




Speech By
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ADJOURNMENT

Toowoomba North, Public Transport

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (8.07 pm): I want to raise a critical issue regarding accessibility to both public transport and school transport in my region. I was recently visited by a mum and one of her children. I do not want to give away too many details. The son normally wears a prosthetic but, because he is growing he has had to have multiple operations and he has been unable to use a prosthetic after a recent operation. Therefore, he needs to take his wheelchair to the school bus in Toowoomba, which he cannot do. I sent off a message to Translink and the answer I received was that Toowoomba Transit does not have any floor/wheelchair accessible buses in the school fleet. As a result, they have advised they are unable to accommodate this request.

He is a primary school kid, an amputee, who cannot get to school unless his mum stops work because there is no facility. Whilst everybody might be celebrating 50-cent fares—and I am not suggesting that is a bad idea—we do not have a single bus that can accommodate him. I have 26 schools in my electorate. It is only a small electorate but we service a lot of people. There is not a single bus that is floor/wheelchair accessible for the children of my electorate. That means that every child who is in a wheelchair cannot take public transport in Toowoomba under any circumstances to get to school.

I do not think that is good enough. I do not know what other members think. I do not know what happens in their electorates, but I am pretty sure there would be a better solution than your mum not being able to go to work because you have had an operation to shorten the bone in your leg and you cannot wear your prosthetic and you are in your wheelchair. I do not think that is good enough. The transport minister needs to take a serious look at how they are procuring that fleet and what the requirements are for that fleet. I am not saying that every bus should have this, but when it is necessary it should be available for that to be put into action because it is completely unacceptable. Regardless of someone's physical situation, if they meet all of the other requirements to get a school bus, they should be able to access that school bus. It should not only be limited to those who are able-bodied or, as on this occasion, someone who has a prosthetic. This is a primary school kid. He has had a pretty tough go of things to arrive where he is. For him to be let down by the Queensland government and its public transport in his ability to go to school and for his mother to suffer financial loss because of it is unfair and the minister should fix it.