

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Question No. (number) of 2025

Legislative Council

ASKED BY: The Honourable Meg Webb MLC

ANSWERED BY: Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council
Hon Tania Rattray MLC

QUESTION:

Regarding school bus service 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've 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 add only an extra 7.6 kilometres each day, an additional four 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:

The Department of State Growth is legislatively required to observe the *School Bus Eligibility Guidelines* (Guidelines) when assessing new services or extensions of 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 stipulates service extensions can only also service nearby state, catholic and independent schools without compromising the travel time and arrival/departure time of students to the core schools.

Extending 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.

I acknowledge the advice from the bus operator suggests incorporating the College would only require an additional four 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 10 minutes earlier for a total difference of 14 minutes. This means students catching the bus from core schools will experience much longer bus trips than they otherwise would.

I do understand the concerns of parents living in the area and I will instruct State Growth 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 in amendments to services which make the inclusion of other non-government schools more viable.

In the meantime, where services which 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.



Hon Kerry Vincent MLC
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

Date:

24 NOV 2025