

**SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Frome) (14:36):** My question is to the Minister for Education. Can the minister please advise the house on the progress of primary school children attending non-government schools in the electorate of Frome being able to get access to the state government school bus system? With your leave and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK:** There have been occasions some families are experiencing where the child attending a public high school can access the government school bus system while their brother or sister, who may be attending a non-government primary school, cannot access the state government school bus system and has to follow in their parent's car.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Minister for Education) (14:37):** I thank the member for the question. This is, of course, an issue that has been raised in this parliament a number of times over the last nine years—or nearly—that I have been here, including many times in the last parliament of which the member was of course a minister and, as a member of cabinet, was unable to resolve this issue; however, I note his interest in it in an ongoing fashion.

The government took a commitment to the people of South Australia at the election that we would review these matters relating to school buses on a number of bases but particularly identifying concerns by non-government school parents in regional South Australia. There are a number of parents, school administrators and church hierarchy, particularly in the Clare area and in the member's electorate, who raise this on a regular basis. I have no doubt that they are in regular contact with the member's office.

The government will deliver on our commitment to have a review. There are officials working between the Treasury department, the transport department and the education department at the moment to get that review underway as soon as possible, and I look forward to that review being undertaken. It will not be the first review into school transport matters. The last one was about four years ago when the member was, of course, a member of the cabinet at the time.

That review paid scant regard to the needs of non-government school families. If the member read the review that I am sure went to his cabinet room, I think there was one page early on in the review that identified that it would be a costly measure and was not recommended. But the actual purpose of the review, as I understood at the time, was that the member had told his community he was going to do something for non-government school families.

This government, in establishing our review, will be seeking to get a better deal, a fair arrangement for non-government school families seeking to have access to transport services that in some cases go past the school on the way to the local public school. In some cases, this is easily done, and indeed the current arrangements do allow, where there is capacity in certain arrangements, for those students to potentially get on the bus. Whether it takes them to where they want to go is one question and whether they have security of being able to get on that bus is another thing. We ended up with entirely different circumstances confronting non-government school families in different areas, depending on issues that aren't in their control.

We understand the anxiety and we understand the concern. That's why we asked questions for 16 years of the former government, including in the last four years of the former government. That's why we took a commitment to the people of South Australia that we would have a review and we are doing just that.