

# House of Assembly

## Question

May 26, 2010

### SCHOOL BUSES, AIR CONDITIONING

Mr TRELOAR (Flinders) (15:04): My question is to the Minister for Education. Will the South Australian government follow the lead of the Western Australian Liberal government and pay school bus operators to retrofit air conditioning to school buses in regional South Australia?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Minister for Education, Minister for Early Childhood Development) (15:04): That is a good question, because school buses and the way in which they are decked out in terms of both seatbelts and air conditioning has been a matter of some contention, and we have certainly taken that seriously. As you would be aware, there is a program now of progressively upgrading our whole fleet of buses. The buses are a combination of buses owned and run by the state government and buses that are provided to us by way of contract, held by private operators. So some of them are assets of the state government; others are owned privately.

What we have been doing for our own fleet, as the process of renewal of those buses comes up, is insisting that they all have air conditioning and seatbelts. So that process is occurring. My latest estimate is that that process will be fully complete in, I think, about seven or eight years' time.

We are also undertaking the same process with our contractual arrangements with private operators. So when we tender for new arrangements we ensure that in the contractual arrangements there are obligations to upgrade, for the private operator, their plant and equipment so that they also meet those standards, although I think there are certain accommodations that are made for private operators so that they can arrange the finance so that they can be in a position to put those assets in place.

I am not familiar with the new initiative in Western Australia, if there is one, but that is the present policy, and it is not proposed, I understand, to be altered.