

My name is Katherine Macnamara, SBS family [REDACTED].

Please find my submission for the review into school bus services below.

Over the past 6 years this has been a contentious issue for myself and my family. School bus services (SBS) has caused us great stress and left us feeling vulnerable. I hope you take into consideration the deep impact this issue is causing for country families. The SBS issue is the first time I have ever questioned living on a farm.

Currently

- Both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have attended the same school from playgroup through to their current years = [REDACTED] has been on this bus for 6 years and [REDACTED] for 5 years. My youngest son [REDACTED] will start Kindy in 2022.
- I have driven them daily to the nearest approved bus stop as per the dept advice dated 2015 for 6 years.
- They then travel approx. 1- hour to school and then 1-hour return home.
- Both children are in classes with approximately 20 pupils per class.
- They can remain in town to attend local after school activities.
- Two of my children are currently getting treatment at the new Pingelly medical centre for speech problems.

If they were forced, because the "policy" states Yealering is the closest appropriate school, they would.

- Travel 1.5 hours to and from school adding an addition hour per day to their travel time- **Approx. 195 hours per school year**
- Go to Yealering PS where there are presently less children in the entire school than in their current classes-**At Present there is 12 students at Yealering primary school. No students in Yr3 or Yr 4 at Yealering PS. Currently 103 students enrolled at Pingelly Primary School, 12 students in Yr3 and 17 students in Yr4.**
- Will have to forgo all sport and after school activities- **No after school sport available in Yealering.**
- Will be isolated and lose connection to their friends and community
- Have no access to medical facilities.- **No Hospital or Doctor in Yealering. New medical centre built in Pingelly by the Pingelly shire.**

Yealering school numbers continue to decline, and it has the potential to close soon. This would add an even worse level of trauma for my children as they would be forced to relocate yet again.

In 2015, I made my application to the department of School bus services, for permission to have my children picked up by the Pingelly school bus contractor. I did this because I was told that the Yealering school would shut due to lack of facilities and declining numbers. I did not want to uproot my children once settled in a school. I am now facing that exact possibility. I also wanted my children to attend the same school as where they were growing up. Where

they not only participated in a plethora of community activities but also have strong connections, where they feel both safe and happy. This strong connection to Pingelly is because it is where we live, have solid friendships, and attend weekly playgroups, community functions and junior sport.

We live, shop and are a part of the Pingelly Community so it was only natural that both my husband and I saw the importance of our children attending Pingelly School. Our farming business 'Oldfields Farm' is a large broadacre farming operation. We pay significant rates to the Pingelly shire. We employ 10 casual staff members through-out the year and have 3 full time staff. We are currently looking for more staff and find it difficult because no one wants to send their kids to a small school like Yealering ps. There is nothing there! We need the Pingelly school bus service. We need it for our business to continue, for my family to spend as much time together as possible, for my children to have friendships, for us to be physically and mentally healthy. If my children decide to return to farming later in life, the friendships they develop now will carry through to adulthood and create a support network which is very important when you are an isolated farmer. We pride ourselves on being active, well respected contributors to our Community and this is reflected in the fact that we are all actively involved in many tiers of the Pingelly community such as

1. Sam Macnamara
  - a. Board member of 'The Pingelly Recreation and Cultural Centre'.
  - b. Coaches Jnr Auskick for local Pingelly Team
  - c. Coaches Jnr Cricket for local Pingelly Team
  - d. Is a member of the East Pingelly Volunteer Fire Brigade
  - e. Member of Pingelly tennis club, pennants player and social player.
  - f. Is a member of the Pingelly Recreation and Cultural Committee Association
  - g. Is a community volunteer helping out on numerous projects over the years.
2. Kate Macnamara
  - a. Coordinator of local Auskick teams
  - b. Coordinator of local Jnr Cricket team/s
  - c. Committee member / volunteer for the Pingelly P&C
  - d. Volunteer Pingelly Primary School
    - i. Catering
    - ii. Sports days
    - iii. Easter disco
  - e. Is a member of the Pingelly Recreation and Cultural Committee Association
  - f. Member of Pingelly tennis club, pennants player and social player.
3. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Macnamara
  - a. Have attended Pingelly Primary School for their whole of School years starting from Playgroup then Kindy and now Primary School.
  - b. Play music in Pingelly- **not available in Yealering**
  - c. Members and players of
    - i. Cricket- **not available in Yealering**
    - ii. Swimming- **not available in Yealering**
    - iii. Tennis- **not available in Yealering**

- iv. Football- **not available in Yealering**
  - v. Hockey- **not available in Yealering**
4. [REDACTED] the youngest of the family
- a. Attend Play Group
  - b. Mother group with his mum
  - c. Has regular play dates with local children

This saga with school bus services is the first time I have felt truly disadvantaged and questioned my family's future on the farm. My mental health has suffered because of the issues we are having with school bus services. I have developed anxiety and have felt depressed about my children no longer being able to attend Pingelly ps. Yealering ps is unique in its smallness and cannot be deemed as mainstream or an appropriate school because of its inadequacy's. It should be a choice to send your child to such a small school because they will miss out on opportunities that most children in WA have and take for granted for example – after school sport, music, friends in their year group. Yealering does not offer any of these opportunities for our children or ourselves. There is no after school sport in Yealering. They would lose everything. They would not be unable to attend local Pingelly activities, as they would not only be home to late to attend but also must travel another hour after arriving home. For my children to continue to be active in after school sport in Pingelly I would need to take them out of school early and drive 70km from Yealering to Pingelly. They would also have to stop their guitar lessons. We have asked for approval to have them attend Pingelly school via the school bus service. I have asked that we keep the remaining bus stop at [REDACTED] [REDACTED], East Pingelly. This bus stop is a 10km drive one way from our house. I am driving 40km a day. If this bus stop is to cease, I will have no choice in where I send my children to school. SBS will be taking the choice away from me. We have been in contact with our local MP Mia Davis and MP Peter Rundall, also Peter Collier and transport minister Rita Scaffioti. We are prepared to take this as far as we must.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Kind regards,

Katherine Macnamara