

**THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S  
PARENTS' ASSOCIATION  
(Western Australia) Inc.**

**WA STATE POLICIES**



## **ICPA WA POLICIES**

**Ratified at State Conference March 2008**

### **ALLOWANCES**

**Policy:**

**ICPA WA pursues equality of access to education for rural & remote geographically isolated students by the provision of government allowances to enable access to an appropriate education facility.**

**Objectives:**

1. The provision of a non-means tested State allowance to cover the incidental costs of living away from home, such as phone calls to maintain family contact, travel by parents to school functions, and transport fares to medical and dental appointments, airports etc.
2. This allowance be available to any student in WA who must live away from home to attend an appropriate school, including
  - (a) Special Education centres (including those offering State Government recognised gifted programmes)
  - (b) Agricultural Colleges
  - (c) Those whose local school offers inadequate subjects.
3. The provision of textbook and uniform allowances for ALL secondary students from low-income families.
4. To support Federal Council in its pursuit of a means-tested AIC Distance Education Additional Allowance.
5. To support Federal Council in lobbying for a tertiary access allowance.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Policy:**

**To ensure that families and students in rural and remote areas of WA have equivalent facilities to the majority of Australians in the area of communications, particularly in regards to the provision of education.**

### **Objectives:**

1. That consultation exists between ICPA and the providers of Information Technology for education, to ensure that the needs of isolated students are considered.
2. That good quality teacher and home tutor/supervisor training be available on the use of new technology when it is introduced.
3. That the importance of human interaction in education is kept to the fore when making advancements in the area of Information Technology Services.
4. That all rural and remote residents have access to 'free to air' commercial TV channels and educational channels, through a single decoder, regardless of the service provider.
5. That the WA sector of the Remote Air Service Subsidy Scheme (RASS) provides a regular weekly air transport of mail, parcel post, supplies (including educational materials, medicines etc) and passenger components of service.
6. That Australia Post upholds their Community Service Obligations of 'the performance standards of the service meeting the social and commercial needs of the community.'

# **CURRICULUM**

## **Policy:**

**ICPA WA seeks to ensure that geographically isolated students from rural and remote areas have access to a current, high quality, diverse curriculum education at schools and in tertiary institutions that in terms of both quality and diversity of curriculum materials, provides an equal educational opportunity with their non-isolated counterparts.**

## **Objectives:**

1. That all students are educated to the highest possible level of literacy and numeracy throughout primary and secondary years.
2. That opportunities are provided to schools to broaden their curriculum offerings through the use of current information technologies.
3. That all schools, especially secondary schools, offer studies in practical computer skills as part of the curriculum
4. That optimal educational programming and support be provided for students with special needs, including gifted children.
5. That a basic physical education programme be conducted in all schools on a regular basis
6. That the content and teaching method of human relationships education be open to consultation and monitoring by local parent groups in conjunction with all school authorities.
7. That the appropriate personnel from all school authorities ensure that the basic curriculum subjects are taught completely and thoroughly at each year level.
8. That information on Curriculum Framework is made available to parents by the school.

# **DISTANCE EDUCATION**

## **Policy:**

**ICPA WA seeks the best possible integrated distance education service, centred on personal interaction from K-12, offering a complete network of programmes, facilities and support services. These are to be provided through a system of coordinated educational services delivered to geographically isolated homes and schools in rural and remote areas.**

## **Objectives:**

1. That all students and Home Tutor Supervisors are provided with the necessary equipment, technology, hardware and training needed to fulfil all the requirements of their year level.
2. That priority be given to establishing clear, reliable two way voice, data and video communications between School of the Air or Distance Education Centres and their students and home supervisors and that an 'on air' service, 2 way data and computer systems with modems be available to all students from K-12.
3. Where appropriate, lesson marking to be completed by the class teacher who also conducts the 'air lesson.'
4. The provision for forward planning to ensure the use of new technology is to enhance, not replace the personal contact between teachers, students and Home Tutors.
5. Pre-service and 'in service' training be available to Distance Education and School of Air Teachers.
6. Home Tutor seminars be conducted by appropriate education authorities for 'in servicing' of Home Tutors.
7. Regular camps and mini camps be conducted by appropriate educational authorities to enable interaction of children who are geographically isolated.
8. Provision for standard phone service to include facsimile and data capabilities.
9. That all School of the Air students have at least 3 visits per year by either their teacher or an itinerant teacher, regardless of location. Visits should not be considered covered by camps/activity days.
10. That a Toll Free number be readily available for Distance Education/School of Air students and Home Tutors to make contact with their school/teacher.
11. That the cost of upgrades to materials be borne by the service provider (eg video to digital).

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

### **Policy:**

**ICPA WA seeks to ensure that an appropriate range of early childhood programmes and services be available to support children and their families in rural and remote areas.**

### **Objectives:**

1. That there be a wide range of mobile Remote Family Services available to families in remote areas.
2. That, for ease of access by families, mobile Remote Family Services be operated by one sponsor.
3. That in-home care be available for a period of at least 4 weeks per year for families in remote areas.
4. That child care be available to families in rural areas.
5. That there be mobile playgroup services for children in rural and remote areas.
6. That mobile playgroup services conduct playgroup sessions and act in an advisory capacity to provide parents with purposeful activities for children that suit the specific needs of the age groups.

## **PCAP**

**Policy:**

**ICPA WA supports the Commonwealth funded Priority Country Areas Program.**

**Objectives:**

1. To ensure the continuation and maintenance of the PCAP programme.
2. To enhance the quality of education for rural and remote children by allowing access to social and cultural activities.
3. That PCAP funding is used specifically to allow students to have 'contact' outside their local community, not for PD of teachers.
4. That a fair and equitable system is used in determining those schools eligible for PCAP funding.
5. That parents and School Councils have input into how PCAP funding is used.

## **POST COMPULSORY/TERTIARY**

(Covering Post Compulsory secondary schooling, Uni, TAFE, AG Colleges & Private Providers.)

### **Policy:**

**ICPA WA seeks to ensure that students from rural and remote areas have access to Post Compulsory/Tertiary Educational options, which will enable them to pursue the career path of their choice.**

### **Objectives:**

1. That adequate accommodation be provided by tertiary institutions to cater for geographically isolated students.
2. The provision of an adequate range of external courses delivered to students at home via satellite or other means through approved WA Educational Institutions.
3. Post compulsory/tertiary authorities continue to be made aware of the problems caused by inadequate communication services and distances from educational institutions for isolated students from rural and remote areas.
4. That Tertiary institutions allow deferment of all courses to two years to enable students to meet Youth Allowance Independent Criteria.
5. Sufficient places continue to be made available in institutions to cater for all qualified applicants.
6. That courses be provided at a regional level to develop skills appropriate to industries in rural and remote areas.



## **RURAL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS**

### **Policy:**

**ICPA WA seeks to ensure that all students in Rural and Remote Schools are provided with quality educational services and facilities.**

### **Objectives:**

1. That a 'Rural and Remote Education' component be included in pre-service teacher training courses.
2. That graduate teachers with appropriate training and practical experience be considered for positions in rural/remote schools.
3. Positive incentives eg minimal rent, quality accommodation and realistic travel assistance be offered to encourage teachers to apply for positions in rural/remote schools.
4. That all specialist services be available to students attending rural and remote schools.
5. That staffing formulas for rural/remote schools be looked at on an individual school basis, taking into account issues such as class size, number of children with learning difficulties, cultural differences, transient families, frequency of visits from Health specialists and access to curriculum staff specialists.
6. That extra resources be made available to provide access to a wide range of educational opportunities and new technology for all rural and remote schools.
7. The provision for forward planning to ensure the use of technology is to enhance, not replace, the personal contact between teacher and student.
8. That all teachers at rural and remote schools receive ongoing training in the use of advancing technology.
9. That the following inequities imposed by geographic isolation be considered when the allocation of resources are determined for rural and remote schools:
  - a) The personal and professional isolation of staff
  - b) The reduced secondary curriculum options which can be offered
  - c) Levels of staff experience
  - d) Increased postage, phone and Internet costs
  - e) Difficulties and costs associated with technology
  - f) Time away from school for both staff & students in order to participate in regional and state activities as well as the associated costs involved.
10. That planned leave for teaching staff in circumstances such as maternity or long service leave, be taken from semester to semester, to ensure continuity.
11. That the Priority Country Area Program(PCAP) be maintained and used to its best advantage to enhance the quality of education and access to social and cultural activities.
12. That the correct procedures be strictly adhered to by education authorities when considering the closure of a small rural school. (For example, 12 months' prior notice in the Government Gazette, extensive public consultation, and consideration of the social and economic impact on the local and wider community.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS**

(Policy to include gifted and talented and those with disabilities.)

### **Policy:**

**That ICPA WA seeks provision and access to adequate services and facilities for students living in rural and remote areas of WA who have specific educational needs. This includes the early identification, assistance and support to these children so they are able to achieve their maximum potential.**

### **Objectives:**

1. That access to appropriate testing is readily available to identify whether a student has a learning difficulty or is gifted and talented.
2. That a student identified as having a learning difficulty or being gifted and talented has, as required, accommodation and financial assistance to access support.
3. That support by specially trained staff for a student studying at home, occurs at the point of learning and in association with the school.
4. That those specially trained personnel be available to guide and support the teacher and home tutor of the student.
5. That the Support Teacher Learning (STL) continue to service each of the five Schools of the Air, (one STL per School of the Air) and, when applicable, students identified with learning difficulties at schools in vicinity of the SOTA base.
6. That the position of the STL, when attached to a School of the Air, remain under the Centre for Inclusive Schooling and independent of SOTA staffing formula .
7. That learning support teachers at rural and remote schools have induction and professional development and have access to the expertise, material and resources from identified district and city centres of support.
8. That isolated families with children needing paramedical and other specialist services be recognised by departments of health and education and that financial assistance for travel and accommodation to access these services be available.
9. That isolated children have ready and regular access to guidance officers, psychologists, speech therapists and other support services.
10. That joint service delivery of allied health be available in all districts.
11. That set procedures and guidelines be followed and all support mechanisms put in place, when students with learning difficulties and disabilities are integrated into small rural and remote schools.
12. That rural and remote schools and the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education address in their planning, the requirements of gifted and talented students i.e. what their educational requirements will be in terms of providing an appropriate educational program.

## **STUDENT ACCOMMODATION**

### **Policy:**

**ICPA WA seeks to have boarding schools and school term hostel facilities as recognised forms of access to education for rural and remote geographically isolated students who must live away from home to receive appropriate primary and/or secondary education and that these facilities offer a standard of pastoral care appropriate to the needs of their clients.**

### **Objectives:**

1. To ensure boarding facilities are of an adequate standard and provide, at reasonable cost, all basic physical requirements as well as suitable supervision and pastoral care.
2. To have government and non-government schools, which serve geographically isolated students, provide appropriate staffing, curricula, and facilities for all the needs of these students.
3. That Federal and State Governments fund all 'education access' facilities for geographically isolated students on a regular and equitable basis.
4. That short-term emergency financial assistance be provided, when needed, to all facilities, which provide boarding accommodation, and cater primarily for geographically isolated students.
5. That career advisers be accessible to all boarding students.
6. That psychological support be made accessible to all boarding students outside of school hours.
7. That 'education access' facilities be exempt from fringe benefits tax on notional benefits provided for residential supervisory and tutorial staff on duty or call on the premises.
8. To ensure that all boarding facilities maintain high standards in the areas of administration, boarding and recreational facilities.
9. That the provision of capital funding by the State Government for the establishment, extension or upgrading of state owned boarding facilities, be on a regular basis.

## **TEACHER TRAINING**

### **Policy:**

**ICPA WA seeks to ensure that the pre service training of teachers adequately prepares them for the teaching profession, particularly for those seeking work in rural schools and distance education.**

### **Objectives:**

1. That trainee teachers be encouraged to complete some of their practicums in rural and remote schools.
2. That a range of Scholarships be available for trainee teachers willing to work in rural and remote schools.
3. That ongoing support and Professional Development be available to qualified teachers working in rural and remote schools.
4. That rural and remote schools be made more attractive to graduates through community support, government scholarships and country practicum programmes.
5. Teacher training courses contain an appropriate mix of theoretical and practical work.
6. That all teacher training courses contain a component on the special requirements and teaching methods of Distance Education, and provision of postgraduate qualifications in Distance Education.

## **TRAVEL**

### **Policy:**

**ICPA WA seeks to ensure the provision of affordable travel services and associated allowances, ensuring access to schools, and boarding and educational facilities by the most appropriate means.**

### **Objectives:**

1. The provision of travel allowances to enable Distance Education students to attend:
  - (a) School camps, sports days etc.
  - (b) Special Education assessments.
2. The provision of travel allowances to enable SIDE students doing
  - (a) Less than 3 TEE subjects, and
  - (b) VET subjectsto attend workshops and gain face to face contact with teachers.
3. That the Conveyance Allowance and Road Travel Subsidy rates include depreciation, interest, registration and insurance costs when set each year.
4. That the Student Subsidised Travel Scheme (SSTS), be available to all students living in the Defined Remote Area (DRA) of WA.
5. That students living in the DRA receive travel assistance to cover the realistic costs of accessing an appropriate education, where no public transport is available.
6. That the boundaries of the DRA be made more flexible to cover all students living in remote areas.
7. That the number of trips provided under the SSTS for primary and secondary students not doing Distance Education, be able to be used at any time during the school year ie beginning and end of terms and exeat weekends.
8. That the school bus service to rural and remote students continues to be a free service.

