

SCHOOL BUS SERVICES, RATE REVIEW AND CONTRACTS

1086. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the minister representing the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

Bearing in mind Labor Party policy that school bus contracts should not be unilaterally altered, that the investment by contractors in school buses should be taken into account in any renegotiations, and that timely reviews of contract remuneration for providers of school bus services should be carried out and completed as a matter of urgency -

- (1) Has the rate review for school bus operators been completed? If so, what is the result? If not, when can it be expected?
- (2) Will the five-year contracts with a negotiated roll-over be maintained in the future?
- (3) Will the issue of contracts be dealt with separately?

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I did promise Hon Murray Criddle that I would not blame him for any difficulty in this area.

- (1) The school bus task force chaired by the member for Wanneroo, Dianne Guise, MLA, has been set up to assist in determining an appropriate government response to a range of issues in line with the Labor Party's policy commitments to the school bus system. The task force has been asked to report to the minister on the preferred model to be adopted to determine the rate of remuneration for school bus contractors; the preferred model for determining a fair and just conveyancing allowance for parents of mainstream students in non-public transport areas; the integration of school buses into the Transperth system; and the appropriateness of the Morrell and special education reviews. The task force expects to report its findings to the minister within the next few weeks.
- (2) School bus contracts that existed prior to 1996 do not conform to the procurement policies and procedures that must be followed by all state government agencies. It is necessary to bring these pre-1996 contracts into line with state government requirements. This may take some time and a number of options are currently being developed for discussion with the State Supply Commission.
- (3) The task force is considering the contract tenure issue and will report on this along with the other terms of reference.