



Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: PET 41408
Your ref: A685325

10 June 2021

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 3476-21, lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Andrew Powell MP, Member for Glass House on 11 May 2021 about a comprehensive review of Queensland's Student Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS).

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to providing support to Queensland families to assist with the cost of transporting students to and from school.

The purpose of STAS is to assist families with travel to and from school when there is no state school provided in their local area. STAS currently provides assistance to around 130,000 school students across Queensland on bus, rail and ferry services and through the payment of conveyance allowance to parents as a contribution towards the cost of transporting their children to and from school.

Delivery of the scheme involves around 600 delivery partners providing over 1100 school bus routes to support government funded travel for students at an annual cost of approximately \$176 million. Due to the number of students involved and the annual STAS budget allocated to support the types of assistance available, it is essential that consistent application of the guidelines is maintained to ensure equitable distribution across the state.

The Department of Education (DoE) determines enrolment eligibility based on school catchment areas. A school catchment area is the geographical location where a state school's core intake of students must live and does not mandate travel to a particular school. School catchment areas are not fixed or static and can change to accommodate new schools and changes in demographics.

I am advised that the impetus behind the petition was a lack of STAS funded services available for school students living in the Mooloolah Valley area to access the Maleny State High School. This issue was rectified by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) at the commencement of term 2, 2021 with the institution of a new STAS funded school bus service to provide these students access to Maleny State High School.

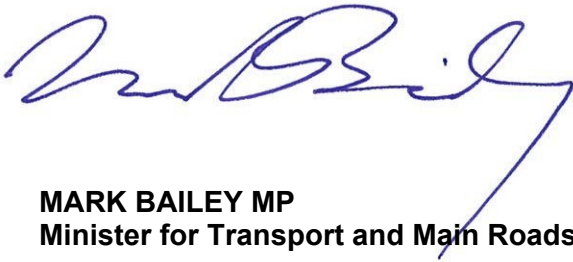
Over the past two years, STAS has undergone significant change to modernise and simplify procedures through a state-wide rollout of SmartForms, completed in June 2020. This has streamlined the application and assessment process providing benefits to parents, carers and industry providers. For the first time ever, parents and guardians can apply for STAS online instead of physically attending operators' premises and office locations around Queensland.

It is anticipated that further opportunities to improve and enhance STAS will be delivered progressively as a result of transitioning to a more consistent route-based network, accessing improved data through investment in ticketing projects for the planning of services.

Both initiatives will assist TMR in providing a contemporary and customer focused scheme, while ensuring provision of information about student travel patterns assists in future network planning.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Bailey', with a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

MARK BAILEY MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads