

STUDENT TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE POLICY FRAMEWORK INQUIRY SUBMISSION 2021

This submission is written with views and opinions from both aspects as a parent of students using the transport service and as a contractor that has been operating a service in the WA Wheatbelt for a little over 15 years, where over this time it has been observed that transporting children to and from school in WA is first class. Children are safely transported to and from school in comfort by committed operators and drivers every school day of the year.

COMPLIMENTS

- The Orange School Bus Service is renowned for its safety, reliability and commitment to school children and their families throughout the state of Western Australia.
- The Service provides wonderful opportunities for business for local communities and its members looking for work from a young age right across the spectrum to those who are no longer physically able to undergo the strenuous demands of country jobs for example farming etc.
- The Service provides opportunities for young families to live and work in the country in rural and remotes regions of the state.
- Contractors are useful sources of information.
- The kids love to travel on the bus!!

CONCERNS

- The security for Contractors of the Evergreen Contract (ECM) and it's termination policy
- The repairs and maintenance of vehicles with those services driven on dirt roads and the costs incurred by contractors such as the air-conditioning systems that do not favour being filled with mud in winter when the roads are wet. As well as the offer of financial support given to contractors when manufacturer issues such as leaking dust or engine mounting are recurring issues that go above and beyond normal wear and tear.
- TDV – The excessive need to reconcile travelled kilometres when they vary to contracted distances and the loss of income contractors incur due to students not travelling. This impacts contractors' ability to budget and repay loans based on contract agreements of expected payments. Once lending has been finalised where do contractors find these funds even though the department state only varied not fixed costs are required to be returned to them. All at the same time expecting drivers to be available to drive a complete route each day.
- Relationships with all parties need to be positive and all kids, no matter of their location, be eligible for the Service.

Lots of memories have been made over the years travelling to and from school on the bus. Let's hope kids of today still get to experience that joy going forward.