

TRANSPERTH — SCHOOL BUS SERVICE — BARRAGUP

3220. Mr D.A. Templeman to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the recent change in the bus service from the traditional orange school bus to the Transperth service, for school children who reside in particularly the Barragup area of my electorate and ask:

- (a) is it consistent with Government policy that children are now being collected on the new service at 7.10 a.m. and being dropped at school at 7.30 a.m. and being left unsupervised until 8 a.m.;
- (b) why is it taking children up to ninety minutes from the time they finish school until they get home on the new service, whereas, the orange bus had the same children home in only fifty minutes;
- (c) why is there some thirty extra stops on the new Transperth School Special 725 service;
- (d) given that under the orange school bus policy bus stops were located no less than 2km apart, why is it that under the Transperth model, stops on this route have been included at intervals of around 500 metres; and
- (e) how many students are regular users of this current Transperth School Special 725 compared with the previous orange bus service?

Mr D.C. Nalder replied:

- (a) The departure time for the morning school special 725 service from Barragup is predetermined by the need to arrive in time for the commencement of the last school that the Route 725 bus serves, in this case Mandurah Baptist College. Mandurah Baptist College requires students to be on campus by 8.20am. The only way departure times could be changed from Barragup would be to unfairly delay the arrival at Mandurah Baptist College, making these students late for school.

In designing the bus route, Transperth applied the same logic which applies to almost every other bus route in Perth that those furthest from the final destination are picked up first and dropped off last. This results in a more legible service and ensures that those closest to a destination have the shortest travel time.

Supervision of students at school is a responsibility of each individual school and given the school special 725 bus needs to service a total of six schools, some compromise must be made.

- (b) The previous 'orange' school bus contractor providing the school bus service to Barragup was departing Mandurah Baptist College prior to the school day finishing. Students from this school were required to leave classes around 20 minutes before the final bell resulting in an unfair and unacceptable impact to these students schooling. The Public Transport Authority was not aware that this was occurring.

With the introduction of the new Transperth services, bus departure times were amended to remove the adverse impact on Mandurah Baptist College students.

The school special 725 service departs Mandurah Catholic College 15 minutes after school and then immediately proceeds to Assumption Catholic Primary School and Frederick Irwin Anglican School (passing at approximately 3.34pm) before returning to Mandurah station to await connecting services from Mandurah Baptist College. Students from Mandurah Baptist College arrive at Mandurah station at 3.44pm and they are provided a four minute transfer time to connect to the school special 725 bus back to Barragup (which departs 3.48pm). To depart the 725 bus earlier from Mandurah station would leave Mandurah Baptist College students with no onward transport beyond services along Pinjarra Road.

The journey time for any student boarding at the first stop, alighting at the last stop is approximately 73 minutes.

- (c)-(d) Transperth bus stops are typically located every 275 to 350 metres across its network. This represents a compromise that minimises the walk for potential passengers and maximises the catchment of each service. That said, it does not necessarily mean that because there are 25 plus bus stops along the route that the bus will automatically stop at every bus stop along the route, the bus will only stop along its route if it has to pick up or drop off passengers using the service. The fact the bus is stopping more regularly suggests that it is actually more convenient than the higher stop spacings which require longer walks to/from the bus.
- (e) The former service provided by School Bus Services had 65 students authorised for travel on the student list, however the service regularly carried less than this figure given absenteeism and students who for various reasons did not use the bus on a daily basis.

Currently, up to 36 students use the 725 school special service in the morning and up to 21 students use the service in the afternoon.