

## **Legislative Council**

### **Hansard**

**Tuesday 2 December 2025**

The President, Mr Farrell, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

*[excerpt...]*

#### **Wisby's School Bus Service – Kingston**

#### **Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT**

I've got a question, I think for the Leader of Government, who's going to do it today for the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport in his absence. The question is regarding school bus services within Spring Farm and Whitewater Park estates, which are in Kingston and part of my electorate. Can you confirm that at the beginning of the 2025 school year, the Department of State Growth engaged Wisby's Buses Pty Ltd to service Spring Farm and Whitewater Park estates for students at Kingston High and Kingston Primary schools, but unfortunately failed at the time to explore extending this new service to accommodate other non-government schools in the area including St Aloysius Catholic College, which is attended by many children living in those suburbs.

Further, can you confirm that you have received correspondence from the college and parents including supportive material from Wisby's Buses advising the company would be happy to implement a contract change as the required route change would only add an extra 7.6 kilometres each day, an additional 4 minutes to the current schedule, and could also accommodate children attending the Tarremah Steiner School nearby. Given the demonstrated demand, the benefits and the minimal impact of the current service, are you considering acting upon the request for a minor adjustment to the existing Kingston school bus route, and will you undertake to have done so in time for the commencement of the 2026 school year?

#### **ANSWER**

Mr President, thank you. On behalf of minister Vincent, I will answer this question. The Department of State Growth is legislatively required to observe the school bus eligibility guidelines when assessing new services or extensions to existing services. The guidelines do not allow for State Growth to fund new or extended services to support travel beyond local government schools. This includes travel to government schools beyond the local intake area and non-government schools. This is because doing so may impact school enrolment patterns and funding which over time may impact community growth and the cost of supporting local schools.

It is important to note section 1 (d) (i) of the guidelines stipulate service extensions can only also service nearby state, catholic and independent schools without compromising the travel time and arrival and departure time of students to the core schools. Extending the Wisby's Buses' Spring Farm route to St Aloysius Catholic College would increase the total distance of the service and compromise both the afternoon departure time from Kingston Primary School and Kingston High School, both of which are core schools for the route and the overall travel time. It's also acknowledged that advice from the bus operator suggests incorporating the college would only require an additional 4 minutes, however this refers to arrival times, not overall travel time.

In the afternoon, arriving in Spring Farm four minutes later than currently requires the service to depart core schools ten minutes earlier, for a total distance of 14 minutes. This means students catching the bus from core schools will experience much longer bus trips than they otherwise would. It's understood, the concerns of parents living in the area and the minister will instruct State Growth to continue to watch the development of Spring Farm and Whitewater Park and the demand for bus services in the area to different schools.

Changes over time may result - this is positive - may result in amendments to services which make the inclusion of other nongovernment schools more viable. In the meantime, where services do not meet the guidelines are desired, schools can make private arrangements or deliver services themselves. The affected constituents may wish to discuss this with Catholic Education Tasmania as an alternative resolution, but there was a couple of positives there.