

## Inquiry into the Use of School Buses in Rural and Regional Victoria

Mrs Karen Humphris

**Organisation Name:**

**Your position or role:**

### YOUR SUBMISSION

**Submission:**

I am a parent of three school children who travel each day from Newry to Sale on the (almost full) school bus. This is an excellent service which saves me up to 2 hours of travelling in the car each weekday. I understand the frustrations of the lack of public transport in this area but I would absolutely not be in favour of the general public having access to the school bus (at the same time as the school children) purely due to child safety reasons. There is so much policy work done in schools and other workplaces regarding child safety - as a parent I have to have a working with children card to have any contact with the school children whatsoever - for example helping at sporting events or school excursions - and these instances are fully supervised by staff from the school. On the school bus the children have no supervising teacher/adult apart from the bus driver who cannot by necessity observe the passengers as he/she must focus solely on the road. Allowing any adults on the bus is much too high a risk (of abuse, including grooming, and exposure of the children to potentially inappropriate conversations and language) and this would totally undermine the child safety policies that schools work so hard to provide. There are children as young as 5 years old travelling alone on the bus and it is just not appropriate for other adults to have access to them. If other adults were allowed on the bus I would not allow my children to travel on the bus which would not only cost my family and the environment more in diesel costs but I would also have to reduce my working hours in order to pick them up. Other families may not have the option to elect not to use the school bus which would place their children in too vulnerable a position. I think it would be a good idea to allow school buses to be used for the general public during the school day when there are no children on them (as long as more cleaning of the bus was factored in), but I realise that the issue of timely bus services for getting to work/adult education is not addressed by this solution. Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this topic.

### FILE ATTACHMENTS

**File1:**

**File2:**

**File3:**

**Signature:**

Karen Humphris