

“What works and what doesn’t and how can we improve the systems? - the Queensland perspective”

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School Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS) Snapshot

- STAS provides assistance to eligible students on rail, bus and ferry services and through payment of conveyance allowances to parents.
- Designed for those students who do not have a school close to their residence.



What we are looking at today

- Eligibility for bus transport assistance (kilometre based), and
- Roll Management – Conveyance Committee.



Eligibility Criteria

- The main criterion is the distance between the principle place of residence and the nearest State school, by the shortest trafficable route.
- As well as meeting general eligibility criteria that applies to the type of assistance being sought.



Eligibility for bus transport assistance (kilometre based contract)

There are two main types of bus services:

- Kilometre based, and
- Fares based services.

There are two types bus transport assistance available to eligible students:

- Distance based assistance, and
- Safety-net assistance.



Distance based assistance – Primary student

- ❖ State primary school student – must live more than 3.2km from the nearest State primary school.
- ❖ Non-State primary school student – must live more than 3.2km from both the nearest State primary school and the nearest non-State primary school of the type attended.
 - Students within this distance may qualify for Safety-net.



Distance based assistance – Secondary student

- ❖ State secondary school student – must live more than 4.8km from the nearest State secondary school.
- ❖ Non-State secondary school student – must live more than 4.8km from both the nearest State secondary school and the nearest non-State secondary school of the type attended.
 - Students within this distance may qualify for Safety-net.



Safety-net assistance – Primary student

Is provided for financially disadvantaged students who live close to their nearest school.

- ❖ State primary school student – must live 3.2km or less from the nearest State primary school.
- ❖ Non-State primary school student – must live 3.2km or less from either the nearest State primary school or the nearest non-State primary school of the type attended.



Safety-net assistance – Secondary student

Safety-net assistance is provided for financially disadvantaged students who live close to their nearest school.

- ❖ State secondary school student – must live 4.8km or less from the nearest State secondary school.
- ❖ Non-State secondary school student – must live 4.8km or less from either the nearest State secondary school or the nearest non-State secondary school of the type attended.



Eligibility – Have we got it right?



Positives:

- ❖ developing an online system for parents/guardians to lodge Bus Travel Assistance applications (paper based application will remain), and
- ❖ a receptive Department willing to work with Industry.



Eligibility – Have we got it right?

- Distance based travel to the nearest State school
 - ?travel beyond the nearest School becomes a commercial arrangement and requires a fare to be paid, why?
 - ?are we restricting a child's learning ability, is learning based on what you can afford?
 - ?are we removing the freedom of choice?
 - ?what would be the differential cost to Government if we moved away from distance criteria to School of choice?



Eligibility – Have we got it right?

- Catchment areas, students must travel on the designated bus service which has a defined transport catchment area.
 - ?what happens when the Educational enrolment catchment area does not align with the School transport catchment area?
 - ?are students financially disadvantaged, i.e. must pay a fare?
 - ?why can't Education and Transport work in partnership?
 - ? why is School transport not a whole of Government approach?



Eligibility – Have we got it right?

- Frequency of travel, to be eligible students must make a minimum of two trips per week. If a student is eligible then they should be eligible for the entire week.

?how does this impact on allocating the correct size of bus for the service?



Eligibility – Have we got it right?

- Safety-net is the second form of School transport assistance, however their numbers are not counted when determining bus size allocation.

?why not if they meet the eligibility criteria?

?what happens when there are more students than seats?



Roll Management – Conveyance Committee

- Comprised of parents/guardians of distance eligible students.
- Must have:
 - ❖ elected officer bearers,
 - ❖ a constitution,
 - ❖ complete all necessary documentation as required,
 - ❖ forward proposed routes, timetables, bus stops etc to TMR.



Conveyance Committee - Objectives

- monitoring the performance of the contracted Operator,
- assist the contracted Operator with timetabling and route design,
- assist Principals and contracted Operators in maintaining discipline of the children.



Conveyance Committee - Relevance

- Not all kilometre based services have a Conveyance Committee.
?why have a Conveyance Committee requirement when it does not apply equally across the State?
- a Conveyance Committee member is required to sign the Operators Kilometre Exception Report certifying that service operated AM and PM on the dates covered by the report.
?why, if the service was not run the Department would know about it on the day, is this not an unnecessary step?



Conveyance Committee - Relevance

➤ Contracts for the provision of School transport services are between the State and the Operator.

?why introduce a third party into the process?

?is this not an unnecessary layer of bureaucratic red tape over complicating an already complex system?



Why have we made getting children to and from School so complicated?

Are we delivering the right outcome for our passengers?

