

NSW National Party Leader, Andrew Stoner MP, made a number of incorrect assertions about CountryLink in a letter published in the Area News in Griffith (*Labor off track*, 29 September 2009). Chief Operating Officer Andy Byford wrote a letter to the editor to clarify Mr Stoner's claims:

I wish to clarify claims made by the leader of the NSW National Party Andrew Stoner about CountryLink services on page six of the Area News, Monday 21 September.

Firstly, it is incorrect to state that CountryLink trains run late 65 per cent of the time. The latest on time running figures for CountryLink services across NSW reveal that trains have arrived at their destination on time 81.7 per cent of total journeys. The Canberra/Griffith CountryLink Explorer service has one of the better on time running records in the state, arriving on time for 87.8 per cent of total journeys.

Secondly, it is misleading to state that CountryLink patronage has fallen by 27 per cent since 2001. While CountryLink patronage did experience a steady decline 2001-2007, patronage rose by 8 per cent in the 2008/09 financial year compared to the previous year.

RailCorp is making travel on CountryLink cheaper and easier for regional residents. We offer regular packages including travel and accommodation to many destinations, and we also run special services to events such as the Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000, the Floriade Festival in Canberra and the Parkes Elvis Festival. We also offer a number of other competitive travel packages across NSW and interstate, and our \$1 fares for children are available all year round.

I encourage people to regularly check the CountryLink website at [www.countrylink.info/](http://www.countrylink.info/) to see what great deals we have on offer and experience the many varied sights, events and activities NSW has to offer.

This letter was not published by the Area News.