Media release

The Hon Martin Dixon MP
Minister for Education
Thursday 29 November 2012

Helping families send children to school

The Coalition Government has listened to the concerns of rural and regional Victorians, and has made adjustments to assistance for travel to and from school.

Education Minister Martin Dixon said Coalition MPs, Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) had raised several concerns about unintended consequences the policy may have had on essential local bus services and the ongoing viability of some small rural schools.

“The Government recognises that regional families need assistance with travelling to and from school,” Mr Dixon said.

“The Government has listened and will remove the means testing in relation to the conveyance allowance.”

The Victorian Government currently spends more than $27 million a year helping families across Victoria with school transport.

The policy change was announced on October 31, and included a new boundary that matched the Urban Growth Boundary, the first update since 1983.

“In the weeks since the announcement, my Coalition colleagues have approached me with feedback from their communities,” Mr Dixon said.

“They told me of genuine concerns in rural and regional Victoria in regards to means testing.

“I have heard these concerns, I have listened to these concerns, I understand and appreciate these concerns,” Mr Dixon said.

Mr Dixon said CECV and ISV had made strong representations about unintended consequences for schools and local bus services.

“Despite the generous grandfathering arrangements included with the announcement to assist with the transition of changes, communities and families who don’t consider themselves rich felt these changes would impact on them unfairly,” Mr Dixon said.

“The Government recognises that transportation to and from school is a shared responsibility between parents and government.

“This is why the Coalition Government provides a conveyance allowance to students in rural and regional Victoria to assist with the cost of transportation to and from school,” Mr Dixon said.

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