



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2021

## ADJOURNMENT

### Glass House Electorate, Student Transport Assistance Scheme

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (7.25 pm): When the department of transport starts dictating the educational decisions of parents across the electorate of Glass House—indeed, across the entire state of Queensland—you know something is seriously wrong. I have had many families contact me over the course of the last 12 years with school transport issues—parents like Lisa West in Mooloolah Valley trying to send her kids to their catchment school, Maleny State High School, and parents in Delaneys Creek trying to send their kids to Woodford or Kilcoy High. In each instance I have made representations to Transport and Main Roads. In each instance, those parents have been knocked back. Why? Because of STAS, the Student Transport Assistance Scheme. What is STAS? It is a policy of subsidising public transport to the nearest school of residence. The fact that this may not align to the education department's catchment does not enter the equation.

I recently wrote to TMR in relation to STAS issues negatively impacting the Mount Mee State School and Mount Mee community. Mount Mee State School is an awesome school, but, like many small schools, day 8 can be dreaded, with a difference of one or two kids resulting in a loss of a third of the teaching staff. There are currently two families residing at Ocean View, within the Mount Mee education department catchment, who have children with special needs who are desperate to attend Mount Mee State School, but there is no bus service to the school. It heads to Dayboro State School instead. When I wrote to TMR asking them to reconsider, the response I received astounded me. It states—

There are currently no plans to change the network as it is designed according to the STAS policy which supports connectivity.

It is good to know that the priority is connectivity and not education. It goes on—

There is a Special School Unit at Dayboro SS and any child residing in the Ocean View area requiring transport to this special school is eligible to travel on the respective school buses servicing this area.

As I said, that sounds like TMR is dictating or directing educational outcomes. It goes on—

In many instances, designated bus service areas do not align with DoE boundaries. The boundaries set by DoE are not fixed or static ... changes to catchment boundaries will mean students' enrolment eligibility does not align with STAS service eligibility, which is consistent across the state.

I am sorry, but schools like Mount Mee have had very consistent school catchments. Everyone else in the world is learning to be fluid and shift with the times. Clearly TMR needs to catch up. Finally it states—

This position has been adopted by all successive governments since the inception of the scheme.

Well, shame on all of us as politicians that we have clearly never had the intestinal fortitude to challenge and review this. It sounds to me that the STAS policy is long overdue for significant review and reform. Quite simply, students living in the catchment of a school should be eligible for subsidised transport to that school.

Today I launch a parliamentary petition calling for an urgent review of the state government's Student Transport Assistance Scheme. I want parents and teachers to determine the school children attend, not transport officials.