



## School Bus Services

### Introduction

The School Bus Services (SBS) branch is located within the Transperth, Regional and School Bus Division of the Public Transport Authority. It arranges and manages the provision of transport services to and from schools for students at regional centres across the State and in the metropolitan area in accordance with the requirements of Government. This is predominantly provided using contracted "orange" and "green" school buses around the State. In 2004/05, SBS managed 818 school bus contracts with a budget of \$69.619 million. Transport support organised by the SBS branch is used by some 24,000 students per school day.

At 30 June 2005, the "orange" and "green" school bus network included 712 school buses servicing mainstream schools and 106 school buses servicing special education schools, centres and units.

Where a school bus service could not be provided to eligible students by the PTA through SBS, a Conveyance Allowance was paid, in accordance with the Government's student transport assistance policy.

A range of different types of contracts/services was used to provide student transport support, including:

Type of contract	Number of contracts
Composite Rate Model Contracts (20-30 years in duration)	701
Fixed term Contracts (Tendered over 1-15 years since 1995)	108
Regular Passenger Transport (License arrangement with fare subsidy)	9

The Composite Rate Model is an average cost model which was implemented in January 2004 and provides for contractor payments to be reviewed by an independent review panel.

**Statement of Objectives**

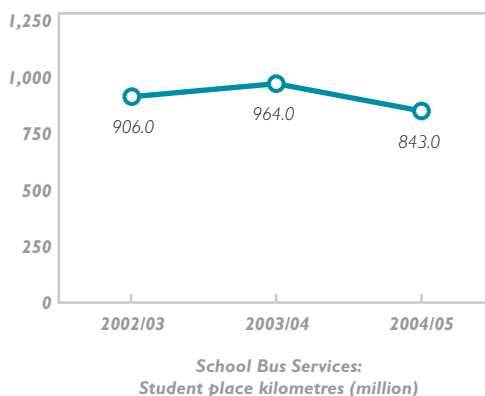
The objectives of the School Bus Services branch in 2004/05 were to:

- provide transport assistance for eligible students to assist them to attend their nearest government or non-government school offering the appropriate year of study;
- ensure that the transport assistance provided to students was appropriate, safe, cost-effective and fair in its application;
- ensure that all service contracts were managed effectively and efficiently in accordance with agreements made between the Minister, the PTA and individual contractors and/or their representatives.

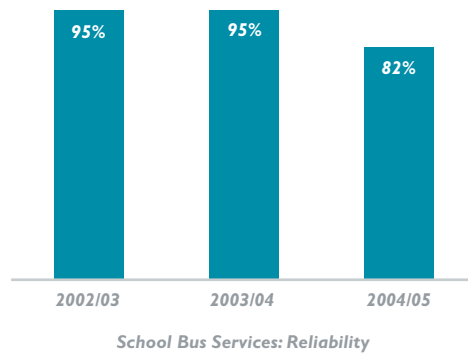
In realising these objectives, the following were the major achievements by SBS in 2004/05:

- computer system enhancements to allow better management of the new school bus contracts signed by contractors in January 2004 (affecting 701 contracts);
- update of School Bus Services policy documentation for School Bus Services staff and internal and external customers;
- new tendering template developed for short-term contracts for school bus services;
- major surveys through Data Analysis Australia to verify the average speed of school bus routes, fuel consumption and bus tyre life - these surveys will continue in 2005/06;
- establishment of Composite Rate Model (payment model) indexation process;
- establishment of the Composite Rate Model Review process;
- development of a new Safety Management Plan for school bus contractors;
- review of school bus routes to maximise service delivery and efficiencies in rural Western Australia;
- review of bus routes to maximise service delivery and efficiencies in metropolitan Perth.

**Service**



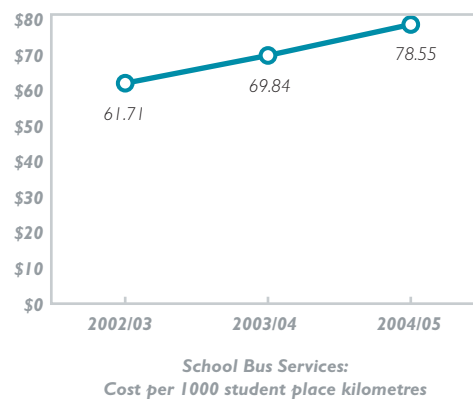
The use of school bus services is measured by the annual number of student bus service place kilometres. This number fell in 2004/05 due to rationalisation of school bus routes as part of the School Bus Services Route Review Project.



Service reliability measures school bus timetable reliability for rural mainstream services and Special Education School Buses operating in the Perth metropolitan area. The reliability measure is arrival less than 10 minutes before school starts and departure less than 10 minutes after school finishes.

It was lower in 2004/05 mainly due to unavoidable delays in transporting students with special needs on special education school buses.

**Efficiency**



The increase in 2004/05 is a result of the higher costs of new Composite Rate Model school bus contract. This was the first full year of the contract.

## School Bus Services

### REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

#### **The Year's Developments**

SBS continued its review of school bus services in order to provide the most efficient use of public funds, balanced against high-quality and safe transport services for eligible students.

During 2004/05, areas reviewed were Jerramungup, Gairdner, Jerdacuttup, Morowa, Perenjori, Frankland, Tambellup, Salmon Gums, Broome and Castlereagh Education Support School. In most areas, routes were adjusted or bus sizes changed to fit the demographics of the area. In some cases, such as Broome, the reorganisation of the bus route resulted in inefficient shuttle services being removed without affecting student numbers.

In other cases, school bus services were closed where student numbers were fewer than four, in accordance with student transport policy. These changes were all in the Wheatbelt, where student numbers generally continue to decline. The affected services were:

- Williams-Tarwonga Service
- Kondinin-South East Service
- Lake Grace-Pingrup Service
- Morawa-Wandalgu Service

The review of services also resulted in a number of new temporary services being introduced in areas of rural population growth (Ravensthorpe, Yealering, Tom Price and Merredin), and also some growth of special education in metropolitan Perth.

A reorganisation in the Wanneroo-Two Rocks area saw four metropolitan fringe contracts (guaranteed a minimum 10-year contract) re-allocated to Woodridge, Bullsbrook and Gingin where demand for school buses was greater.

In January 2004, a new school bus contract and payment model was put into place. This applied to contractors with pre-1995 contracts. The new Composite Rate Model School Bus Contract allows contractor payments to be reviewed by an independent review panel. The purpose of the Composite Rate Model, including the review procedure, is to balance the interests of the PTA and the contractors in the absence of a competitive tender process. The contract allows for all fixed and variable costs to be reviewed by the panel over a three-year cyclical period.

This was the inaugural year of the review.

#### **Patronage**

Fares are not charged for school bus services and precise patronage statistics have not been kept up to 30 June 2005. A database was being developed at year's end to capture student details and thereby determine the number of students carried in a year.

#### **Customer Satisfaction**

SBS does not measure customer satisfaction as transport assistance is provided on an entitlement basis.

#### **Expenditure**

School Bus Services' expenditure for 2004/05 was \$68.988 million.

#### **In the Future**

The education landscape is potentially changing due to the Government's policy direction and new initiatives being delivered by the Department of Education and Training (DET) such as retention of children at secondary school for longer periods and potential changes to the compulsory school leaving age. These issues will affect School Bus Services in its delivery of student transport assistance over the next four years.

A recent review of educational services for students with disabilities in Government schools has provided the opportunity for DET to evaluate current educational provision for students' needs, identify quality practice and make recommendations for further development of an increasingly inclusive Government school system.

School Bus Services liaised with DET to ensure a whole-of-Government approach to this proposal to clearly identify the financial implications, and the impact on student transport assistance.



The new Prospector train operates between Perth and Kalgoorlie Station (pictured)

## Transwa

Transwa operates road coach and train passenger services to regional centres in the southern half of Western Australia:

- Australind train services between Perth and Bunbury;
- Prospector train services between Perth and Kalgoorlie;
- AvonLink train services between Midland and Toodyay/Northam;
- MerredinLink Train services between East Perth and Merredin; and
- a comprehensive road coach network.

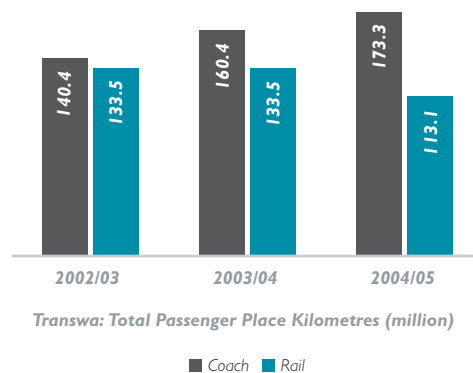
### Statement of Objectives

Transwa's objective is to provide customer-focused, safe and cost-effective passenger transport services for regional Western Australia.

Key indicators of performance for Transwa in 2004/05 were:

- Services to arrive at their destinations within the parameters set for punctuality:
  - Prospector - within 15 minutes for 90 per cent of services
  - Australind - within 10 minutes for 90 per cent of services
  - AvonLink - within 10 minutes for 95 per cent of services
  - Road coaches - within 10 minutes for 95 per cent of services
- To achieve 90 per cent passenger satisfaction across all train and road coach services.

### Service



The passenger place kilometres for Rail in 2004/05 declined by 1.8 per cent as a result of service disruptions to the Australind during a major resleeper project.