

My whole life has been in the country. I grew up catching a school bus to town in the 90s, and other than a short period where I lived in Perth have lived in small country towns. I'm now back in Lake Grace where my first child [REDACTED] has started his schooling journey and like me will catch a school bus to town.

Let me first note that the period I lived in Perth both boarding school and my for my tertiary education, cemented for me whole fortunate those are who don't live regionally. Services and choice at the fingertip and many ears who listen when a group has an issue. Continually over the years what holds true is the effort to be heard when we are not listened to.

Forward some thirty years from when I caught the same school bus service my son is now catching so much has changed. No longer is the bus service one based on common sense and routes determined by the schools. Now we deal with a department that is beyond hard to contact. And a department run from the city, where common sense seems to be non existent.

In my opinion bus routes, number of buses and time spent on a bus should be up for consultation each year and be directed by the school where parents can work with bus contractors to determine the best and safest way to school. The amount of rules determining where a spur can go to, or whether a family is entitled to a spur for example should not be a blanket rule. It should lay with the school and what is deemed far. While it may seem efficient to not drive 9km extra for example to safely collect kids and return them each day from the office of the SBS department in Perth, the reality is a daily commitment of more cars on dangerous roads all year round particularly when large haulage grain trucks navigate similar journeys. When I was a child everything was based on safety and common sense and yet now a blanket set of rules has us all laughing at how poor the department is that runs the school bus service.

Let schools and parents be the ones to decide whether a spur is allowed. Let schools decide what kids should go on what bus to make for a more efficient bus run.

We are constantly faced with challenges living rurally, getting our kids to school the safest and fairest way on kids, bus contractors and busy regional families should not be one. Let us have more control once again. And common sense dictate a service that we are entitled to for our kids education.