



### **Cooking the Kids**

1 December 2009

Children attending Miltaburra Area School are being forced to travel in an un-air conditioned school bus with recorded temperatures that exceed 60 degrees Celsius which flies directly in the face of Government's workplace warnings, according to Member for Flinders Liz Penfold.

A SafeWork SA media release issued on 9<sup>th</sup> November stated that 'employers are legally obliged to provide a safe working environment' as it 'is a necessary part of that duty of care.'

"I fail to see how the same does not apply to children who have to attend school," Mrs Penfold said.

The government warning advised the 'symptoms of heat stress can lead to serious illness and in extreme cases, death' and describes symptoms that include: headaches, fatigue, dizziness or fainting, increased sweating; mood changes such as irritability or confusion, and possibly an upset stomach or vomiting.

Mrs. Penfold said she had been advised that one child had an epileptic fit after a journey home on a very hot bus and she is very concerned for the health and safety of the driver and all passengers should there be another incident.

It is inconceivable that the Minister for Education has not deemed it necessary to provide an air-conditioned bus for the Haslam route despite swapping one air-conditioned bus for another when it was replaced.

"In a ridiculous twist, rather than return the un-air-conditioned bus, the department in their wisdom took back an air-conditioned bus", Mrs. Penfold said.

Mrs Penfold has written to Minister Lomax Smith urgently requesting an air-conditioned bus be appointed to Miltaburra Area School.

"As one parent wrote to me, 'if we as parents were to travel in a boiling car with no air-conditioning and no seatbelts, we would be prosecuted,'" she said.

### **Local Member demands air conditioning in country school buses**

29 January 2009

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said it is tantamount to child abuse to expect school children to travel on non airconditioned buses in 50°C heat.

"If parents put their children in cars at 50 °C I believe it would be called child abuse by the authorities and they would probably have to face the courts."

“Temperatures of 50 °C, (122 degrees Fahrenheit) would not be tolerated in city buses and trams and won't be tolerated by country people either particularly for our children,” she said.

“Experiencing such high temperatures is dangerous for health and well being, particularly when many are on buses for an hour or more on their journey home.”

The daylight saving hour has added to the problem with buses departing from schools just after the sun is at its height in the hottest time of the day. Many buses are not even provided with shade during the day, windows don't have curtains unless parents put them there and windows are no longer allowed to open fully for safety reasons.

“These school buses are turned into the kind of hot boxes used for torturing prisoners during the war. They must be air conditioned or replaced with air conditioned buses urgently, she said.

No politician would work in 50 degree heat and it is not acceptable for children to suffer such extremes.

Miltaburra bus driver Dean Woods said the temperature in his bus was 36 °C when he dropped the children off at 8.45am on Wednesday morning 28 January.

Later in the day he parked the bus in the shade however the temperature had soared to 50°C when he picked the children up for the home journey.

“Occupational Health and Safety rules wouldn't allow adults to work in these conditions so why is it acceptable for country children to be subjected to these standards?” Mrs Penfold asked. ENDS