

## **CONFERENCE MOTIONS**

### **Agenda Motions: Allowances**

#### **A1 Pilbara Branch**

#### ***Allowances***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government to reverse the decrease in the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) and instead increase it in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) annually to accommodate the significant increases in boarding fees charged by all boarding facilities.”**

#### **Explanation:**

The State Government is decreasing the Royalties for Regions component of the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) by 37% over five (5) years. This allowance has already decreased from \$2,105 in 2017 and will reduce down to \$1320 in 2022.

This decision is impacting heavily on isolated families due to boarding schools, both Government and Independent, increasing their annual fees significantly each year. The gap between what parents pay and the allowances received from both the Federal and State Governments is widening. We therefore request that ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government to reverse this decrease to help minimise the financial pressure put on parents from rural and remote areas who are providing their children with an adequate education.

**Moved:** *Pippa Johns (Pilbara Branch)*

**Seconded:** *Tash Johns (SC on behalf of Pilbara Branch)*

**CARRIED**

#### **A2 Lakes District Branch**

#### ***Allowances***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Minister for Education and the State Government for an annual increase to the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).”**

#### **Explanation:**

The BAHA is an important subsidy which assists families living in remote areas of our State who send their children away to school. The allowance provides financial relief for those eligible families who are constantly having to find money within tight budgets to cover the ever-increasing cost of school and boarding fees.

Boarding fees continue to rise on average by 2-8% per annum and the continued reduction of the BAHA allowance, increases the financial burden on parents accessing an education for their children.

The reduction of this allowance has seen rural and remote families leave and relocate to larger centres to ensure their children have access to affordable secondary education. For families who have no choice but to send their children away to boarding school, the increase in the gap fee; between what is charged, and the amount parents receive in financial support continues to widen.

For the 2021 school year there is a gap fee of \$4427 between the boarding costs at a Residential College in WA and the AIC and BAHA payments that an eligible family receives from the Federal and State Government. This is an increase in the gap payable up from 2020 by 3.68%.

We therefore request that ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government for an increase to the BAHA on an annual basis in line with the CPI increase as is applied to the Federal AIC allowance; to minimise the financial impact on rural and remote families.

**Moved:** *Jane Cunningham (Lakes District Branch)*

**Deemed covered by A1**

**CARRIED**

**A3     Goldfields Eyre Branch**

***Allowances***

**“That ICPA (WA) continue to lobby the State Government and the Department of Education for a substantial increase to the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) to take into account the significant annual rise in boarding fees.”**

**Explanation:**

In September 2017 Minister Sue Ellery announced that the BAHA would reduce over five years due to the Royalties for Regions (RfR) funding ceasing after 2017. The Royalties for Regions program started funding support for the BAHA in 2010 with an increase in the BAHA of \$785.

Boarding fees continue to rise annually throughout Western Australia by up to 8%. This is causing a significant gap between what is charged and what is received by parents as support from both Federal and State Government. Families who have no choice but to send their children away to boarding school are increasingly under financial pressure to provide their children with suitable educations. Currently there is a gap of \$4427, at Residential Colleges in WA, that isolated families must pay after receiving the AIC and BAHA payments (without AIC additional) from both the Federal and State Governments.

We therefore request that ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government to increase the Boarding Away from Home Allowance to minimise this financial pressure put on parents in the effort to provide their children with a suitable education.

**Moved:** *Elyce Donaghy (Goldfields Eyre Branch)*

**Deemed covered by A1**

**CARRIED**

**A4     Kimberley Air Branch**

***Allowances***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government for an increase in the Boarding Away from Home Allowance.”**

**Moved:** *Kirsty Forshaw (Kimberley Air Branch)*

**Deemed covered by A1**

**CARRIED**

**Agenda Motions: Communications**

**S1     Lakes District Branch**

***Communications***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby Telstra and the Minister for Regional Development to ensure the time taken to restore faults, and the entitlements for every working day of delay beyond an agreed repair date is within the Customer Service Guarantee guidelines, in Rural and Remote WA.”**

**Explanation:**

Members within the Lakes District area were without a fixed service landline for a period of six (6) weeks from the date first reported. Throughout this period of time members continued to be billed for a service that was not operational. Members were not offered an alternative service and due to poor mobile coverage, they were unable to rely on a consistent and reliable service from the existing mobile tower.

**Moved:** *Jane Cunningham (Lakes District Branch)* **Seconded:** *Claire Walter (Lakes District Branch)* **CARRIED**

### **Agenda Motions: Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum**

#### **A5 Goldfields Eyre Branch *Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Education to ensure that the role of Support Teacher of Learning (STL) and the funding for the position in Schools of the Air (SOTA) continues past 2021.”**

#### **Explanation:**

ICPA (WA) have lobbied for the recognition from the State Government of the importance of the STL position within SOTAs. There have been instances in the past where the Department has considered removing this position. Continued lobbying has shown the importance of this role within the context of our schools.

The role of the STL is to provide a support service for those geographically isolated students studying via school of the air, with specific learning requirements including learning difficulties and gifted and talented programs.

The STL teachers:

- Are specialized and highly trained.
- Support teachers in developing, implementing and evaluating individual educational programmes (IEP).
- Assess and evaluate students, using second and third tier assessments and implement interventions.
- Provide detailed assessment records for the entire school.
- Provide a link between outside organisations and the school community through referrals to specialists.
- Visit students in the home learning environment to do assessments and support the implementation of IEPs.
- Facilitate individualised lessons for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. These lessons are offered in addition to the student’s regular class lessons.
- Develop and provide professional learning for teaching staff and home tutors.
- Source materials and resources to cater for students, staff and home tutors.
- Are a vital, confidential and personal link between school and home, between child, teacher, home tutor and parent.

Students continue to benefit directly from this service. It is imperative that the STL service is not diminished in anyway.

**Moved:** *Elyce Donaghy (Goldfields Eyre Branch)* **Seconded:** *Sam White (Goldfields Eyre Branch)* **CARRIED**

**S2     Gascoyne Branch**

***Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Minister for Education to change the funding model for Schools of the Air to a service delivery model rather than the student-centred funding model to ensure that Schools of the Air do not have to cut services delivered.”**

**Explanation:**

Schools of the Air are not only dealing with rolling funding cuts since the decision was reversed to close them, but they are also now faced with the problem that they cannot deliver services that make School of the Air.

Services that should be delivered no matter how many students:

- Face to face contact at least once per term to interact with other students and their teachers plus activities that all school students should have that attend school.

At Carnarvon School of the Air this includes:

- Home Tutors Seminar: One (1) week in Carnarvon with students and parents; students attend face to face with teachers and parents are updated on set work, expectations of the school attend meetings with teachers to name a few.
- Sports and activity days: Two (2) days in term twice a year to attend school for team sports and attend lesson with teachers.
- Sports camp: For years 3-6 to attend Geraldton to participate in sports activities.
- Canberra trip: Held biannually for years 5 and 6 students. (Heavily subsidised through fundraising by the school community.)
- Presentation concert, activity days for Kindergarten – year 3 and muster for years 4 – 6.
- Home visits: These should be three (3) times a year but have been reduced to one (1) or none with the current funding model which is really unacceptable.

**Moved:** Mary Wake (Gascoyne Branch)    **Seconded:** Alys McKeough (Gascoyne Branch)

**CARRIED**

**F1     Kimberley Air Branch**

***Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum***

**“That ICPA (WA) works with the Education Department to explore a transition from the current Education Port for accessing satellite internet across to Sky Muster Plus to provide for a more reliable and effective service for online distance education programs .”**

**Explanation:**

Although the provision of internet to distance education classrooms via the Education Port is greatly appreciated, the introduction of the NBN Sky Muster Plus product with unmetered access to online education sites would result in a more effective service to families who rely on internet for educational purposes.

**Moved:** Jo Camilleri (Kimberley Air Branch)    **Seconded:** Kirsty Forshaw (Kimberley Air Branch)

**CARRIED**

### **Agenda Motions: Rural & Remote Schools**

**A6      Central Wheatbelt North Branch      *Rural & Remote Schools***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Minister for Education to ensure that services such as the mobile Dental Therapy Centre (DTC) are not rationalized purely due to school population.”**

**Explanation:**

Our branch is concerned about the erosion of services to rural schools and ask that ICPA (WA) advocate on our behalf so that rural schools do not continue to be disadvantaged by the removal of services. The dental health service states in its mission statement that it provides dental care for all enrolled school children and provides access to dental care to financially or geographically disadvantaged persons in the community.

The State Government provides a public dental service for eligible school students via the School Dental Service (SDS). This provides free general dental care to enrolled school children between the ages of 5 and 16 years old.

Loss of the mobile Dental Therapy Centre to small rural schools’ places extra pressure on school attendance, access to dental care and parent travel time and expense.

**Moved:** *Amanda Nixon (CWN Branch)*    **Seconded:** *Isabel Nixon (CWN Branch)*

**CARRIED**

### **Agenda Motions: Student Accommodation**

**A7      Kimberley Air Branch      *Student Accommodation***

**“That ICPA (WA) work with the relevant departments to ensure that our WA children who are boarding at schools outside the state are allowed the same permissions as essential workers and granted special permission to quarantine at home rather than in a hotel away from family (if state regulations require a quarantine period).”**

**Explanation:**

Families are being separated across state borders due to the mandatory hotel quarantine. Families within our region are being faced with the difficult choice; change schools to WA based boarding school or, in the case of another hard border closure, potentially not see their children for an unforeseen amount of time. The children in question are attending specialist equine programs interstate that are not offered in WA schools and moving these children at this stage in their education would be disruptive academically, emotionally and socially.

Currently “essential workers” do not have to quarantine when traveling across state borders so long as they do not leave the airport. Why then are our boarding school children being asked to do a mandatory quarantine period when traveling home from school?

**Moved:** *Jo Camilleri (Kimberley Air Branch)*    **Seconded:** *Kirsty Forshaw (Kimberley Air Branch)*

**CARRIED**

**A8      Lakes District Branch**

***Student Accommodation***

**“That ICPA (WA) requests the Minister for Education work collaboratively with the Department of Education, the Catholic Education Office of WA and the Association of Independent Schools WA; and any other relevant authorities to develop policy that will ensure the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) guidelines be adhered to with uniformity and consistency across all boarding school facilities in Western Australia.”**

**Explanation:**

Lakes District Branch acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020 brought many challenges to our schools and in particular our boarding facilities and that often decisions were being made at an everchanging pace.

However, the inconsistent and varying arrangements that were introduced caused additional stress to both students and families in extremely worrying times.

After the first wave of COVID-19 when schools reopened some boarders had not actually returned to school. It quickly became apparent that the AHPPC guidelines for boarding students are contradictory. For example: the social distancing requirement in a boarding house under the AHPPC is much more restrictive than for example those children that were housed in a private accommodation and compared to the freedoms of a day student.

There are broad interpretations from school to school which adds to the confusion and uncertainty. Policy and guidelines need to be implemented with the assistance and guidance of stakeholders such as ABSA, who know our families and know boarding.

**Moved:** Jane Cunningham (Lakes District Branch)   **Seconded:** Claire Walter (Lakes District Branch)      **CARRIED**

**Agenda Motions: Travel**

**A9      Pilbara Branch**

***Travel***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Transport to accept and process requests for refunds for airfares under the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) up until 31 December for the full school year when all travel has been undertaken as is the case for the Road Travel Subsidy (RTS).”**

**Explanation:**

The STSS provides travel assistance in the form of a fares allowance and/or a road travel subsidy subject to a number of eligibility criteria being met. The STSS is available to eligible students who:

- hold Australian Citizenship or permanent residency status.
- are below the age of 26.
- are dependant financially on their parent(s)/guardian(s).
- are not receiving Youth Allowance or Abstudy.
- had a gap of no more than 12 months between secondary and tertiary study.
- **To be eligible for air, bus or train fare allowances**, the student and parents must ordinarily reside in the ‘Defined Remote Area of Western Australia’.

Eligible applicants are entitled to:

- 8 round road trips per family under the RTS.
- 4 return air/bus/train trips for school students under a subsidised fare.
- 4 return air/bus/train trips for first year tertiary students (less than 20 years old) under a subsidised fare who have not claimed previously.
- 3 return air/bus/train trips for first year tertiary students aged less than 20 years of age who have claimed previously.
- 2 return air/bus/train trips for all other tertiary students.

The subsidised fare is limited to the cost of the air/bus/train fare for the most direct route by air/bus/train between the principal family home or usual place of residence and Perth. Any additional cost must be borne by the parent(s).

Subsidised fares can be accessed using a travel voucher or by requesting a refund. If a family chooses to book and pay for air, bus or train travel rather than applying for a travel voucher, they may apply for a reimbursement; however, completed refund applications for airfares must be submitted no later than one month after the last date of travel on the e-Ticket or tax invoice.

Families should be allowed to submit refund applications up until the end of the calendar year in order to maximize the advantage of the subsidy. When managing the logistics of secondary students boarding away from home from remote areas, circumstances often change during the year altering plans of transporting students to and from boarding school.

One of the key objectives of the scheme is to alleviate the difficulties associated with access to secondary/tertiary education related transport in regional and remote WA. One of these difficulties is funding transport to and from boarding school. The flexibility of allowing airfare refunds until 31 December ensures families are receiving the entitlements the scheme has been designed for. We therefore request the Department of Transport to remove the strict one-month time constraint.

**Moved:** *Pippa Johns (Pilbara Branch)*      **Seconded:** *Tash Johns (SC on behalf of Pilbara Branch)*      **CARRIED**

**A10      Pilbara Branch**

***Travel***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Transport to allow for special circumstances as to the location a student is flying to and/or from when applying for a refund or voucher for airfare under the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS).”**

**Explanation:**

When applying for a refund or voucher through the STSS, a student is only eligible to submit a request for flights via the most direct route by air/bus/train between the principal family home or usual place of residence and Perth.

Families in remote areas can travel large distances to access needs and services for a variety of reasons, such as student pick-ups from school camps for younger siblings, medical and/or business. If a student is flying to a location from boarding school that is more practical to be picked up at an airport than the airport located nearest to their usual place of residence, the family should be entitled to a voucher or refund equivalent to that of the fare to the airport nearest to their usual place of residence.

For example, if a family's nearest airport is Paraburdoo but they are attending a School of the Air camp in Karratha with younger siblings, it makes sense that their child attending boarding school would fly to Karratha rather than Paraburdoo. The current scheme does not allow for a voucher or refund for this situation.

A student should be eligible to request a voucher or claim the amount of a fare to their usual place of residence regardless of the location they are flying to.

**Moved:** *Pippa Johns (Pilbara Branch)*      **Seconded:** *Tash Johns (SC on behalf of Pilbara Branch)*      **CARRIED**

**A11      Eastern Districts Branch      *Travel***

**"That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Transport to review their policy regarding the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS)-Road Travel Subsidy to more appropriately fit rural travel situations and therefore change their criteria to enable our children to receive the education that is comparable to that of metropolitan students."**

**Explanation:**

Families who have previously qualified for the Road Travel Subsidy prior to 2019 are now still having their claims rejected. This is due to a TransWA bus service running through their town, or within a 56km radius. The scheduled timetables are often on days not suitable to school timetables.

Example: The TransWA bus travels from Perth to Esperance coming through Hyden on a Tuesday. The return bus is on a Thursday from Esperance; meaning students would accrue anywhere from 8 to 16 days absent over a school term. Over a 6-year period of boarding this is a minimum of 9.6 weeks of school missed.

When the bus is not available on the appropriate days, students are expected to travel to Perth and stay in hotels (at parents' expense) with no adult supervision until their school opens. This could mean five (5) nights in a hotel alone. Many of these students are minors, unaccompanied by an adult and particularly pertinent as some children are still 11 years of age.

**Moved:** *Coby Smith (Eastern Districts Branch)*      **Seconded:** *Carla Hyde (Eastern Districts Branch)*      **CARRIED**

**A12      Lakes District Branch      *Travel***

**"That ICPA (WA) lobby the On-demand Transport - Department of Transport service and the State Government for a review into the eligibility criteria of the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme - Road Travel Subsidy."**

**Explanation:**

Families who have previously received the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme - Road Travel Subsidy allowance are continuing to be rejected due to the introduction of TransWA services; and that they now reside less than 56kms from the nearest transport hub, with a regular passenger transport service.

The timetabling of these services is not suitable for transporting rural students to and from their nearest appropriate educational boarding facility as the days these services run are mid-week and would result in the student missing out on up to 20 days of schooling per year.

This reduction of attendance at an educational institution is proven to have detrimental outcomes on a student's academic performance.



The eroding of allowances is an added increase to the cost of educating rural students and shows a lack of support for rural families.

**Moved:** Jane Cunningham (Lakes District Branch) **Seconded:** Claire Walter (Lakes District Branch) **CARRIED**

**A13** **Eastern Districts Branch**

**Travel**

**“That ICPA (WA) requests that the On-demand Transport - Department of Transport (ODT) review the transport hub policy criteria for the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS)-Road Travel Subsidy. The criteria should state that the nearest transport hub should travel to the nearest appropriate government school.”**

**Explanation:**

The official criteria are as follows:

The Student Travel Subsidy Scheme provides travel assistance to school and tertiary students who are geographically isolated. The two main types of travel support are:

- Subsidised fares for air, bus and train travel for eligible students who live within the defined remote area of Western Australia (see map).
- A road travel subsidy for eligible students who live anywhere within western Australia but who must be driven in a private vehicle more than 56km from home to the nearest:
  - Appropriate government school with boarding facilities offering classes in the grade or level in which the student is enrolled, or
  - Regular passenger transport (bus stop, airport, or train station- please visit the TransWA - [plan your journey](#) website for regular passenger transport hubs and routes), or
  - A school bus service operating between the student’s home and the school they are attending.

Families are being refused STSS-Road Travel Subsidy when the nearest appropriate hub is more than 56km away, for the 2020 school year.

Example 1: Hyden is 192km from Narrogin Senior High School, our nearest appropriate government school. There is no direct bus route from Hyden to Narrogin, so the transport hub criteria are unsuitable to our demographics.

Example 2: When a rejection claim was inquired by a member, the response from an ODT Customer Service officer to the member was as follows:

***“I understand that the bus hub is less than 56km from you. With our assessment to be eligible you need to reside more than 56km from your nearest government boarding facility or regular passenger transport service. We therefore pay the allowance to the closest facility/transport hub whichever comes first. To be able to claim the allowance, you must live more than 56kms and each kilometre after, you will be paid a rate of \$0.2038 per kilometre.*”**

The nearest bus service does not go to the closest appropriate government facility at Narrogin, it goes to Perth, the opposite direction.

Example 3: Another member enquired why their family application was rejected and she was advised:

***“If you look at the TransWA map that they could get their child from Kulin to Narrogin.”***

Turns out she can just on two different bus routes and it may take a day and a half to make the journey. This would include a night's stay in Perth with no adult supervision. The closest boarding facility (Narrogin) has no direct bus on a daily or weekly basis.

**Moved:** *Coby Smith (Eastern Districts Branch)*

**Deemed covered by A12**

**CARRIED**

**A14     Lakes District Branch**

***Travel***

**"That ICPA (WA) lobby the Public Transport Authority to ensure that all school bus contractors adhere to the Student Transport Assistance Policy and Operational Guidelines and their contractual obligations; and that remotely affected families are provided with an avenue of recourse should a breach to the code of conduct and/or the contractual obligations by bus contractors occur."**

**Explanation:**

Concerns have been expressed for the safety of students when contractors fail to maintain buses to a safe and hygienic standard and fails to comply with procedures relating to leaving students unattended at bus stops.

Example 1: Bus driver failed to notify they were going to be early in the afternoons and dropped students at their stop. At the time, this student was six (6) years old and it was raining. When the driver was questioned, he told her to 'just run quickly'.

Example 2. Bus that experienced many breakdowns including blown tyres, flat battery, lack of preparedness for school commencement and ongoing issues with the door not closing correctly. Parents had been requested to close the door when students were put on the bus.

Example 3. Cleanliness of the bus, both inside and out with poor visibility out of the windows due to a lack of cleaning.

Example 4. Contractor using an older bus when the regular bus was being serviced or was broken down. This meant no seatbelts for students and the inability to safely fit booster seats for younger students.

Example 5. Following a two-week trial to change the bus route the contractor extended the route unbeknown to School Bus Services and the distance was changed from 95km in 85 minutes of which 40% was on unsealed roads to 112km in 81 minutes with 56% on unsealed roads. This means the school bus is travelling in excess of the permitted speed of 80km/hour.

The number one priority should be the safety of the children.

**Moved:** *Jane Cunningham (Lakes District Branch)*    **Seconded:** *Claire Walter (Lakes District Branch)*

**CARRIED**

**A15     Kimberley Air Branch**

***Travel***

**"That ICPA (WA) lobby the relevant State Government departments to ensure students boarding away from their home base within WA are allowed the same travel permissions as essential workers. The purpose being to travel home without restriction, at short notice."**

**Explanation:**

In 2020, due to the COVID 19 pandemic a number of students have been left stranded when short notice lockdowns have taken place and boarding houses have closed. If these students were given permissions that lasted the full year, rather than applying for a G2G pass every time a lockdown is put into effect, it would enable parents to get their children home rather than relying on friends and family in Perth to take them in.

Giving these students the same travel privileges as 'essential workers' would allow them exemption from quarantine restrictions (if and when applicable) when travelling to and from school.

**Moved:** Kirsty Forshaw (*Kimberley Air Branch*) **Seconded:** Jo Camilleri (*Kimberley Air Branch*) **CARRIED**

**A16** **Eastern Districts Branch**

***Travel***

**"That ICPA (WA) lobby School Bus Services (SBS) to ensure that four (4) bus service routes are provided for students in the Hyden District. These routes are to be flexible when student numbers and/or residential distribution of students change. Bus routes should not be dictated or decided by the bus contractor as they have a vested financial interest."**

**Explanation:**

The Hyden Primary School Bus Committee were informed earlier this year that the entire Northern Hyden corridor may be without a bus as of end of Term 2 2021 due to current low student numbers. This is extremely concerning not only to those families currently utilising this service but will negatively impact our community now and into the future.

According to the SBS Student Transport Assistance Policy and Operation Guidelines; one of the four operation principles states that the Policy will be applied in a manner that is "*reasonable, equitable and aims to meet the needs of individual communities*".

Due to our serious concern, the Hyden Primary School Bus Committee compiled a list of all eligible students for the next four (4) years (2021 – 2024 inclusive) and devised four (4) amended bus routes. These four (4) routes ensure all students will have an opportunity to access the School Bus Service and attend Hyden Primary School as planned, as well as maintaining adequate student numbers on each route.

These proposed routes have been compiled by a group of unvested individuals that have all the current and future children of Hyden best interests at their forefront; they want to ensure they have access to a bus route. School bus routes need to be flexible and accommodating rather than being locked into fixed contracts.

**Moved:** Coby Smith (*Eastern Districts Branch*) **Seconded:** Carla Hyde (*Eastern Districts Branch*) **CARRIED**

**S4** **Lakes District Branch**

***Travel***

**"That ICPA (WA) lobby the Public Transport Authority for an annual review of all orange school bus service routes."**

**Explanation:**

Changes in student numbers for some bus services has put additional pressure on some bus contractors in both the distances the bus routes are required to travel and the time taken.

There is currently no flexibility with bus contractors and bus service routes. Each appears to be intent on retaining their existing service without considering what is the best option to provide an appropriate, safe and fair service for eligible students and families in the area.

School bus routes need to be flexible and accommodating to meet the everchanging nature of rural/farming families and should be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with local school bus representatives.

**Moved:** *Jane Cunningham (Lakes District Branch)* **Seconded:** *Claire Walter (Lakes District Branch)* **CARRIED**

**S5** **Gascoyne Branch**

***Travel***

**“That ICPA (WA) investigate why ABSTUDY students are not entitled to the travel scheme. Same allowances as the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS)**

**Explanation:**

If a child is on the ABSTUDY school fees allowance, which is paid directly to the boarding school they attend, then that child is unable to apply for a Student Travel Subsidy Scheme – Fares Allowance through the Department of Transport. Instead, they are only able to utilise the ABSTUDY fares allowance, which has some differences.

- ABSTUDY fares allowance will cover up to 3 return flights a year, while Student Travel Subsidy Scheme covers 4 return flights a year.
- ABSTUDY fares allowance requires a minimum of 6 weeks’ notice while STSS encourages early application.
- ABSTUDY Fares Allowance – not eligible for long weekends. This is very inflexible with flight timetables, students cannot use ABSTUDY Fares Allowance to fly home for long weekends, Easter (unless in school holiday times) or for boarder weekends. This is not the case with the STSS.

For families with children at boarding school who qualify for STSS and other children in the same family who receive the ABSTUDY Fares Allowance, they are incurring additional expenses for some children who must pay for extra flights.

This can become very expensive, especially when flying into Carnarvon, at over \$1000 per child for a return flight.

**Moved:** *Alys McKeough (Gascoyne Branch)* **Seconded:** *Mary Wake (Gascoyne Branch)* **LOST**