

To whom it may concern,

We currently live at [REDACTED] and our son attends Dumbleyung Primary school. He catches the [REDACTED] school bus service and travels to Dumbleyung Primary school as a complimentary student. Our farm is 22.4km from the Nyabing primary school and 28.9km from the Dumbleyung Primary school. We believe that Stap needs to consider the inclusion of social, community, and economical and financial factors. Other considerations could be, but not limited to, mental health, family support, parents place of employment, access to hospitals, sporting groups and health care.

[REDACTED] grandparents founded Dumbleyung and continue to reside in Dumbleyung so this was one of the strongest reasons we wanted him to attend Dumbleyung primary school. It was very important to us that he had extended family that could help care for him and have a positive influence on him growing up. Its known that grandparents play a vital role in the development of a child. [REDACTED] had already established a strong sense of belonging to Dumbleyung and its people, being a regular visitor to the old folk at the hospital before he had even started school. I felt that if we were to send him to Nyabing he would have no connection at all and would feel lost and out of place. It is well known that relationships with family members and other adults and children associated with the family plays a key role in building their identities. When children feel a sense of belonging and sense of pride in their families, their peers, and their community, they can be emotionally strong, self-assured and able to deal with challenges and difficulties. None of this is ever considered at school bus services but is vital as it creates an important foundation for their learning and development.

As a mother, having the help of extended family and friends plays a huge role in our lives in the rural communities. Not being able to get the support we need can have a negative effect on family life and mental wellbeing of the parents.

I also work in Dumbleyung and have built relations with people in the community so sending [REDACTED] to Nyabing wasn't an option for us, but this wasn't ever taken into consideration by STAP.

We are happy that a review of the current Student Transport Assistance Policy framework is being carried out and look forward to many changes bring these policies up to date.

Kind Regards

Heather Bartram

[REDACTED]