

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

*Sixth Report — Bus fair: The report of the inquiry into the student transport assistance policy framework —
Government Response — Statement by Minister for Transport*

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [9.15 am]: I rise to advise that the state government's response to the Public Accounts Committee's report on the inquiry into the student transport assistance policy framework was tabled on Tuesday. The Western Australian government has been providing school bus services to the community for over 100 years. It is important that regional school bus services can continue to provide students access to quality education and meet the needs of Western Australian families for many years to come. As members may recall, in August 2021 I asked the Legislative Assembly to refer the current student transport assistance policy framework to the Public Accounts Committee for review. This was the first review of school bus services to be undertaken in almost 25 years.

The committee tabled its report entitled *Bus fair: The report of the inquiry into the student transport assistance policy framework* on 18 August 2022 following an extensive consultation period that involved more than 200 written submissions, 25 hearings and regional visits to Wagin, Narrogin, Dumbleyung and Jarrahdale. The report contains 40 recommendations covering the overarching principles of the student transport assistance eligibility criteria, including forms of transport assistance, processes and response times, local engagement, contractual matters, and student behaviour management roles and responsibilities. The government has accepted a number of the recommendations in principle and noted that some require further work and consultation with stakeholders such as BusWA and the Departments of Education, Treasury and Communities in order to understand impacts and budget implications. I have asked the Public Transport Authority to start working on implementing the recommendations accepted in principle and to engage with relevant stakeholders over the coming months.

I would like to thank the Public Accounts Committee and all the community members who participated in the review for their contributions. Our government is committed to improving school bus services for the community. We will work across government, and with families and industry to implement the recommendations.