



2021 State Conference Motions

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Motion 1 North West Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA work with Federal Council and relevant bodies to advocate for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) to help with the ongoing cost to families, businesses and industry”.

Explanation: COVID-19 put many families into a spin last year. Some city, rural and regional families had to ‘home school’ their children. We heard of issues arising from this; with parents having to work AND teach their children and the problem of who is going to stay home and teach the child.

Our Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison said, “For those who have been working at home, and sort of overseeing their kids’ learning at home, I think that’s been a real problem. That’s been hard on parents and I don’t think it’s best for the kids’ education.”

The cost is often not only to the family but also to our industry, as families either split so that one parent takes the children to school during term time, or families leave the bush and find employment closer to a face to face school

Motion 2 Marla Oodnadatta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA request the Department for Education to enable School of the Air (SOTA) students completing Year 7 to remain eligible to enrol through Port Augusta SOTA beyond the current exemption period.”

Explanation: As of 2022, it is required that Year 7 be included as high school across South Australia. SOTA was granted an exemption for 2022 - 2024 along with some other ‘eligible schools’ whose country primary schools are located more than 20km from their local area or high school. As it currently stands, after the cessation of the exemption period for the Year 7 transition, SOTA will only cater for students from Reception to Year 6.



There are a number of negative implications for the families utilising SOTA in making this change. It places a huge stress on families with children having to go to boarding school in Year 7 (some students will only be eleven years old), or alternatively enrolling them through Open Access College for one year before then changing schools again to attend boarding school. If students were able to remain part of the SOTA Port Augusta campus, it would allow them to attend face-to-face events providing invaluable social interactions, greater continuity and a better-quality foundation for life at boarding school when the time comes. The 'snowball' effect of diminishing enrolments will also be felt given the already small nature of the school. The option for Year 7's to remain at SOTA would also ease the financial pressure put on families who are faced with additional years of boarding school costs.

Motion 3 North East Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA State Council continue to work with Federal Council towards having the AIC extended to 4-year-olds doing Kindergarten by distance education."

Explanation: Currently, 4-year-old students studying Kindergarten via distance education are ineligible to receive the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education Allowance. If families received this allowance, it would alleviate the cost of providing an educational experience for their children. The majority of children who are enrolled in a distance education Kindergarten program are found to have better educational outcomes in later years, by forming these important foundations early in their educational journey.

Motion 4 Flinders Ranges Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA State Council support ICPA Federal Council in seeking the establishment of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA), to recognise the ongoing out of pocket expenses families incur to educate their children via distance education."



Explanation: The role of the distance education tutor is vital to the education of young remote children studying via School of the Air, who have no other option than to attend school via distance education.

The role of tutor often falls to the mother, who is required to manage this along with an already busy schedule, with no recompense. The hours are generally the same as paid teaching staff, yet with little to no recognition. This is a double edge sword that also means the mother must forego any income that could have been earned while fulfilling this role.

Some families employ a Distance Education Tutor, again this vital role comes at a cost to the family. The Distance Education Tutor Allowance would go some way towards recognising the important role the tutor plays and compensates the family in a small way for the high cost of educating their children.

Motion 5 Port Augusta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA lobbies the Department for Education to provide an allowance for geographically isolated Distance Education (DE) supervisors whose students are in receipt of Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC).”

Explanation: Currently there are less than 50 families that would be eligible under this criteria.

Gross Regional Product per capita for the Outback Communities Authority (OCA) region in which the geographically isolated DE AIC recipients reside is \$417,000. This compares to the Gross State Product of \$62,100 per capita highlighting the fact that inhabitants of the OCA area contribute well above the state average towards the finances of the state.

Unemployment for the OCA region is lower than both state or federal levels. This highlights that there is not a lot of scope for taking on the extra workload involved in supervising. Often families seek an additional employee to supervise schooling. However, without financial support the reality is that many families cannot afford this option and the family must absorb the added workload and responsibility themselves. This continues as a huge contributing factor to many families leaving the bush.

The COVID-19 lockdown has highlighted the difficulty that employed parents supervising their own children's education brings.

(source: Outback Communities Authority Region Economic Growth & Investment Strategy, Revised Report, January 2019)



SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS

Motion 6 State Council

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA State Council requests that the Minister for Education support teachers in rural, regional, and remote areas to implement high-quality, evidence-based literacy programs in schools, to ensure all students have the best chance of success.”

Explanation: While the Department for Education’s Literacy Guarantee Unit have promoted evidence-based approaches in schools, there are still many schools that have done little to improve the way they teach reading and spelling, leaving their students at a disadvantage. In rural, regional, and remote areas, with limited access to intervention services, too many students continue to slip through the cracks and are faced with attending high school not having mastered basic literacy skills. For geographically isolated students with no daily access to a face-to-face school, it is even more crucial that families are provided with adequate resources and guidance for teaching reading and spelling. With such clear evidence supporting the effective teaching of reading and spelling, it is no longer acceptable to allow students to continue to be at risk of literacy failure. It is time the Department for Education ensured that all students have access to high quality programs, including appropriate, evidence-based interventions when required.

BOARDING SCHOOLS AND HOSTELS

Motion 7 State Council

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA State Council work with Federal Council and other states and territories to advocate for a nationally consistent and long-term approach to border restrictions and guidelines for those students who board interstate.”

Explanation: As the 2021 school year is well underway across Australia and complications continue to arise from the COVID-19 pandemic, ICPA (Aust) is sending a message of appeal to all levels of government asking decision makers to ensure rural and remote students have access to education institutions, regardless of where they live in our vast nation.



ICPA is hopeful that a nationwide, workable solution will be established as a matter of urgency to ensure the concerns which arose in the 2020 school year are not repeated.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & CARE

Motion 8 North West Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA continue to liaise with Child and Family Health Services (CaFHS) and the Minister for Health and Wellbeing about the need to conduct health checks on all remote and isolated children in SA to ensure any learning disabilities, eyesight, speech and hearing issues are picked up and recognised in their early years.”

Explanation: We all know that recognising and diagnosing learning disabilities early on in a child’s life is extremely important. It gives them a greater chance to get professional help and enable them the best start to their learning journey. Many issues are being undiagnosed due to the tyranny of distance. If learning difficulties are being picked up, then it is often hard to seek help as professionals are often hundreds of km away. Once a child enters the school system there is often a long wait before professional help is able to be accessed. There is strong concern for the stable development of children most at risk, those children being the ones that fly under the radar, which with the lack of CaFHS involvement will fly more under the radar than ever before. A systematic checking system is essential to maintain a level of early detection of children most at developmental risk. If issues can be diagnosed and treated early the outcome is often better.

Motion 9 North West Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA liaise with Child and Family Health Services (CaFHS) to allow geographically isolated members to feel that their family’s needs are being met.”

Explanation: Our concern is that there are still a number of families with infants and pre-schoolers requiring child health and developmental checks that are not easily able to access CaFHS clinics due to distance and a



lack of engagement from CaFHS to provide the holistic care these families require. It was a detrimental loss to our families when the Child Health Nurse funding to RICE was lost in 2018 and RICE could no longer support

families with home visits. It is not acceptable that a government funded entity such as CaFHS cannot provide equitable care to assist families living in remote regions of the state.

Motion 10 North East Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA continues to work with Child and Family Health Services (CaFHS) to ensure children living in the North East of South Australia and serviced by Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) South Eastern Section are included in CaFHS services and communication."

Explanation: Families along the Barrier Highway north of Burra are serviced by RFDS South Eastern Section and not Central Operations. While some families have had contact from a CaFHS nurse, to ensure age appropriate health checks are being carried out and developmental milestones are met, other families have not received any CaFHS communication and are missing out on vital child and maternal health care.

Motion 11 Flinders Ranges Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA continue to work with the Department for Education to ensure there is early identification and intervention along with adequate and sufficient support for children with learning difficulties, and their Distance Education Supervisor, studying via Distance Education."

Explanation: Issues that arise for a child, and their family, when they have a learning disability are only exacerbated when that child studies via Distance Education. Families currently feel they have no choice but to relocate, leaving their homes in rural and remote South Australia, so that their children can access the support required to fulfil their potential. We need to do better for these families; the students deserve equitable education and support wherever they may live in South Australia.



COMMUNICATIONS

Motion 12 Marree Air Branch

CARRIED/LOST

Motion: "That SA ICPA continue to work with Telstra to install small cell towers at properties to provide better access to communications which are vital for distance education"

Explanation: As distance education moves forward through the internet, the infrastructure to provide that internet needs to move forward as well. A reliable, fast service is vital to keeping our children up-to-date with their education. It is also vital for our businesses to keep up as the world moves online or we will be left behind. As more and more people travel and work in the outback, the safety of these people is paramount. Having reliable communication to the outside world, including emergency services is necessary to avoid the burden falling on station personnel. Having fast reliable communication will also provide better living conditions for those educating their children in the bush and this will hopefully entice more people to live and work in the outback.

Motion 13 State Council

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA State Council work with Telstra to provide satellite small cell networks at properties where they have no mobile service."

Explanation: The majority of properties throughout remote and isolated SA currently do not have any mobile network coverage, their only phone access being a frequently unreliable landline and the only source of internet the National Broadband Network (NBN) satellite. Whilst the NBN has improved immensely there are still outages, hardware issues and technical difficulties. Last year the NBN satellite was hit by space matter resulting in an internet outage which negatively impacted schooling, health services and businesses for a number of days. Distance Education (DE) is delivered entirely online and families are restricted by poor internet packages and the limited services available. The 2020 COVID-19 lockdown saw many of the nation's families experience the difficulties that remote and isolated families face on a daily basis; home-schooling their children on limited download packages. We would like to see that remote and isolated families have options for data packages and internet and phone services, equal to those of our city counterparts.



ADMINISTRATION

Motion 14 Port Augusta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

" That the Port Augusta Branch host the 2022 SA state conference."