

## **PASSENGER TRANSPORT BRANCH GUIDELINES FOR RURAL SCHOOL BUS SERVICES**

### **EXTENSION OF A BUS SERVICE**

PT514\_2

This guideline relates to the extension of existing contracted rural school bus services and has been developed to maximise use of existing services and infrastructure to ensure cost-effective development of the public transport system.

An extension of a bus service is considered to be any form of lengthening of a route and is classed as a “Variation of a Contractually Operated Regular Passenger Service” under the *Passenger Transport Services Act 2011*. An extension can be requested by the community, a Bus Operator or the Department of State Growth.

Rural school bus services are services that operate wholly within a regional area and do not cross an urban boundary. Different guidelines apply to other service types.

In considering any request to extend an existing contracted rural school bus service, the Secretary of the Department of State Growth must give consideration to the following intent:

1. An extension to a contracted rural school bus service will not be introduced in areas where an existing government-funded Regular Passenger Service is already provided to the requested school or another school that can meet students’ educational needs, and those existing services are (or can be) timetabled to drop off/pick up students within 30 minutes before or after school
2. For the purposes of (1) above, existing services may include a requirement for interchange (or multiple interchanges) with other government-funded Regular Passenger Services if the total waiting time across all interchanges is no longer than 30 minutes. Waiting time at interchanges does not include any waiting time at the originating bus stop (including the school for afternoon services).
3. Extensions are limited to services travelling to the home area school (Primary School) as defined by the Department of Education, or the nearest college, or a school identified by the Department of Education as being a school for which the area is a defined “feeder” area (High School).
4. An extension will only be provided to a point, which is greater than three (3) kilometres from an existing route.
5. A service may be extended provided it would collect at least eight (8) full-time students on a regular basis (three or more return trips per student per week).
6. Students living *within* three (3) kilometres of the existing route will not be included in the count to achieve the required number (8) to extend a service.
7. Extensions to services will not be approved if it is more cost effective for the Department to fund conveyance allowance.
8. Sections of a bus service which carry fewer than eight (8) full-time students will be curtailed to a point at which at least eight students would be collected.

9. Procurement of extensions to a contractually operated Regular Passenger Service may be undertaken directly with the current service provider in accordance with the *Passenger Transport Services Act 2011*.
10. The service must be classified as a Regular Passenger Service under the *Passenger Transport Services Act 2011* and *Passenger Transport Services Regulations 2013*.

**Note:**

Where the above criteria are not met, a Bus Operator may choose to apply for authorisation to provide what is called a “non-core” extension to a service. If approved, the extension will not receive government funding.

Students electing to use such an extension may be charged a fare set by the Bus Operator. No concession passes are issued for travel on these services.

These guidelines may change, subject to changes in government policy on service provision and fares, and may be subject to external consultation requirements.