto</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>11 March 1990</td>
<td>Ceased operating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrandera to Jerilderie</td>
<td>104.62</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>10 January 1991</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajere to Eugowra</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>17 January 1991</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loftus Junction to The Royal National Park</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>Recreation traffic</td>
<td>11 June 1991</td>
<td>Ceased operating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pippita to Homebush Saleyards Loop</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>Inwards livestock traffic</td>
<td>22 June 1991</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biniguy to Delungra</td>
<td>74.60</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>16 August 1991</td>
<td>Last train</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greenethorpe to Grenfell</td>
<td>29.80</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
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<td>Decommissioned</td>
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<tr>
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<td>39.61</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>?? 1991</td>
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<td>Line</td>
<td>Length (km)</td>
<td>Prime Function</td>
<td>Closure Date</td>
<td>Closure Instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<td>carriage</td>
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<td>Ceased operating (later reopened)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandos to Gulgong</td>
<td>55.15</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>20 July 1992</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Molong to Yeeoval</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>Goods traffic</td>
<td>6 June 1993</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Yard to Pyrmont</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>6 June 1993</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Botany to Port Botany</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>6 July 1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chullora Junction to Signalling Workshops</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>Staff traffic</td>
<td>7 August 1993</td>
<td>Converted into a siding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dumaresq to Glen Innes</td>
<td>92.62</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>4 October 1993</td>
<td>Last train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Sidings Line Junction to Electric Car Workshops</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>Staff traffic</td>
<td>24 April 1994</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moree to Biniguy</td>
<td>39.45</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>14 June 1994</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balmain Road Junction to Pyrmont</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>22 January 1996</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flemington to Pippita</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>General carriage</td>
<td>26 August 1996</td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Colliery</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Outwards coal traffic</td>
<td>March 1999</td>
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(Laidley 2002)
## Appendix 6.2

### Infrastructure Added After 1932

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Goods Handling Infrastructure Added/Enlarged</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Passenger Handling Infrastructure Added/Enlarged</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wallan-garra</td>
<td>Water for Army Light Horse units</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Electric lighting</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interchange facilities for Army</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goods shed</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>Defence force siding</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Platform asphaltaling</td>
<td>1949</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Platform at stockyards</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extend Tancred Bros. siding</td>
<td>1948</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Loading bank</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bungulla</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Bluff Rock</td>
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<td>Deepwater</td>
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<td>Yarrarford</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>Refreshment room</td>
<td>1935</td>
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<td>End loading ramp</td>
<td>1942</td>
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<td>New wool loading dump</td>
<td>1959</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Loading bank</td>
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<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>Stock loading ramp</td>
<td>1965</td>
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<td>Llangothlin</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Guyra</td>
<td>Larger weighbridge</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Pave platform</td>
<td>1946</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reconstruct loading bank</td>
<td>1961</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Extend No.3 goods siding</td>
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<td>Provide abattoir siding</td>
<td>1964</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Superphosphate storage shed</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Dumaresq</td>
<td>Bulk fertilizer unloader</td>
<td>c.1966</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Extend stock siding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Out of Room</td>
<td>c.1949</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelly’s Plains</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Uralla</td>
<td>Extend stock unloading bank</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Pave platform</td>
<td>1947</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve wool loading bank</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Raise platform</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&lt;1954</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky South</td>
<td>Stock yards</td>
<td>1964</td>
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<td>Wollun</td>
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<td>Improved stockyards and lighting</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Back platform facing</td>
<td>1949</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Upgrade crane from 2ton – 5ton</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Platform paving</td>
<td>1949</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improved stockyards</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Extended platform 212ft</td>
<td>1951</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>Electric lighting</td>
<td>1957</td>
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<td>Loading bank</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Platform raising</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improved stockyards</td>
<td>1962</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bulk fertilizer unloader</td>
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### Appendix

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Goods Handling Infrastructure Added/Enlarged</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Passenger Handling Infrastructure Added/Enlarged</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woolbrook</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Electric lighting</td>
<td>1956</td>
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<td>Danglemah</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Kootingal</td>
<td>Larger weighbridge</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>1965</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Tintinhull</td>
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<td>Nemingha</td>
<td>Grain siding</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Electric lighting</td>
<td>1952</td>
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<td>Wheat silo</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crossing loop</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian Motorists Petrol siding</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Totals   | 41                                           | 13    |

Does not include works for: routine maintenance; relocations; changes in railway technology; internal organisational reasons (Forsyth 1997; 1999; Station History Cards; Signal Branch station history folders; Plans)
## Appendix 6.3

### Infrastructure Removed After 1932

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Goods Handling Infrastructure Removed/Reduced/Disconnected</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Passenger Handling Infrastructure Removed/Reduced</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wallan-garra</td>
<td>Goods shed -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Carriage shed</td>
<td>1970</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
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## Appendix 6.4

### Line & Station Closures

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<td>Deepwater</td>
<td>8 January 1979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>9 February 1976</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarraford</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>2 December 1989</td>
<td>Last train, 4 October 1993</td>
<td>92.62</td>
<td>Not reopened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonehenge</td>
<td>20 February 1975</td>
<td>October 1993</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glencoe</td>
<td>29 March 1975</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>Before 1990</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llangothlin</td>
<td>20 February 1975</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>18 November 1988</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth</td>
<td>9 February 1976</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumaresq</td>
<td>16 December 1974</td>
<td>Last XPT, 10 February 1990</td>
<td>134.84</td>
<td>Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Remained open</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly’s Plains</td>
<td>20 February 1975</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uralla</td>
<td>Before May 1990</td>
<td>Reopened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky South</td>
<td>20 February 1975</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollun</td>
<td>20 February 1975</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walcha Road</td>
<td>25 November 1989</td>
<td>Reopened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolbrook</td>
<td>3 August 1985</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danglemah</td>
<td>c.1978</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limbri</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootingal</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Remained open</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tintinhull</td>
<td>11 December 1961</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemingha</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total 32**  
**28**  
**338.31**  
**134.84km open. 4 stations open.**  

(Forsyth 1993; 1997; 1999)
# Appendix 6.5

## Railway Preservation by Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Preservation Effort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wallan-garra</td>
<td>Station and goods yard conserved, Station museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>Station and goods yard museum, Preserved rolling stock, Publication of a local railway history, Trike rides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater</td>
<td>Station conserved, Preparation of a Conservation Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>Council’s Tourist Information Centre in a railway carriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>Station conserved, Preparation of a Conservation Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>Station museum, Trike rides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain</td>
<td>Station conserved, Preparation of a Conservation Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Display of track machines, Display of railway artefacts, Preserved rail motors, Active railway reopening lobby group, Active heritage rail motor operating group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollun</td>
<td>Station name-board letters conserved and adapted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*GIE 30 November 1993; Site survey 2006*
## Appendix 7.1

**Unused Economic Capital**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Unused (underused) Railway Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wallan-garra</td>
<td>Land; track; (station building reused as a museum).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallan-garra–Sunnyside</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>Land; track; station platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside–Tenterfield</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
<td>Land; track; (station building and yard reused as a museum).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield–Bungulla</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungulla</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungulla–Bluff Rock</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluff Rock</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluff Rock–Sandy Flat</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Flat</td>
<td>Land; track; station platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Flat–Bolivia</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Land; track; station platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia–Deepwater</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater</td>
<td>Land; track; (station building reused for community purposes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater–Dundee</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>Land; track; station platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee–Yarraford</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarraford</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarraford–Glen Innes</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>Land; track; petrol tanker unloading facilities; (station building partially reused for commercial purposes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Innes–Stonehenge</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonehenge</td>
<td>Land; track; station platforms x2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonehenge–Glencoe</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glencoe</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glencoe–Ben Lomond</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond</td>
<td>Land; track; station platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lomond–Llangothlin</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llangothlin</td>
<td>Land; track; station platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llangothlin–Guyra</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra</td>
<td>Land; track; (station building and yard partially reused as a museum).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyra–Black Mountain</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain</td>
<td>Land; track; (station building reused for community purposes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain–Exmouth</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth–Dumaresq</td>
<td>Land; track.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Field survey from publicly accessible viewpoints January 2006)
Track includes all associated railway infrastructure.
Appendix

Appendix 9.1
Transforming a Dyad into a Network

Social exchange theory includes dyads and networks (Cook & Emerson 1978; Ekeh 1974, p. 49-56), with reciprocity being direct between them or indirect among them (Molm et. al. 2007a). Yet the implications of one party changing from singular to multiple, as with a dyad transforming into a network does not seem to have been discussed in the literature. Railway closure seemed to destabilise the seemingly singular government and railway administration party into several variably independent parties.

Addressing the Armidale protest, Costa said ‘I’m happy to have those figures challenged’ (AI 29 October 2003). The figures were passenger loadings provided to him by SRA administration. ‘MP doubts CountryLink costs’ headlined the NDL (11 December 2003). The government side of the relationship, traditionally comprising government and its railway agent, was becoming visibly divided.

Costa said ‘he was open minded about Professor Parry’s recommendations’ (AE 24 October 2003). Government did not necessarily agree with the published report from its consultant.

SRA CEO, Vince Graham, ‘questioned the wisdom of [AWB] spending almost 60million dollars building two, big grain storage facilities at Werris Creek and Stockinbingal’ (NWM(i) 10; SWM(i) 3 November 2003). The government SRA agent questioning the wisdom of another, albeit Federal, government agency, the AWB, showed that State and Federal governments were not necessarily mutually consistent.

Richard Torbay asserted that ‘Country Labor should drop the word “country” from its name because its members are failing to support regional communities’ (NDL 3 October 2003). Railway closure destabilised the relationship between political identity and political action. Country Labor was the country arm of the ruling State Labor Party, but it could still come under such questioning as a result of railway closure.

Some Labor politicians spoke against their party. While the larger state Labor Party proposed railway closure, Country Labor MPs publicly opposed railway closure headlined as ‘Labor branch fights plans to close lines’. ‘Armidale Country Labor canvassed 5000 names to a petition’ against closure, as ‘Grassroots Labor members look to maintain the rage on train plan’. ‘Even the local branch of the Labor Party – Mr Costa’s ‘grassroots’ membership – have campaigned strongly for the State Government to reject the Parry Report.’ Former President of the ALP State Electorate Council said ‘the current Labor Government should announce that the train will stay’ (AE 17; 22 October; NDL 27 October; AE 5 November 2003). Individual speakers differed from the larger political party narrative.

The Country Labour faction claimed credit for overturning the majority of the party. Branch spokesperson, Dr. Greg Smith, asserted that ‘We [Country Labor] recently won a significant victory on the floor of the NSW State Labor conference demanding that the Armidale rail service be retained.’ The NDL headlined (8 November 2003) the decision
Appendix

as ‘Labor branch claims credit for [retaining] rail link’. The government political party seemed visibly divided.

Opposition to railway closure came from ‘both sides of the political fence’, headlined as ‘Lobbying wins cross-party support to retain [the train] service’. Bipartisan support was described as ‘Country Labor and the Coalition’s open support’ (AE 20 October; NDL 12 September 2003), i.e., visible. Some parts of the pro-closure Labor protagonist seemed to be agreeing with the opposition party’s view. Destabilisation was associated more widely with the exchange than just between the exchange partners themselves.

Likewise along grain lines, where grain grower and activist Dan Mangelsdorf claimed maintaining and upgrading railway infrastructure had ‘bipartisan support’ (SWM(i) 3 November; WA 30; WWA 31 October 2003). Railway closure was so significant it overcame traditional party politics, blurring inter-party division, and further splintering the government party.

Destabilising of the government party side of the relationship further strained the relationship. To retain passenger train services in New England, New England communities would have to replace the traditionally dyadic relationship with a single other government party, with several relationships with several other parties in a network. One party was the train and station operator, while the track was maintained by another party. The dyadic grain train operations had already become a network. The singular government grain train operator had already become multiple private grain train operators. The grain train operators had already been separated from the rail track maintaining organisation. Different sections of line had different track administrators and different track maintainers. Some entities being government, while others being private firms further complicated relating to organisations with differing organisational cultural values.

In the future interacting to keep lines open would require country communities dealing with multifarious and potentially politically opposed other parties, making the process of exchange much more complicated. Maintaining the provision of New England passenger and grain train services would require more country effort into the future.