

RURAL SCHOOL BUS ROUTES AND BUS STOP

TS30



NARRANDERA SHIRE COUNCIL POLICY

RURAL SCHOOL BUS ROUTES AND BUS STOP

Policy No:	TS30
Policy Title:	Rural School Bus Routes and Bus Stop
Section Responsible:	Technical Services
Minute No:	15/3
MagiQ No:	8397
Next Review Date:	As required

Objective

To provide Council with the means to consistently and objectively assess requests for new rural school bus routes and bus stops.

Policy Statement

In New South Wales, the approval for bus stop locations is regulated by the Passenger Transport Regulation 2007, Section 104.

The regulation states that the road authority is the sole approval body for the location of all school bus stops, rural or otherwise within their jurisdiction. This jurisdiction also covers consideration or appropriateness of existing bus routes and stops that may be deemed inappropriate under current assessment guidelines. Where an application or part thereof, is received where Narrandera Shire Council is not the road authority, Council shall identify to the applicant the road/s that are not under Council jurisdiction and provide advice on contacts to the relevant agency.

It is the responsibility of the road authority to assess all rural school bus routes and bus stops, and where appropriate approve those routes and stops for use. All applications for proposed bus stops, or issues arising with existing bus stops, are considered by the Local Traffic Committee for recommendation prior to being considered by Council.

The policy provides a risk oriented approach for the assessment of bus routes and bus stops through consideration of best practice and relevant standards.

Scope

This policy applies for use:

- By all Council employees
- On all Council controlled roads

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- On non Council controlled roads but with the approval of the relevant road authority

Content

Road Authority Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the road authority to assess all rural school bus routes and bus stops and where appropriate approve those routes and stops for use, after consultation with the Local Traffic Committee.

Applications for approval may come from a bus operator or directly from the funding authority.

Bus Operator Responsibilities

Bus operators must ensure that they obtain approval for all routes and stops from the local road authority prior to lodging an application for funding with the New South Wales Ministry of Transport.

Bus operators must only operate on approved bus routes and approved bus stops using a bus of approved size. The operation of a bus on a non approved route or to a non approved stop may be a breach of the contract conditions the operator has with the NSW Ministry of Transport.

Where the approved route is not an all-weather road the onus is on the bus operator to determine whether the road surface is safe for use on any particular day or at any particular time.

Bus operators are responsible for ensuring that bus users and their parents / guardians are aware of the Traffic Management Plan (TMP) for the bus stop that they utilise and that they adhere to the requirements of the plan when using the bus stop.

Parental Responsibilities

It is the parents or guardians' responsibility to ensure that their child gets to and from the bus stop safely. At a rural school bus stop, parents are responsible for their child prior to boarding and directly after disembarking the bus. While on the bus the child is the responsibility of the bus operator.

Parents should familiarise themselves with the Traffic Management Plan for their child's bus stop to ensure that they understand where the child should and should not walk board and disembark from the bus and where the designated car parking area is located.

NSW Ministry of Transport Responsibilities

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The NSW Ministry of Transport is responsible for the funding of the school bus system. The Ministry contracts individual bus operators to provide services in both rural and non rural locations for the purpose of school transport.

The NSW Ministry of Transport only contracts bus operators on receiving proof of an approved route and or stop/s from the local road authority.

Once that evidence has been noted, the Ministry will determine whether or not it will fund the proposed service.

If the Ministry is funding the proposed service, then the route and all the bus stops on the route that have been approved by the local road authority must be included in the service contract with the bus operator.

Assessment Process

Application/s received from bus operator/s will be assessed by Council's Traffic / Airport Officer and or Road Safety Officer. These staff will then undertake a desktop assessment to determine the appropriateness of the application. The desktop assessment will include:

- Sufficient completion of application standard form and request for further information.
- Ownership of land or roads which the application proposes to access.
- Identification of nearby bus stops and determine if use of an existing bus stop is appropriate.
- Determination of traffic movements (peak traffic movements in vicinity).

Following the desktop assessment Council's Traffic / Airport Officer and or Road Safety Officer shall undertake an onsite inspection of the proposed route / site to determine appropriateness of the proposal. This inspection should be undertaken in accordance with the "Guidelines for Rural School Bus Routes and Bus Stops". The bus operator / applicant may attend the site inspection at the invitation of the Traffic / Airport Officer and or Road Safety Officer.

Should the assessment require the construction of new infrastructure such as gravel set down areas or widening of sections of road, this shall be noted in the reports to the Traffic Committee and Council for consideration through the budget process or other means of funding.

Similar Council will only fund or install bus shelters through the budget process or other means if at least one of the following applies:

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- For school bus routes on rural roads, where there are a minimum of ten (10) school aged children utilizing a single stop.
- The location is on an approved bus route and at a designated stop within the urban area.
- If external grant funding is received.

Council may request from the bus operator further information to assist in the assessment of the bus stop or route. The application will be held in abeyance until such time as the information requested has been provided to Council, at which time the assessment process will continue.

Approval Process

Assessment and documentation is submitted to the next available Local Traffic Committee for consideration and recommendation. The Local Traffic Committee meeting minutes are provided to the next available ordinary Council meeting for consideration and acceptance at which time a determination of approval or refusal will be formalised.

Given that timing of Local Traffic Committee meetings is bi-monthly interim approval may be given to the operator / applicant until such time as Council can consider the proposal.

Following the Council meeting, the applicant will be informed of the decision of Council. If the proposal is approved, assessment documentation is archived to subject file and represented on Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) with relevant information. Where new or existing stops are not approved the applicants / users will be directed to the nearest alternative safe stop.

Should construction of infrastructure to facilitate the proposal be required, an additional report will be drafted to Council citing the recommendation of the Traffic Committee seeking provision of appropriate budget to construct such infrastructure. Provision of infrastructure deemed necessary may affect the Council decision to accept or refuse an application. Should the proposed bus stop or route give cause for construction or modification of infrastructure to support the proposal and no internal or external funding is available for the works, Council may determine not to support the application until such time as the works necessary to facilitate the bus can be completed.

Ongoing Appropriateness of Bus Stop Location and Route

Council will periodically undertake an audit of all rural bus stop locations and routes to assess their appropriateness, considering the current traffic situation and identify any prevalent issues from the ongoing nature of the bus stop and or the bus route. An audit may be undertaken on a singular bus stop or route

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should a complaint from the public or government department be received by Council.

The results of this audit will be provided to the Local Traffic Committee for consideration and a recommendation may be formed for Council approval to modify, relocate or not allow a bus stop or route.

Should the Council resolve any change to a bus route or bus stop, consultation will be held with the subject bus operator with an aim to minimize the inconvenience to the operator and their patrons.

Council will utilise this audit information to continually plan and seek funding for upgrading of some bus stops and routes to improve safety of these areas for rural school bus use. Works undertaken will be subject to availability of funding and the audit indicating a priority of works required.

Signage

Where guidelines have been met, signage is not required on rural school bus routes. It is not intended that rural school bus warning signs be used to justify unsafe school bus routes.

Roles and Responsibilities

Deputy General Manager	Oversee services delivered by the Technical Services Department
Infrastructure	
Manager Works	Oversee implementation and review of policy and associated documentation
Traffic / Airport Officer and or Road Safety Officer	Assessment reporting to Local Traffic Committee for Council approval

Related Legislation / Guidelines / Narrandera Policies and Associated Procedures

- Guidelines for Rural School Bus Routes and Bus Stops
- RMS Road Design Guide
- AustRoads
- Council's adopted roads hierarchy
- Risk Assessments
- Road Transport (Safety & Traffic Management) Act 1999

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APPENDIX ONE

APPLICANT DETAILS

Applicant's	Name:		
Bus	Company	Name:	
Address:			
Contact	Phone:	Fax:	Email:

REQUEST FOR A RURAL SCHOOL BUS ROUTE

Road	Name:						
No. of Stops on Route:	Estimated No. of Users:						
Type	of	Bus	to	be	Used	on	Route:
Bus	Capacity	and	Length:				
If the proposed route is not an all weather road please nominate the proposed alternative route for the service:							

REQUEST FOR A RURAL SCHOOL BUS STOP

Is the proposed stop/s on an existing approved bus route?	Yes / No
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Road	Name:
.....	
Rural	Address
.....	
for	Proposed
Stop:	
.....	
No. of Users:	Anticipated
.....	Ages of the Users:
.....	
Where are the closest bus stops immediately before and immediately after the proposed stop?	
.....	
.....	
Will the pick up and drop off points be on the same side or different sides of the road?	
Same Side	Different Side
Will users have to cross the road to access the bus top?	
Mornings	Afternoon
Yes / No	Yes / No

Policy History

Endorsed by relevant Committees (name) and date

Adopted by ELT 8 December 2014

Adopted by Council 20 January 2015

Reviewed type full date

Amended tba

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Signed: Chief Executive Officer

Date: 21 January 2015