



FURTHER INFORMATION

Public Accounts Committee

STUDENT TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE POLICY FRAMEWORK INQUIRY

The Committee's Terms of Reference

The Public Accounts Committee (Committee) is inquiring into the current Student Transport Assistance Policy (STAP) framework. The STAP framework applies to Western Australian State Government transport assistance made available to students:

- a) living in rural areas who attend mainstream government and non-government schools; and
- b) with special needs who attend education support schools and centres provided by government and non-government agencies.

The Committee's inquiry will not consider transport and transport assistance provided to students residing in Public Transport Areas attending mainstream schools, as these students are not covered by the STAP framework.

In relation to the STAP framework, the Committee will consider matters relating to the **terms of reference** stated below. The questions stated under each **term of reference** indicate matters that the Committee may consider as part of the inquiry. However, your submission can address any matters which you consider relate to the **terms of reference**, and does not need to be limited to answering the questions below.

- a) the eligibility criteria for students to qualify for transport assistance, including:**
 - i. nearest appropriate school;**
 - ii. access to spurs; and**
 - iii. inclusion of social, community, and economic and financial factors;**

Such as:

- What are the current eligibility criteria?
- Are the eligibility criteria too restrictive, or can they have unintentional outcomes?
- Are Department of Education school intake areas consistent with the 'nearest appropriate school' eligibility requirement?
- How might the eligibility criteria be improved?

- b) the types of transport assistance and entitlements to be provided to ensure students can undertake an appropriate education;**

Such as:

- What are the current types of transport assistance and entitlements provided to students under the STAP framework?
- Are the current types of transport assistance and entitlement satisfactory?
- How are the types of transport assistance and entitlements offered to students affected by changing area demographics?
- Are there additional types of transport assistance and entitlements, or variations made to the existing types of transport assistance and entitlements, that could be provided under the STAP framework?

c) *the relevance of existing policies, practices and rules that are applied in delivering the transport assistance arrangements;*

Such as:

- What other policies, practices and rules support or sit behind the *Student Transport Assistance Policy and Operation Guidelines*?
 - For example, how are you affected by rules regarding regularity of use?
- Do these additional policies, practices and rules lead to unfair, inefficient or unintended consequences?
- How might these policies, practices and rules be improved?

d) *the assessment process when evaluating the safety of bus stops and routes;*

Such as:

- What is the assessment process?
- What considerations are taken into account in the assessment process?
- How consultative is the assessment process?
- How could the assessment process be improved?

e) *the implication of the National Disability Insurance Scheme on the delivery of transport assistance for students attending Education Support facilities;*

Such as:

- How does the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) interact with the delivery of transport assistance for students attending Education Support facilities?
- Is this interaction between the NDIS and delivery of transport assistance likely to change in the near future? If so, how?
- Are there any gaps in eligibility between students eligible for the NDIS and those eligible for transport assistance under the STAP framework?
- How could any gaps in eligibility be filled?

f) *the contractual arrangements with services providers, including the appropriateness of current school bus contracts, and payment arrangements, and previous contractual arrangements and the manner in which they were created;*

Such as:

- What types of contractual arrangements exist for the provision of school bus services under the STAP framework?
- Are there any issues with the current contractual arrangements?
- How can the contractual arrangements for the provision of school bus services under the STAP framework be improved?

g) *the resourcing of the School Bus Services division with the Public Transport Authority;*

Such as:

- Is the School Bus Services Division sufficiently resourced to appropriately manage the Student Transport Assistance Program?
- Has there been changes to the resourcing of the School Bus Services Division in the last 10-15 years?
- If so, how has resourcing changed, and on what basis?

h) *the appropriateness of the conveyance allowance as an alternative to transport assistance.*

- See a) and b) above.

The Committee will report on its findings by 31 August 2022.

Your submission

The Committee would welcome your submission addressing the issues raised generally, or one or all of the terms of reference more specifically. Submissions must include the submitter's full name and contact details.

Submissions should be received by the Committee no later than **Friday, 29 October 2021**. Submissions can be lodged online via the WA Parliament's website at www.parliament.wa.gov.au/subportal. They can also be sent electronically to lapac@parliament.wa.gov.au.

All submissions become the property of the Committee. Unless the Committee decides otherwise, submissions are part of the Committee's public record. This means that your submission may be published on the Parliament's website, disclosed for the purposes of the Committee's enquiries, referred to in public hearings and, at the end of the inquiry, referred to in the Committee's published report and tabled as a public document in the Legislative Assembly.

If you would like the Committee to consider a request for your correspondence to be accepted as a confidential submission, please include that request with your submission. The Committee will consider any request you make, but ultimately it is the Committee's decision about how it uses the information it receives. Please seek further information from the Committee's Principal Research Officer prior to making your submission if you have particular concerns.

Until such time as your submission is published by the Committee you should not share it with others. If you publish or disclose the content of your submission, you may not be protected by parliamentary privilege.

For questions about the terms of reference or the inquiry process, including the preparation of submissions, please contact the Principal Research Officer on 9222 7394 or lapac@parliament.wa.gov.au.