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Minister for Transport

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MEDIA RELEASE

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SEATBELTS TO BE INSTALLED ON DEDICATED REGIONAL SCHOOL BUSES

The NSW Government will invest more than \$200 million to install seatbelts on buses dedicated to school runs in rural and regional NSW, Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian and Minister for Roads and Ports Duncan Gay announced today.

The commitment comes as the NSW Government today announced it will adopt the majority of the recommendations made by the Independent School Bus Safety Community Advisory Committee's inquiry into school bus safety in rural and regional NSW.

For the first time in NSW, seatbelts will progressively be installed and standing phased out on almost 1,700 dedicated school services over 10 years, starting this financial year. The rollout of seatbelts is estimated to cost around \$208 million over the period.

More than 60,000 students across regional and rural NSW travel on these dedicated school buses (known by operators as contract A buses) each day, covering more than 50 million kilometres each year.

Buses which run not only school routes, but also regular bus services during the day, will not be included in the program.

The NSW Government supports the overwhelming majority of the Committee's recommendations

Ms Berejiklian today recognised the efforts of the committee in compiling their report, including comprehensive consultation with communities.

"The NSW Government established the School Bus Safety Community Advisory Committee in April 2011 to examine school bus safety in rural and regional NSW and I want to thank the committee members and chair Carolyn Walsh for all their hard work," Ms Berejiklian said.

"Today the NSW Government is making a substantial financial commitment to addressing an issue which is so important to communities in regional and rural areas."

Mr Gay said the Government was taking a significant step in addressing school bus safety and noted the Government had also committed to road safety initiatives as part of its response.

“Our plan will see almost 1,700 buses which only run school services in rural and regional areas fitted with seatbelts over the next decade, which is an ambitious, but necessary undertaking,” he said.

“The former Labor Government achieved absolutely nothing on this issue and once again it is the NSW Liberals & Nationals who not only do the hard work but deliver for the people of NSW.”

Other recommendations made by the committee which Transport for NSW will adopt to improve regional and rural school bus safety include:

- regular monitoring of new and emerging vehicle safety technologies and where necessary and appropriate, encouraging their use through regional bus contracts;
- A new Student Code of Conduct to ensure parents, students and bus operators know their responsibilities when it comes to wearing seatbelts;
- encouraging schools to use buses fitted with seatbelts for excursions and other charters;
- developing guidelines which outline responsibilities for rural and regional bus operators to encourage students to wear seatbelts when fitted;
- developing a standard for designing rural bus stops to improve safety;
- reviewing regulations relating to speed limits around buses when school bus warning lights are flashing;
- exploring new ways to communicate with stakeholders to improve student safety around school bus zones;
- rolling out communication strategies to identify, share and promote good school bus safety practice.

Full details are available at www.transport.nsw.gov.au/content/school-bus-safety-community-advisory-committee