



Queensland
Government

Hon Rachel Nolan MP

Member for Ipswich

Our ref: MC48838

Your ref: Petitions

Minister for Transport

14 MAY 2010

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Corner Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition numbers 1399-10 and 1419-10 lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Ian Rickuss MP, Member for Lockyer on 13 and 15 April 2010, about a school bus service to Flagstone Creek State School.

The Queensland Government understands the need for children to receive an education and accepts a responsibility to provide schools across the state. It is, however, the responsibility of parents to make suitable arrangements for their children to attend these schools.

Over many years, successive state governments have provided assistance with school transport costs for eligible students in certain circumstances. This assistance is provided through the School Transport Assistance Scheme. Assistance for student travel is subject to a number of state-wide policies and guidelines.

In rural areas, where there is limited student population, a network of government funded school bus services is provided. Many of these services are funded as kilometre-based services and there is a particular set of policies that apply to the operation of these services.

These policies stipulate that a number of conditions must be met for a proposed extension to a kilometre-based service to be approved. The conditions include, but are not limited to:

- two distance eligible students for each additional 1.6km
- the new overall daily cost for the service must not exceed the approved maximum cost.

I am advised that the route extension requested by the conveyance committee was not approved because there were not enough students for the proposed extension of 8.7km. The possibility of approving some part of the proposed extension was investigated, but as the bus service already exceeds the daily maximum cost of \$17.60 per student, this option was not possible.

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I am further advised that there is no provision for the automatic reinstatement of previously deleted sections of bus runs. It is possible that some part of the requested extension may be approved in the future if there are enough students to meet the policy requirements. However, it would not be appropriate to approve an extension for this service, in contravention of the policy, when similar approvals are not available for other kilometre-based services across the state.

Regarding the issue of which bus service students can use, I am also advised that students are eligible to use the local school bus in their area. The bus run (P884T) to Flagstone Creek State School only transports primary students as this is the only school it services. However, the bus service at the top of the range (P1653) transports primary and secondary students as it travels to the nearby primary and secondary schools in Toowoomba.

I understand that the idea of using local authority boundaries to define service catchment areas has not been adopted because these boundaries are determined by a variety of factors, not necessarily on the location of schools. Therefore, it would be impractical to have these boundaries influence the operation of school bus services across the state.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Nolan', enclosed in a circular scribble. A long horizontal line extends from the right side of the signature.

RACHEL NOLAN MP
Minister for Transport