

Question on Notice

No. 1153

Asked on 26 October 2022

DR C ROWAN ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON G GRACE)

QUESTION:

With reference to the 'school transport assistance program for students with disability'—

Will the Minister advise (a) what reviews have taken place for the School Transport Assistance Program concerning the NDIS arrangements for students who have a disability, (b) what were the outcomes and (c) are the transport arrangements that allow access and engagement for students with a disability comparable to their peers in mainstream schools?

ANSWER:

a) what reviews have taken place for the School Transport Assistance Program concerning the NDIS arrangements for students who have a disability

In 2018, the Disability Reform Ministers' Council agreed that all states and territories would deliver specialist school transport for students with disability to and from school as an in-kind contribution to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to 31 December 2023.

The agreement to deliver specialist school transport as an in-kind contribution is outlined in the *Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and Queensland on the National Disability Insurance Scheme*.

Under the in-kind arrangements, the Department of Education delivers specialist school transport under its own policies and procedures through the Specialist School Transport Assistance Program.

No formal review of the arrangements has been undertaken. National work is continuing to consider options for the future delivery of specialist school transport.

In 2019, the Australian Government commissioned AlphaBeta to undertake research on the future delivery of specialist school transport through the NDIS.

b) what were the outcomes

Discussions are on-going between the Australian Government and all states and territories on the future of specialist school transport delivery through the NDIS.

The future delivery of in-kind services will be considered as part of the Australian Government's NDIS Review. The NDIS Review's Terms of Reference require the Independent Review Panel to make findings and recommendations to Disability Reform Ministers regarding in-kind services such as specialist school transport.

c) are the transport arrangements that allow access and engagement for students with a disability comparable to their peers in mainstream schools?

Yes, eligible students with disability may receive school transport assistance between home and school at the start and end of the school day through the School Transport Assistance Program for students with disability. This program is funded by the Queensland Government, administered through the Department of Education and delivered by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Eligible students with a disability may be provided with three types of assistance:

- a conveyance allowance;
- Category 1 – bus, rail or ferry assistance; and/or
- Category 2 – transport, which is contract taxi or minibus.

Some students may require an individual escort to travel with them for a medical or safety reason.

Assistance is also available for any student travelling to and from school in situations where access to education is impeded by distance, income or isolation under the School Transport Assistance Scheme. Students may be eligible for bus, rail, ferry assistance, or through a conveyance allowance.

Applications for the School Transport Assistance Scheme can be made on the Queensland Government website at www.qld.gov.au/transport/public/school/school-transport-assistance/apply-for-school-transport-assistance. Students with disability who can demonstrate independent travel skills may also be eligible for this program.