



MEDIA RELEASE

More bus seatbelts to keep New England Electorate school kids safe, says Joyce

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FEDERAL Member for New England Barnaby Joyce said a Tamworth-based bus company has received a grant of \$49,798.50 to fit seatbelts to two coaches that travel around Tamworth, Moonbi, Kootingal, Nemingha, Manilla, Attunga and Hallsville.

The grant was from the Australian Government, which is designed to deliver safer journeys to school for regional and rural students through the Regional School Buses programme.

Mr Joyce said the Australian Government will deliver \$1.1 million to 31 operators in this round of the programme, to upgrade a further 61 buses, including the two owned by Tamworth Buslines in the New England Electorate.

“In places like Tamworth, kids will now buckle up on their often long trips to school and get home to their families safely,” Mr Joyce said.

“Regional school bus routes are longer, have higher travel speeds and are often on un-sealed roads, so seatbelts have an important role to play in safeguarding our next generation.”

Mr Joyce said recent statistics from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics show that more than 80 per cent of bus passenger fatalities occurred outside the nation’s major cities.

“Today, around 25 people are killed in bus crashes each year, and a further 200 are hospitalised. Of the 25 deaths, five are bus passengers and nearly half of these are young people under 26,” Mr Joyce said.

“Over the decade, community and government action has significantly improved the safety of buses and the counts of fatal bus crashes have trended down by about 7.0 per cent each year.

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Hon **Barnaby Joyce** MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

“These trends are set to continue into the future following the recent commitment by our two largest states, NSW and Victoria, to progressively put seatbelts on all rural and regional services over the next 10 years.”

The Australian Government’s programme allows bus operators on recognised rural and regional school routes to apply for up to \$25,000 to have seatbelts installed in new buses or retrofitted in existing ones. Under the programme, seatbelts have been installed on 473 buses since its inception.

Further information about the Seatbelts and Regional School Buses programme can be found online at: infrastructure.gov.au/roads/safety/seatbelts/index.aspx.

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