

School Bus Review 2021 Submission

Security of the Evergreen Contract (relocation is essential)

- Most Evergreen Contracts are long term contractors and should be given the chance to stay in the industry
- Contracts should not be lost to low number and for many years these contractors have given a good family service and understand the industry
- Evergreen Contractors have never asked for high remunerable prices
- Prices have always been determined by PTA and Bus WA
- Our family have been in the industry for 30 years and it has been a reasonably fair priced contract
- After a few years travelling on gravel roads and long daily kilometres, high costs and freight charges; repairs and maintenance can get expensive.

Confusion surrounding the Complimentary v Eligible Students. (All students to be eligible)

- Students living in remote geographical isolated areas should not be excluded from having a seat on an orange school bus as complimentary students.
- In our region Parents are choosing to travel up to 80 kms a day to meet an orange bus so they can send their children to schools where they can complete a full school education from Kindy through to year 10 as a family.
- These parents and children should not be made feel isolated and anxious with the threat of having the seat taken off them because they're not attending their closest school.
- With most country primary schools not being able to supply a year 7 curriculum, a lot of schools have severely reduced in student numbers and therefore social interaction is minimal when siblings are going through their primary school years in the same classroom together.
- There has been known cases where some of these smaller schools do not have end of year concerts or presentations nights due to the reduced numbers.
- Parents are making the decision to send their kids to schools that are able to offer a wider vibrant social and cultural environment and the availability to be involved in a variety of sports and cultural activities during and after school.
- This in turn helps isolated children to gain the social skills and being able to be better emotionally equipped when having to leave the family home to further their education at age 11 or 12yrs.
- On the other hand, students who live within a short distance (too close to be eligible) from their nearest school should be eligible and not complimentary for transport assistance to school. These students can't walk or ride a bike to school as there are no footpaths; generally they live on a main highway. If the bus route goes past their driveway it makes sense to include them as eligible students.

More communication and trust given to contractors when deciding routes and bus stops – Examples

- PTA do not come into the further regions and travel on school buses to get an indication on what they are dealing with when determining routes and bus stops.
- A lot of Orange School Bus Contracts are community owner drivers.
- We have lived and worked in the same country area for over 50yrs and have been involved in family school bus contracts for 30years.
- Our knowledge of the roads in this area far exceeds looking on google maps to determine what is and what isn't the safest route to take school children to school and safest pick-up point for a bus stop.
- Proposals determining the shortest safest route servicing all eligible and complimentary students have not been accepted by PTA.

More consistency from contract officers, too much variation over all contractor officers

- Communications between SBS and bus contractors when shuffling the TOL staff around is quite frustrating at times.
- In some instances, as contractors, we are not even aware who the TOL is until we get an email with a query on a bus issue.
- It is not uncommon to get different advice from what the previous TOL has given.

Tender model is both confusing and a race to the bottom (safety is jeopardised; lack of local support, Evergreen contract has more stringent guidelines.

- There is a need to recognize the financial investment a Contractor has in their ECM contract.
- The industry has a proud, safe 120-year record.
- The difference between a Tendered Contract and an ECM contract pricing comes down to imported buses v's locally manufactured bodied buses, less maintenance, lower driver wages, all of which put student safety at risk.

School Bus Services heavily focused on clawing back \$\$\$ to the detriment of service and relationships.
Delivery of service to the community

- Common sense should be factored in where spurs are involved.
- If there is time within the 90-minute travel time limit then families should be allowed a gate way service pickup
- Community contractors/drivers knowledge of the roads should be considered to determine what is and what isn't the safest route and safest pick-up point for a bus stop.

TVDs to be simplified, formula's are to confusing and difficult to understand.

(Revert to agreeing kms at the beginning of terms)

- Contractors sign a contract to supply a service for school children to travel over the agreed map route.
- Every day they still get up and do all the safety checks, leave the depot to drive the route in all types of weather and wildlife on some pretty ordinary roads in the country regions.
- Drivers are expected to run a business inside the bus.
- The amount of paperwork required to complete on route is unacceptable.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to attract Relief Drivers due to ongoing cost of obtaining a licence and the responsibility of having to complete too much paperwork

The Orange School Bus contractor and drivers are an integral part of every community, the majority live locally.

- Like a lot of contractors, we are a family-owned business with 30 years in the school bus industry. We have lived and worked in the same country area for over 50 years. We have owned and run local businesses and been involved in all aspects of a country community. The communities hold a very strong trust in school bus contractors and drivers.