



# COMMUNITY SERVICES

Linking families, individuals, communities.

Helen Silver  
First Assistant Commissioner  
Progress in Rail Reform  
Productivity Commission  
LB2 Collins St East  
Melbourne Vic 8003

Dear Ms Silver

I refer to your correspondence concerning the inquiry into Progress in Rail Reform.

As stated in the issue paper, railways may be required to provide services and concessions which they may not have chosen to provide if they operated on a fully commercial basis. Often these are required by government in support of policy objectives relating to access to transport in rural or remote areas, equity considerations or income redistribution.

This may have implications for women escaping from domestic violence, young people and unemployment. According to NSW Recorded Crime Statistics (1996), 51% of women who are protected by Domestic Apprehended Violence Orders reside in rural areas.

The Department of Community Services is playing an important role in a whole-of-government approach to reduce violence against women. The Department has maintained the primary responsibility for providing services to assist women and children escaping from, or at risk of domestic violence.

As the specification and funding of these community service obligations can have implications for the funding, operation and efficiency of rail service provision, special consideration on assisting the above target groups should be included in the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Oldfield  
Assistant Director-General