

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

**Organisation Name:**

**Your position or role:**

### YOUR SUBMISSION

**Submission:**

Hello, my name is

I make this submission having both grown up in Ballarat and experienced public transport as a young person and later worked with a significant number of young people as a social worker for the last 16 years. When growing up, I lived outside Ballarat and did not have access to public bus services, having to rely on parents for transport to sport and casual employment. I did access the country bus service, which completed one trip in to school and one trip home each day. While this was helpful, it was challenging to navigate extra-curricular activities with parents who worked fulltime. I have supported many local young people from both disengaged and from highly vulnerable and disengaged pockets of Ballarat's community to young people engaged in education, sport, volunteering and casual or part time employment. I have worked across local Government, drug and alcohol, case management, education – teaching and wellbeing work, mental health and community engagement and development roles.

Below are considerations from a small group of young people currently engaged in alternative education that rely on transport on a daily basis. Please accept these ideas for consideration.

1) Key concerns for young people regarding public transport

- a. long wait times
- b. outdated paper timetables at bus stops
- c. limited time options for travel
- d. bus stops feel unsafe; Little Bridge Street is the most common bus stop mentioned – drug use, violence, threats, unclean
- e. people on buses feel unsafe; passengers are rude to driver/patrons, passengers may not be paying fares, drug use on bus, young girl experienced sexual assault – man was masturbating and looking directly at her, vandalism of bus

2) Accessibility and mobility options related to public transport

- a. most stops are not wheelchair accessible
- b. limited bus shelters at stops
- c. lack of lighting
- d. timetables are printed on paper which is not accessible to all

3) Technology and systems that may be effective in ensuring safety on public transport | mainstream buses

- a. video surveillance on buses
- b. GPS tracking of buses; allow for real time updates of bus locations and times, improves driver safety and efficiency of bus routes to decrease unnecessary wait times (currently being piloted in Melbourne)
- c. Parents could see where the bus was and at what times via use of app

4) Existing or potential barriers to allowing public access to the mainstream school bus network;

- a. suggest zoning areas on buses to separate school kids from general public
- b. having buses for express lines would free up other bus routes to then be used for school pickups and drop offs
- c. investigating cost of extending mainstream school buses to the general public and how a fare system would function

d. adjustments or extensions to the current bus services in regional areas that include young people | school buses.

Thank you.

## **FILE ATTACHMENTS**

**File1:**

**File2:**

**File3:**

**Signature:**