



Chairperson: Linda Balcombe

The Chairperson
Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee.
Review into WA Regional School Bus Services.

Dear Chairperson

Re: Review into WA regional school bus services

The current Public Transport Authority's Student Transport Assistance Policy Framework Policy is not meeting the needs of students and families in the Shire of Gingin. The policy is seen by the school community as outdated and unworkable. It is incongruent with the aspirations of families, who wish their children to receive a local education, with minimal travelling time, in a school which can provide sufficient curriculum choices to cater for the interests of their children and provide a range of options for career pathways.

The Impact of the Present School Bus Policy on Gingin District High School

1. The policy of offering free student transport from the rural area of Gingin, to private schools outside the public school's catchment area, is unfairly contributing to enrolment numbers diminishing at this school.
2. The reduction in numbers negatively affects staffing levels.
3. Staffing levels reduce the range of subject options available to students in Years 7-10.
4. It actively works against the Gingin DHS by providing bus zones that promote students attending schools outside of the district.

The Impact of the Present School Bus Policy on Students and Families

5. The current policy means that children as young as 5 years of age are regularly travelling on school buses for periods of up to 2 hours per day, which extends their school day and tires them unnecessarily. Some children are picked up at 6.45am and not dropped off until 5pm.
6. It allows a high number of different school buses to come into our Shire, and facilitates them transporting students, out of our district to private and public schools over an hour's travelling time away from Gingin. This is having a negative economic effect on our communities.

The Board of the Gingin DHS believes that in peri-urban areas there needs to be a relaxation of state school catchment zone boundaries. This would allow parents to have certainty that their children can complete their education at the state school at which they commence.

Yours sincerely

Linda Balcombe
Chairperson