

TRAVEL

1. **A41.** ALPHA BRANCH

“That ICPA QLD Inc. lobby the QLD Minister for Transport and Main Roads and TransLink to change their policy and regulations to enable small rural bus run extensions and changes to be approved on a case – by – case basis and not by restrictive kilometre based and approved cost components.”

Carried

Explanation: The current criteria for an extension to an existing school bus run is preventing changes and extensions to bus routes occurring. As shown below (3.2.5) there must be a minimum of two students to extend the run 1.6km and a further student for an extra 0.8km.

Boundaries of most properties in rural areas, where these school aged children reside are located much further apart than what these criteria stipulate, making it very difficult for bus runs to be extended or changed when new students become school age or move to the area. Although the distance criteria can be removed, this is only the case if there are two students and the bus service does not exceed the approved maximum cost. These current rules are limiting changes and extensions to rural bus routes and thus affecting the viability of rural bus runs and having a negative impact on students and small school numbers. If a student cannot get the bus route extension, they are entitled to receive a School Conveyance Allowance instead. If each extension was reviewed on a case-by-case basis, the funds used to pay parents to transport their children could be redirected to the school bus run if it was to exceed the approved bus run costs to meet the extension.

2. **A42.** DIRRANBANDI BRANCH

“That ICPA lobby the Minister for Sport, and any other relevant bodies, to increase the current Young Athletes Travel Subsidy for students residing in rural and remote areas, who are accessing State level sporting opportunities, or higher.”

Carried

Explanation: This travel subsidy provides additional financial assistance through three event tiers and supports attendance at specific state, national and international events.

Subsidies are provided retrospectively under a tiered funding model, with applicants eligible once every 2 calendar years at each tier. Athletes and officials can only apply after they have competed or officiated at an event and within 6 months of participating.

The travel subsidy aims to foster the development of young athletes and support elite athlete pathways by providing financial assistance to help alleviate the costs associated with attending championship events.

Currently, the travel subsidy will allow up to a maximum of \$1200 in financial assistance over the 3 event tiers, once every 2 calendar years. Eligible athletes and officials can apply for 1 event per tier once every second calendar year.

- State or state school event - \$200
- National or national school event - \$400
- International event - \$600

Before rural and remote students even reach State level events, they have had to participate in local and regional events leading up to this. There are usually no fewer than three training weekends leading up to State events, often hundreds of kilometres from home for many students. Fuel, food and accommodation costs well exceed the \$200 subsidy, and this is well before the student even reaches State level sport. Students residing in more populated areas (such as Brisbane) do not need to travel so far for training sessions. For children who excel at, and often participate in more than one sport, the costs can prove to be prohibitive for many families.

There is a need for the radial distance criteria to be reviewed and for the potential of another tier to be added. This tier should be increased to 500km radius and another level of subsidy for this 500km radius to

be implemented. ‘Get Started Vouchers’ and similar financial assistance opportunities require applicants to possess a Health Care Card at a minimum, which many rural and remote families are ineligible for.

3. **A43.** KINDON BRANCH

“That ICPA (Qld) lobbies the Department of Transport and Main Roads TransLink Division to liaise transparently with local communities when considering revision of school bus routes in rural and remote areas.”

Carried

Explanation: There has been an injustice for two (2) school bus services that serviced Yelarbon and Millmerran being a distance of 100km between. Both the concerned communities were very proactive in offering viable suggestions and solutions during discussions (not negotiations) with the Department of Transport and Main Roads TransLink Division who ended these discussions by closing these routes. No consideration was given to vested families involved who have a generational history in these districts even after offering all their assistance to come to a viable resolution that were ignored by the TransLink Division and closed anyway.

AMALGAMATION OF MT EMLYN BUS WITH IVANHOE BUS RUN – 2018

The Mt Emlyn bus committee was formed back in 1957, to transport students from the Kooroongarra and Grays Gate districts into primary schools in Millmerran. This bus run had always been well supported and reliable.

Early in 2018, the owner/operator applied for a new bus as the 22 seat Coaster bus had reached 20 years of age. TransLink began investigations into the possible amalgamation of the Mt Emlyn run with the nearby Ivanhoe run. Timings and investigations were done and it was found that the proposed run would be far too long, in both travel time and distance.

However, this was not the end of the matter, as then TransLink proposed a second amalgamation, this time deleting the Kooroongarra section, amalgamating it with the Bringalily bus run, and amalgamating the remaining Mt Emlyn run with the Ivanhoe run.

New timetables and maps were sent to all families and a meeting was called in June for all families to meet with TransLink and to express their opinions on this new route. The meeting was very well supported as most families were not satisfied at all with the proposal - everyone was to be negatively impacted by the amalgamation. Following the meeting, families were called upon to return feedback to TransLink. Timings of the new route were also undertaken with TransLink and representatives from both bus runs.

Months followed with no word from TransLink at all, as to what was going to happen to the bus run. This created uncertainty for many, including the driver of the Mt Emlyn bus who sought alternative employment. Towards the end of 2018, a letter was sent to families, saying there was “general support” for the amalgamation and that the Mt Emlyn bus run was to cease operation and be amalgamated with the Ivanhoe & Bringalily services. The new services began in early November 2018.

From the outset, it was felt that TransLink only had one agenda and that was to close the Mt Emlyn run. Having two funded buses on either side of this service, both owned and operated by the same operators, made this possible. The district lost a great, reliable bus run, with the students now having earlier pick-up times and over an hour of travelling time for some, on the new run.

Parent’s concerns, from all bus runs involved, were not adequately taken into consideration, as well as the negative impact on the rural community. TransLink were simply looking to save money, despite concerns about near-capacity buses and lengthy travel time, especially affecting predominantly primary school-aged students.

Case Study 2.

YELARBON BUS RUN

In 2014, we embarked on the project to better utilize the bus operating at Yelarbon State School (YSS). The bus was only operating on the eastern side of town and delivering three children to the school - there were

eight on the western side of town that would use the bus. The current bus run actually had the high school bus and the YSS bus following each other from the same point in Yelarbon to the Whetstone truck stop. The students would transfer from the YSS to the high school bus and continue on their way. This was very inefficient so we came up with a plan to change the bus run to go out both sides of town and collect every child except one.

After 12 months of planning with the Principal, Council, Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), the TMR finally arrived at YSS. After travelling on the bus route and realizing the inefficiency's they did a deal with the YSS bus owner to pay him out. Then informed the Principal that the bus run was finished and left town. They did not even look at the new bus run or do any community consultation. Their opinion was if you want to use a bus, use the one to Goondiwindi, otherwise drive your child to YSS.

To conclude, the bus run we designed met all TMR requirements. We thought it unfair to expect parents to put preppies on a bus for an hour each way to go to school. The parents wanted to send their children to YSS not Goondiwindi. The YSS bus was already there, we just wanted to utilize it to its full potential but we ended up with nothing. We have the wrong Queensland Department controlling School bus runs.

4. **A44.** SPRINGSURE/ROLLESTON BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. approach commercial bus companies to allow free travel for chaperones on all bus service routes for rural students using bus transportation to access education.”

Carried

Explanation: Not all boarding schools have their own buses. Students aged 12 and under can only travel on a commercially owned bus if accompanied by a chaperone. Many parents of students travelling to and from these schools using commercial transport cannot afford the time or money to pay extra for an escort. Allowing these chaperones to travel free on ALL routes would help in these situations.

We would like to thank those companies who already allow chaperones to travel free on certain routes.

5. **A45.** CLARKE CREEK BRANCH

“That ICPA (Qld) Inc lobby TransLink and the Department of Transport to update the current School Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS) policy to include kindy students as recognised allocations on school buses.”

Word Change

A45. QUEENSLAND STATE COUNCIL

“That ICPA (Qld) Inc lobby TransLink and the Department of Transport to update the current School Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS) policy to include kindy students as recognised allocations for class I school bus routes.”

Carried

Explanation: Under the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education 2016-2017 (NPUAECE) the Qld government committed to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to access Kindergarten in the year before school commenced. With 95% of children now attending Kindergarten, access for children in remote communities has been identified as an ongoing challenge. With the intention of continuing the program, participating schools have recently been instructed to identify as K-6 schools. With these considerations in mind, it seems timely that an update of the School Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS) also occurs to include kindergarten students as recognised allocations on school buses.

6. **S14.** CLERMONT BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby the Department of Education and the Department of Transport to make provision for Kindergarten children attending local schools offering State Delivered Kindergarten who need to travel on-designated bus runs to be eligible for government conveyance allowance.”

Word change

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby the Department of Education and the Department of Transport to make provision for Kindergarten children attending local schools offering State Delivered Kindergarten who need to travel on-designated Class I bus runs to be eligible for assistance under (STAS) School Transport Assistance Scheme or related government Conveyance allowances.”

Carried

Explanation: School bus run operators servicing schools where state delivered kindergarten is to be implemented can currently choose whether or not to carry these Kindergarten students, with no government allowances available for these students. That is, if the bus run operators choose to allow the Kindergarten students onto their bus runs they do not receive any government benefits. If the owner of the bus run decides to take the Kindergarten students, it will then be up to the operator to invoice families privately in order to be paid to carry those children. At Kilcummin State School, where state delivered Kindergarten is to be implemented next year, there are two bus runs and while both operators may be happy to allow the Kindergarten students to travel to and from school on their bus runs, it would see parents getting hit with out of pocket expenses to use the services for their Kindergarten child. Some of these families already have siblings travelling on the bus runs, so it is only logical that the Kindergarten child travel on the bus as well. One family who live 53 kilometres from the school and 37 kilometres from the nearest bus run, will have a child in grade 2, a child in prep and a kindy child in 2020. The children in Prep and grade two will be eligible for state funded travel allowances, yet the kindy child will not be.