

CONFERENCE MOTIONS

Agenda Motions: Allowances

A1 Lakes District Branch

Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Education and the State Government for an annual increase to the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA).”

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 extra 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; particularly for some families who are struggling with rural hardship.

The reduction of this allowance has seen rural and remote families leave and relocate to larger centres to ensure their children have access to an affordable secondary education. For families who have no choice but to send their children way 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 2020 school year there is a gap fee of \$4270 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 Governments, this is an increase in the gap payable up from 2019 by 8.65%.

We therefore request that ICPA (WA) lobbies 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: *Claire Walter (Lakes District)* **Seconded:** *Kym Ross (SC on behalf of Lakes District)* **CARRIED**

A2 Pilbara Branch

Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies 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) seeing an overall reduction of 37% over five years. This allowance has already decreased from \$2,105 in 2017 and will go 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 & remote areas who are providing their children with an adequate education.

Moved: *Pippa Johns (Pilbara)*

Seconded: *Karen Watherston (Pilbara)*

CARRIED

A3 Central Wheatbelt North Branch

Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the State Government to increase the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) annually.”

Explanation:

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) has decreased from \$2,105 in 2017 and will reduce to \$1320 in 2022. Families will have to pay an extra \$785 per child per year for boarding fees after that period. We request that ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government to increase the BAHA in line with the CPI annually, to lessen the financial strain on parents from rural and remote areas.

Moved: *Isabel Nixon (Central Wheatbelt North Branch)*

Deemed covered by A1

CARRIED

A4 Meekatharra Air Branch

Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the State Government highlighting the importance an increase to the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) would make to our drought stricken rural and remote families.”

Explanation

The current drought in rural and remote areas of Western Australia continues despite recent rainfall in some parts of the state, financial hardship due to dry conditions will be ongoing and the BAHA is a vital allowance that rural and remote families rely heavily upon to assist with education costs.

Moved: *Clare Mahony (Meekatharra Air)* **Seconded:** *Penny Johns (Meekatharra Air)*

CARRIED

A5 Meekatharra Air Branch

Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the State Government to increase the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) to bring it in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) annually.”

Explanation:

This allowance is vital in assisting parents who need to send their children away from home to continue their education. With the State Government cutting the allowance by 37% over 5 years (2018 -2022) the allowance will be reduced to \$1320 in 2022. In the same five years the cost of boarding at both public and private schools will have increased substantially.

This leaves parents even further out of pocket in trying to educate their children. Given the number of WA students who can access the BAHA allowance is relatively small, it seems small minded of the Government, to take funds from these families.

Moved: *Clare Mahony (Meekatharra Air)*

Deemed covered by A1

CARRIED

F2 Gascoyne Branch

Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) request ICPA (Aust) to continue lobbying on our behalf for the Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA).”

Explanation

For several years branches of ICPA across Australia have asked ICPA Australia to lobby the Federal Government for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA). Recently it was suggested that the States lobby for this at a state level. Whilst we absolutely support the intention of DETA and would embrace its introduction we feel that dealing with this at the State level could detract from the importance of such an allowance and potentially leave a situation where some States have a version of DETA and others do not. We feel that Federal ICPA representing all the States on this issue will, if DETA is adopted, support ICPA members fairly across Australia.

Moved: *Alys McKeough (Gascoyne)*

Seconded: *Mary Wake (Gascoyne)*

CARRIED

Agenda Motions: Communications

A6. Central Wheatbelt North Branch

Communications

“Central Wheatbelt North Branch would like ICPA (WA) to support ICPA (Aust) in lobbying the Minister for Regional Development and telecommunication providers to investigate mobile call dropouts and restoration times on mobile tower backup batteries.”

Explanation:

Members still report significant issues with call dropouts and timely restoration of the backup battery on mobile towers during extended power outages. We request that these concerns are raised when in meetings with telecommunication providers.

Moved: *Isabel Nixon (CWN Branch)*

Seconded: *Nancy Werder (CWN Branch)*

CARRIED

Agenda Motions: Distance Education

A7 Goldfield Eyre Branch

Distance Education

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies 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 2020.”

Explanation:

ICPA have lobbied for the recognition from the State Government of the importance of the STL position within SOTA's. 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.

With the closing of the Chidley Education Centre in 1998, ICPA (WA) lobbied hard to ensure there was a service to replace it and today's STL is the result.

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.

In the past numerous students have benefited directly from this service. It is imperative that the STL service is not diminished in anyway.

Moved: *Elyce Donaghy (State Council on behalf of Goldfields Eyre)* **Seconded:** *Bianca James (State Council)*

CARRIED

Agenda Motions: Rural & Remote Schools / Appropriate Schooling

A8 Central Wheatbelt North Branch

Rural & Remote Schools

“That the ICPA (WA) lobbies 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:

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.

We are 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.

Moved: *Isabel Nixon (CWN Branch)*

Seconded: *Nancy Werder (CWN Branch)*

CARRIED

A9. Meekatharra Air Branch

Appropriate Schooling

“That ICPA (WA) writes to the Minister of Education advising of the poor condition of the facilities and hygiene concerns at the Bluff Point Camp School since it was leased to Fairbridge WA.”

Explanation:

Parents who attended events at the camp school, including the 60th Anniversary celebrations of the Meekatharra School of the Air, were shocked to find the facilities untidy and that sports equipment had been left exposed to water, thus making it unfit for use and a hygiene risk. Even worse was some parents discovering there were bed bugs in the dormitories they and their children were sleeping in.

Many home tutors have now said they will no longer stay at the camp school for any school events.

Moved: *Clare Mahony (Meekatharra Air)* **Seconded:** *Penny Johns (Meekatharra Air)*

CARRIED

Agenda Motions: Travel

A10 Hyden Branch

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies 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 our metropolitan students.”

Explanation:

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

For example: The Trans WA bus travels from Perth to Esperance coming through Hyden on a Tuesday. The return bus is on a Thursday from Esperance. This would mean that students would accrue up to and including anywhere from 8 to 16 days absent from school per term. Over a period of 6 years of boarding school this is a minimum of 9.6 weeks school missed. When the bus isn't available on the appropriate days, the expectation is that students travel to Perth and are accommodated as a minor, unaccompanied by an adult. Other than a boarding school, what facility is available to provide this service? This is particularly pertinent when many children are still only 11 years old.

Moved: *Samantha Greay (Hyden)*

Seconded: *Carla Hyde (Hyden)*

CARRIED

A11 Hyden Branch

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) requests that The Department of Transport – On Demand Transport 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 is 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 56 km 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 transport hub is more than 56km away, for the 2019 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 is unsuitable to our demographics.

Example 2: When the rejection of a claim was queried by a member that is from Corrigin where there is a district high school with no Year 11 or 12 available. The response from an ODT Customer Service officer to a member was as follows: -

"I understand that the school year your child attends is not available in Corrigin, however the nearest bus service, is less than 56kms. With our assessment to be eligible, you need to reside more than 56kms from the 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 rate of \$0.2038 per kilometre."

The nearest bus service doesn't go to the closest appropriate government boarding facility at Narrogin, it goes to Perth; the opposite direction.

Example 3: Another member enquired why her application was rejected, she was advised;

"That if she looked at TransWA map that she could get her child from Kulin to Narrogin." Turns out she can - just on two different bus routes and it may take him a day and half to make the journey!

The closest Boarding facility (Narrogin) has no direct bus on a daily or weekly basis.

Moved: *Samantha Greay (Hyden)*

Seconded: *Carla Hyde (Hyden)*

CARRIED

A12 Kimberley Air Branch

Travel

"That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Transport to increase the payment per kilometre for the Public Transport Authority (PTA) Conveyance Allowance."

Explanation

In previous years, the payment per kilometre travel paid by the Public Transport Authority (PTA) Conveyance Allowance was sufficient to cover the costs associated with transporting children to school when there is no access to school bus services. However, in the past two years, the cost of fuel and parts to remote areas has meant that this allowance no longer contributes even 50% of the cost families incur transporting our children to school.

We ask that the Department review the current rate of this allowance and increase it greater than the current CPI so that the cost burden on families to transport our children to school is reduced.

Moved: *Connie Wood (Kimberley Air)*

Seconded: *Kirsty Forshaw (Kimberley Air)*

CARRIED

A13 Kimberley Air Branch

Travel

"That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Transport to review the current WA Student Travel Subsidy Scheme for geographically isolated students to allow for discounted fares for students who are required to travel home by air, bus or train at times additional to those already provided for in the scheme."

Explanation:

The current Student Travel Subsidy Scheme provides a number of travel supports each academic year and these allow for students to travel home at school term breaks and at the start and end of each school year. There is no subsidy provided however for mid-term breaks where most boarding houses close and alternative arrangements need to be made for students to return home at these times.

Students who receive other subsidies such as Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY and AIC Second Home Allowance are not eligible to apply for subsidies under the scheme.

We ask that the Department of Social Services review the current scheme to provide for a student discounted fare rebate for travel additional to what is already provided and also for those who are ineligible for full subsidies under the scheme.

The discount would assist in reducing the fare costs incurred so that the burden of cost on families to transport our children to school is reduced.

Moved: *Connie Wood (Kimberley Air)* **Seconded:** *Kirsty Forshaw (Kimberley Air)*

CARRIED

A14 Lakes District Branch

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Department of Transport and the Minister for Transport for a review into the eligibility criteria of the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) - Road Travel Subsidy.”

Explanation:

Families who have previously received the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme - Road Travel allowance are being rejected due to the introduction of Trans WA services; and that they now reside less than 56kms from the nearest transport hub, with a regular passenger transport service irrespective of whether services from that transport hub travel to the nearest appropriate boarding school.

The timetabling of these services are not suitable for the transporting of 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: *Claire Walter (Lakes District Branch* **Seconded:** *Kym Ross (State Council on behalf of Lakes)*

CARRIED

S1 Pilbara Branch

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies 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)*

Seconded: *Karen Watherston (Pilbara)*

CARRIED

S2 **Pilbara Branch**

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies 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.

These two circumstances may affect the location a student flies to:

- 1) Weather events such as flooding and fires may cause road closures between a family home and their nearest airport; however, roads between the family home and an alternative airport may be open, allowing the opportunity for students to fly to the alternative airport.
- 2) 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 and/or medical services.

If a student is flying to a location from boarding school that is more practical or feasible to be picked up at an airport other 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 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)*

Seconded: *Karen Watherston (Pilbara)*

CARRIED

F1 **Kimberley Air Branch**

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Department of Transport Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) to review their policy regarding the eligibility criteria for families in receipt of the AIC Second Home Allowance in relation to accepting the principal place of residence as the address of the claimant rather than the second home address.”

Explanation:

Presently the eligibility criteria for the AIC Second Home Allowance and the Department of Transport Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) contradict each other and make it difficult for the recipients of the AIC allowance to

comply. You meet AIC eligibility criteria if the main purpose of you maintaining a second home is to make it easier for the child you're claiming for to go to school, and the principal family home is the family's usual place of residence, with at least one parent or guardian living there for more than half the time they're getting the allowance where the child you're claiming for usually spends school holidays.

On the contrary, to meet the Department of Transport Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) must be living in a Defined Remote Area (DRA) to qualify and living in a second home in Perth makes you ineligible. This means that families in receipt of AIC 2nd home allowance are not eligible to claim assistance to meet air travel costs for children comply with AIC ruling and to return home during term breaks.

Moved: *Connie Wood (Kimberley Air)* **Seconded:** *Kirsty Forshaw (Kimberley Air)*

CARRIED

Agenda Motions: Miscellaneous

A15 Central Wheatbelt North Branch

Miscellaneous

"That ICPA (WA) investigate the logistics involved in offering the State publication "Bits & Pieces" to members in electronic format with the default option being paper format."

Explanation:

We understand that some members may wish to receive paper copies of ICPA (WA) publications. We ask that the option of electronic publications is offered to members. Electronic distribution aids timeliness of information provides convenient access with handheld devices, cuts the cost of publishing and is an environmentally sustainable option.

Moved: *Isabel Nixon (CWN Branch)*

Seconded: *Nancy Werder (CWN Branch)*

CARRIED

S4 Gascoyne Branch

Miscellaneous

"That ICPA (WA) ask Federal Council to consider adding a recurrent payment option to memberships when the ICPA website and membership portals are revamped."

Explanation:

Many companies offer ongoing annual payments of membership fees, which give the organisation the authority to write to members to remind them their memberships are due, offer the option to request cancellation and if this is not taken up take payment. There are many advantages to having this as a membership option. It saves the treasurers at all levels of ICPA chasing payments from long-term members who may have overlooked payment (this regularly occurs especially in our branch because January is when everyone is on holidays). It ensures continuity of memberships of long-term supporters of ICPA and I personally would be more than willing to sign up to this system as I have been a member for many years. It would save transactions at a branch level for life member payments. It also captures those people who may or may not renew – I am guilty of having recurring payments I forget to cancel then do not worry about it because I have already paid.

Moved: *Alys McKeough (Gascoyne)*

Seconded: *Kelly Hopkinson (Gascoyne)*

CARRIED

F3 Gascoyne Branch

Miscellaneous

““That Gascoyne Branch convene the 49th Annual ICPA (WA) State Conference in 2021.”

Moved: *Alys McKeough (Gascoyne)*

Seconded: *Mary Wake (Gascoyne)*

CARRIED

Agenda Motions: Post Compulsory

S3 Gascoyne Branch

Post Compulsory

“That ICPA (WA)) approach universities who offer the Bachelor and Master of Education to investigate whether station placements could count towards their practical placements as part of their degree.”

Explanation:

At Carnarvon School of the Air we have the most home tutors we have had in quite some time. Home tutors with varying qualifications from student, graduate to experienced teacher, made some comments at our recent meeting. They have asked our branch to ask this question because they think it would have been a great learning opportunity while they were studying. There are many modern technology tools that could assist with assessment of students in these situations and if this model is a possibility the logistics would need further refinement and our branch would be more than happy to assist.

Moved: *Alys McKeough (Gascoyne)*

Seconded: *Mary Wake (Gascoyne)*

CARRIED