

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

Mrs Susan Carroll

**Organisation Name:** St Anne's College

**Your position or role:** Principal

### YOUR SUBMISSION

#### **Submission:**

1) An independent analysis of the transport disadvantages experienced by regional and rural Victorians, specifically youth, the elderly and low-income households;

Transport disadvantage extends to town bus routes facilitating government school students to get to their school destination, but not supporting the same for non-government students. We are a newly established non-government school and our students do not have a public bus service available to transport them to school via the current town bus routes established by PTV.

2) Investigating the potential social and community impacts of improving mobility options by widening the mainstream school bus system and an analysis of the examples and trials from other jurisdictions both locally and overseas;

3) Investigating technology and systems that would be effective in ensuring child safety on mainstream school buses;

Swipe on/off technology should a real possibility to track users - with some ability to identify any concerns eg child safety re: any potential risk from the people using the system at the same time as students. What implications from Ministerial Order 870? Does it increase risk to vulnerable students if members of the public can intimidate the student just by their presence?

4) Identifying any existing or potential barriers to allowing public access to the mainstream school bus network;

Eligibility of non-government school students should be equal to that of government when travelling to nearest denominational school. Should never be a question of 'if there is capacity' (see eligibility priorities below). The eligibility of non-government school students has been consistently problematic. This inconsistency needs to be addressed before allowing wider public access to the school bus system? Non-government school students should also count equally in considerations such as the number of students required to extend or vary a bus route.

#### Student priority of access to services

With some services the demand for seats can exceed the carrying capacity of the bus. In these situations the following priority of access applies:

first priority — eligible students (including those previously approved to travel)

second priority — eligible government school students

third priority — eligible non-government school students

fourth priority — students who are eligible because they fall within an exemptions to an eligibility criterion or are considered a special category traveler (both government and non-government school students)

fifth priority — fare paying travelers who are government and non-government students

sixth priority — fare paying travelers (non-students)

(see fare paying section for order of priority)

The coordinating principal should give preference to students with special needs or those travelling both morning and afternoon five days a week. If after applying these criteria there is more seating available, preference should be given to those who have the greatest distance to travel and to the youngest students. (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-bus-program/guidance/criteria-determining-eligibility-school-bus-program>)

## **FILE ATTACHMENTS**

**File1:**

**File2:**

**File3:**

**Signature:**

Susan Carroll