

- **TDV process.**
- This is a time-consuming process when contractors have to account for every kilometre travelled, even though they are not compensated for every kilometre eg when taking bus to get new tyres or refuel at service station. This should be 'give and take' eg when a tree is down over a road and bus is required to take alternative/longer route the contractor should also not claim. The TDV should be for advising School Development Days only, to streamline use of contractor and SBS staff time.
- The lodgement of TDVs via the website. Contractors only receive a lodgement number, not a printout of the information lodged. The SBS website should be updated to allow any lodgements by a contractor to be able to save/print the information we have lodged.
- Roadwork delays. From the 27/10/21 to now (17/11/2021) there have been two sets of roadworks on my bus run. I can get stopped there 8 times a day for 5 minutes each stop. That totals approximately 40 minutes a day of extra running of the engine and labour time spent sitting there. In addition to having to run the bus at a faster speed to catch up time. All of this is at a cost to the contractor. I have contacted the PTA about this, and they advised it is the contractors' responsibility and no extra costs will be borne by the PTA. I feel this is a very similar issue to TDV's. The PTA recoup all available costs paid back when the bus does not travel the full run however when the bus is running an 40 extra minutes a day when roadworks are beyond the road user's control, costs are not reimbursed by the PTA to the contractor.
- **SBS Communication with Contractors**
- The SBS advises that contractors are only to transport students who have written SBS approval, however SBS also advises that if a child presents to the bus, they are not to be left on the side of the road. A clear black and white rule needs to be provided to contractors/drivers.
- **SBS Communication with Parents**
- Process of advising parents/caregivers that their child is being removed from the service. Is this still via post? Too lengthy a process. Should be all via email to expedite the communication process between all involved.
- **SBS Communication with Education Department**
- Communication with the Education Department. There seems to be minimal communication between the Education Department and School Bus Services.
- Contractors should be advised when students are suspended from school. If they are suspended from school and the bus driver/contractor isn't advised then we can assume that they are just absent from the bus and can technically exit them. Likewise, if a student is suspended from the bus we should be able to advise the school. We should be able to share information that is pertinent to both agencies to make things run easier, without the fear of prosecution for privacy related issues. Examples where we should be able to share information is, suspensions, wagging, abusive or threatening behaviour, medical emergencies.
- **Eligible vs Complimentary Students**
- Catholic Primary School students have eligible status. Why are private school students given eligible status when state run primary school students are not? Is this discrimination? I have a 57-seat bus which has 15 private students on board as eligible students and yet a government primary school student would only be considered as complimentary.

- Eligibility of 60%+ use should be consistently reviewed and maintained to ensure students who are approved to travel on the bus are using it, rather than having waiting lists where students who would use bus regularly are not being able to access the service.
- Currently, if an eligible student is removed from the service for being a non-regular user of the bus, as soon as they reapply they are reinstated to a bus service, and the most recent complimentary student is removed. An eligible student who is removed due to lack of regular use, should be placed at the bottom of the queue, to reflect the SBS School Bus Industry Customer Service Charter role of “providing eligible rural students and students with special needs free transport to and from school on contracted ‘orange’ school buses. These contract services are critical to ensuring students are able to **attend** school”.
- The PTA should record when a student has been exited due to poor attendance by any one student, and it should be considered when the student reapplies for any orange school bus. Too often students regain a seat even after numerous exits (due to less than the required 60% regular travel) and students who have higher levels of use of the bus are removed, as they are complimentary.
- **Student Attendance / Exiting of Students**
- Exiting of students – The PTA will not allow a contractor to exit a student for non-attendance. PTA request the contractor to send them the student attendance register for the whole term, and they make the decision; and students who are absent for large periods of time do not seem to be exited by the PTA through this process.
- The PTA do not seem to understand what the contractor/driver is advising regarding poor attendance of a student. Contractors are ‘on the ground’ and see what students are doing, especially in small country towns. Contractors see these student not attending school – they are seen hanging around the parks etc in their own town, driving to and from the town the school is located in. The PTA, being city-based, are removed from this.
- The PTA should make the application process stricter with guidelines and if those guidelines aren’t met then consequences, including exiting the student, should be applied. The guidelines need to be in black and white to overcome this issue.
- Out of Policy approvals. Currently, I have one OOP on a bus who has travelled 7 trips out of 53. A student approved for OOP, should be required to meet the same 60% attendance rate of other students, however the PTA will not exit the student when this rate is not met by an OOP student.
- **Bus inspections.**
- The previous system was great, whereby the PTA bus inspector would attend and go over the bus with the contractor present. The bus inspector would advise the contractor on their particular bus, as they would see all bus types all over the state and know of any issues. The new annual inspection system is cumbersome. As a contractor, my bus has failed the inspection multiple times, mostly for minor stone chips in the windscreen.
- The windscreen issue is huge. A 7mm stone chip within your field of vision is a fail, even though the integrity of the windscreen and ability to safely drive isn’t reduced by this type of damage. Due to this as a contractor I have had to replace every bus windscreen every year prior to registration. Windscreens typically cost \$3,000-\$5,000 for a 2-piece windscreen. I believe that eventually the insurance companies will remove the windscreen policy from all school buses, and we will have to foot that bill ourselves, which will need to be a cost considered by the PTA.
- Bus inspection failures. If a school bus is failed, the contractor generally needs to hire a bus (if not during school holidays). In some towns, the only business to hire a bus from is the

same business that inspects/fails the bus. The replacement/hire bus is often non-seat belted and older condition.

- **Bus maintenance.**
- During a recent audit the TLO asked who performed our bus services, and I advised that I performed these, and that a mechanic carried out all other works on the bus. I was informed by the TLO that I was not permitted to service my bus and that it had to be done by mechanic with an MRN. I had to provide invoices from the mechanic to prove I was using him to perform general bus services. I have since been advised that this is not the case and that I am officially able to perform the basic bus service. The incorrect information provided to me by the TLO has subsequently cost me a couple of thousand dollars in work that I could have carried out myself. While as a contractor I should have been aware of contract requirements, the PTA staff should also be aware of contract requirements and provide contractors with accurate information.