



## Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: PET 39618  
Your ref: A628225

1 William Street Brisbane 4000  
GPO Box 2644 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
**Telephone +61 7 3719 7300**  
**Email** [transportandmainroads@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:transportandmainroads@ministerial.qld.gov.au)  
**Website** [www.tmr.qld.gov.au](http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au)

24 December 2020

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 3407-20, lodged with the Legislative Assembly on 26 November 2020 about public transport accessibility for the Rockhampton region, including Gracemere and surrounds.

The Palaszczuk Government recognises the importance of continued investment in our public transport network to enable Queenslanders to connect more easily to health services, education, jobs and with each other.

As there is high demand for increased public transport services across Queensland, it is essential to prioritise investment across the state to areas of greatest need where it will create the largest positive impact.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR)—in partnership with Youngs Bus Service (Youngs) and Sunbus—provide scheduled public transport services to the Rockhampton region, including Gracemere and surrounds.

In Rockhampton, Sunbus operates nine urban bus routes that run hourly or better on weekdays and less frequently on Saturdays.

Youngs bus route 21 operates between Gracemere and Rockhampton hourly or better on weekdays and provides four trips per day on Saturdays. Youngs bus route 22 operates between Mount Morgan and Rockhampton, via Gracemere, five times return on weekdays and twice on Saturdays. Outside of school times, demand for these services is lower, with capacity available on buses. As such, TMR considers the current level of service suitable to meet demand.

With regard to school students travelling on buses, Youngs has advised TMR that the only service regularly carrying standing passengers is the last service to leave Rockhampton State High School in the afternoons. It is believed that these standing passengers are students going to the local shops after school, therefore missing their designated service. To assist, the Principal has requested that Youngs refer any student that does not catch their designated service to the school office. The school will then contact the student's parents and advise them that their child has missed their bus and they will need to arrange to pick them up from the school office.

I am advised the speed limits mentioned in the petition only relate to part of a five-kilometre section of the bus route along the Capricorn Highway. This section of the Capricorn Highway is currently subject to major roadworks that will result in the road becoming separated dual lanes in both directions. Reduced speed limits are currently in force while these works continue. The speed limit during the hours of school bus operation is 60 km/h.

With regard to reports of overcrowding at school times, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Standard 2010 (the Standard) states that if the vehicle is a school bus that carries standing passengers, it cannot be overloaded (that is, exceed the Gross Vehicle Mass) and must be specifically constructed to carry standing passengers (that is, the provision of handgrips as per the Australian Design Rules). In addition, when carrying standing passengers, no passenger must stand for more than 20 kilometres.

Through investigating these concerns, TMR has been advised that all vehicles servicing the Gracemere area comply with the Standard, in that all vehicles have the required handgrips to carry standing passengers.

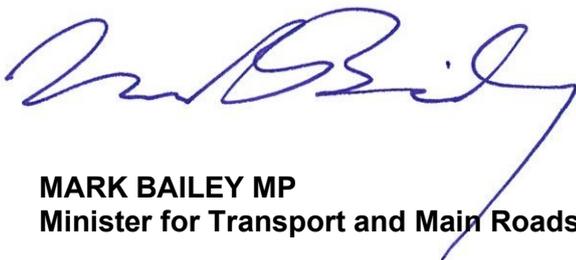
TMR provided an additional school service at the beginning of 2020 to ensure that enough capacity was available to meet a forecast increase in school student travel. During the year, TMR worked with Youngs to balance the allocation of students across services, taking observed travel patterns into account. This resulted in an evidence-based decision to discontinue the use of the additional school service bus at the end of Term 2.

To improve accessibility to public transport, TMR assists local governments to upgrade bus stops to be compliant with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Commonwealth) and to install bus shelters. To date, TMR has provided over \$1 million to upgrade bus stops across the Rockhampton region—including Gracemere—so that they are safe, comfortable and accessible to all.

I have asked TMR to continue to monitor passenger demand and work closely with Youngs, Sunbus and local schools to identify opportunities to make future service improvements as the population and demand for services increases. All requests for new services continue to be prioritised against community needs across Queensland.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Bailey', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right and then curves downwards.

**MARK BAILEY MP**  
**Minister for Transport and Main Roads**