

**The Isolated Children's Parents'
Association of Australia
ICPA (Aust)**



2023 Federal Conference

Motions

26 and 27 July 2023

Darwin, Northern Territory

BOARDING SCHOOLS/HOSTELS/SECOND HOME

A1. Western Australia State Council

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate to the Minister for Social Services and other relevant government departments for an increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance for geographically isolated students, to help alleviate financial pressures incurred as a result of increased fees by boarding facilities.”

Explanation:

The cost of boarding in Western Australia continues, on average, to increase by 5% per annum, with some schools increasing by as much as 16.92%. In 2022 the WA State Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) was reduced to the 2010 amount of \$1350 per child. ICPA WA has successfully lobbied to have the BAHA increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which has resulted in a \$30 increase per child for 2023. However, this still falls well below the 2017 BAHA of \$2105 per child. Families are continually experiencing increasing financial pressure as the cost of boarding continues to rise.

As stated in media release 15th March 2023, Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm has acknowledged that *“The Albanese Government wants to ensure that all Australian’s have access to high quality education and for many families, boarding school is not only the best option for a quality school education experience for their children, it may also be their only option.”*

An increase in the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance would relieve some of the financial burden placed on families to pay for their children’s education.

A2. Broken Hill Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Education and the Minister for Social Services for an increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance, to help reduce the gap between costs incurred by geographically isolated families and the Basic Boarding Allowance.”

Explanation:

Geographically isolated families not only have to pay boarding fees which are continually increasing, but also face additional, unavoidable and ever-increasing costs of travel and accommodation.

Geographically isolated families often have no choice other than to send their children away for boarding school in the secondary years. Often these schools are hundreds of kilometres and many hours travel from their home. Geographically isolated families face additional costs when they drop off and pick up their children and for weekend visits, especially for compulsory leave weekends, during the term. With the cost of boarding fees, fuel, flights and accommodation increasing and the AIC only increasing slightly each year the gap between what geographically isolated families pay to send their children to boarding school and what they receive through the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance is quickly widening.

In recent data collected in a survey conducted of GI families across Australia, over 75% families face a gap of \$5000.00 or more per term.

We understand that the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance cannot cover all costs, but we believe an increase to the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance of at least \$4000.00 per annum would help reduce the gap between actual costs for geographically isolated families and the Basic Boarding Allowance. This would help ensure equity of educational opportunities for families with students living in geographically isolated areas.

A3. Midwest Branch (WA)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the Minister for Education and Minister for Social Services for an increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance to more closely reflect the real cost of educating geographically isolated students where the only option is to attend a boarding facility.”

Explanation:

A recent survey of Western Australian Midwest branch members confirmed that the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance of \$2349 per term fails to address the actual costs of sending a child to a boarding facility. 91% of respondents were in the range of \$5000 - \$10,000 per term, per child deficit when boarding fees, travel costs and overnight accommodation were taken into consideration.

Many of our families reside in locations that have no access to a local high school. The cost of boarding school continues to rise, and our families are faced with very difficult financial decisions as to how they are going to afford to educate their high school aged children and continue to live in their rural community.

An increase to the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance is a much-needed equity allowance to allow geographically isolated children an education as afforded to their urban counterparts and help alleviate the financial burden placed on families to pay for their children’s education.

A4. Richmond Branch (QLD)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the Minister for Social Services for an increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance of at least \$4000 and the alignment of the Allowance to the Consumer Price Index: Education sub index to assist geographically isolated students’ access to boarding school.”

Explanation:

According to ICPA (Aust) figures, the 2022 the average boarding fees in NSW was \$24,345, Qld \$21, 235, SA \$23,304 and WA \$23,315. In 2023 the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance is \$9396 per student per year. Without factoring in boarding fee increases which would have no doubt occurred in the 2023 year, the AIC BBA is not even covering 50% of boarding fees if using these averages as a measuring stick. An increase of \$4000 to the Allowance would see at least 55% of boarding fees covered and assist to counteract the rising costs of living expenses being experienced across Australia. The alignment of the Allowance to the Education sub index would ensure the Allowance did not erode over time and was reflective of the true costs of educational expenses.

Affordable education goes to the heart of rural and remote communities and their sustainability. If geographically isolated families cannot afford to send their children away to boarding school to access a secondary education, we will continue to experience the mass exodus of families from these communities, the impact of which most probably will not be noticed by mainstream Australia until local butcher, grocery stores and supermarket shelves are void of Australian made produce. Access to affordable education does not only affect rural and remote families. It affects the entire country which relies on these families to feed it, and it affects the national economy which is reliant on agricultural exports.

With an estimated 4000 geographically isolated students receiving the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance per year, increasing this allowance to an amount which reflects the actual cost of a boarding school in Australia in 2023 and beyond is a small but sound investment not only for educational outcomes for students but for the entire nation.

A5. Collarenebri-Mungindi Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) asks the Minister for Social Services to review the guidelines for approving ‘Limited Program Schools’ to make the program more effective for rural and remote students.”

Explanation:

The current program guidelines and assessment process is:

(1) The Australian Government's Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme is administered by guidelines published by Services Australia - Centrelink.

Services Australia defines a limited program school in the AIC Guidelines as:

- primary schools where the syllabus and teaching arrangements are specifically geared to meet particular requirements and may be considered limited compared to the general curriculum of the state or territory.
- secondary schools that either:
 - do not offer a full range of years or grades; or
 - do not provide adequate facilities or programs to enable a student to gain a Year 12 certificate or tertiary entrance score; or
 - have a syllabus and teaching arrangements that are specifically geared to meet the needs of a particular student and may be considered limited compared to the general curriculum of the state or territory.

(2) Each year Services Australia writes to the State Departments of Education and provides the definition of a Limited Program School and requests the department provide a list of schools that meets their criteria by November.

Services Australia uses this list to determine if a student would to be eligible for the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme and ABSTUDY Allowances operated through Centre link.

- a) Schools do not apply to be included in the list.
- b) For each year, from 2017-2021, two schools in New South Wales have been identified as meeting Services Australia's definition of a Limited Program School.

A limited school should also be assessed according to the syllabus's offered and the health and wellbeing of the students attending the rural and remote school. Video conferencing should not be considered the acceptable way of offering a subject. If you are the only student in the class doing a subject it should not be accepted as offering the subject and points should be awarded under the limited program schools. That student should therefore be eligible for the entitlements under the Limited Program Schools.

What a limited program school is:

Limited program schools either don't:

- offer all year levels or grades
- have facilities or programs for students to get a Year 12 certificate or an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank.

The outcomes to holding this review would be:

- Review all guidelines/criteria of the program
- make the program more workable – these schools are already limited in what they offer
- make the program more inclusive for students who have a disability
- assist rural and remote students who have no other options for gaining an education in their secondary years.

A6. Walgett Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant federal ministers to include criteria that would ensure the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding and Additional Boarding Allowances are available to students living in or near remote communities such as Walgett, NSW that are identified as severely educationally disadvantaged, in the “Educate Australia Fair”, Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre Study.”

Explanation:

Sadly, despite the best efforts of many over the past few decades, there are locations in remote areas of Australia where due to extenuating circumstances, lone High Schools are not able to provide adequate educational opportunities for all students.

While most States recognise the need to offer bypassing of local schools that offer limited programs, others do not. Support for families continues to be ignored, and they continue to leave once their children reach secondary education. Locations that have been identified as severely educationally disadvantaged in the “Educate Australia Fair” Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre Study must have the option of accessing the AIC Boarding Allowance, which will assist families to remain in remote communities.

A7. Walgett Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the relevant ministers and departments, requesting the new Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program include the following criteria:

1. income limits are substantially higher for the families who reside in remote communities such as Walgett, NSW, who are identified as severely educationally disadvantaged by the “Educate Australia Fair”, Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre Study,
2. the income limits are tapered to recognise the number of children in a family, and
3. not reliant on students receiving any other Commonwealth funding.”

Explanation:

The Australian Government has announced 100 scholarships for low and low to middle income families from regional, rural, and remote areas to assist with boarding school fees and associated costs. The Walgett Branch would like to thank the government for this wonderful opportunity these new scholarships will provide for students.

As this is a Pilot Program with the eligibility criteria yet to be released, it is timely that we urge the Department of Education to a) ensure that the income limits are realistic considering the significant cost of boarding students away from home and that b) priority is given to communities with the most severely disadvantaged children as evidenced by Studies such as the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre Study.

The “Educate Australia Fair” Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre Study lists Rural and remote Australian towns that suffer the greatest disadvantage, with Walgett being the second most disadvantaged on NSW’s list. Evidence of disadvantages such as this should be used to guide the eligibility criteria for such scholarships.

These scholarships must reflect the real impact on income for families boarding children away from home for their education, particularly when several children are away simultaneously. What may appear to be a medium income quickly diminishes when boarding costs are factored in. This is not a cost for families living in larger centres who can access free education. Therefore, income limits should be higher than what is considered low to medium income in a larger centre. The income limit must also be tapered to consider the number of children in a family.

The eligibility criteria must ensure the inclusion of families residing in small towns who do not meet the requirements for other available Commonwealth funding. This encompasses vital and indispensable

services like nurses, teachers, plumbers, electricians, and police families - whose roles are essential in any town's survival.

Again, we are incredibly grateful for the announcement of these scholarships and hope that the government will work with the ICPA to develop fair and realistic eligibility criteria that will assist those in the most disadvantaged areas of remote Australia.

A8. Westmar-Inglestone Branch (QLD)

LOST

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Education Minister, Social Services Minister and other relevant ministers and departments to recognise rural and remote students as being ‘Vulnerable Persons’ to ensure adequate funding is available to meet the needs of these students and their families.”

Explanation:

There are various Australian Government definitions of a ‘*Vulnerable Person*’ but this terminology can refer to a child who is experiencing disadvantage whilst accessing a *regulated activity* or service related to the disadvantage. A ‘*regulated activity*’ in this sense, is identified as an activity provided to vulnerable persons and child education services is identified as one of these activities.

The intent of this motion is to precipitate momentum towards identification of isolated children and their families/carers as being within this ‘vulnerable’ category. It is after all, the families/carers that will be assessed as to the ‘vulnerability’ of these students/children/persons. We need to attract and retain these ‘vulnerable’ families in rural/remote regions by securing additional funding for the education of their children when they do need to attend boarding school for face-to-face learning.

As we all know, the AIC allowance alone is insufficient to cover the costs of educating isolated children (even for those who are eligible). So perhaps then we, as guardians of isolated children, need to “think outside the square” and potentially open a new funding stream, separate to the education funding space (AIC), to narrow the gap between the current funding provided and the actual cost of educating isolated students.

A9. Northern Territory State Council

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies relevant ministers to support the removal of the Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) for businesses who assist their employees residing in geographically isolated areas, by providing financial assistance to enable their children to attend boarding school.”

Explanation:

Currently many businesses across remote Australia are faced with the financial challenge of helping to fund the education of employee’s children.

Financial assistance is essential to support families employed in remote areas of Australia as they are unable to afford the exorbitant expenses of sending their children to board for secondary schooling. Families who have no choice but to leave their homes and place of employment to continue their child’s education, simply because they cannot afford the costs of boarding, leaves employers with a hard to fill gap in the remote workplace. These remote and rural workplaces struggle to fill vacancies.

Businesses able to provide financial assistance for boarding and secondary school retain their valuable employees. However, it is these businesses able to offer financial aid that are struck with the added costs of paying Fringe Benefits Tax on the assistance provided.

For example, a business who offers to cover 50% of a boarding school fee that totals \$50,000 will be subject to 47% FBT and pay approximately \$23,500 in tax on top of the \$25,000 of assistance. A total cost

of \$48,500 to that employer, almost doubling the costs of their financial support. This is a significant deterrent for any business thinking of offering assistance.

It is most likely that more employers would be able to offer financial assistance to their employees if the FBT was removed. This would help stabilise a rural workforce and keep valuable families in rural and remote Australia.

Employers could increase the employee's salary to "cover" the fee amount but then the employee is taxed depending on their tax rate so they don't receive the full amount.

So effectively the employer pays double, they can claim it as a deduction and claim any GST but still because of the tax it would mean that many employers would not do so.

There are some FBT exemptions for remote areas but they are very limited. One is that employers can provide housing for their employees. The ATO states the reason is because:

- *there is insufficient suitable residential accommodation otherwise available at or near the place where the employee is employed.*

This argument also applies in regard to secondary school options. There are often insufficient suitable secondary school options available in remote areas, so the removal of FBT for employers assisting their employees in educating their children would be beneficial to regional and remote Australians.

Also, if an employee receives a fringe benefit it is not part of their taxable income but is reported in the tax return and is used to calculate income thresholds for Centrelink benefits etc so would affect eligibility for certain benefits.

A10. Capricornia Branch of the Air (QLD)

CARRIED

"That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the Federal Government to urgently address the negative impacts that the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) Funding model is having on geographically isolated children who are enrolled at non-government schools and reside within boarding school facilities."

Explanation:

In 2020, the Australian Government introduced the direct measure of income (DMI) to determine the capacity of a school community to contribute financially to the operational costs of their school.

The DMI calculates capacity to contribute (CTC) using the median income of the parents and guardians of the students attending the school, making use of income tax data and other information held by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) through the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP).

SOURCE: <https://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/resources/direct-measure-income-dmi-methodology>

The DMI Methodology states that the new DMI funding is intended to ensure more funding flows through to those schools that need it the most, **however**, there are a number of factors that don't make it an accurate, reliable or an equitable funding model, especially for rural and remote families who rely upon the boarding schools attached to many of the schools in regional areas for the education of their children for secondary schooling.

Since its introduction in 2020, ICPA (Aust) and the Coalition of Regional Independent Schools (CRISA) have lobbied the Federal Government to the fundamental shortcomings and possible flow on effect that the DMI funding model could impose, possible consequences of these effects and how it could stand to affect the education of rural and remote children and financially impact regional outer metropolitan schools across Australia.

<https://icpa.com.au/sites/icpa.com.au/files/inline-files/icpa-aust-submission-to-australian-education-amendment-direct-measure-of-income-bill-2020-provi.pdf>

As per a letter circulated to families during July 2022, by a P-12 school in regional QLD, it has been reported that federal funding accounts for approximately 45% of that particular school's total income; so, in turn, this significant reduction in federal funding has major effects upon the financial position of the school. To counteract this loss, the school has had to develop various strategies to deal with the decline in funding due to the DMI funding scheme. The school projects that the federal funding will fall significantly over the years of 2022-2029. Historically, this school had been able to keep tuition fee rises to a reasonable level due to the fact that federal funding increased by an average of 6.6% per annum over the last four years. However, moving forward under the new funding model any reduction in federal funding can only be replaced by increased tuition fees or by increasing student numbers. To date this school has chosen to increase student numbers over a period of 7 years.

Increasing enrolments - Schools that take this approach could inadvertently place pressure on existing facilities if they are not well positioned to deal with the increased enrolments across both day school and boarding, class sizes would be affected and recruiting extra teaching staff in the current teacher shortage environment could prove difficult.

Increasing Fees - A regional school budget model indicates that if the reduction of funding was to be offset entirely by fee increase this would have to be at a minimum level of 7% per annum for the years 2023 to 2029 – a position that would make education unaffordable for many regional, rural and remote families.

ICPA (Aust) members have reported that their tuition and boarding out of pocket expenses range from \$10,000 to \$30,000 per child per year depending on allowances and scholarships. The cost of boarding is already increasing at an alarming rate and certainly in advance of CPI, so, increased fees caused by the apparent oversight of the effects that this model would have on Geographically Isolated families just exacerbates the financial burden. Safeguards need to be put into place to ensure rural and remote students who attend boarding schools are able to continue their education without the additional burden and cost caused by the loss of such large amounts of funding due to increased fees or worse still, the forced closure of some boarding facilities due to being deemed financially unviable. In the event that increased fees create a fallout from independent schools to government schools it would impact heavily on education expenditure for state governments.

Geographically Isolated students who need to board have fewer choices with regards to the school they attend; they are limited to those schools that have boarding facilities. Rural and Remote families rely heavily on and are the end users of these schools and associated boarding facilities. We are beginning to see and feel the negative impacts that this funding model is placing on the operating budgets of schools and more importantly our children.

Concerns have been raised by parents that the new school funding arrangement is significantly impacting students who board within the boarding facilities attached to negatively impacted regional schools. In Queensland, where the 'Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences' is not mandated, it is concerning that boarding facilities could fall below the 'Standard' and boarding students' welfare be negatively impacted as schools address how to continue to operate in the short term due to the loss of income. It is particularly concerning that the loss of federal funding has coincided with an unprecedented rise in costs of living. The running costs of the boarding arm of these schools have no doubt been scrutinised and reports of boarding budgets being scaled back. Rising food costs are a major cost for boarding schools, when costs are rising and budgets are being scaled back the nutritional quality, quantity and variety of meals provided to boarders are negatively affected. It could be argued that food budgets

should in fact need to be increased due to the cost of food, but with many schools engaging with external food service providers and repeated attempts to work with the schools to improve the situation, nothing changes as it all comes down to profit margins. Boarding Schools should be required to at least meet the age-appropriate Australian Dietary guidelines to provide nutrients and energy needs for all adolescents.

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/australian-dietary-guidelines.pdf>

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/how-much-do-we-need-each-day/recommended-number-serves-children-adolescents-and-toddlers>

It is imperative that the DMI funding does not affect the health and wellbeing of Geographically Isolated Children whilst attending boarding schools at the cost of schools doing business. Boarding budgets need to be safeguarded and be transparently reported as part of school reporting to ensure that boarding students are guaranteed equitable outcomes by means of academic support & tutoring, reside in safe well-maintained facilities, be supported and supervised by appropriately trained staff at the correct ratio and be provided with a variety of highly nutritional meals to support their adolescent needs to engage in their academics and sporting activities whilst attending boarding school.

A11. Western Australia State Council

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to bring to the attention of the Federal Government the impacts the new ‘Direct Measure of Income’ funding model is having on geographically isolated students who attend boarding schools, when advocating for increases to the Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance (AIC).”

Explanation:

In 2022, as part of the Quality Schools reforms, all non-government schools completed the transition from the previous area-based socio-economic status (SES) methodology to the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) to determine the capacity to contribute (CTC) for most non-government schools.

In very simple terms, if a school’s CTC score is now lowered as a result of transitioning from SES to DMI, the school’s base funding will increase. If CTC is now higher as a result of the transition, the funding of the school will decrease as of 2022.

As a result of using the Direct Measure of Income parameters many schools throughout the whole of Australia will receive a cut to their funding, this is a major concern for boarding families.

In Western Australia, in addition to families incurring increased boarding costs they are also incurring significant increases to tuition fees. Previously, tuition fees have increased by an average of up to 3% however, data from the current school year has shown an increase of tuition of a minimum of double this rate and in some cases 10% and even 20%.

A12. Capricornia Branch of the Air (QLD)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the Federal Government to increase the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance to counteract the increase in costs of educating geographically isolated children at non-government boarding schools due to costs incurred by the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) funding model.”

Explanation:

Where schools have been impacted by the DMI funding and there is no other choice other than to increase fees, the costs of educating a Geographically Isolated child dramatically increases and for many rural families will become unaffordable. The DMI funding model only takes tuition fees of students attending the day school into account whereas for Rural & Remote families there is the added cost of boarding fees plus the often-overlooked associated costs of boarding school that includes travel, overnight accommodation due to living remotely, co-curricular activities, medical costs, siblings’

education costs or distance education costs. Essentially, we already pay more, in order to access an equitable education.

An increase in the AIC to assist with the affordability of education for rural and remote families is necessary to ensure that equitable education is available at regional boarding schools for those children who cannot access secondary education in their area. An increase in the AIC needs to be made available to limit the negative impacts, namely the ever-increasing financial gap that rural families are already facing that will be further exacerbated by possible increases in fees due to the DMI funding model. This financial burden is not limited to the financial cost but more importantly the burden of limiting the education options and opportunities for geographically isolated children. Rural families do not deserve to be blindsided by further increased costs and have their children's education options disadvantaged further.

A13. Midwest Branch (WA)

CARRIED

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government, the Minister for Education and other relevant ministers and government departments to provide funding for students with a disability in residential boarding facilities, so that their needs can be met, and reasonable adjustments and accommodations can be implemented in accordance with The Disability Standards for Education 2005."

Explanation:

When a student with a funded disability (e.g., Autism) is enrolled at a school, the school is eligible to apply for schools plus funding or special education funding from individual state-based Departments of Education and federally through the Individual Disability Allocation (IDA) and Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for Students with a Disability (NCCD), via their individual system dependant on what type of school they are classified as.

The amount of funding allocated per student is in accordance with their diagnosis and needs. This funding is then dispersed at the schools' discretion for the purpose of education. A boarding student (24 hours per day, 7 days per week in a school term) receives the same level of funding as a day student.

The boarding house has a duty of care, responsibility, and accountability for the increased needs of a student with a disability. This is inclusive of wellbeing, medical, social, homework/prep education, nutrition, extracurricular school activities such as sports or choir and boarding house excursions, activities, and most of all inclusion to all aspects of boarding regardless of the child's abilities.

Students with a disability require extra support in their daily lives to reach their full potential. Currently, there is no clarity on whose jurisdiction or agency the needs of a person with a disability fall under in the secondary residential boarding house system.

Access to funding for a person with a disability in a boarding house is not currently provided in any way. For our geographically isolated families, residential boarding is an important continuation of our children's education.

The relevant bodies included in the shared response to the needs of a person with a disability include the Department of Education, individual state-based government Departments of Social Services and Departments of Education and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). NOTE: The NDIS is not designed to cover the needs of a child in secondary education residential boarding facilities.

Relevant standards and registrations that cover schools' compliance to meet the needs of a student with a disability include individual State Registration Standards and Compliance for Non-Government Schools

and Government Schools, Boarding Standards for Australian Schools and Residences 2015, and the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

We urge you to pass this motion to support students with disability and to ensure their needs are being met in boarding houses across Australia through the provision of funding that offers an equal and inclusive opportunity to education.

S1. Wentworth Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests Services Australia to update their AIC Renewal Form to allow ‘Assessment for Additional Boarding Allowance’ to be selected when students transition from Distance Education to Boarding School.”

Explanation:

Currently, the renewal form sent out to families allows for families receiving AIC for primary school to update the students’ details to transition to boarding school. Whilst this form allows for the easy transition to the new school there is nowhere on the form that allows you to select that you would like to be considered for the Additional Boarding Allowance. There is also no advise as to how you actually submit a request for Additional Boarding Allowance if you are already receiving AIC.

Staff from the AIC Helpline have advised that a simple update to the form would allow families to select this option and save parents from missing out or spending hours trying to follow up how they actually apply for this after sending their child to boarding school.

COMMUNICATIONS

Internet Access

A14. Katherine Branch (NT)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to request the Minister for Communications ensure all rural and remote students have adequate internet access with regard to speed, quality, capabilities and cost of the service.”

Explanation:

We acknowledge and thank ICPA (Aust) and the Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia for their continuous and effective lobbying of the Federal Government, Telstra, nbn™, Starlink and other providers on internet issues in the bush. The prioritisation of installations required for education is paramount. Many remote families are using the internet provided by the family business. Or are having to pay for it themselves if educational internet data is not part of their employment package. This includes tertiary and training students. Small rural schools and boarding students who’ve returned home for a period.

While expected data speeds, plan sizes and service reliability are continually improving, our members have concerns about the data allocations in plans being heavily loaded towards unreasonable off-peak times. The Mb/\$ continues to fall extremely short of those available to our urban counterparts, thus ensuring maintenance of the internet divide between regional and urban areas.

Currently many families are paying for two services to ensure reliability whilst undertaking recent internet trials. To ensure there are no disruptions to their children’s education, including Home Tudors studying to complete university degrees or TAFE courses.

A15. Alice Springs Branch (NT)**WITHDRAWN**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that the Minister for Communications and the Minister for Education, investigate if all state and territory governments are offering the deliverance and maintenance of a high-speed internet connection to geographically isolated families with children enrolled in Schools of Distance Education and Schools of the Air at no cost to the families.”

Explanation:

For the past couple of years, The Northern Territory Government (NTG) have been advising Schools of Distance Education, such as Alice Springs School of the Air (ASSOA), should recommend to families who are enrolling at the school, that they would receive a better connection if they organise and supply their own internet such as SkyMuster rather than STARS network; This is the free internet connection the NTG offers to families with a child enrolled on Schools of Distance Education.

The Northern Territory Government have an obligation to all Remote Schools and Schools of Distance Education to provide satellite internet connection. They are able to do this via the STARS network.

There is now only a hand full of families in the Alice Springs ICPA Branch who are still able to access the STARS internet connection. These are families who have been enrolled at ASSOA long term. These families experience **no** out of pocket expenses, no ongoing monthly fees, no initial set up costs, no out of pocket expenses for repairs/maintenance – the STARS connection is fully funded and provided by the NTG.

This leads us to the dozens of other families, mostly new enrolments to the school, who have been told they would be better off supplying their own internet service as the STARS network, provided by the NT Government, is not recommended.

Those families are then required to source, cover installation and initial equipment costs, ongoing expenses, repairs, maintenance and technical support all at their own up-front expense. With the option of applying to the NTG for a predetermined subsidy to help cover monthly bills, which doesn't cover the minimal monthly amount available.

How is it reasonable that some of our geographically isolated families face these costs, while other families are having internet supplied into their remote classrooms that is fully funded and maintained by the NT Government via the STARS network.

The subsidy for families who incurred out of pocket monthly internet expenses to provide their own internet did not always exist. The NT ICPA have lobbied the NT Government to provide this subsidy and we have seen increases to this monthly amount over the past couple of years.

The core business of schools of distance education is to deliver a free public education to the most geographically isolated children in Australia. To do so, these families need access to High-Speed Internet without the burden of financial outlay of equipment, monthly connection costs and any ongoing repairs/maintenance.

If respective States and Territories are still using slow and obsolete satellite internet connections for their Schools of Distance Education, then it is time they invest in High Speed, reliable internet for ALL of the families who are currently enrolled at these rural and remote schools and schools of distance education. They should NOT be able to place this responsibility back on the families.

This raises the question, why are families responsible to provide the delivery mechanism (the internet) of education for their geographically isolated children?

It is so disappointing to hear that the NT Government / NT Department of Education are quietly instructing Schools of Distance Education (like ASSOA) to recommend that new families use their own internet connections instead of the FREE service provided and maintained by them.

If the department is supplying a slow internet service to families, they should be accountable to upgrade it – we are talking about our children accessing an education and to do so, they need to be supplied with a good High Speed internet connection.

The Alice Springs ICPA Branch would like to ensure, ALL Children enrolled in Schools of Distance Education have access to High-Speed internet connections for their remote classrooms that is delivered and maintained by their relative state or territory governments with **no upfront or ongoing cost** to the Families.

Extra Information

STARS (internet) = Northern Territory Government is the provider and the responsible entity for the delivery, maintenance, costs etc.

STARS (internet) = Alice Springs School of the Air (ASSOA) is the conduit though which NTG delivers education to geographically isolated children in the remote home school rooms. ASSOA does bear some costs and responsibilities associated to STARS network does not have ultimate responsibility.

A16. Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that the Minister for Communications and the Minister for Education encourage state and territory governments to deliver and maintain a high-speed internet connection to geographically isolated families with children enrolled in Schools of Distance Education and Schools of the Air at no cost to the families.”

Explanation:

Children who are receiving an education via schools of distance education are faced with a myriad of challenges when it comes to interacting with their teachers and classmates. They complete their daily school lessons, assemblies, sports lessons, private learning assessments, reading tasks, group activities and even singing lessons all via the home school room computer on platforms such as Microsoft Teams, React, Zoom and more.

If states and territories are not providing families (enrolled in Schools of distance Education) with High-Speed internet connection to the home school rooms of these geographically isolated children, they face major disruptions to the quality of their learning experience. Poor connection, sound, images may hamper their daily lessons and cause disruptions for the other children on the lesson.

The ONLY way our children are accessing their public education in these remote locations is via a satellite internet connection. If, over time, this connection has become slow or obsolete, then it is the responsibility of the Department of Education to ensure it is upgraded.

In our case, The NT Government is providing the STARS network for Schools of Distance Education. However, instead of upgrading their internet to a High Speed and reliable service, they are recommending that the schools direct families to supply their own High Speed internet. This is highly distressing and disappointing.

Telephone

A17. Queensland State Council

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Communications to ensure all communication providers fulfil their Universal Service Guarantee (USG) obligations in the provision and functionality of essential communication services that are reliable, fit for purpose and are maintained at a fully functioning standard to enable the delivery of rural and remote education.”

Explanation:

Remote communities of Queensland and the Northern Territory recently experienced the failure of essential communication services at critical times and for extended periods, leaving remote families in a state of true isolation. With the inability to fly, drive or even walk to safety, it is critical that these remote areas are protected and supported for both human safety and for the continuum of education.

Case Study 1

This family lost internet and mobile connections due to a flooding event and their landlines had been problematic for some time before the event. The family was evacuated and post the event, the parents returned home to begin recovery clean up while the child remained in town with the Home Tutor. Communication during this time was sporadic with the child’s family; however, to ensure minimal disruption to schooling the child and home tutor could not return home until communications had been restored.

Case Study 2

Due to extended rain periods and cloud cover, all communication - mobile/landline/internet - were problematic. Landlines and mobile then became non-operational as batteries that power equipment were not receiving enough sun to remain charged. For the majority of Term 1 the student had little to no contact with their DE teacher and could only attend online lessons sporadically (the internet would work one day but not the next, or part of one day and due to mobile outage they could not hotspot to get coverage, either). Systems are now working well in Term 2.

A18. Katherine Branch (NT)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Communications to insist Telstra meets their Universal Service Guarantee of providing quality, efficient, and reliable voice services to rural and remote premises including fixed address pastoral leases, remote communities, and remote roadhouses by ensuring new USO voice services exceeds the reliability and quality of existing voice services.”

Explanation:

Through the Universal Service Guarantee, Telstra are paid by the Australian Government to ensure all Australians have access to a standard telephone. With the announcement that Telstra would be phasing out the copper landline services in the coming years it’s important that they are replaced with the same quality as provided in metropolitan areas including no delays and interruptions such as those experienced when using satellite phone systems and that these services be efficient and reliable during all Australian weather conditions with appropriate backup power supply to ensure students can access education/schooling. In areas where a mobile network has already been established, it’s important that these are upgraded to current standards such as 4G or 5G.

Any technologies used in RRR areas must be thoroughly tried and tested in all weather and terrain types, and come with consumer support and engagement with RRR stakeholders.

CURRICULUM

S2. Charters Towers Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Education to review NAPLAN reporting timeframes, enabling schools to access students’ results in a timely manner, preferably during Term 2 in the year of examination, to better support the specific learning needs of rural and remote students.”

Explanation:

In 2023, the dates of NAPLAN testing were moved earlier in the school year, to Term 1. One of the expectations of this change in date is that results would be provided to schools in a timely manner, so that they may review the results, identify the needs of the cohort and individual students, and provide necessary support as available. In 2023, the NAPLAN results will not be made available until Term 3 which limits schools’ capacity to review, act upon and support students in a timely manner. It is well documented that rural and remote students’ have unique educational needs and that there is a widening gap between metropolitan and rural and remote students in relation to results of NAPLAN testing.

More information can be found in the following articles:

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/news/releases/2022/november/naplan-not-remotely-working>

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/dec/15/naplan-shows-no-obvious-falls-in-literacy-and-numeracy-during-covid-but-city-and-country-gap-widens>

It is difficult to effect change and improve student outcomes in the calendar year if there is a lengthy delay between assessment and access to results. If teachers and school administrators had access to NAPLAN results in Term 2, there is a higher likelihood that supports could be made available to address areas of learning need, particularly for rural and remote children who are already educationally disadvantaged.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

A19. CONJOINED MOTION presented by:

CARRIED

Western Australia State Council, Alice Springs Branch (NT), Far North Queensland Branch (QLD), Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA), Katherine Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate to the Minister for Social Services, the Minister for Education and all other relevant government departments 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 Western Australia State Council:

Repeatedly states are advised to advocate for this Allowance to be implemented at a state level. Whilst we absolutely support the intention of DETA and would embrace its introduction WA members 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.

The argument from the Federal Government is that the deliverance of education is a state’s responsibility. That responsibility is being borne by the state through the deliverance of education utilising distance education and School of the Air.

Each eligible child, who boards away from home, is afforded a Federal Allowance (AIC) from the Federal Government to assist with the cost of boarding, as boarding is a necessity for those children to have equitable access to an appropriate education. Children who access distance education through School of

the Air are no different. Instead of boarding away from the family home, these students, due to their age, are reliant on Home Tutors as a necessity for equitable access to an appropriate education.

We feel that Federal ICPA representing all states on this issue will if DETA is adopted, support ICPA members fairly across Australia.

Explanation Alice Springs Branch (NT):

An introduction of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA), as financial recognition of the essential work a supervisor/Home Tutor performs in Distance Education classrooms, would help alleviate the pressure placed on remote families, whose only option is to home-school their children via Distance Education. It is a government requirement under the Distance Education Schools Guidelines that students enrolled in Distance Education schools have appropriate supervision, and these guidelines state that this may be an employee or parent. In many cases, a parent, usually the mother, is forced to forgo paid work on the property, community or outstation where they live, due to the need for them to stay home and teach their children. This in turn strips the family of a second income, and places further financial pressure on families who educate their children via Distance Education. This can amount to a family paying a Home Tutor between \$25,000-\$50,000 per year, depending on salary/wage agreements. On top of the wage a Home Tutor is paid, in many cases, Home Tutors are also living with the family, and have all food, board and other sundry expenses such as internet, paid by the family as part of their wage package. If the family employs a Home Tutor to deliver Distance Education lessons and provide support and supervision, the family is effectively paying award wages for a child to receive a public education.

We would like to suggest that DETA be incorporated into the existing AIC framework. If a family is eligible for AIC, it is extremely likely that they would also be eligible for DETA, and combining DETA into the AIC would streamline the application process.

Explanation Far North Queensland Branch:

Far North Queensland Branch thanks ICPA (Aust) for the work they have done advocating to the Federal Government for the establishment of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA). Like many ICPA Branches across Australia, our long-term and new members are familiar with the strong advocacy of ICPA (Aust) on this issue over many years.

We support the position of ICPA (Aust) that this situation requires a collaborative and consistent approach involving both state and national levels of government and our Branch has put forward a similar motion to the ICPA Queensland State Conference requesting ICPA Qld lobby the state and federal governments on this issue.

Many of our members have spent tens of thousands of hours as Home Tutors teaching their children through distance education. Like many roles in rural and remote properties, the role of Home Tutor often falls on mothers. Due to dedication to their children, and by necessity, they often forego their own earning potential and careers, to ensure their children have access to an education equal to their city counterparts, an education which is compulsory and supposedly free.

The delivery of distance education is not possible without the commitment of Home Tutors. It is a full-time job. Some geographically isolated families may employ a tutor or governess to perform the Home Tutor role, but this comes at considerable cost and finding a governess/tutor is often difficult in isolated areas.

Consideration must be given to the burden on approximately 1,500 families in geographically isolated areas for whom distance education is the only option to educate their children. The vital role of the Home Tutor should be remunerated through an allowance, which recognises the essential work they perform.

Explanation Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA):

The service provided by Home Tutors in the delivering of education to students in rural and remote Australia who have no choice but to be educated via the distance education mode of delivery needs be acknowledged. Home Tutors provide what the government simply cannot cost effectively supply and as such should be recognised and remunerated fairly.

Explanation Katherine Branch (NT):

Katherine Branch thanks ICPA (Aust) for your continuing pursuit of this motion and considers the Distance Education Resource Video to be a great resource illustrating the commitment of Home Tutors to education and the challenges faced by families on distance education. For many young people living in remote regions, their only access to education is to study by distance education. It is clear that distance education provision is provided on the assumption that all children have ready access to a person able to deliver the program in the geographically isolated classroom. This person is the distance education tutor who must be available and able to provide the practical, day-to-day supervision and support required for the effective delivery of a distance education program. With the responsibility of the distance education tutor position often falling on the mother, fulfilling this position further compounds her workload. This can place increased pressure on other family members and may necessitate the employment of additional staff.

A20. Northern Territory State Council**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) investigates the existing precedence of Centrelink Jobseeker payment being available to single principal carer with exemption from mutual obligation requirements because they are a home or distance educator of child/ren in their care, and its possible application, adaption and or leverage for the creation of an applicable Distance Education Tutor Allowance for geographically isolated families.”

Explanation:

“Australian Government Social Security Guide, version 1.307, released 8 May 2023, at 5.1.8.20 Common benefit rates” describes a payment for a “Single principal carer with an exemption from mutual obligation requirements EITHER: because of caring for large family or foster child/ren, OR who is a home or distance educator of child/children in their care.” This is currently \$949.30 per fortnight.

It is payable to Jobseeker Payment (JSP) recipients who have an exemption from mutual obligation requirements under paragraphs 40P(2)(a) or (b) of the SS(Admin)Act.

Source: <https://guides.dss.gov.au/social-security-guide/5/1/8/20>

Act reference: SSAct section 1068 Rate of JSP, section 1068-B5 Maximum basic rate for certain JSP recipients.

SS(Admin)Act section 40P Caring responsibilities

Policy reference: SS Guide 5.1.4.10 PP - current rates, 3.7.1.80 Determining the rate of SpB

It appears that to be eligible as it currently stands, one needs to be eligible for Jobseeker payment and be a single parent plus looking after a large family (4 or more under 16 years) OR teaching via home-schooling or distance education.

This Centrelink payment is an acknowledgement by the Federal Government that being a home or distance educator of a child is equivalent to full time work and has a value.

Benefit rates

This table shows the basic rates in dollars per fortnight (pf) as at 20 March 2023*. Current rates can be found in the [A guide to Australian Government payments booklet](#) on the [Services Australia](#) website.

Recipient status			Rate (\$ pf)
Single	no children	22 or over	693.10
Single	with children	-	745.20
Single	no children	60 or over after 9 months	745.20
Single principal carer with an exemption from mutual obligation requirements EITHER:	with children	-	949.30#
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> because of caring for large family or foster child/ren, OR who is a home or distance educator of child/ren in their care. 			
Partnered	without children	-	631.20
Partnered	with children	-	631.20
Partnered - illness separated couple (1.1.I.04), respite care couple (1.1.R.240), or partner in gaol (1.1.P.85)			745.20

Example of single with children: JSP recipient with dependent YA child under 18 years.

*The maximum rate of payment may be higher if the person is eligible for supplementary payments (see below) in addition to the basic rate.

This amount is equal to the maximum rate of PPS, including pension supplement, and is payable to JSP recipients who have an exemption from mutual obligation requirements under paragraphs 40P(2)(a) or (b) of the SS(Admin)Act. Recipients may be eligible for such an exemption if:

- they are a registered and active foster carer of a child, or children, for whom they are a principal carer
- they are the principal carer of a large family (4 or more children under 16 years of age)
- they are a home educator of a child, or children, for whom they are the principal carer, OR
- they are a distance educator of a child, or children, for whom they are the principal carer.

Act reference: SSAct section 1068 Rate of JSP, section 1068-B5 Maximum basic rate for certain JSP recipients
 SS(Admin)Act section 40P Caring responsibilities

Policy reference: SS Guide 5.1.4.10 PP - current rates, 3.7.1.80 Determining the rate of SpB

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Early Learning

A21. CONJOINED MOTION presented by:

CARRIED

Western Australia State Council, Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA), Katherine Branch (NT), Wentworth Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate to the Federal Government for geographically isolated pre-compulsory school students enrolled in a registered distance education program to receive the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education Allowance where they meet other eligibility criteria.”

Explanation Western Australia State Council:

The AIC Distance Education (DE) Allowance is designed to assist families to set up and maintain the schoolroom. Currently, part-time distance education students are ineligible, therefore families enrolled in pre-compulsory programs must bear the costs. Most early learning programs require significantly more learning materials than that of older students studying at primary levels, with families having to provide learning resources for these students. If families received this Allowance, it would assist with the cost of suitable learning resources.

The majority of children who are enrolled in a pre-compulsory program are found to have better educational outcomes in later years, by forming these important foundations early on. Full-time or part-time, every child needs a schoolroom.

It is disappointing that the Federal Government continues to overlook this important Allowance each year.

Explanation Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA):

Under the current guidelines, part time distance education students are ineligible for the Distance Education (DE) component of the AIC Allowance, which means families enrolled in the 4-year-old programme must bear the costs of maintaining and setting up the classroom in that first year of schooling. This first year is often extremely costly for families.

The AIC DE Allowance is designed to assist families to set up and maintain the schoolroom. The schoolroom must be set up and maintained the day the child begins their education. Full-time or part time, the child needs a schoolroom.

Explanation Katherine Branch (NT):

The Federal Government is committed to ensuring that every child has access to a quality early childhood education program. From the website www.education.gov.au/universal-access-early-childhood-education "The Australian Government is providing funding certainty for preschool, having committed \$453.1 million in the 2019-20 Budget to extend the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education until the end of 2020 ... This funding ensures that every child will continue to have access to a quality preschool program for 600 hours (15 hours a week) in the year before school. Universal Access [has] a focus on participation by Indigenous children, vulnerable and disadvantaged children in a range of settings in order to meet the needs of working families, and will be accessible to all Australian children, regardless of their location."

If that was actually what was happening in rural and remote areas, this motion would be unnecessary! Setting up the classroom for distance education delivery for Pre-schoolers costs the same, if not more, as for the first year of compulsory schooling. The number of children accessing this pre-compulsory year by distance education is not huge. For example: Katherine School of the Air (KSA) has had a structured Pre-School Program in place for over 20 years and currently (Sem 1 2022) has 16 enrolments. On average KSA enrolments have been around 20-25 each year. The NT Government already recognises this cohort of students by making available half of the "NT Correspondence Site Allowance – Preschool" to assist all four-year-old children that are enrolled in pre-school with the Alice Springs and Katherine Schools of the Air.

Extending the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) distance education allowance to include these students will ensure greater and more equitable participation in Early Childhood Education by rural and remote students. Distance education students could benefit enormously from a minute portion of the billions of dollars allocated to early childhood education and care, including the funding intended to ensure the system is more accessible, affordable and fairer for families.

Explanation Wentworth Branch (NSW):

We congratulate many ministers both at the federal and state level for continuing to increase access to preschool, reduce costs and introduce additional access to this vital early education. Unfortunately, in remote areas this access will not be as accessible as it is for regional and city-based children.

In remote areas preschool comes at a huge cost to the family with either increased travel or the need for a dedicated supervisor. It is unrealistic to think that remote families can facilitate this increased preschool with no assistance.

Childcare**A22. Katherine Branch (NT)****CARRIED**

"That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Education amend the In Home Care rules for families in remote areas to allow:

1. An educator to care for children from more than one family at the same time.

2. An educator to care for their own child whilst caring for children from another family(ies) under In Home Care.”

Explanation:

The reason for this is that there are often multiple families employed by and living in the same location in remote areas (for example pastoral stations, tourism and conservation operations). Due to the remote location all staff and the educator live at the same location. Allowing an educator to care for children from more than one family in these circumstances solves the practical problem of limited accommodation - accommodating more than one educator is likely to be difficult.

It also provides the opportunity for a greater range of people to be employed in these areas (including single parents) who would otherwise be unable to take these jobs as they wouldn't have access to childcare. By potentially increasing the number of children living at a location, all children will benefit from the social interaction.

Allowing an educator to care for their own children would also increase the range of people available as In Home Carers in remote areas. It is extremely difficult to find appropriately skilled people willing to live in remote areas. Allowing someone with their own child to be care for other children at the same remote location would be of great benefit.

Example 1: A single mother applies for a station hand position. She is highly qualified and prior to becoming a mother had extensive experience working on remote cattle stations. The owner of the station she has applied to also has a small child and already employs an educator through IHC. There is suitable accommodation for the mother and child but not enough for another educator. By allowing that educator to also care for the station hand's child, the station hand gets a job for which she is qualified for (it is also difficult to find good station hands so expanding the pool of people who could take these jobs is important) and both children have access to good quality childcare and a playmate.

Example 2: a guy applies for a station hand position on a remote cattle station. He and his partner have a toddler. There are no childcare facilities within 200km. The managers of the station also have a toddler. By allowing the partner to become the In-Home Carer (dependent on obtaining the relevant qualifications etc) the manager's child has access to high quality care, the manager(s) can concentrate on their jobs, the station hand is not separated from his partner and his partner has a fulfilling job.

The rules around Family Day Care provide a starting point for a structure to determine the appropriate number/age of children and how the CCS would work in this situation. Further consultation with families living in remote areas with young children would be required to refine these structures to ensure they are practical and suitable for their situation.

A23. Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government and the Minister for Education to change the In Home Care (IHC) requirements for educators so that the enrolment in an education degree also makes them eligible for IHC positions in geographically isolated areas.”

Explanation:

Families in geographical isolated areas are finding it difficult to find educators who are eligible to be enrolled in IHC. Educators need to be only enrolled in at least a Certificate III in Early Child Care, however a potential educator who is in 2nd year of Bachelor of Primary Education is not eligible to be enrolled with IHC until they have completed their degree and become a registered teacher.

The educator is employed for before and after school care of primary aged children so why do they then have to have an Early Childcare certificate. If the educator was employed in a town with before and after school care of primary aged children, they would not need this certificate.

A24. Wentworth Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the relevant departments for geographically isolated families to be able to access the In Home Care program to provide supervision in the home classroom when the student is studying via an approved Distance Education School.”

Explanation:

The government encourages parent participation in the workforce right across Australia, unless you have a primary school aged child studying via government approved distance education school. The expectation on those parents is that they will give up their work and running their business to tutor their children for the entirety of the primary school years. You cannot enrol your child in these schools without agreeing to provide constant supervision.

Many people across Australia should now appreciate that supervising your children to complete their schoolwork whilst doing your own job is almost impossible, yet that is what we expect of remote families every day.

Families should have access to In Home Care to ensure children are appropriately supervised during working hours and ensure productivity across remote Australia remains.

A25. Flinders Ranges Branch (SA)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that the Minister for Education and the Minister for Early Childhood Education seek an inclusion to the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653) - Regulation 124 (NSW Legislation) to enable two approved family day care educators to care for children in an approved family day care venue in disadvantaged rural and remote areas of Australia where there is an absence, or limited supply, of Centre Based Day Care or Family Day Care services.”

Explanation:

Our community in rural South Australia, like many rural towns across Australia, struggle with the lack of childcare. We are too small to attract a private provider to offer centre based long day care, our demand profile makes it unviable. The State Government have a Rural Care program where a childcare service is integrated within government preschools in rural communities where there are limited childcare options, to provide families with access to long day care for children from birth to 12 years. We have been advised by the Department for Education that there will be no further Rural Care places offered above the 17 that currently exist.

We are simply seeking a small inclusion into the current legislation to enable more than one approved family day care educator to care for children in our approved family day care ‘in-venue’ location. This provides a cost-effective solution to the government to cover childcare demand in small disadvantaged rural communities where no appropriate childcare exists. It strikes us as remarkably unfair that rural communities must continually do all the leg work (volunteering/financially) to provide solutions to issues such as childcare, because it is easier to let us fall through the cracks than support us. Childcare is not going to be a profitable venture in small rural and remote communities that attracts providers, but that does not mean we do not deserve to be supported in providing it.

This small change means that we will be able to meet our current childcare demand, at little to no cost to either state or federal government. It importantly provides the community with an approved and regulated care model, it enables eligible families to claim the childcare subsidy and has the added benefit

in that approved family day care educators will have the support of each other in what is widely known as an isolating environment for family day care providers to work in.

Current legislation:

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS - REG 124

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653) - NSW Legislation

Number of children who can be educated and cared for--family day care educator

124 Number of children who can be educated and cared for--family day care educator

- (1) A family day care educator must not educate and care for more than 7 children at a family day care residence or approved family day care venue at any one time.
- (2) In determining the number of children who can be educated and cared for by a family day care educator for the purposes of sub regulation (1)--
 - (a) no more than 4 can be preschool age or under; and
 - (b) if the children are being educated and cared for at a residence, the educator's own children and any other children at the residence are to be taken into account if--
 - (i) those children are under 13 years of age; and
 - (ii) there is no other adult present and caring for the children.
- (3) No more than 7 children can be educated and cared for as part of a family day care service at a family day care residence or an approved family day care venue at any one time

Requested addition to the above current legislation:

In disadvantaged rural and remote areas of Australia where there is an absence, or limited supply, of Centre Based Day Care or Family Day Care services two approved family day care educators may care for children in a single approved family day care venue with an exception to (1), (2) and (3) as follows:

- (1) Two family day care educators must not educate and care for more than 14 children at an approved family day care venue at any one time.
- (2) In determining the number of children who can be educated and cared for by a family day care educator for the purposes of sub regulation (1)--
 - (a) no more than 8 can be preschool age or under; and
 - (b) if the children are being educated and cared for at a residence, the educator's own children and any other children at the residence are to be taken into account if--
 - (i) those children are under 13 years of age; and
 - (ii) there is no other adult present and caring for the children.
- (3) No more than 14 children can be educated and cared for as part of a family day care service at an approved family day care venue at any one time.

A26. Bourke Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates for sufficient funding from streams such as the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Sustainability stream (or any other funding streams that may be similar), be made available for services in remote and very remote locations to meet their operational costs which are unable to be met through the Childcare Subsidy (CCS)/Parent Fee model.”

Explanation:

Services providing Childcare Subsidy Model childcare are currently capped at the maximum amount of CCCF Sustainability funding they are able to apply for (\$200,000 pa) despite the operational gap they are able to demonstrate, which is often significantly larger. The same cap applies to services in regional areas as in remote and very remote locations, and the only longer-term funding is in the CCCF-Restricted pool, which services may not be eligible for. Remote and very remote services have to meet significantly higher staffing and operational costs – such as providing housing for teachers and meeting the pay parity gap for teachers to attract and retain adequately qualified teachers. Early Childhood Services in remote and very remote locations should be able to provide a service with teachers and staff at the same level as their city

cousins - our children are worth no less, and often have significantly more vulnerabilities according to the AECD (Australian Early Childhood Development) Census Data.

Early Childhood Education and Care - Other

A27. Louth Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the relevant Federal Ministers amend the lack of salary parity between four year trained early childhood teachers and four year trained primary and high school teachers to assist with access to early childhood education in rural and remote communities.”

Explanation:

It is necessary that salary payments of early childhood teachers can be afforded the same salary package as their four-year trained peers who are working in primary and high schools.

Currently, the pay gap is so significant it is impossible to recruit and retain teachers in early childhood centres and new recruits often use early childhood jobs as a steppingstone into the primary school sector.

Particularly in the remote context where the early childhood packages are without comparable incentives such as holiday pay, provision for housing, access to professional support and travel to attend professional development.

Some centres are unable to offer early childhood packages which are equal to those in state primary and high schools.

A28. Bourke Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the relevant Federal Ministers for funding to be sought to address Early Childhood Teacher pay parity to assist with access to early childhood education in rural and remote communities.”

Explanation:

Pay parity of Early Childhood Teachers is a significant issue. An Early Childhood Teacher completes a 4 year degree course. In a remote early childhood service, an Early Childhood Teacher can expect a salary of around \$85,000. If they maintain NSEA proficient accreditation and elect to work in the Public School System, at a Connected Beginnings School, such as Bourke, in a rural and remote location, the additional benefits they would get compared to working as an Early Childhood Teacher would tally to \$114,500 p.a and includes:

- Additional 8 weeks of annual leave valued at \$17,500p.a.
- Significantly shorter contact hours per week
- Approx \$30,000 additional salary
- Professional mentoring by other Teachers
- Structured Professional development programs (\$10,000 pa)
- Access to Teacher Housing/Rural Teacher Incentive \$25,000
- Retention bonus \$5,000
- Recruitment bonus \$20,000
- Climatic, Social and Geographic allowance \$3,000
- In addition to the above, there is also the impact on superannuation to be considered \$4,000.

Early Childhood services are significantly limited in their budgets. It is important to find long term solutions to address pay parity of Early Childhood Teachers in rural and remote locations.

A29. Meekatharra Air Branch (WA)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the relevant minister instigate changes to the Working Holiday visa (subclass 417), of the Working Holiday Maker Program (WHM), to include as eligible employment, the positions of governess/nanny/au pair for Working Holiday visa holders intending to complete the required 88 days of work within the specified industry of ‘Plant and Animal Cultivation in Regional Australia’.”

Explanation:

There is a constant skills shortage when it comes to experienced workers in agriculture. The broadening of eligible work positions within the visa regulations, may not mean that qualifying workers on visas would directly engage in the cultivation of plant and animals in regional Australia. The direct impact however, would be that already competent agricultural workers could return to the workforce, which would still achieve the desired aim of an increase in skilled workers actively engaged in agriculture.

As it currently stands, the WHM program declares the position of a nanny on a farm, to be an ineligible employment option when seeking to increase the time on Working Holiday visas. By revising the Working Holiday visa regulations, it would allow skilled and experienced members of a farm workforce, undertaking duties at home, such as childcare and the home tutoring of distance education children, to return to every day agricultural work. This would be due to these childcare/education positions on rural properties being effectively filled by visa holders.

Due to the restrictive job criteria of the WHM program, many capable applicants are not applying for childcare or education related positions in rural areas when needing employment counting towards extensions to their visas.

It is expected that the inclusion of these suggested new employment positions would result in the 88 workdays undertaken as a governess/nanny or au pair, also counting towards qualifying workdays for second or third year visa extension applications.

A30. Western Australia State Council**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate that the Federal Government implements a nationally recognised and administered Working with Children Card (WWCC).”

Explanation:

WA State Council fully supports the implementation of a nationally administered police clearance, specifically for children.

Employees who move across state borders are required to reapply for a WWCC when applying for employment in a new state. This process can result in lengthy delays when employing staff of up to eight weeks, causing disruptions to students and families. Currently, a person who wishes to obtain a WWCC for work purposes is checked nationally, which is then administered at a state level.

A31. Far North Queensland Branch (QLD)**DEEMED COVERED BY A30**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government to implement a national Blue Card system, or relevant Working with Children Check in Australia.”

Explanation:

In Australia, the blue card system, or relevant working with children check, regulates activities that are essential to children’s lives including education, childcare, healthcare, sporting, and cultural activities. There are eight Blue Cards, or Working with Children Checks (WWCC) in Australia, a separate one for each state and territory, and each working independently of each other.

Having a state-by-state/territory Blue Card, or WWCC, is affecting tutors, teachers, health professionals, police, volunteers, and volunteer organisations, as they have to navigate the relevant state and territory legislations and research what is involved in the screening and application processes to work or volunteer with children. This is and can be a barrier to workers and volunteers coming into rural and remote areas to work and volunteer with children and makes it difficult for them to move from one state or territory to another.

For example, the BushED tutoring program, places educational volunteers from around the nation with rural and remote families to provide relief and educational support. This program is called upon particularly by geographically families to provide educational tutoring assistance to students enrolled in distance education. However, the state-by-state/territory Blue Card system, or relevant WWCC, can be a hindrance to volunteers from interstate as they must have the relevant Blue Card, or Working with Children Card, for the state or territory in which they wish to volunteer. Further, the application process can be time consuming, particularly if tutors (and their partners) wish to volunteer in multiple states or Territories.

The need for a national approach to the Blue Card or WWCC has been advocated for many years. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2015 recommended a nationally consistent approach to the WWCC which if implemented would not only protect children, but also address the problem of a Blue Card or WWCC issued in one jurisdiction not being recognised or transportable to another.

S3. Queensland State Council

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates that In Home Care (IHC) Australia and other relevant stakeholders establish a dedicated or stand-alone rural and remote In Home Care branch that works with families who are geographically isolated.”

Explanation:

The In Home Care scheme is currently providing funding for a large number of families whose circumstances prevent them from accessing a standard child care centre. This funding enables families to employ a suitable educator to deliver childcare in their home regardless of where they live. The funding is individually tailored to meet the needs and circumstances of each family. Throughout Queensland there is a number of IHC support agencies that families are enrolled with to help with the administration of having an IHC educator. It would be highly beneficial for all rural and remote families who use the IHC scheme to work with one agency that solely supports and fully understands rural and remote families and their needs living in geographically isolated areas.

F1. Northern Territory State Council

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers to establish funding to deliver mobile remote playgroups to geographically isolated children, aged 0-5 years who are currently without access to any such service because of where they live.”

Explanation:

Geographically isolated families that reside outside of the "remote community footprint" have been without access to any early learning childhood services prior to preschool for more than a decade as has many remote communities in our region. Early education is a vital tool in all children's development, along with being a foundation for learning, it's how they build confidence, interact with others, and learn important social and emotional skills. It's also an opportunity for parents to come together, share stories and support one another.

RURAL SCHOOLS

A32. Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government for funding to be sought to further incentivise experienced teachers to take up contracts and long term rural, regional and remote positions.”

Explanation:

Students from rural, regional, and remote areas are facing, at times constant, disruptions to their education in the form of teacher shortages. Teacher retention in rural areas can be problematic and even in those schools where teachers are committed long term their ability to access vital professional development days, long service leave and even sick days is limited due to the lack of relief teachers and/or support staff available in these areas. It is not uncommon for small schools to have only two classroom teachers across all year levels and minimal funding for additional support staff such as EAs or Library Technicians. Additionally, the mental health of teachers is becoming increasingly worrisome due to their burdensome workload.

The states all have varying incentives to encourage teachers to take up positions in rural schools however it has been our experience that these incentives are not always well advertised and experienced teachers often think these are graduate positions only when they are actually open to all teachers. As well as federal funding we suggest the Federal Government run an advertising campaign to get teachers into the bush pitched at experienced teachers and their families. The Federal Government recently rolled out The Rural Health Outreach Fund (RHOF) and it is our opinion that a similar campaign and federal funds could be set up to assist the states in making education in rural areas fairer for bush kids.

A federally administered fund could offer extra incentives to teachers and schools such as:

- Financial incentives for short term or contract work in the regions.
- Increased childcare rebates for teachers with young families wanting to take up rural positions.
- Clear potential for permanency/job security for eligible teachers.
- Increased potential for permanency/job security in the city after completing a set amount of time in a rural, regional or remote school.
- Make extra funds available for support/relief staff to rural, remote and regional schools with small student numbers. Decrease the student to teacher ratio and/or ensure teachers aren't asked to teach across too many different year levels.

SCHOOL TRAVEL

A33. Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant bodies for a ‘Capped Student Fare’ for geographically isolated students attending educational institutions within Australia who need to travel between their home residence and the educational establishment they attend.”

Explanation:

Students who fit this Category should be able to book tickets by Air or Road at any point during the year without being subject to inflation caused by peak tourist season, holidays, limited tickets, and any number of other reasons ticket prices fluctuate.

There are geographically isolated families whose children attend school's interstate or intrastate that have all their travel costs covered and or organised, home to closest airport, then airport to interstate school. There are examples of how such a policy mechanism can work through allowances such as ABSTUDY.

We would like to suggest that this existing framework (used by agencies such as ABSTUDY, to book and secure travel for students) be extended to all geographically isolated families when travelling between their home residence and the educational establishment they attend. At the very least to secure capped student travel fares.

A34. Walgett Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the relevant federal ministers and the Education Minister to implement a national funding program that would help ensure that no young geographically isolated children are left on childcare, preschool or school buses by installing sensor devices that sense sound and movement, to detect and alert drivers if young children have been left in the vehicle.”

Explanation:

There have been numerous incidences that have occurred over the years of children being left on childcare/school buses and it continues to be a big issue. These incidences occur on a far more regular basis than are reported in the media. These incidences have caused distress, heat exhaustion, major physical injury and death.

Whilst thoughtful Policies and Procedures are continually put in place in Schools and Childcare Centres this is not preventing children from being left on busses. There needs to be physical monitoring devices installed in buses to counteract unfortunate human error.

A Sensor Device that monitors sound and movement just like a home monitoring device could be set during the hours that the bus wouldn't ordinarily be transporting children. Alerts could be made to the bus drivers and centres or schools to mobile phones should the sensor detect anything.

Human error is inevitable, we urge the government act on implementing movement monitors as a matter of urgency on all Childcare Centre and School buses.

SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS**A35. Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA)****CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government and relevant bodies for increased federal funding to improve rural and remote school's access to specialists who can diagnose students with learning disabilities and offer ongoing education and support to students and their teachers.”

Explanation:

Despite the funding that is currently available many small rural schools find it difficult to access professional support for students with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties. We are asking that the Minister of Education and the Ministers for Health and Aged Care and for Regional Development, local government and territories work together to actively support professionals such as speech therapists and education and mental health specialists to work in regional, rural and remote schools by providing them with appropriate placements that include accommodation and transport. Funding should be used to incentivise specialists wanting to take on permanent positions in rural centres ensuring continuity for teachers, students and their parents.

In Western Australia it has become a requirement for families to travel to Perth or utilise telehealth to access these specialists, when previously the specialists have travelled to the regions. We believe this “footprint reduction” strategy deployed by the Health Department is affecting remote children whose families do not have the capacity to travel to seek diagnosis and treatment and children are slipping through the cracks without appropriate diagnosis and intervention to assist them with their learning.

Even when students are referred to these services the weight time to see a specialist can be months or even a year which can have negative long-term effects academically especially when dealing with children under 5. This is also affecting rural and remote teachers and other students who are often dealing with these issues in the classroom without assistance. If the specialists were readily available in regional centres, it would be easier for families to travel to them and more likely that the same specialist would remain in the position giving children continuity of treatment.

A36. Bourke Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that a permanent Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) item number for telehealth consultations is assigned to telehealth Allied Health Services, specialists and consultations, including but not limited to Speech Pathology, Paediatricians and Psychologists, where they aren’t already available, to support the specific educational needs and learning difficulties of geographically isolated children.”

Explanation:

Many allied health services are unavailable to rural and remote families.

Barriers are:

- that people have to travel extremely long distances.
- People have to join lengthy waiting lists to access practitioners located in their closest regional or metropolitan areas.
- There is little or no access to Allied Health Services, particularly for children with special needs and developmental delays (often on more than one domain).
- financial hardship caused by travel and accommodation costs while accessing treatment and not able to access IPTAAS. For example, a community may have a visiting specialist but they already have full books and waiting lists of over 18 months is not unusual but because there is a service available, families are not eligible.
- low socio-economic families living in rural and remote areas do not have the means to travel for treatment.
- rural and remote people are often unable to find their way around or unfamiliar with metropolitan areas in order to access treatment.
- most people needing NDIS plans are unable to navigate the system and without access to services they are unable to utilise their plans.
- we are aware of many families rejecting NDIS plans due to lack of access to services.

Utilisation of telehealth services can be of great benefit to families in geographically isolated locations who would otherwise have to travel considerable distances or encounter lengthy delays to access face to face consultations with relevant health professionals.

Students with developmental difficulties require frequent and timely consultations and these can be enabled via telehealth services for many families otherwise unable to access allied health professionals due to living in rural and remote areas.

Some specialist consultations, such as speech pathology, can be satisfactorily delivered using telehealth services where the technology is available. These services are already providing improved access to health services for some children in geographically isolated areas. The cost to families to access such services should also be equitable.

A37. Bourke Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates for improved access and utilisation of Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) funding, currently managed through the NDIS scheme for geographically isolated children.”

Explanation:

Many remote and geographically isolated children are missing out on essential allied health supports due to the ability to access or utilise funding administered through NDIS for Early Childhood Early Intervention. In Bourke the NDIS Early Childhood Partner was McKillop, and they had around 7 staff supporting Western NSW. McKillop Family Services has now withdrawn and the workload has been transferred to NDIA staff. Remote areas also have a significant underutilisation of ECEI funding, as when children's needs are identified, there are often no allied health services available to support them. Evidence shows that accessing Early Intervention supports improved educational outcomes.

A38. Alice Springs Branch (NT)**CARRIED**

"That ICPA (Aust) urges the Federal Minister for Health and other relevant ministers and agencies to ensure that federally funded health clinics and health physicians across Australia are easily accessible to all Australians, so all geographically isolated children can receive a diagnosis and ongoing treatment of medical issues that impede their ability to learn and thrive."

Explanation:

We appreciate that there is ongoing work in progress for this motion. We thank ICPA Federal Council for your efforts thus far and wish to advise that the issue is still relevant and ongoing. Northern Territory ICPA members and families are unable to access public service providers without frequently being turned away from their local public, albeit remote, health clinics because they 'do not meet the criteria' (to access the public health clinic). Remote families have no other 'local' health clinic alternative, but if they 'don't meet the criteria' and are refused treatment, they necessarily must travel vast distances including interstate to access treatment for what could have otherwise been dealt with closer to where they live, at their closest remote health clinic, serviced by rostered doctors, specialists and allied health providers. Some families are facing months, even years to try and access services in remote Australia being put on a waiting list that never actually runs in order either. It is not acceptable that publicly funded health facilities discriminate on race, demographic, or on any other basis, let alone in a situation where there are no other local alternatives for rural and remote families to 'conveniently' access.

Case Study 1:

Mum of seven year old child that has finally been diagnosed with ADHD through their SOA in the public system after years of waiting for said child to be assessed has now been told that they have been placed on a 12-18 month wait list to be seen by paediatrician doctors and allied health providers in the public system but if they were to pay or travel interstate they may be seen within a year. Said child has just turned 9 and still hasn't been seen by a paediatric doctor nor an OT or allied health provider. This child is still struggling on a daily basis to complete basic school activities, basic daily tasks, form friendships and socially interact on a 9 year old level. This child is now mentally suffering and receiving private counselling and psychology with the parent out of pocket hundreds of dollars a month. A paediatric doctor and Occupational Therapist visit this family's local clinic only an hour away on a monthly to 6 weekly basis and this family has been told that because they do not fit the criteria they cannot be seen by these specialists!

Case Study 2:

Mum of four-year-old enrolled through SOA with a stutter and some speech problems, went to local remote clinic wanting to book an appointment with a speech therapist that travels to the local clinic on occasion, during the year. Mum was told, "I'm sorry, you do not fit the criteria, you will have to make an appointment in Darwin". Mum gets hold of the same speech therapist that travels to the local clinic, still told "No, I can't see you in XXXX (971km from Darwin), but I can see you in Darwin anytime". The speech therapist tells Mum that the first thing she must do is get a hearing test for her child, "Most local clinics are able to do a simple hearing test". Back to XXXX clinic and told yet again, sorry, you don't fit the criteria. Mum has had to travel 971km to Darwin for hearing tests and an initial consultation with a therapist; the rest of the appointments were done over Zoom. Mum reports "Zoom is ok, but certainly made it harder

with the delay to be able to fully show the mouth positioning and sounds. It would be helpful to see the therapist at our local clinic once in a while, to make sure we are doing the right thing.”

TERTIARY

Access Allowance

A39. Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to relevant federal ministers and government departments that the first payment of the Tertiary Access Payment for rural and remote students relocating to access tertiary studies be expedited to ensure funds are available when upfront relocation expenses are being endured.”

Explanation:

The Services Australia website states that the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) is “A payment to help students with the cost of moving from regional or remote areas for tertiary study. Our Branch thoroughly appreciates the Tertiary Access Payment now available for eligible students however we harbour concerns that currently the first payment of the Tertiary Access Payment is not paid to students until 42 days (six weeks) after the qualifying tertiary course commencement date.

Given the costs associated with relocating are endured before the course commences, it seems incongruous that a payment designed to assist with the costs of relocating are not available to students when they are actually doing so, with the waiting period to be deemed eligible and to receive this assistance being well after these costs must be met.

This is a concern as it may result in students not being able to afford those upfront costs regardless of their eligibility and in turn meaning they either must find other sources of funding to assist with their relocation costs or in a worst case scenario will not be able to commence their course in the year after completing year 12 which would then render them ineligible for the TAP. Our branch understands that the Relocation Scholarship is available to students at the commencement of their course.

Our Branch wish to see a system in place whereby part of the funding can be paid to students at least at the start of their course, or alternatively sooner, such as when their enrolment in the course is confirmed, to ensure assistance is available for the upfront costs of relocating.

Youth Allowance

A40. Walgett Branch (NSW)

WITHDRAWN

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers to change the criteria for the Relocation Scholarship to include all students from remote areas relocating who do not qualify for Youth Allowance.”

Explanation:

There are instances where students take a gap year after year 12 with the aim of earning enough to qualify for Independent Youth Allowance before moving away from home to commence their university degree.

Despite their best efforts and often due to circumstances beyond their control (such as drought, no harvest, economic downturn, or pandemics) their capacity to earn money may be limited. As a result, earnings fall short of the requirements to meet the Independent Youth Allowance criteria.

They struggle to meet living costs, let alone save to relocate hundreds of kilometres to university. These students are moving from remote or very remote areas like Walgett to the city or possibly interstate, which is a substantial burden on their family's financial circumstances.

The Relocation allowance would give them the opportunity and time to move, settle and commence studies before seeking employment to subsidise their living costs away from home.

A41. Bourke Branch (NSW)

WITHDRAWN

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the relevant federal ministers to change the criteria of the Relocation Scholarship so that tertiary students from remote and rural areas, who are not eligible to receive other student allowances, still receive the Relocation Scholarship if they are leaving home to study.”

Explanation:

Tertiary students who are eligible for Dependent Youth Allowance are also able to apply for the Relocation Scholarship which is a welcome injection of funds for any student having to leave the principal place of residence and set up a new place to live to attend Tertiary studies. However, it is not available to students who are deemed independent or not eligible for any other allowance. The meaning of relocate is ‘to move or to establish in a new place’. Regardless of whether a student is eligible to receive certain student allowances, they are still relocating. This scholarship was established to ensure students who had to undergo a process of relocation would not have the unfair financial burden of a move compared to those who are able to live and study from their family home. It actually means that they are not only unable to access Youth Allowance but are also ineligible for the Relocation Scholarship.

A42. Western Australia State Council

WITHDRAWN

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government review the criteria for the Relocation Scholarship to ensure all geographically isolated students who must relocate from their usual place of residence for the purpose of undertaking post-compulsory studies are eligible.”

Explanation:

In the primary school years assistance for access to education is offered through the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education Allowance and a conveyance allowance to access a school bus service or drive directly to school. In the secondary years, the AIC – Boarding and Second Home Allowances assist with the significant financial cost incurred when children are living away from their primary residence to access education. Yet, for many of these families when their children commence tertiary studies there is no assistance unless the child qualifies for Youth Allowance, which is very few.

It is recognised across all levels of government that geographically isolated children face barriers in accessing an appropriate education, and to overcome these barriers involves significant financial contribution. But when it comes to post-compulsory tertiary education our children are not sufficiently catered for.

Having incurred the initial cost of relocating the ongoing costs associated with living away from home can become unmanageable for many families. Rental properties in Western Australia are at a premium and it is extremely difficult to find any shared accommodation below \$250 per week plus utilities. This equates to \$13,000+ per annum urban-based students do not have to fund. Students often seek employment to supplement the cost of living, which can become difficult to navigate with university timetabling, and as a result of the financial burden many rural and remote students fail to complete their studies.

The requirement for a student to be receiving Youth Allowance to access the Relocation Scholarship is disadvantaging rural and remote students.

For many geographically isolated students the barrier in accessing Youth Allowance and hence relocation scholarships, along with other such scholarships, is impacted by being able to provide evidence of financial need. Children do not have a choice where their parents live and yet they are continually being disadvantaged because of this. Urban children do not need to find accommodation and other associated costs to attend university, but it is a necessary cost for geographically isolated families. Evidence of being geographically isolated should be sufficient, for example, qualifying for receipt of the AIC should also be deemed a component of the qualifying eligibility criteria.

Ineligibility for Youth Allowance is a major barrier in accessing a range of financial supports for geographically isolated families who face financial barriers that their urban counterparts do not.

A43. Bourke Branch (NSW)

WITHDRAWN

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government to change the criteria for gaining Independent Youth Allowance so that rural and remote students who have to leave home to study at tertiary level, and are not eligible for Dependent Youth Allowance, are eligible for Independent Youth Allowance as soon as they commence the tertiary course of their choice.”

Explanation:

Students who are unable to access Youth Allowance due to the Parental Means Test are having to support themselves until they prove they are independent. The Parental Means Test is not indicative of what income is available to support the family. We are not wanting to include students moving out of home because they feel like moving. The students we represent move hundreds of kilometres to major regional centres or cities and pay inflated rent and utilities for accommodation near their university. Having to move so far away from the family home and set up a second home is a fair indication that these students are the very ones that should be eligible for Independent Youth Allowance. They then have to support themselves through finding work while studying. These students should be focusing on studying their chosen degree. It is great if they find part time employment however finding a job in a new environment and supporting themselves is a major concern. It leads to high dropout rates and increased stress and anxiety on individuals.

A44. Bourke Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government to change the eligibility criteria for Independent Youth Allowance, so that those rural and remote students who choose to save or invest their earnings during the working period prior to attending university are not disadvantaged by the Liquid Assets criteria.”

Explanation:

Students who choose to save their earnings during their gap year should not be deemed ineligible or disadvantaged because of savings. Many students work hard to save their earnings to buy a car or perhaps equipment to assist with their studies but instead have to use their savings to support themselves and pay rent while attending University. Other students who earn enough to be considered eligible for Independent Youth Allowance but spend everything they earn can be eligible for the Allowance but those who have saved their earnings are not eligible for the Allowance, and therefore not eligible for the Relocation Scholarship, Tertiary Access Payment or Rent Assistance. Instead, they have to use those savings and support themselves for a waiting period or until the money runs out which again may lead to financial strain and dropout rates.

A45. Katherine Branch (NT)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates for the removal of the parental threshold from the Independent Youth Allowance for students applying under rural and remote work criteria.”

A48. Tasmania Branch (TAS)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that the relevant ministers and government departments extend the current scheme to reduce the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debt for teachers, to include teachers who commit to teaching in rural and remote Australia not just very remote Australia.”

Explanation:

The current initiative that either waives the indexation on accumulated HELP debt or reduces the accumulated HELP debt for teachers who commit to working in very remote areas of Australia is appreciated. This initiative must be extended to teachers who commit to teaching in rural and remote areas as well to assist in the current issues around recruitment and retention of teachers in rural and remote Australia.

Incentives like this measure would go a long way to encouraging teachers to consider teaching in these areas and must include teachers who are teaching in early childhood education, preschool, primary and secondary schooling.

A49. Alpha Branch (QLD)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that the relevant ministers and government departments extend the current scheme to reduce Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debt for rural doctors and nurse practitioners to include all health professionals who work in rural, remote or very remote areas of Australia including those who work with geographically isolated children with specific education needs.”

Explanation:

While we applaud the Federal Government for recognizing the importance of having qualified doctors and nurse practitioners in areas that are sometimes a very long way from medical services, we believe that nurses, physios, speech pathologists, psychologists and many other health professionals also need to be living in rural and remote areas as well to fully understand the needs of their client base and provide an essential service.

If this incentive were offered to all health professionals, we would see a reduction in patient travel to big cities as there would be much more chance of seeing a qualified professional not so far from home. We don't believe that this offer needs to be extended to all professions who have Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts as for instance seeing a solicitor, accountant, surveyor or a banker can certainly happen on a yearly basis and can be planned, whereas health emergencies and health problems cannot.

It is a well-known fact that a Speech Pathologist plays a pivotal role in the identification and management of specific needs issues in children which will enable educational development. In a rural area, while not defined as a “health care emergency”, a delay in seeking the help and advice of a Speech Pathologist is having a profound impact on these student's education and many families in rural areas simply cannot afford to travel with their children to big cities for face-to-face consults and therefore they miss out completely. HELP debt relief for all health professionals would certainly be useful in recruitment and retention of these workers for the benefit of geographically isolated children.

This motion is dual purpose- not only will it encourage health professionals to work in rural and remote areas, it will also persuade the young people who grew up in such areas to gain qualifications as health professionals and come back to work in their familiar environments. It is common knowledge that people who grow up in regional and remote areas are pre-disposed to returning to these areas for work once they graduate, if the opportunities exist.

A50. Collarenebri-Mungindi Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and the Minister for Skills and Training to ensure that HECS debt repayments are forwarded by employers and applied each time it is deducted from the employees' wage to assist rural and remote graduates in the repayment of their HELP debt.”

Explanation:

At the moment those people who are paying back HECS debts are only having the payment applied to their debt each six months, whilst the payment is being deducted each fortnight from their wage. On the 1st June 2023 the HECS Debt owing is being indexed by 7.1%. This is the highest indexation in 11 years. It is unfair for the amounts being deducted from wages to not be attributed immediately to the HECS Debt. With the already high cost of living for everyone this indexation is creating greater financial struggles for those still paying off a HECS Debt. Over a 10 year period this indexation would add \$12 084 to a \$50 000 HECS Debt.

A51. Alice Springs Branch (NT)**CARRIED**

"That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the Federal Government and relevant ministers to support the inclusion and availability of 'Certificate IV in School Based Education Support' in all tertiary institutions across all States and Territories in Australia to assist geographically isolated distance education Home Tutors."

Explanation:

NT ICPA have been working in conjunction with Charles Darwin University to write and deliver a new course; a Certificate IV in School Based Education Support (course code CHC40221).

This ensures that Home Tutors/parents who are employed to teach our children that are enrolled and studying in schools of distance education can obtain formal recognition for the outcomes they achieve in delivery of lessons in these remote school rooms.

The Alice Springs ICPA Branch would like to see all states and territory ICPA branches support the National roll-out of this Tertiary Course as it provides pathways for Home Tutors to live and be employed in remote Australia while studying and working towards obtaining a Certificate IV in School Based Education Support.

This new course that is being delivered via Charles Darwin University equates to 40 credits towards a degree in Education. People that are partaking in this current trial of the course, will have formal recognition of the role they fulfil as a Home Tutor when they finish employment at the end of the school year.

A52. Walgett Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

"That ICPA (Aust) requests that the relevant ministers and Universities Australia continue to work with universities and other educational providers to help make Diplomas and Early Childhood Degree's more accessible and achievable in order to address the severe shortage of Early Childhood Educators in rural and remote areas."

Explanation:

Universities, TAFE and other educational providers need to continue to be able to provide a variety of affordable flexible pathways (such as School Based traineeships, TAFE, Open Universities etc.) to gaining a Diploma or Degree in Early Childhood.

Early Childhood degrees are lengthy and often expensive degrees. These degrees need to be flexible and at least partially subsidised by the government. With the high cost of living, it is very difficult to study and support oneself, especially with the huge cost of rentals and campus accommodation.

We would like to acknowledge and thank those universities and other providers that are offering flexible and accelerated pathways for students to gain the necessary qualifications to become an ECE. Accelerated Early Childhood Degree's such as that offered by the University of Wollongong as an example, are a great way of encouraging people into the industry. These degrees, however, need to be incentivized and flexible for those wanting to further their education.

A53. Tasmania Branch (TAS)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) urges the Federal Government to implement the recommendations from the *Education in remote and complex environments Report* relating to rural and remote tertiary students.”

Explanation:

Rural and remote students continue to face many barriers in their pursuit of a tertiary education and these have been highlighted in reviews that have been undertaken nationally. The *Education in remote and complex environments Report* recommended that the government announce an implementation plan for the recommendations and actions from the *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education* (Halsey Review) and *National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy* (Naphthine Review). The reports have recommended measures that would improve the pathway of tertiary education for rural and remote students. While some measures that have been implemented including the Tertiary Access Payment, the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships, the Regional University Centres and improvements to the Fares Allowance have benefited and been greatly appreciated by rural and remote tertiary students, other recommendations from the *National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy* (Naphthine Review) need to be implemented to ensure improved participation, achievement and affordability for rural and remote students aspiring and undertaking tertiary education.

Implementation of all the recommendations would make a significant difference including:

- the access to Youth Allowance as an independent for rural and remote students who successfully complete their first year of tertiary study externally if they relocate to continue study for a further minimum of one year,
- the reduction of the earnings required for rural and remote students who are qualifying for independent Youth Allowance under the Concessional Workforce test and
- the review of the changes to the parental means test cut-offs for independent Youth Allowance under the Concessional Workforce test.

A54. Queensland State Council**CARRIED**

“That ICPA Qld requests that ICPA (Aust) thanks the Federal Government for its ongoing commitment to the Country Universities Centre (CUC) program for which is making a substantial, proactive contribution to the completion of post compulsory years education in rural and remote areas.”

Explanation:

ICPA Qld acknowledges the value of these facilities in rural and remote areas to provide students with options to study close to home and we hope to see the program continue to expand.

F2. Bourke Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) request the relevant Federal Ministers expand the criteria of the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) to better suit the needs of rural and remote students.”

Explanation:

At present the TAP is only available to school leavers and should include those taking a gap year or deferring traineeships and include Australian Apprenticeships.

TRAINING**A55. Queensland State Council****CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to extend the TAP (Tertiary Access Payment) to include rural and remote Australian Apprentices.”

Explanation:

Australian Apprentices relocating to undertake training face similar relocation and set up costs (travel, bond/rent, uniforms) as students relocating to undertake study. They are generally school leavers, moving from the family home for the first time with very little financial security. To make apprenticeships more attractive and increase retention rates, it is imperative that apprentices are well supported financially, particularly in the initial stages, of their apprenticeship.

A56. Queensland State Council**CARRIED**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Australian Government and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) to conduct more comprehensive and timely audits of Australian Apprenticeship Support Networks (AASNs) to ensure that the delivery and support intended by the Australian Government is actually received by rural and remote apprentices/trainees."

Explanation:

With a nationwide skill shortage, it is imperative that apprentices/trainees are well supported during their apprenticeship. With national completion rates alarmingly low (55%), it is timely for the Federal Government to focus on all stakeholders and review their procedures. Retention needs to be seen as a collective responsibility of all stakeholders. AASNs are integral to ensuring that the sign up, administration and management of apprenticeships occurs. The Qld Government website clearly states that one of the key roles of the AASN is *"to provide advice and support during the apprenticeship"*. To ensure this support is ongoing and comprehensive, it is essential that the Australian Government and DEWR conduct more rigorous and timely audits of all AASNs which include gathering feedback from apprentices/trainees and their guardians (those under 18), and face to face follow up within three months after sign up occurs.

A57. Bourke Branch (NSW)**CARRIED**

"That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Skills and Training and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, to mandate specialist support structures for regional and rural apprentices/trainees, from within the federally funded Australia Apprenticeship Support Networks (AASNs)."

Explanation:

Within our branch there are many examples of little support, contact or follow-up for apprentices, trainees and their employers once they commence a training contract. It is requested that there be trained rural and remote specialist support staff within the AASNs. These staff must be contactable by employers, trainers and apprentices/trainees in rural and remote areas, and for those who have had to relocate to undertake their on and off the job training.

Assistance for the rural and remote apprentice/trainees requires mandatory actions from the AASNs including (but not limited to) visits to the workplace and/or training facility to check that the apprentice/trainees are being suitably trained, educated and supported; documented semester reviews on all parties involved; knowledge and assistance with state and federal support programs; and follow-up contact and interviews should the apprentice/trainee or employer terminate the contract prior to its completion.

The data collected during and after a traineeship can inform the ongoing improvement of AASN services and the practices of those working with apprentices and trainees. This will assist the growth in completion rates of apprenticeships and traineeships in and from rural and remote areas.

A58. Queensland State Council**CARRIED**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to add criteria to the Trade Support Loan scheme recognising rural and remote-based apprentices, as being eligible to get a 30% discount after completion of the trade."

Explanation:

The Trade Support Loan scheme offers a loan to Australian Apprentices that helps meet everyday costs while undertaking training. These loans are a great source of support for apprentices. However, rural and remote based apprentices face additional travel and freight costs when completing their apprenticeships due to distance and isolation. In recognition of completing a trade, listed on the priority list, in a rural or remote area, a further incentive could be added to the trade support loan criteria. Similar guidelines could be adopted from the Queensland Department of Education teacher incentives scheme that recognises rural and remote services. This adjustment to the criteria could not only be of benefit to apprentices but also assist in the attraction and retention of apprentices in rural and remote areas thus boosting local economies. The addition of this higher incentive could also be linked to the existing regional area's postcodes as listed in the Trade Support Loans Rules 2014 legislation.

MISCELLANEOUS**A59. ICPA Federal Council****CARRIED**

“That ICPA implements a rolling membership model enabling online recurring membership payments.”

Explanation:

After investigating the feasibility of introducing online recurring membership payments, we are pleased to say the ICPA website has a ‘recurring payments’ feature which can be switched on at any time and would be a positive move for the future, streamlining the online renewal process for all concerned. This model would mean that members could opt to automatically renew membership every twelve months, receiving an email one month beforehand reminding them that their membership will be automatically renewed and providing the opportunity to cancel the payment if they wish.

Currently, ICPA as an organisation is constitutionally constrained to a fixed membership model, which is mirrored on the website with a membership calendar year of January to December. If the website were to move to an online recurring membership payment model at this time, it would be a very complicated system that would increase potential for human error and the volunteer workload to manage this.

Therefore, it is recommended that in order to provide the recurring membership payment option, it is highly recommended that ICPA move to a rolling membership model with, which would involve the following process:

1) Implementing a rolling membership model:

- a) All online membership renewals would be renewed 12 months from the date of payment and if opting for the recurring payment, would automatically renew when 12 months expires, regardless of what time of year this is. For example, if a member pays membership on 1 March, the membership will be due on 1 March the following year. Considering the timing of many State Conferences and the number of members who currently renew between November and March, this should not change much, if at all.
- b) Changes to state and federal constitutions to accommodate a model where membership is not due at a fixed date of January 1 will need to occur. These changes will be minimal and all constitutions would contain the same wording. It is important to note the following:
 - State EOFY would remain the same.
 - Branches could continue to hold AGMs at the same time.
 - Membership drives could continue to be promoted at the same time.
 - Membership fee changes could still be aligned with the calendar year.
 - Membership renewals would, over time be spread out more. -

- New members will benefit – they will pay for a 12-month subscription rather than the full fee for, say, two months if they join in October and then ask to renew a month later.
- Manual membership payments through the Branch would still be an option.

Along with streamlining the membership process for members, moving to a rolling membership model will have huge advantages for the ICPA website. It will also mean that many of the functions available to state and federal membership management teams will be usable, significantly reducing the workload of our volunteers. Currently, between November and April exports need to be compiled manually as opposed to pressing one button.

2) Implementing online recurring membership payments

- a) Once the Rolling Membership model is implemented online recurring membership payments could be offered as an option. Members would not be obligated to take up this option.
- b) Online recurring membership payments would reduce issues around renewing, as memberships will be automatically updated.
- c) The change to recurring membership payments will also simplify processes for ICPA Council volunteers, including treasurer's, membership officers and other personnel who manage membership and the database.

A60. Northern Territory State Council

LOST

"That at future Federal ICPA Conferences that ICPA branch conference delegates' and observers' partners be offered conference observer admission at a very low rate to encourage participation and greater gender diversity of our organisation."

Explanation:

At the present time, gender diversity within ICPA at all levels is heavily skewed to females, to mothers. Whilst there are many practical reasons for this, we need to be mindful that our actions need to actively encourage both parents - mothers AND FATHERS - and ensure that both are made feel welcome to participate in ICPA. And that diversity on Councils and Committees make for more robust and strong decision making.

The historic practice of organising fun and highly subsidised (for eg. Darwin tours capped at fee of \$20 but true cost much greater) PARTNER TOURS during conference time may actually attract partners, Dad's, to participate in those as opposed to going to conference - where they can hear, see, understand, contribute (and be impressed by) the activities of their partners. Pre and post tours could be arranged or participation as observer at conference at the same low rate as the Partner Tours offered.

We acknowledge that some states and branches have a much greater gender mix than others and applaud them on that. This motion is targeted at creating the conversation to be mindful of gender inclusiveness and to be careful that our actions aren't contributing to some choosing not to actively participate in ICPA.

A61. Northern Territory State Council

CARRIED

"That ICPA (Aust) accepts our collective gratitude for the work you put into not only advocating for members, but also for the depth and quality of information you develop, make available and share with stakeholders, State Councils and members in the course of your advocacy on a national level. We thank you for representing ICPA nationally in a most professional and esteemed way."

Explanation:

ICPA Australia has always done an incredible job advocating for members, but in this motion, we'd like to acknowledge Federal Councils consistently high standards for the benefit of our members.

S4. Mt Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)**WITHDRAWN**

“That ICPA (Aust) introduce a by-law allowing financial ordinary members to be affiliated with other branches from their State.”

Explanation:

Ordinary members who wish to be closely associated or connected to another branch should be encouraged to do so. For example, a financial member of the Julia Creek ICPA branch would only have to pay our Mt Isa BOTA a small fee, endorsed by our branch at our AGM, to be an affiliate member of our branch, not purchase two full memberships which is currently the only available legitimate option. We are noticing that some branch events require compulsory branch membership of ICPA to participate such as sports camps, and that this is leading to a prevalence of members holding two ICPA memberships. Our branch has members who have paid full membership (that is branch, State and Federal fees) twice over, so QLD State has received \$60 and Federal \$44 from the same member. State-wide there are some instances where one spouse is a member of one branch and the other spouse a different branch. There are also travelling families who have membership with their local branch and additional membership with another branch when they are contracting in that area. We appreciate that multiple branch memberships cause issues for the current online membership system and significant changes would have to be made to the constitution and database to accept affiliate memberships as an additional category. Therefore instead, we are requesting that affiliates be defined within an ICPA by-law and give branches the discretion whether to accept affiliates and charge a fee. Affiliates may engage with branch activities and motions however cannot be on their affiliate branch/es Executive nor be a branch delegate for affiliate branches. Every committee in Australia is struggling to get volunteers so why don't we let financial members wanting to help and join in with other branches be supported to do so.

AGM**A62. ICPA Federal Council****CARRIED**

“That the Minutes of the 2022 AGM as circulated on 6 May 2023 be accepted.”

A63. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That the 2022 - 2023 Audited Report be received and accepted.”

A64. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That the Federal membership fee be set at \$25 per member family for the 2024 membership year.”

Explanation:

Federal Council have opted to hold off on any membership price increases in recent years to alleviate costs for member families. A price rise is required to cover administration expenses and the Federal ICPA publication (Pedals) printing and distribution costs. Federal Council are recommending a small fee increase from \$22 per annum to \$25 per annum for the 2024 year with the hope to hold at this rate steady for three to five years.

A65. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That Corporate Membership be set at \$300 per organisation for the 2024 membership year.”

Explanation:

At the 2022 AGM, Federal Council advised they would be holding off any price increase to Corporate Memberships for another year to better establish publication printing and distribution costs. An increase of \$25 per annum is recommended.

A66. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That School Corporate Membership be set at \$300 per school or educational institution for the 2024 membership year.”

Explanation:

At the 2022 AGM, Federal Council advised they would be holding off any price increase to Corporate Memberships for another year to better establish publication printing and distribution costs. An increase of \$25 per annum is recommended.

A67. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That Queensland Audit Services be appointed as auditor for the 2023 – 2024 financial year.”

A68. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That the suggested amendment to Section 6.0 of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution be adopted.”

Explanation:

The deletion of rule 6.7.2 in the Constitution ensures the School Corporate Membership rule is broad and allows for flexibility to meet the needs of all parties regarding where to allocate School Corporate members within the state they are located. Rather than including specific directives in the Constitution for the School Corporate Membership category it is suggested these be included in the ICPA (Aust) By-Laws instead.

A69. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That the suggested amendment to Section 11.0 of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution be adopted.”

Explanation:

Federal Council undertook governance training in 2022 which highlighted the need to put more safeguards in place to ensure all member bodies of the Association are aware of the need to remain solvent in order to operate therefore this additional rule is recommended, hence the suggested addition of Rule 11.7.

A70. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That the suggested amendment to Section 19.1 of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution be adopted.”

Explanation:

Following recent governance training and Federal Council discussions around ensuring the Federal Council structure and processes are appropriate and effective, Federal Council suggests an amendment to the Constitution which reduces the number of Executive positions and increases the number of committee positions which make up the Federal Council. Namely this amendment would see the position of Publicity Officer become a committee position rather than an Executive role. Federal Council believes this modification ensures a healthy balance of Executive to committee ratio and reflects roles and responsibilities, ensuring optimal operation and effectiveness of the Council.

A71. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That the addition of a new Rule 19.10 to Section 19.0 of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution be adopted.”



Explanation

It is suggested that this Rule be moved from the 18.0 Annual Subscription section to the 19.0 Management section as it is more relevant to management of the Association rather than Annual Subscriptions.

A72. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That the suggested amendment to Section 32.0 of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution be adopted.”

Explanation:

The requirement for a common seal is no longer included in the Model Rules for Incorporated Associations in WA, therefore it is recommended Rule 32.1 is removed to ensure the Constitution remains up to date.

ROLLING MEMBERSHIP MODEL**A73. ICPA Federal Council****CARRIED**

“That the suggested amendment to Section 7.0 of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution be adopted.”

Explanation:

Suggested amendments to Rules 7.1 and 7.3 will reflect and support the change from a fixed membership model to a rolling membership model.

A74. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That the suggested amendments to Section 18.0 of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution be adopted.”

Explanation:

These amendments to Rules in Section 18.0 will reflect and support the change from a fixed membership model to a rolling membership model.

A75. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That the amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) By-Laws, as circulated, be ratified.”

A76. ICPA Federal Council**CARRIED**

“That the suggested amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Distance Education Policy be adopted.”

Suggested amendments:

ICPA seeks a distance education service for ~~Foundation~~ *Early Childhood Education* – Year 12 rural and remote students *including services delivered by schools of distance education and Schools of the Air (SOTAs)*.

Explanation:

ICPA (Aust) suggests the update of the policy statement for the Distance Education Portfolio to ensure that language used reflects current terminology and to ensure it is evident that the policy applies to students and schools across all of Australia.

A77. ICPA Federal Council

CARRIED

“That the suggested amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Specific Education Needs Policy be adopted.”

Suggested amendments:

ICPA seeks equity of access and opportunity to appropriate ~~educational~~ services and facilities to identify and assist children from rural and remote areas who *require support for* ~~have~~ specific *educational learning* needs.

Explanation:

While it is imperative educational services and facilities are adequate to assist students with Specific Education Needs, this extends to Allied Health Services, Specialists and other services and facilities as well. The proposed edits ensure that the policy statement is broadened to encompass more services and facilities.

A78. New South Wales State Council

CARRIED

“That ICPA-NSW hosts the 2024 Federal Conference in Sydney on 24 and 25 July 2024.”

A79. South Australia State Council

CARRIED

“That ICPA-SA hosts the 2025 Federal Conference in South Australia.”

