



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **New Bus Contracts Provide Certainty For Rural and Regional Communities**

**22 July 2008**

The NSW Bus and Coach Association (BCA) in conjunction with the NSW Ministry of Transport recently completed the first round of seminars in Young, Narrandera and West Wyalong to explain new rural and regional bus contracts to operators.

BCA Executive Director Darryl Mellish said that the roll out of new contracting and funding arrangements for bus operators servicing the **Narrandera** district was the culmination of comprehensive negotiations between the BCA and the NSW Ministry of Transport over an eighteen month period.

“The new rural and regional bus contracts will be progressively rolled out across New South Wales from July 2008,” Mr Mellish said.

“This is positive news for the bus operators, the many passengers they carry, and the communities they serve,” he said.

“Families in rural and regional communities depend on their local bus service to transport students safely to and from school on a daily basis,” Mr Mellish said.

Mr Mellish said the contracting arrangement and reporting requirements would make operators more accountable for their performance, and the transparent funding would give the NSW Government value for money.

“A seven year contract term and increased capacity on school bus services will help to ensure sustainable bus services and provide long term certainty for rural and regional communities,” Mr Mellish said.

“New funding arrangements will also cover a recently announced wage increase for rural and regional bus drivers,” he said.

The BCA strongly supported an extension of the Bus Industry Reform Allowance (given to metro drivers as part of bus reform in 2005, and outer metro drivers in 2006) to rural and regional bus drivers.

Mr Mellish said the increase in wages will help operators deal with driver shortages that are apparent in rural and regional communities.

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*For more information please call Darryl Mellish, Executive Director, (02) 8839 9500 or mobile 0412 007 511. Contract signing photograph attached.*