

## AGENDA MOTIONS

### ALLOWANCES

**A1 Eastern Districts Branch Allowances CARRIED/LOST**

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

**Explanation:**

The State Government is decreasing the Royalties for Regions (RfR) 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 to \$1,320 in 2022.

This decision is heavily impacting our isolated families due to boarding schools, both Government and Independent increasing their fees annually. 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 and to help minimise the financial pressure put on parents from rural and remote areas who have no other option than to send their children away to school.

**A2 Lakes District Branch Allowances CARRIED/LOST**

**“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 that 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 2022 school year, there is a gap fee of \$4,647 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 2021 by 4.97%.

Fees & Allowance	2021	2022	Rate Variations	
Accommodation	\$14,461	\$14,823	Increase	2.50%
AIC Allowance	\$8,557	\$8,856	Increase	3.49%
BAHA	\$1,477	\$1,320	Decrease	10.63%
	\$4,427	\$4,647	Increase	4.97%

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.

**A3 Meekatharra Air Branch Allowances CARRIED/LOST**

**“That ICPA (WA) continues to lobby the Minister for Education and the State Government for an increase in the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA), to bring it back in line with the consumer price index (CPI) annually.**

**Explanation:**

The BAHA is an important subsidy that rural and remote families rely heavily on each year when sending their children away from home to provide them with an adequate education. An increase in this allowance would significantly help rural families as boarding fees are ever increasing annually.

**DISTANCE EDUCATION, SOTA & CURRICULUM**

**A4 Meekatharra Air Branch Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum CARRIED/LOST**

**“That ICPA (WA) requests ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Families and Social Services, the Minister for Regional Education, Senator the Hon, Fiona Nash Regional Education Commissioner and the Federal Government, to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role home tutors play in educating geographically isolated students via distance education.”**

**Explanation:**

Due to their age, many children are reliant on home tutors to assist with their education. Home tutors are not considered teachers or education assistants. They are, however, accountable for the delivery of face-to-face educational support and supervision of students undertaking a compulsory government education program.

Following the COVID lockdown period, understanding the extent of the role a family member assumes when school must occur from home must now be clearer.

## **TEACHER TRAINING**

### **A5 Lakes District Branch**

### ***Teacher Training***

**CARRIED/LOST**

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA) for the hours REVISE tutors work with students and the Professional Development they carry out to be recognised as counting towards to their hours for meeting their full registration requirements.”**

#### **Explanation:**

REVISE tutors are retired teachers who assist parents with the supervision of children’s education through the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) and regional Schools of the Air (SOTA). Though they may be retired teachers, REVISE tutors may want to remain fully registered with the TRBWA which requires teachers ‘*teach*’ at least 100 full working days since registration was last granted or renewed (usually 5 years for full registration).

In the *Professional Engagement (for the Renewal of Registration) Policy*, it states that ‘*teach*’ is defined as:

- (a) the delivery of an educational programme designed to implement a prescribed curriculum and the assessment of student participation in such an educational programme; or*
- (b) the administration of any such educational program.*

It also states that an ‘*educational venue*’ is ‘(a) a school as defined in s4 of the *School Education Act 1999*’.

The work of REVISE Tutors appears to fit the definitions of both ‘*teach*’ and ‘*educational venue*’.

The current COVID climate has highlighted the importance of retaining accredited teachers and to recognise them as a valuable resource.

### **A6 Lakes District Branch**

### ***Teacher Training***

**CARRIED/LOST**

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA) for the hours Home Tutors who are qualified teachers working with students at home and the Professional Development they carry out to be recognised as counting towards to their hours for meeting their full registration requirements.”**

#### **Explanation:**

Throughout Western Australia, there are many qualified teachers who are currently working with their own children as they attend either the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) or a regional School of the Air (SOTA). Many of these teachers would like to retain or apply for registration with the TRBWA which requires teachers ‘*teach*’ at least 100 full working days since registration was last granted or renewed (see table below for professional engagement and various categories of registration).

In the *Professional Engagement (for the Renewal of Registration) Policy*, it states that ‘*teach*’ is defined as:

- (a) the delivery of an educational programme designed to implement a prescribed curriculum and the assessment of student participation in such an educational programme; or*
- (b) the administration of any such educational program.*

It also states that an ‘educational venue’ is ‘(a) a school as defined in s4 of the School Education Act 1999’.

The work of parents who are qualified teachers working at home with their children to deliver educational programs appears to fit the definitions of both ‘teach’ and ‘educational venue’.

Category of Registration	Minimum number of professional engagement (days taught) required
Full Registration	100 full working days or a period of time that would be equivalent in hours
Limited or Provisional granted for 3 years	60 full working days or a period of time that would be equivalent in hours
Limited or Provisional granted for less than 3 years	Calculated on a pro-rata basis for the period since the registration was last granted or renewed, to the date of application at the rate of 20 full working days for each year

The current COVID climate has highlighted the importance of retaining accredited teachers and to recognise them as a valuable resource.

**A7 Meekatharra Air Branch *Teacher Training* **CARRIED/LOST****

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

**Explanation:**

This is a valuable opportunity for preservice undergraduates to be placed on stations and teach students rather than sit in the SOTA school and only participate with the students online. The online delivery of lessons from a SOTA may give the wrong impression of how easy it is for the parents/tutors to manage students via distance education lessons.

Air lessons with multiple students across varying age levels is very difficult as you are required to keep the other children quiet yet actively working independently; and be helping the student who is undertaking their on-air lesson. This may often be inaccurately perceived by the SOTA teacher as a break for the parents.

There may be ways for branches to assist with overcoming the issues relating to additional expenses incurred for preservice student.

**TRAVEL**

**A8 Eastern Districts Branch *Travel* **CARRIED/LOST****

**“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 with boarding facilities.”**

**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 continuing to be refused STSS Road Travel Subsidy when the nearest transport hub is more than 56km away, for the 2021 school year and/or fails to support the needs of rural students.

Examples have previously been provided and yet still there remain as issues for our members.

**Example 1:**

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

**Example 2:**

A member enquired why their family application was rejected and she was advised that if you look at the TransWA map they could get their child from Kulin to Narrogin. This is only possible on two different bus routes and it may take a day and a half to make the journey. This would include a night stay in Perth with no adult supervision. The closest boarding facility (Narrogin) has no direct bus on a daily or weekly basis.

**A9 Lakes District Branch**

***Travel***

***CARRIED/LOST***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Transport – On-Demand 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 allowance are continuing to be rejected due to the introduction of TransWA services; as 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 the transporting of rural students to and from their nearest appropriate educational boarding facility as the days these services run is mid-week and would result in the student missing 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.

**A10 Eastern Districts Branch *Travel* CARRIED/LOST**

**“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 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 often on days not suitable to the school timetables.

For 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 that students would accrue up to and including 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 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.

**SUPPLEMENTARY MOTIONS**

**RURAL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS**

**S1 Goldfields Eyre Branch *Rural and Remote Schools* CARRIED/LOST**

**“That the ICPA (WA) approach the relevant ministers in regard to the state of disrepair and lack of services offered at the Fairbridge WA run camp schools, in particular Goldfields Camp School in Kalgoorlie.”**

**Explanation:**

In 2018 the State Government handed over the running of six (6) government owned camp schools to Fairbridge WA in an attempt to save money. A media release at the time stated, *“Public school students will continue to receive priority access to the camp school sites. Fairbridge WA has committed to providing students and other members of the community access to school camps and outdoor activities that are high-quality, affordable and available to all schools. The organisation specialises in camp accommodation and outdoor education.”*

In the intervening years less and less activities, room for activities, accommodation and meal options are being offered. The state of the Kalgoorlie Camp School in particular has degraded to such an extent that many schools, including Kalgoorlie School of the Air who have traditionally used the camp

school up to 4 times a year, have had to seek alternative venues and accommodation for camps at considerable cost to their schools, parents and communities.

## STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

**S2      Midwest Branch                                  *Student Accommodation*                                  **CARRIED/LOST****

**“That ICPA (WA) requests the Minister for Education work collaboratively with the Department of Education, the Catholic Education WA (CEWA), the Association of Independent Schools WA (AISWA), the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) and the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association (ICPA) to ensure that a balanced approach to risk management within Boarding Schools is undertaken so that disproportionate restrictions aren’t placed on our vulnerable young children. “**

**Explanation:**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve in Western Australia and we learn to live with COVID in our community, parents have real concerns for the wellbeing of their children in boarding schools and the disadvantage compared to their day student peers. Geographically isolated students are a vulnerable cohort who, in many instances have no choice but to attend a boarding school in order to receive an equitable educational opportunity. Their families continue to be exasperated by the conditions imposed and measures implemented to limit the spread of the virus in boarding schools.

Across our vast State in all the varying boarding environments, inconsistent, unjustifiable, and stifling guidelines, processes and rules have proven to extenuate these vulnerabilities, proving unbearable for the children and indeed heartbreaking for their families. We believe more needs to be done to ensure pragmatic solutions are implemented in boarding facilities which do not further disadvantage our children.

Please consider our vulnerable young children before disproportionate restrictions compared to their day student peers are placed upon them.

## TEACHER TRAINING

**S3      Goldfields Eyre Branch                                  *Teacher Training*                                  **CARRIED/LOST****

**“That ICPA (WA) approach universities who offer a Bachelor of Education to investigate whether preservice/student teachers’ time spent programming and teaching ‘set work’ on stations could count towards their practical placements as part of their degree.”**

**Explanation:**

By working with the universities, isolated families who educate their children through SOTA’s could offer student teachers an immersive experience that would benefit themselves, the families and SOTA’s. This scheme would likely encourage preservice and student teachers to apply for positions with SOTA’s once they graduate and would benefit isolated families by providing them with a home tutor dedicated to education who understands the system and can more confidently deliver the curriculum.