



## School bus saga splits family as two of three children lose seat



By [Beau Greenway](#)

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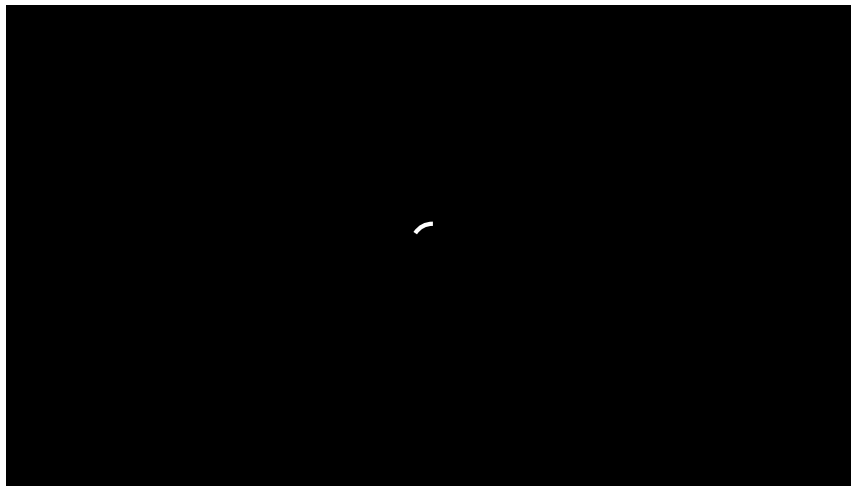


Tangambalanga's Megan Barber with her children Amelia Harding, 6, Xavier Wilson, 13, and Madison Harding, 6. Her daughters have not been guaranteed a seat on the school bus for term one despite having a place for three terms in 2023. Picture by Tara Trehwella

A Tangambalanga mother is struggling to comprehend why two of her three children won't be able to catch the school bus in 2024 despite having a seat last year.

Megan Barber has revealed her twin daughters, Amelia and Madison, who will start year one at Bandiana Primary School on Tuesday, January 30, both don't have a seat guaranteed on the bus, yet her son, Xavier, who enters year 8 at Wodonga Middle Years College does.

Her daughters were in the same position last year, but secured a place from term two onwards.



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Miss Barber received an email from the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning on Monday, January 22, a week out from the start of the school year, which confirmed her daughters were on the waiting list for term two should places become available.

"It's a bit disappointing because they've been on the bus for three terms last year and miss out this year," she said.

"I've got neighbours that haven't even got an email from the bus co-ordinator to say if their child has been accepted on the bus or not, so they're very disappointed as well. We've got other neighbours that have actually got four kids and two of them have got a spot on the bus and two don't.



📷 Amelia and Madison Harding, both 6, don't have a seat on the school bus for term one, yet their brother Xavier Wilson, 13, does, which has left their mother Megan Barber perplexed. Picture by Tara Trehwella

"We've actually had to change our work hours so we can drop them off and pick them up from school. It is very frustrating."

Because Miss Barber's daughters don't attend the closest government school to their home, Kiewa Valley Primary School at Tangambalanga,

they are deemed ineligible for the service.

"My son went to Bandiana Primary School for seven years and we decided to continue our girls going through that school, so it's just unfortunate we have to go through this every 12 months to see if they have a spot on the bus or not."

[Similar concerns have been raised at Baranduda with students starting year 7 at Catholic College Wodonga unable to secure a place on the school bus.](#)

[The Department of Transport and Planning confirmed it was working with the Department of Education to conduct a review of the local school bus program network for the Wodonga area.](#)

It aimed to identify and address any gaps and service duplication to ensure areas of growing demand were catered for.

The department said proposed changes planned to maximise capacity of the network and provide more seats for eligible students in growing areas on the route, such as Killara.



Baranduda's Christine Barnett revealed her son Lachlan, 12, missed out on a school bus seat to travel to Catholic College Wodonga. Picture by Tara Trehwella

However, Miss Barber would like to see a dedicated bus service for Killara to cater for population growth as it was currently shared with students travelling from Kiewa and Tangambalanga.

"Hopefully something does change in the future so they get more buses on and people can get a spot on the bus," she said.

The Department of Transport and Planning said a direct school bus to Killara, which would bypass other areas, was not the most efficient way to deliver an increase in capacity on the existing Wodonga school bus network.

"We have been working with schools on how to improve school buses services in Wodonga and we have developed proposed changes to improve the network and boost capacity," a spokesperson said.

"We are currently consulting with schools about the improvements and will await their feedback before implementing any changes."

The Department of Education said its student transport unit will support schools to work through travel issues and, where suitable, encourage eligible families to access the conveyance allowance through their school.

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