



## St Ives High P&C Student Transport Survey – March 2023

### Summary

The aim of the survey is to update our student transport data and parental feedback regarding student transport to and from the St Ives High campus. In particular, we want to get more clarity around how many parents are driving their children to and from school, when and why.

In 2024 the Draw Area for St Ives High (SIHS) will change, and St Ives High will lose its Northern Draw. It is important to remember, however, that students from the Northern Draw will attend St Ives High for at least the next five years. Students at the Intensive English Centre (IEC) all require transport to and from school, the majority via Gordon Station. This cohort will, in effect, replace the Northern Draw student demand for transport to and from Gordon Station over time.

Critical to solving St Ives High transport issues is improving the frequency of Berowra train services after the PM bell, as these are currently on a 30-minute rotation. This places enormous pressure on the PM bus services to get SIHS Northern Draw students who live beyond Hornsby and IEC students to Gordon Station in time for the Berowra 3.45 pm train. Increasing the frequency of this train service would also benefit the wider community and hundreds of other students who work, live or study along this rail corridor.

**Survey:** This survey was designed, tested and launched in a week. **The survey opened on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and closed on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023.** Survey invites were distributed to the St Ives High community via the St Ives High P&C Distribution List. One invite and two survey reminders were issued.

## Data Overview

**There are currently 1271 families at St Ives High. At the close of this survey there were 538 responses. This represents a response rate of 31%.**

**538 families responded to the survey representing just over 670 students.**

80% [n=427] of students qualify for free student travel and have a Student Opal Travel Card.

4% [n=23] use public transport to get to and from school but don't qualify for free student travel.

15% of students [n= 81] don't use public transport to get to school.

46% [n=203] of students qualify for a **St Ives High Push Pass**

4% [n=23] use public transport to get to and from school but don't qualify for free student travel.

15% of students [n= 81] don't use public transport to get to school.

### Push Passes:

St Ives High school has a Push Pass system to aid the management of bus lines. At the time of writing, it takes eight members of staff (five from St Ives High and three from the IEC) to manage the PM bell bus lines every school day. Due to the current transport shortfall, there are students still waiting to board a bus to begin their journey home ONE HOUR after the PM bell.

**Northern Draw students who live north of Hornsby Station** have a Push Pass for priority boarding on the first buses to Gordon Station after the PM bell so that they can catch the 15:45 pm through train to Berowra and get home in a reasonable time.

Students living along the corridor between the St Ives Draw and the Northern Draw and in Waitara near Hornsby Hospital qualify for a **St Ives High restricted 591PM service push pass**. Currently, more students qualify for this pass than are permitted to board by the bus company. Boarding is capped by Transdev at 50 students to allow room for members of the public who may board this service at subsequent stops. We are campaigning for a double capacity 'bendy bus' for this route in addition to a corresponding AM service.

**Push Passes are also occasionally issued on compassionate grounds** to students who may not live beyond Hornsby, but who have to catch other infrequent connecting services to get home.

**In February 2020 St Ives High School issued 170 Push Passes.**

**In February 2023 St Ives High School issued 416 Push Passes.** A further 219 Northern Draw students do not qualify for a push pass (resident in Hornsby/Waitara).

## Bus Services Most Frequently Used

The top three bus services used by students to get to and from St Ives High are:

1. **School Gordon- St Ives High Service** -50% [n=319]
2. **Public 582 St Ives-Gordon Service** – 13% [n=79]
3. **Public 194 St Ives Chase-City QVB Service** - 9% [n=57]

## Issues with Buses to Gordon Station / St Ives High – Hornsby 591

For the first time since we began our campaign in 2020:

- students are regularly late to school because there are not enough buses at the right time in the mornings to get them from Gordon Station to School. For important events such as NAPLAN, students are now advised to arrive at Gordon station before 8.07 am so that they can catch a bus for the 10-minute ride to school. This gets them to school an hour early.
- For students living north of Hornsby Station, the transport situation has deteriorated further since 2020. Many students are now regularly spending up to three hours each day commuting to school (read the open feedback at the end of the survey).
- students living in Hornsby are impacted by the lack of bus services from St Ives High to Gordon Station at the PM bell. They do not get priority boarding on the SIHS-Gordon bus service, and due to a lack of buses, are often having to wait up to an hour after the PM bell to get on a bus to begin their journey home.
- There is only one school bus to Gordon Station available on Thursday afternoon after Grade Sport, and this is unable to accommodate all children needing to get to Gordon Station. If this one is missed, they either have to walk to Gordon Station or wait 45mins for the regular bell buses.

## Issues with bus services in the SIHS St Ives Draw Area:

### Specifically:

**245 St Ives Chase Service:** On Tuesday SIHS finishes at the earlier bell time of 2.15 pm. There is no school bus service for St Ives Chase students at the Tues PM Bell. These students have to wait one hour to take the 3.15 PM bus from school.

**194:** Very unreliable and always full.

**247:** frequently late or does not show up at all

**582:** Unreliable and timetable does not match up with school bell times

### **In general:**

Buses are not frequent enough

Buses are overcrowded

Services are unreliable – often cancelled with no prior warning.

Services are often late – meaning students are late to school

Bus timetables do not match up with School bell times

A fractured service – short distances can take a disproportionately long time to complete: e.g. Killara, 6kms, nearly an hour!

The unreliability of services is a significant cause of anxiety and stress for students. It also prevents some students from participating in St Ives High Extracurriculars because they cannot get to and from school in a safe, predictable and timely manner using public transport.

Some of the public bus services that these students rely on do not stop in the school bus bays directly outside St Ives HS on Yarrabung Road. Consequently, students are often observed crossing Horace Street or Yarrabung in an unsafe manner in a bid to catch a bus home.

Some students opt to get to school an hour early just to ensure they arrive on time as the buses are so unreliable.

### **Driving Students To/From St Ives High**

**42% of parents/carers regularly drive their child/ren to and from school [n=215]. This represents 1036 students a week being driven.**

**Every day of the week, the majority of students are being dropped/collected for regular bell times (range 46%-67%).** The second biggest reason for driving is attending St Ives High extracurriculars (busiest slot Monday AM, 27% [n=24]).

**The busiest slot for drop off is Monday AM [n=140],** and the busiest slot for pick up is Tuesday PM [n=99].

**36% [n=125] of families opt to drive their child/ren because of Unreliable/Unavailable student/public transport services.**

**The average time it takes to drive the round-trip to school is less than 30 minutes (AM 52% [n=99 trips], PM 53% [n=84 trips]). The majority of parents/carers driving their child/ren live in the St Ives Draw.** 394 students from the St Ives Draw are dropped/collected for regular bell times each week (range 62%-85%). **28% [n=50] of respondents from the St Ives Draw cited unreliable/unavailable public transport as the reason for driving their child/ren.**

There are more trips in the AM (n=190 trips) than the PM [n=158 trips].

**Most parents have to drive their child/ren to school at least once a week (AM 39% [n=117], PM 50% [n=123]),** with 28% [n=85] driving their children every school AM, and 16% [n=39] every school PM.

**53% [n=108] of respondents have to adjust their work arrangements/caring responsibilities to drive their child/ren.** They are changing their hours of work, skipping lunch breaks or working late, declining more hours at work; working from home; relying on grandparents; forgoing promotions; opting to take local employment. This has an economic impact on families who have to reduce their working hours to accommodate necessary school runs. Feedback from many St Ives Draw parents

tells us that parents would prefer their child/ren to take public transport if it was reliable and available at the right times.

### Traffic Management / Pedestrian Safety

**The majority of drivers dropping/collecting their child/ren use the recently created St Ives High Drop & Collect Zones on Yarrabung and Horace.** These zones were created at the request of St Ives High P&C in 2022. Refer to the St Ives School Parking Map:

**St Ives High Drop & Collect Zone – Yarrabung Road: 49% [n=275]**

**St Ives High Drop & Collect Zone – Horace: 24% [n=133]**

St Ives Public Kiss & Drop Zone - Yarrabung Road: 14% [n=80]

Surrounding Streets or elsewhere on Yarrabung Road: 13% [n=76]

The most popular surrounding streets for dropping/collecting students are Kelvin [n=15], Waterhouse [n=10], Hunter [n=7] and Torokina [n=5].

### Impacts of poor transport services:

**Unreliability of services forces parents to opt for private transport over public transport. This has a direct impact on traffic levels around the school , family life and student wellbeing.:**

#### Student Wellbeing:

Overcrowding on buses creating safety issues

Anxiety – students are frequently late to school because of transport, and are missign out on their regular education.

Some students opt to arrive at school an hour early to avoid the anxiety of whether they will be able to get on bus from Gordon Station to get to school on time in the mornings.

**28% of parents in the St Ives Draw cite unreliable/unavailable public transport as the reason for driving their children to and from school. The average time taken for a round trip is less than 30 minutes.**

Many parents state that their children would take public transport if it were reliable and the timetables aligned with the school day and extracurriculars.

#### Family Life:

53% make adjustments to their work or caring arrangements in order to drive their child/ren to and from school. They:

- Change their days of work
- Change their hours of work
- Opt to work from home – especially on Tuesdays if they live in St Ives Chase and there is no 2.15 bus at the PM bell
- Opt to work locally, so they can fit in the school runs
- Forgo lunch breaks or work late to make up the time
- Forgo promotions so that they can continue to work and fit in the school runs
- Rely on relatives to do the school runs

This disruption to their working day has an economic and opportunity cost.

### **Impacts of increased traffic in the Yarrabung Road Precinct:**

Increased pollution from cars

Increased risky driver behaviour and incorrect usage of the St Ives High Drop and Collect Zones in Yarrabung and Horace as drivers drop their child/ren

Disruption to bus services as drivers park in bus zones

Disruption for local residents at bell times as drivers park across driveways or the volume of parked cars make surrounding streets difficult and slow to navigate.

### **Risky pedestrian behaviour**

To catch a public bus home, students often engage in risky pedestrian behaviour to get to bus stops located on the west side of Horace or Eucalyptus Street (near the Eastern Arterial/Horace roundabout).

Some students who need to get to Gordon Station are now opting to walk there, and many cross Horace at the Eastern Arterial roundabout following pedestrian 'desire lines' rather than using the signalised crossing further up Horace.

There are not enough safe crossing points in the St Ives Schools Precinct, especially on the Horace side. There is only one signalised crossing on Horace, located midway, outside St Ives Public. Students are frequently observed running across the road as the pedestrian lights change to catch their bus.