

My name is Jane Scott and I live in Jarrahdale.

I have been put in charge of a group of concerned parents to be spokesperson about an issue that we feel is an injustice by the state government.

I am writing this email due to the impending cancellation of our government funded orange school bus that will soon affect over one hundred students. This cancellation involves three orange school buses servicing three schools in the area and will soon result in three bus drivers losing their jobs.

Jarrahdale school students have used this service for over 38 years. We have only one public high school in our region that our students are allocated to attend. In the past it was Armadale Senior High School and more recently Byford Secondary College.

We rely on this service to pick up and drop off our children throughout the town over a 31 km circuit, meaning they have only a reasonable distance to walk to the pickup/drop off points.

The Public Transport Authority (PTA) will be making changes to the Perth Public Transport Area (PPTA) boundary to include the Jarrahdale township, effective 19 July 2021. The change to the PPTA boundary will therefore provide rural students reasonable access to transport to and from school; meaning families residing in Jarrahdale will no longer have access to School Bus Services (SBS). I have attached this letter accompanying this email for your perusal.

Our current school bus service has my children walking 300m to the bus pickup/drop off point every day. The transport minister now wants all our primary school and high school children, aging from 4 years to 17 years old, to walk to the Jarrahdale General Store Transperth Stop. For our family this is 1.6 km from our home. This distance to walk is even further for other children in our estate, and then families in further afield estates e.g. Millbrook and properties along Nettleton Road are also expected to drive their children to the General Store bus stop or just directly to the school.

To add a personal note our bus drivers do a wonderful job which means a great service for our children. They will often wait for children in the morning and afternoon so they don't miss the bus, ensuring they get to and from school safely and on time. If a child is running late in the morning, they often call their parents to check if the child is on their way to the bus before leaving the stop.

As an additional and very important safety feature for our parents, these school buses all have seat belts fitted. The drivers also make sure that every student wears their seat belts before taking off on the open highway. This involves the driver walking the aisle to check on their belts, and for our local bus there are added treats of confectionary for each student that has it fitted every day for that week. Transperth buses do not have seat belts. If the bus is full the students are expected to stand up for the 18km journey along mostly 80 km/h roads to Byford Secondary College.

As a community we also cannot understand how that many children from three buses will all safely fit on Route 253 from Jarrahdale General Store (stop 13088) at 7:51am”?

To date, aside from trying to get a resolution for the Public Transport Authority of Western Australia (which was unsuccessful) I have also raised this issue with our local Serpentine Jarrahdale Shire President Councillor Michelle Rich. As this is not a local government issue Cr Rich advised me to contact the Minister of Transport, Honourable Rita Saffioti MLA, and Hugh Jones MLA - Member for Darling Range. I have called the electorate office and parliament office of Honourable Rita Saffioti MLA where they gave me her email, to which I have written to and I am now waiting for a response. I have called the office of Hugh Jones MLA - Member for Darling Range twice and am waiting for a response.

Further to this I have also been in contact with Perth media who have expressed interest in airing our story on the local news.

I am asking you to please contact me to arrange a meeting with the impacted parents of the Jarrahdale community and hear our concerns and questions about the cancellation of the 38-year-old, and well-oiled, routine School Bus Service that has served our community so well for so many years.

Kind Regards,