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Media Release

Bus safety again saves lives in second major school bus accident

There is an eerie similarity between two recent school bus accidents on Queensland roads, with bus safety and driver actions saving the lives of students on both occasions, according to the peak body representing Queensland's bus operators.

In March, Gympie bus driver Jullie Laffey was praised for her quick actions to attempt to avoid an accident, which were credited, along with seat belts, for saving the lives of the school children aboard.

On Friday, school bus driver Colin Stafford was similarly hailed a hero for his evasive efforts to avoid a head on collision with a car near Wallumbilla in Western Queensland, and for installing seatbelts in his bus at his own expense.

Queensland Bus Industry Council executive director David Tape said he was sickened that another person was killed in a crash involving a car and a school bus, but also commended the driver for his actions not only to minimise the impact but in caring for the children after the impact.

"I'd firstly like to express my sincere condolences to the family of the young lady who lost her life and to wish the passenger in the vehicle a full recovery," he said.

"We must equally be thankful that more lives were not lost and that the school children aboard the bus not only survived but were not more seriously injured."

Mr Tape said more than 150,000 Queensland school children travel by bus every day and that the industry has an excellent safety record.

However, he pointed out that safety isn't an accident.

"In both of these instances there is no doubt that the result would have been a lot worse but for two factors – the professionalism and expertise of the drivers and the fact that children were wearing seat belts.

"Driving training is a high priority for the industry and we are seeing the results. Equally the importance of children being seated in buses and having seat-belt equipped buses can't be overstated."

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