



ISOLATED CHILDREN'S  
PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

## 2025 MOTION RESPONSE DOCUMENT

SA ICPA Members, the following is a document that has all motion responses combined and any follow up that has been undertaken or received by State Council since the 2025 State Conference. The information collated in this document has been a result of sending motion letters, delegation meetings, emails and phone calls by State Councillors. It is in Portfolio alphabetical order and includes each of the motions.

### **BOARDING SCHOOLS, HOSTELS AND SECOND HOME**

There were 4 motions presented at this year's conference relating to the Boarding Schools, Hostels and Second Home Portfolio. They were motions 9,10 and 11.

#### **MOTION'S 9 and 10**

##### **MOTION 9**

*'That SA ICPA advocates to the Department for Education and the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to increase the State Education Allowance (SEA) in line with the Education Sub Index of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).'*

##### **MOTION 10**

*'That SA ICPA requests the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to consider increasing the State Education Allowance (SEA) as a stepped allowance based on tuition fees that a family incurs.'*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motion's 9 and 10 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. Included in the letter, was a table that outlined a snapshot of current SA Boarding School boarding fees and the current SEA allowance received and the amount that would be received if they got the equivalent amount based on the QLD LAFHS allowance as well as the difference between both those amounts.

In June, SA ICPA State Council members attended delegation meetings in Adelaide and met with Minister Boyer and relevant Department for Education staff members, where the SEA review/increase was discussed. The general feel of these meetings was positive and the immediate outcome was that there was request for SA ICPA to put forward a proposal of what a review and increase of the SEA could look like. This proposal was constructed by Kirsty Williams and sent to Minister Boyer and the Department for Education in July.



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A response letter was received from Minister Boyer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September and the following exert is the part of the letter that was related to the request for a SEA review/increase.

As you are aware, the State Education Allowance (SEA) is available to geographically isolated parents with children at the secondary level who board away from home. This allowance assists with travel, boarding, and other educational expenses.

I am pleased to advise that, to support families with cost-of-living pressures, the SEA rate for 2025 has been increased by 3.2 per cent, raising the amount payable from \$5,105.98 per student in 2024 to \$5,269.37 per student in 2025. Further, the Remote Travel Allowance has been adjusted to \$516 per student.

A further letter was received on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November and the following exert is the part of the letter that was a response to the proposal put forward in July:

I can advise the State Education Allowance (SEA) is currently under review and remains subject to ongoing discussion and further consideration. We are working diligently to assess the framework, with a focus on ensuring the allowance aligns with Department for Education priorities and provides optimal support to those affected. Further updates will be communicated as decisions are finalised.

To aid in cost-of-living pressures, you would be aware that, in 2025, there was an increased adjustment of 3.2 per cent to both the SEA and the Remote Travel Allowance. This raised the amount payable for the SEA to \$5,269.37 per student in 2025.

While there is no indication from Minister Boyer that the allowance will be increased further other than the yearly CPI increase, SA ICPA remain hopeful that the State Education Allowance is still on the Minister's agenda and that with continued advocacy from State Council and ICPA members a review and substantial increase will happen in the near future.

## **MOTION 11**

### **MOTION 11**

*"That SA ICPA discuss with the denominational and independent boarding schools in Adelaide, the need for a designated ICPA bursary at each school/college."*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motion 11 to all the relevant Adelaide Boarding Schools as well as the Australian Boarding Schools Association. Responses were received from Pembroke School, Sacred Heart College and Seymour College, stating that they have taken the suggestion under advisement and that it would be discussed at upcoming enrolments meetings. No further response from those schools have been received.



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A response from Price Alfred College was received which highlighted a scholarship that was already available for students who live remotely (the Ken Lord Scholarship) and that often students from ICPA families met the requirements needed to apply for that scholarship and that there was currently 7 students from regional and remote parts of Australia who were recipients of that opportunity.

Finally a response was received from Walford School, where they indicated that they were excited to announce that in direct response to motions put forward at conferences and through advocacy from SA ICPA, from 2026, a scholarship for rural and remote boarding students would be introduced. More information about this scholarship can be found [here](#).

SA ICPA will continue to work with boarding schools across the state to ensure that families and members are able to access the most current and up to date information relevant to admissions and scholarships.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no motions presented at this year's conference relating to the Communications Portfolio.

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION**

There were 6 motions presented at this year's conference relating to the Distance Education Portfolio. They were motions 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17.

### **MOTION'S 12,13 and 14**

#### **MOTION 12**

*"That SA ICPA State Council request the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to provide financial assistance towards the cost of supervising students in a Distance Education Classroom."*

#### **MOTION 13**

*"That SA ICPA request the Department for Education to establish a Distance Education Home Supervisor Allowance."*

#### **MOTION 14**

*"That SA ICPA request the Department for Education, and the Minister for Education, Training and Skills provides a supervisor remuneration to families when enrolling a child through Open Access College, School of the Air (Port Augusta) as per the Open Access College enrolment policy."*



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A motion letter was sent regarding Motion's 12,13 and 14 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter outlined the importance of full-time supervisor for students in a distance education classroom and that it was an enrolment criteria for students who attend Open Access College's Port Augusta School of the Air. It also reminded the Minister that education was the responsibility of the State Government and that it was high time families were recognised and compensated for the financial cost of either employing someone to supervise their children or who those who have to remove themselves from a paid role to educate their own children.

A response letter was received from Minister Boyer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September and the following exert is the part of the letter that was related to the request for remuneration for Distance Education Supervisors.

I recognise the burden on families supervising students in distance education. With over 900 families participating in distance education through OAC, including 35 SOTA students, the State Government strives to ensure fair distribution of support across all families involved.

OAC and the Department are continuing to work with families to help improve students' access to learning. This includes looking at new ways of delivering education locally through the Country Education Strategy. I remain committed to keeping you informed as this work progresses.

State Council were disappointed but not surprised by this response as the issue surrounding distance education and separating enrolments for remote students and those who study via distance for other reasons is a complex one. We will continue to advocate for such an allowance with the Minister over the coming months and years.

At the Federal ICPA Conference in July, a floor motion reading "*That ICPA (Aust) Federal council adopt the term 'Remuneration for the Isolated Classroom Supervisor' (RICS) when advocating for recognition of home tutors/ supervisors within the Distance Education classroom.*" was moved and carried. The issue of a financial remuneration and recognition of home tutors has been ongoing for many years and this motion is the next step for ICPA, at both a Federal and a State level to address this issue.

After the motion was carried, The Hon Fiona Nash, Regional Education Commissioner spoke about her support of this issue and invited ICPA to take part in a round table discussion, with herself as facilitator and with other interested stakeholders to discuss 'where to next' for this line of advocacy. On Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> of October Belinda Hatcher took part in this round table. It was a positive and productive 2 hours that gave all participants a chance to contribute to the discussion and push this issue forward. There is another meeting planned for the new year. A summary of the Round Table discussion with The Hon Fiona Nash can be found [here](#).



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### **MOTION'S 15,16 and 17**

#### **MOTION 15**

*"That SA ICPA requests the Department for Education to increase the amount provided to School of the Air (SOTA) specifically to assist with travel for families to attend face to face events."*

#### **MOTION 16**

*"That SA ICPA requests the Department for Education to increase the School of The Air travel reimbursement from \$0.32/km to the current ATO rate of \$0.88/km."*

#### **MOTION 17**

*"That SA ICPA requests that the Department for Education increase the amount provided to the School of the Air (SOTA) specifically to assist with travel for families to attend face to face events."*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motion's 15,16 and 17 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter outlined the fact that face to face events are a vital part of distance education student's learning and that the current rate of reimbursement for travel costs is incredibly low and not meeting the actual travel cost incurred by families. It went on to outline what the actual costs of increasing the allowance to a fairer rate would be.

A response letter was received from Minister Boyer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September and the following exert is the part of the letter that was related to the request for an increase to the travel reimbursement rates:

In addition to car travel allowances, Open Access College (OAC) offers reimbursement to School of the Air (SOTA) families for travel to face-to-face events. The current reimbursement rate stands at 32 cents per kilometre.

The Department is currently reviewing both rates, and I hope to share some positive updates with you when the review is complete.



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## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE**

There were 8 motions presented at this year's conference relating to the Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio. They were motions 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and 8.

### **MOTION'S 1 and 2**

#### **MOTION 1**

*"That SA ICPA thank the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Port Augusta for reducing the Child and Family Health Services (CaFHS) service gap that has been experienced in previous years."*

#### **MOTION 2**

*"That SA ICPA thank the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) for their continued work in providing a Child and Family Health Nurse based in Port Augusta."*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motion's 1 and 2 to the RFDS thanking and acknowledging them for their work in filling the service gaps that our members were experiencing in regard to support for babies and young children.

### **MOTION 3**

#### **MOTION 3**

*"That SA ICPA advocates to the Minister for Health and Well-being and the Department of Human Services to help secure the secondment of a Child and Family Health Services (CaFHS) nurse back to the Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise (RICE), ensuring new and young mothers in South Australia's outer regions receive the support they need and do not fall through the gaps, as it currently happening."*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motion 3 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter outlined the importance of mothers and young children getting access to timely and quality support throughout the early years and how there has been a huge decline in services in recent years, especially since the CaFHS nurse service was lost from RICE.

A response letter was received from Minister Chris Picton on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October in which he acknowledged that there has been challenges with this delivery in the past. It also outlined in detail the steps that his department, CaFHS and RICE are undertaking to better deliver rural and remote families the support they need. The following are the steps outlined in his letter:



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- Exploring partnership opportunities between CaFHS and RICE, including establishing a referral pathway into CaFHS through RICE.
- Support and promotion of the child and family health service now being provided by the Royal Flying Doctor Service and bi-monthly partnership meetings with the RFDS as well.
- Working with the Office for Early Childhood Development to understand and further enhance service reach.
- Offering virtual early parent groups to remote and isolated families.
- Re-instating CaFHS clinics in Streaky Bay, Hawker and Crystal Brook.
- Replacing the current phone system to enhance the consumer experience and ensure calls are responded to in a timely manner.

The letter also stated that during a meeting in August between the Director of CaFHS, Acting Director of Operations, the acting Regional Manager Country North and the Director of RICE they discussed an agreement that would make provisions for CaFHS to accompany RICE staff on four community visits per year, the supply of loan baby scales for use by remote families and the provision of promotional materials for digital and postal dissemination by RICE Staff. This agreement is yet to be ratified and is still a work in progress.

In recent days, we have been made aware that a Child and Family Health nurse is available for health checks at the CaFHS office in Port Augusta. The office is located at 5 Young Street, Port Augusta SA 5700. Please call 1300 733 606 to make an appointment.

Please contact the Director of CaFHS Ms Mirella Vagnarelli via email on [Mirella.Vagnarelli@sa.gov.au](mailto:Mirella.Vagnarelli@sa.gov.au) or phone (08) 8303 1502 should you wish to discuss any of these matters further.

For any members wishing to access immunisation services, please contact Stellar Health services on 08 8642 4898. Their offices can be found at 6 Church Street, Port Augusta SA 5700 or 51 Playford Ave, Whyalla Playford SA 5608.

#### **MOTION'S 4 and 5**

##### **MOTION 4**

*"That SA ICPA State Council support Federal Council with their lobby to extend the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education Allowance to Children who are participating in eligible pre-compulsory early childhood programs."*

##### **MOTION 5**

*"That SA ICPA continues to support Federal Council's advocacy for the inclusion of kindergarten children in the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance to cover the cost of creating a fun, engaging and meaningful learning environment."*



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A motion letter was sent regarding Motion's 4 and 5 to Federal Council, reiterating our continued support of ICPA's campaign to increase the AIC to include preschool students. Whilst the advocacy for AIC for pre school students has not been the main focus for ICPA Australia this year, it is still an important line of advocacy and they welcome any and all support in this area.

## **MOTION 6**

### **MOTION 6**

*"That SA ICPA advocates to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills for geographically isolated children enrolled in a registered South Australian preschool education program to receive financial assistance from the state government for travel and home classroom expenses incurred by the preschool program."*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motion 6 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter highlighted that there is a significant gap in the financial support that geographically isolated members receive when undertaking preschool programs with their children. It outlined where there was a need for support and given that there was a relatively small number of these children that it would be a small outlay for the government to fund.

A response letter was received from Minister Boyer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September and the following exert is the part of the letter that was related to the request for financial support for preschool families.

The State Government continues to support preschool education in remote areas through the Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise (RICE) program, with an allocation of \$305,112 in 2025 to provide essential services to families in remote South Australia.

The Department has advised RICE that the grant can be used to support families by contributing to the cost of essential equipment and resources needed to access the program, as well as travel and accommodation expenses associated with attending face-to-face activities.

SA ICPA are very pleased to report that families, thanks to the above funding agreement, are now eligible to receive \$100 per night reimbursement for accommodation and reimbursement of 50 cents per kilometre travelled, when attending RICE face to face events. Whilst this is not the allowance SA ICPA was advocating for, it is still a win for our members and SA ICPA's hard work advocating for their needs.



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In June, SA ICPA State Council members attended delegation meetings in Adelaide and met with Minister Boyer and relevant Office for Early Childhood Development staff members, where an early childhood allowance was discussed. The general feel of these meetings was positive and the immediate outcome was that there was request for SA ICPA to put forward a proposal of what such an allowance could look like. This proposal was constructed by Edwina Bowie and sent to Minister Boyer and the Office for Early Childhood Development in July.

A response letter from both the Office for Early Childhood Development and Minister Boyer was received in November. Below is an exert from the letter from Minister Boyer.

At this stage, there is no available funding to support the proposal to expand the Early Years Allowance subsidy to include preschool-aged children. While the significance of early childhood education is well recognised, current budgetary constraints prevent the allocation of additional resources for this initiative. Please be assured this matter will continue to be monitored and reassessed as part of ongoing strategic and financial planning processes.

SA ICPA will continue to advocate for this allowance in the coming 12 months.

## **MOTION 7**

### **MOTION 7**

*"That SA ICPA advocates to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills and the relevant departments for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services, to consider the unique needs of rural and remote families when it comes to the eligibility criteria for funding and subsidies."*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motion 7 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter highlighted the growing concern among our members that current ECEC funding models do not adequately meet the needs of families living in remote South Australia and how the traditional Child Care Subsidy (CCS) structure does not allow for families to claim any subsidies using the Outback Childcare service provided by RICE.

A response letter was received from Kim Little, Chief Executive of the Office for Early Childhood Development on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September and the following exert is the part of the letter that was related to the Childcare Subsidy barriers.



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I understand this and other matters were discussed at a recent meeting between SA ICPA members and OECD representatives. As a result, my office has commenced discussions with the Australian Government to better understand the barriers associated with the Outback Childcare service accessing CCS, and options to support greater affordability for families. The next step involves bringing together ICPA, RICE and government agencies in the coming months to share these options.

SA ICPA have had no further correspondence from the Office for Early Childhood Development but will continue to follow this issue up in the new year.

#### **MOTION 8**

##### **MOTION 8**

*"That SA ICPA reach out to relevant local councils and the Regional Childcare Desert Advocacy Project to offer support for their efforts in addressing the 'childcare desert' that is impacting local communities across regional and remote South Australia."*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motion 8 to Emily Heywood-Smith from the Regional Childcare Desert Advocacy Project, offering support from SA ICPA State Council in regard to the 'childcare desert' and how it has affected members.

A response letter was received in June offering thanks for the letter of support and that should they need anything they would not hesitate to ask. No further communication has been received about this since.

#### **RURAL SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL TRAVEL**

There were 9 motions presented at this year's conference relating to the Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio. They were motions 18,19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26.

#### **MOTION 18**

##### **MOTION 18**

*'That SA ICPA request that the Department for Education provides extra country incentives to enable schools in isolated regions to attract and entice appropriate teachers to work in these areas.'*



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A motion letter was sent regarding Motion 18 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter outlined the need for further, location and roll specific incentives to be considered in order to attract and retain appropriate teachers in rural and remote schools across South Australia.

The issue was discussed during delegation and while there was no immediate outcomes from the discussion, it was acknowledged with the plan for follow up in the future. A response letter was received from Minister Boyer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September but there was nothing in that letter that specifically addressed Motion 18 or the discussion had at delegation.

### **MOTIONS 19 and 20**

#### **MOTION 19**

*"That SA ICPA request that the Department for Education provides extra country incentives to enable schools in isolated regions to entice Student Support Officers (SSOs) to work in these areas."*

#### **MOTION 20**

*"That SA ICPA request that the Department for Education provides extra funding to rural and remote schools to allow additional Student Support Officers (SSOs) to be employed."*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motions 19 and 20 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter outlined the need for better and more enticing incentive, as well as more targeted funding to be made available to schools in order to better attract and retain SSO's that are appropriate for their sites.

A response letter was received from Minister Boyer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September and the following exert is the part of the letter that was related to the request for further incentives and better financial support for rural and remote schools across the state.

Student Support Officers (SSOs) are essential to the success of our educational system, particularly in country areas where their impact is profound. Recognising their importance, we have implemented a comprehensive range of incentives to attract and retain these invaluable staff members.

Through the current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, SSOs and other ancillary staff will receive a 13 per cent salary increase by May 2026, in addition to increased allowances and entitlements.



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Regional schools and preschools are unique, both collectively and within each site, and we empower them to attract and retain high-quality ancillary staff. The Department's HR Business Partners collaborate with site leaders to offer targeted incentives, including travel and accommodation support. Additionally, eligible SSOs may begin employment at a higher base salary depending on their skills and experience.

### **MOTION 21**

#### **MOTION 21**

*"That SA ICPA asks the Department for Education (DfE) to increase the Car Allowance component of the Student Travelling Allowance Scheme, which is paid to families who transport their children to school or bus stops, to better reflect the increase in cost of living and rising fuel/care maintenance prices."*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motion 21 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter outlined the need for an increase to the Car Allowance to better reflect the costs of traveling to and from school or a bus stop in a private car. It also included a detailed list of the estimated costs of running a car in rural and remote areas of the state.

A response letter was received from Minister Boyer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September and the following exert is the part of the letter that was related to the request for an increase to the Car Allowance.

The Department for Education provides car travel allowances for approximately 1,500 students across rural South Australia, with reimbursement rates adjusted annually in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The Department is currently reviewing both rates, and I hope to share some positive updates with you when the review is complete.

### **MOTIONS 22 AND 23**

#### **MOTION 22**

*"That SA ICPA work with the Department for Education to address conditions that hinder isolated schools in getting bus drivers who provide a significant service to families of those areas."*



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#### MOTION 23

*"That SA ICPA ask the Department for Education (DfE) to expand their bus calculation formula to include preschool students, as they catch buses to school-based preschools but aren't currently entitled to a seat on those buses."*

Motion letters were sent regarding Motion 22 and another regarding Motion 23 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter addressing Motion 22 outlined the difficulties facing rural and remote communities when trying to attract and retain bus drivers to their schools due to the restrictive criteria. The letter addressing Motion 23 explained the frustrations that occur when children who are attending a school based preschool program are not able to catch the bus to that school.

A response letter was received from Minister Boyer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September and the following exert is the part of the letter that was about bus drivers as well as preschool students using the already existing buses.

The Department acknowledges the ongoing shortage of bus drivers, particularly in regional and remote areas. It is actively exploring measures to encourage employment in this vital role and to assist schools with recruitment and retention. This includes the recent appointment of a School Bus Driver Liaison Officer to assist with driver induction and training, and the development of training packages for regional drivers. Further updates will be provided as these plans develop.

The Department also has an established process for determining the suitability of preschool children to travel on a departmental school bus service. Parents of preschool students requiring transport should first speak with their local school Principal. If a bus is at capacity, the Department will work with the school to develop an appropriate solution.

#### **MOTIONS 24 AND 25**

##### MOTION 24

*'That SA ICPA requests airlines servicing the northern areas of SA to provide a student fare.'*

##### MOTION 25

*'That SA ICPA approaches Regional Express (REX) Airlines to request they provide children accessing REX flights, to and from rural South Australian areas for educational purposes, with a fixed student fare.'*



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Motion letters were sent regarding Motion 24 and another regarding Motion 25 to Alliance Airlines and Regional Express (REX) airlines respectively outlining the need for a dedicated student or discounted fare for children who need to travel vast distances to attend school and where using air travel would decrease the travel time significantly. They also referenced the QLD 'Bush to Boarding' fare through REX that can be accessed by regional and remote students in Queensland. Despite follow up letters we are yet to receive a response from either airlines. We will continue to follow this up in the new year.

#### **MOTION 26**

##### **MOTION 26**

*'That SA ICPA requests the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to provide a subsidy for students accessing flights in areas of South Australia where no student fare is available.'*

A motion letter was sent regarding Motion 26 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter highlighted to the limited and affordable travel options that many rural and remote students face and how air travel is a much quicker option, that would allow students to spend as much quality time at home, rather than in a car travelling.

The issue was briefly discussed during delegation, where it was clear that this was an issue that was of low priority to the Minister or the Education Department. A response letter was received from Minister Boyer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September but there was nothing further in that letter that specifically addressed Motion 26 or the discussion had at delegation.

Given the lack of communication from airlines, and despite no commitment from the Minister or the Education Department to address this issue, State Council will continue to advocate for a student airfare travel allowance in the new year, as we believe it will be our best way forward.

#### **SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS**

There were 2 motions presented at this year's conference relating to the Specific Education Needs Portfolio. They were motions 27 and 28

#### **MOTION 27**

##### **MOTION 27**

*'That SA ICPA State Council requests the Minister for Education, Training and Skills and the Minister for Health and Wellbeing to make targeted funding available for the provision of speech pathologists in rural and remote schools and in particular for distance education students.'*



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A motion letter was sent regarding Motion 27 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter highlighted the fact that students who are education in a rural and remote setting or who are educated via distance education are at a disadvantage due to their geographical location and the lack of access to quick intervention when it comes to speech delay and issues. It asked that both the ministers consider a funding model that would see targeted funding that would better equip rural and remote and distance education schools to ensure that early intervention and support is provided to those students in need.

A response letter was received from Minister Boyer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September and the following exert is the part of the letter from Minister Boyer that was related to the request for targeted funding for Speech Pathologists. A response letter from Minister Chris Picton was received in October, which did not directly address the targeted funding but rather the PATS scheme on the whole. His response is in the next motion response.

The Department recognises the importance of speech pathology services in rural and remote schools. The Department's Student Support Services (SSS) provides these services to optimise learning and wellbeing outcomes for children with speech, language, and communication needs.

Multi-disciplinary SSS teams, based at the local education office nearest to the child's home, serve as the primary contact for consultation and referrals for preschool and school-aged children.

If it is decided more intensive support is needed beyond what SSS can provide, the practitioner will work with the school and/or family to find suitable providers and help them make contact if needed.

The Flexible Services Response Team has been introduced to support areas experiencing high demand, using a hybrid model of fly-in-fly-out and tele-practice to reach children statewide.

The Department has recently implemented improvements aimed at addressing service accessibility challenges in remote areas. It values SA ICPA's feedback and ongoing advocacy in highlighting the experiences and needs of geographically isolated communities and looks forward to continuing regular engagement to understand the impact of these changes on families.

## **MOTION 28**

### **MOTION 28**

*"That SA ICPA advocates to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing and the Rural Support Service in SA Health to add 'Geographically remote families' as an additional eligibility criterion to bypass a nearing specialist in the Patient Assistance Travel Scheme (PATS) Guidelines for Assessment."*



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A motion letter was sent regarding Motion 28 to the intended addressees as well as the appropriate stakeholders. The letter highlighted the need for a new criteria being added to the guidelines of assessment for the PATS scheme, that would allow families to access the allowance, where bypassing the more local specialist is more convenient for the family situation and better for the patient.

A response letter from Minister Chris Picton was received in October, this is the exert from the letter that addresses both the PATS scheme and speech pathologist in SA Schools and preschools.

*When there is no local visiting specialist available, PATS is an important initiative that will subsidise travel for patients who need to travel over 100 kilometres each way to access their nearest specialist.*

*PATS subsidies are provided to the nearest medical specialist service. If a patient is referred past one of these services either the urgency or the patient's clinical risks cannot be managed in a regional health facility, and this information must be noted on the forms.*

*PATS encourages the scheduling of multiple appointments where possible to reduce the burden of travel and accommodation on patients, however the eligibility for subsidy must be in line with assessment criteria.*

*PATS acknowledges the unique challenges faced by residents in remote regions of South Australia and appreciates the suggestion to add "geographically remote" as an additional assessment criterion. PATS remains committed to reviewing feedback to enhance services and ensure they meet the needs of patients in rural areas.*

*Regarding Allied Health services, including Speech Pathology, are provided across all regional LHNs, including in remote areas. These services are delivered in person and via telehealth, with the frequency of in-person visits varying depending on service agreements, clinical demands, and local workforce. The services provided by regional LHNs are separate from the allied health services provided by the Department for Education.*

*Speech Pathologists in regional LHNs provide services to children with communication delays or disorders, including language or speech, up until they commence kindergarten or school. After this point, their care is transitioned to Speech Pathologists in the Department for Education.*

*In some cases, regional LHN Speech Pathologists may continue working with kindergarten or school-aged children if they have specific needs such as feeding, swallowing, voice or fluency concerns, which are not covered by the Department for Education. Support may also continue if the child is eligible for services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).*



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For further information on the PATS program please contact Mr Michael Aschberger, Program and Business Improvement Manager, RSS, by calling 1300 341 684 or by emailing [PATS@sa.gov.au](mailto:PATS@sa.gov.au)

For further information regarding Allied Health Services provided by regional Local Health Networks please contact Ms Joanne Lawson, Principal Consultant Allied Health, Rural Support Service by emailing [joanne.lawson@sa.gov.au](mailto:joanne.lawson@sa.gov.au)

Keep an eye out for the PATS help document in the upcoming Pipeline edition that has some useful information for members on how to best utilise the PATS service.

## **TERTIARY EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHWAYS**

There were no motions presented at this year's conference relating to the Tertiary Education and Career Pathways Portfolio.