

Question on Notice

No. 302

Asked on 30 March 2022

MR L MILLAR ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how the government will assist the families of boarding students in Grades 7, 8, 9 and 10 to provide travel between their homes in Western Queensland and boarding schools in Toowoomba, given that Greyhound Australia, the sole Queensland Government contractor, has a strict ban on unaccompanied travellers under the age of 15 years on all Greyhound Australia routes?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Gregory for the question.

I can confirm that, in September 2018, Greyhound Australia introduced a new ticketing policy regarding the travel of unaccompanied children between the ages of 12 and 14 years old on all long-distance services Australia wide. The change in policy was made to address safety and operational issues and required that all children up to 14 years old be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or a chaperone.

When this was announced, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) responded with an initiative to assist all affected regional and remote families who utilised Queensland Government-contracted Greyhound services by funding 100 per cent of the cost of chaperone tickets.

In December 2021, Greyhound Australia was successful in retaining the existing services between Longreach – Rockhampton and Emerald – Rockhampton and was successful in obtaining the following additional contracted routes: Brisbane – Mount Isa; Brisbane – Charleville; Miles – Rockhampton; and Mount Isa – Townsville (including Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory).

I am pleased to report that, from February this year, in time for Term 1, TMR extended its policy of funding chaperone tickets to these new routes and, together with Greyhound, has amended the chaperone initiative to include students 11 years of age attending Year 7. TMR also wrote to all impacted Queensland local government councils, as well as private and state boarding schools, advising of its extended commitment to fund chaperone tickets and the updated details of the chaperone initiative.