

Question on Notice

No. 145

Asked on Tuesday 26 February 2019

MR A POWELL ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

With reference to recent representations made on behalf of parents about students from Mooloolah Valley attending Maleny State High School, from Peachester attending Maleny State High and from Delaneys Creek attending Woodford P-10—

Will the Minister direct Translink to subsidise bus services for students attending their catchment high school regardless of whether there are existing subsidised services to other high schools operating from the same location?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Glass House for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government funds a network of school buses to transport eligible students under the Student Travel Assistance Scheme (STAS) to their nearest school. Generally, the designated bus service will have a defined school bus catchment area, which is determined by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR).

Approximately \$180 million is provided annually to support the transport needs of eligible students, and consistent guidelines are required to ensure STAS's ongoing financial viability. STAS assists about 130,000 students across the state, or about 20 per cent of Queensland's students.

To be eligible to receive STAS assistance, students must travel on the designated school bus service for their area. Their eligibility cannot be transferred to other services or modes of transport. If these guidelines were to be changed it would create a precedent that would need to be sustained across the state. This would cause a significant rise in expenditure beyond the current allocation.

Parents are entitled to enrol their children in the school of their choice, however, when this occurs, it must be recognised that the transport options used to get to and from the school, and the costs associated with this decision, fall outside the purpose of STAS, and, as such, remain the responsibility of the parents or guardians.

TMR currently provides subsidised services for students in the Mooloolah Valley, Peachester and Delaneys Creek areas to their designated school. Commercially run services are also available to transport students to alternative schools in the area, however, cost to travel on these services will remain the responsibility of the parents or guardians.