

## AGENDA MOTIONS

### ALLOWANCES

A1     **Goldfields Eyre Branch**                             **Allowances**                             **CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) requests that ICPA (Aust) continue to advocate to the Federal Government for all pre-compulsory students enrolled in a distance education program to be granted the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education allowance.”***

**Explanation:**

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. Early childhood education is a materials/resource heavy time which translates to expensive. This, coupled with the costs associated with setting up a classroom for the first time, means that many families are under undue financial pressure at an already stressful time in the isolated education journey.

A2     **Meekatharra Air Branch**                             **Allowances**                             **CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) requests ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate the Federal Government for all pre-compulsory students, who are enrolled in a distance education program, be granted the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education allowance.”***

**Explanation:**

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 program must bear the costs of setting up and maintaining the classroom in the first year of schooling. Early childhood education is a material resource-heavy time which translates to expensive. This, coupled with the costs associated with setting up a classroom for the first time means that many families are under undue financial pressure at an already stressful time in their isolated education journey. We believe that a child turning 5 this year needs to begin the journey or will be well and truly on the back foot when making a start in pre-primary in 2026. If education is essential so is the allowance.

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

***“That ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government for a conveyancing allowance for parents of distance education students who are required to drive their children to School of the Air camps.”***

**Explanation:**

Travel to educational ‘in-school’ face-to-face learning or activities is often hundreds of kilometres and the cost is borne entirely by the family. Distance education and School of the Air camps are not traditional school camps. Activities are based in a classroom environment like that of mainstream schooling (which GI students cannot regularly access) and vital curriculum is taught. They are also regularly used as a time for face-to-face testing requirements and activities that cannot be achieved via a computer screen.

Geographically isolated students who are enrolled in Schools of the Air (SOTA) in Western Australia seem to

be excluded from the Department of Education's offering to provide every student with a pathway to a successful future (as per "Focus 2025") where the Department notes its commitment to examining how they can expand opportunities for regional students.

We know that the opportunity for our students to attend 'in-school' learning sessions with face-to-face delivery has a direct impact on student educational outcomes and should be looked at as a fundamental and crucial part of a GI students education and has a place in the Departments 2025 Focus and delivery of the Quality Teaching Strategy (QTS) which "ensures that every student benefits from high impact teaching".

In order for our students to attend face-to-face 'in-school' delivery of "high impact teaching" we need to consider the cost of how this happens for GI families and the impact of the true cost for a family on enrolment into a SOTA school. We want the message from the Director General, Department of Education to apply to all SOTA families equally, which is:

**"Every student in Western Australia deserves access to high-quality education that equips them for success in an increasingly complex world." Focus 2025**

When our students travel to 'in-school' face-to-face learning events, they are not eligible for the conveyance allowance (as provided by the Public Transport Authority, School Bus Services) because they are not travelling to school, the activity is commonly and historically known as a "camp".

This name has been adopted through the fact that the students will stay there for several days rather than a typical mainstream school excursion. The important fact to remember is that the teachers are delivering education as per the "Western Australian Curriculum" during these face-to-face contact hours with teachers as per the 8 learning areas of English, maths, science, humanities, arts, languages, health and physical education, and technologies. If the students do not travel to the activities for whatever reason, there is no alternative provision for them through the school. The teachers attend the 'in-school' learning events; there are no air lessons or contact with their teachers or classmates while the 'in-school' is in progress for any student unable to attend.

Face-to-face peer contact is essential for these very remote children who most frequently only have screen time contact. These students are isolated every day of their lives not just for school. Face-to-face interactions are impossible, you are home with whoever is in your family. There is no opportunity to make friends, practise social interactions, join a choir, meet for lunch or play basketball. Seeing and attending a variety of different activities teaches children how to behave in different circumstances and while these may not be taught explicitly at school, they are inherently accessible. By attending the 'in-school' activities these GI children receive the opportunities that other school students are exposed to during their school educational journey.

With the cost-of-living crisis hitting everyone, travel from home to the SOTA 'in-school' face-to-face school education delivery has risen exponentially. We note the following programs which offer travel assistance or free travel for Western Australian students to access education:

- Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) Program, for students to attend an excursion to Canberra.
- "Free Travel" with student SmartRider on Transperth and Transregional services through the Ride to School Free Program and Fare Free Sundays.
- School Bus Services conveyance allowance.

Meekatharra ICPA urges the State Government to acknowledge the cost borne by our families to access education and create a travel allowance to reflect the true cost of attending a SOTA 'in-school' face-to-face learning event.

**Case Study:**

2025 Schedule of In School Events - Meekatharra SOTA					
Term 1 (1 trip)	Term 2 (0 trips)	Term 3 (2 trips)	Term 4 (1 trip)		
Home Tutors Seminar	<i>In home learning</i>	In school - Physical Education	In School - Jnr SOTA		
Student In School	<i>teacher visit</i>		In School - Snr Perth		
Student Testing		Face-to-face visit 2025	Year 6 Graduation		<b>Total KM's</b>
Swimming Lessons		Meekatharra' location			<b>Return Trip</b>
<b>Family 1 KM's</b>	386			386	<b>2018</b>
<b>Family 2 KM's</b>	1214		1246	1354	<b>3782</b>
<b>Family 3 KM's</b>	786		1292	786	<b>2864</b>
<b>Case Study Information:</b>					
Meekatharra School of the Air, Kempton Street, Bluff Point- Geraldton					<b>KM's</b>
<b>Family 1 - Yuin Station</b>					
Distance to Meekatharra SOTA (Geraldton)					<b>193</b>
Distance to Meekatharra In School term 3					<b>430</b>
<b>Family 2 - Yarrabubba Station</b>					
Distance to Meekatharra SOTA (Geraldton)					<b>607</b>
Distance to Meekatharra In School term 3					<b>70</b>
<b>Family 3 - Kirkalocka Station</b>					
Distance to Meekatharra SOTA (Geraldton)					<b>393</b>
Distance to Meekatharra In School term 3					<b>253</b>
<b>ATO Travel Rate 2024/25 88c per KM</b>					
<b>Analysis</b>					
Family 1 travelled a total of	<b>2018</b>	KM's, At a cost of		<b>\$ 1,775.84</b>	as per ATO Rate
Family 2 travelled at total of	<b>3782</b>	KM's, At a cost of		<b>\$ 3,328.16</b>	as per ATO Rate
Family 3 travelled at total of	<b>2864</b>	KM's, At a cost of		<b>\$ 2,520.32</b>	as per ATO Rate

**A4 Lakes District Branch**

**Allowances**

**CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates for the Minister for Education and the State Government to substantially increase the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) to more accurately reflect the rising costs of education for students in rural and remote areas. Additionally, we request that this allowance be reviewed annually, with a Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase each year to ensure it keeps pace with inflation.”***

**Explanation:**

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) is a vital subsidy for families in rural and remote areas who are required to send their children to boarding school due to the lack of local secondary schools. With the growing cost of living and increased prices across all sectors, the current financial support is insufficient.

The boarding cost incurred by regional families less any eligible allowances is listed in the table below:

WA Residential Colleges boarding facility cost for 2025, (covers bed, meals, facilities, and pastoral care).	\$15,536
Federal government assistance (if eligible) with the Assistance for Isolated Children Basic Boarding Allowance (AIC)	\$10,338
Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA)	\$1,424
<b>Potential out-of-pocket expense</b>	<b>\$3,774</b>

For 2025, the cost of attending a WA Residential College, which covers bed, meals, facilities, and pastoral care, is \$15,536. After accounting for Federal Government assistance through the Assistance for Isolated Children Basic Boarding Allowance (AIC) of \$10,338 and the current BAHA of \$1,424, families still face significant out-



of-pocket expenses. This financial burden puts additional strain on rural and regional families, making it harder for them to remain in their communities and contribute to local workforce stability.

An increase in BAHA funding, coupled with an annual CPI adjustment will help support and encourage families to stay in regional areas, retain employees, and foster overall community stability, ultimately supporting the long-term viability of rural communities across Western Australia.

**A5 Goldfields Eyre Branch*****Allowances*****CARRIED/LOST**

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

**Explanation:**

We were pleased and grateful to see an increase in financial support for the BAHA from the State Government and are hopeful that the government will further alleviate the pressure on rural and remote families by significantly raising their financial support.

Despite the welcomed increase, it remains a fact that boarding school fees continue to rise throughout Western Australia. This is still causing a significant gap between what is charged and what is received by parents as support from both federal and state governments. Families who have no choice but to send their children away to boarding school are increasingly under financial pressure to provide their children with suitable educations. Currently, there is a gap of almost \$4,000 at residential colleges in WA that isolated families must pay after receiving the AIC and BAHA payments (without AIC additional) from both the federal and state governments.

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

**A6 Meekatharra Air Branch*****Allowances*****CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) continues to advocate to the Minister for Education and the State Government for a substantial increase in the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA).”***

**Explanation:**

While we appreciate that BAHA will be increased each year under the Consumer Price Index (CPI), it is an important subsidy that rural and remote families rely heavily upon each year when sending their children away to provide them with an adequate education.

A substantial increase in this allowance would help relieve some of the financial pressure faced by rural families with the rising cost of boarding.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

**A7 Eastern Districts Branch *Communications* **CARRIED/LOST****

*"That ICPA (WA) requests that the Minister for Communications ensure that Telstra provides regional areas with mobile phone coverage that is as good as, or ideally better than, what was available before the 3G network was switched off, and that immediate solutions are implemented for communities experiencing reduced connectivity."*

**Explanation:**

Since the staged shutdown of the 3G network from October 2024, many regional areas have experienced a significant decline in mobile coverage, despite assurances that service would be equivalent or improved. This has created serious challenges for residents and businesses in already isolated areas, impacting safety, education, communication, and economic activity.

Mobile connectivity is not a luxury - it is a necessity for those living and working in regional, rural and remote areas. Urgent action is needed to restore and enhance coverage, ensuring regional Australians are not left worse off due to technological transitions beyond their control.

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION, SOTA & CURRICULUM**

**A8 Goldfields Eyre Branch *Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum* **CARRIED/LOST****

*"That ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government to allow geographically isolated students enrolled in School of the Air (SOTA) to enrol in the in-term and VacSwim swimming programs at a kindergarten level."*

**Explanation:**

SOTA children are enrolled in school and attend camp at kindergarten age and the whole school undertakes swimming lessons as one of the major camps of the year. Students who are under the age of 5 are excluded from the swimming lesson program. Children living remotely are far more exposed to water hazards such as dams and rivers and do not have access to private swimming lessons. South Australia currently enrolls children at 3 years of age.

**A9 Goldfields Eyre Branch *Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum* **CARRIED/LOST****

*"That ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government to provide financial assistance to cover the cost of supplying a supervisor in the Geographically Isolated (GI) and Distance Education (DE) schoolroom."*

**Explanation:**

It is a requirement in State distance education and Schools of the Air (SOTA's) that a supervisor be present to support the delivery of the distance education curriculum. The State Government is responsible for the cost of education delivery, including supervision, in traditional education settings (i.e. schools), however, the cost of a supervisor is borne entirely by the family in a DE environment. We are seeking a government funded payment to recompense the home tutor for their time and expertise, be that an individual employed by the family or a parent.

**A10 Meekatharra Air Branch *Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum* CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government to provide a subsidy to assist with the cost of supplying a supervisor in the Geographically Isolated (GI) or Distance Education (DE) schoolroom.”***

**Explanation:**

State distance education and Schools of the Air require a supervisor to support distance education delivery. While the State Government is responsible for the cost of education delivery including supervision, the cost of a supervisor in a distance education environment is borne entirely by the family.

**A11 Goldfields Eyre Branch *Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum* CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) requests that ICPA (Aust) continue to lobby the Federal Government to provide a clause to the In-Home Care Program in order to employ individuals to assist with supervising school aged students in geographically isolated classrooms.”***

**Explanation:**

As the current parameters of the In-Home Care Program focus on early childhood and preschool-aged care, families of geographically isolated students are unable to access the program to fund a home tutor or classroom supervisor despite the program being a natural fit for this type of childcare. As it is a requirement of state Distance Education (DE) and Schools of the Air (SOTA's) that a supervisor be present to support the delivery of the DE curriculum we believe that better support should be offered to students in the form of a paid home tutor.

If families of geographically isolated students had access to the financial assistance offered by the In-Home Care Program home tutors could be properly remunerated, and as such we believe we would see an improvement in students' educational outcomes.

**A12 Meekatharra Air Branch *Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum* CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocate for the Minister for Education when meeting with Federal and State Education Ministers to come up with a uniform solution that adequately remunerates home tutors.”***

**Explanation:**

The home tutor is essential in a distance education, home school or School of the Air setting to adequately supervise students. The cost of a home tutor is solely borne by the isolated family and is an added expense to what is usually an already tight budget.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

**A13 Midwest Branch *Early Childhood* CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) campaign the Department of Education to develop and implement the introduction of early childhood education programs (such as a three-year-old program) and school occasional childcare where no other service exists, ensuring all geographically isolated students and early years children have equity of access to a continuing and appropriate education.”***

**Explanation:**

Develop a system to provide equitable access to early childhood education and childcare care utilising pre-existing infrastructure in consideration of the following:

**Education**

Opportunities for learning and developing social and play skills are essential for child development in creating new friendships, learning new skills and building resilience. Early childhood education contributes to school readiness and fosters a positive relationship with the education system. While in-home care is an option for some families, rural and city; sourcing educators is challenging with added costs relating to accommodation, meals and fuel. The capacity for families to provide these allowances is minimal.

**Feasibility**

In some locations, rural school numbers are diminishing and accessing pre-existing facilities for the use of childcare and early childhood learning would increase school numbers and promote rural areas and employment opportunities for families. Utilising existing local infrastructure and resources to their full potential would have flow-on effects for budgets at a local, state and federal government level, reflective of Playgroup WA's agreement with the Department of Education.

**Community Impact**

Childcare challenges are a national issue, particularly in rural areas where it is often inaccessible. By developing programs to support early childhood education and childcare in rural communities, more employment opportunities are created, bolstering the national economy and ensuring rural communities continue to flourish in the face of evolving challenges. These changes would encourage individuals and families to settle and remain in country areas.

Creating opportunities in rural and remote areas for childcare not only supports child development, it also contributes to the vibrancy of rural communities by allowing the primary caregiver to use childcare to seek employment opportunities, study, fulfil community volunteer roles and nurture their well-being. Having this resource would also attract more people to these small communities and likely boost education numbers.

## **RURAL & REMOTE SCHOOLS**

**A14 Goldfields Eyre Branch*****Rural and Remote Schools*****CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government for funding to be sought to further incentivise experienced teachers to take up a contract and long term rural, regional and remote positions.”***

Students from rural, regional and remote areas are at times facing 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.

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 Education Assistants (EAs) or Library Technicians. When one teacher is away from the classroom, the other teacher must take the whole school and/or EAs are being asked to step in and take classes. Alternatively, teachers are being called in without completing their training and as such, the mental health of teachers is becoming increasingly worrisome due to their burdensome workload.

Whilst the State has varying incentives to encourage teachers to rural schools, 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 better incentives, we suggest the State

Government run an advertising campaign to get teachers into the bush, pitched at experienced teachers and their families.

Additional Incentives could include:

- 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.
- Mortgage support for teachers who choose to buy in the rural or remote location in which they teach.
- Increased potential for permanency in the city after completing 3 - 5 years in a rural, regional or remote position.

**A15**     **Goldfields Eyre Branch**                     **Rural and Remote Schools**                     **CARRIED/LOST**

***"That ICPA (WA) requests that the State Government review the government-provided housing available in regional and remote locations, with a view to sharing accommodation between departments."***

**Explanation:**

It is increasingly difficult to recruit teachers to regional areas, and the lack of housing is one of the main barriers. It has come to our attention that government-owned housing is vacant though there is no availability for the Department of Education to place teachers in this housing, as it belongs to another government department that is not utilising it. Teachers are also being placed in hotel accommodation when there is government-owned accommodation available for fly-in fly-out (FIFO) medical staff and police that could be shared.

**A16**     **Goldfields Eyre Branch**                     **Rural and Remote Schools**                     **CARRIED/LOST**

***"That ICPA (WA) continues to work with Fairbridge and the State Government to ensure that necessary upgrades at the Kalgoorlie Camp School are completed in a timely manner, addressing ongoing concerns around cleanliness, maintenance, and overall facility standards."***

**Explanation:**

While some improvements have been made at the Kalgoorlie Camp School, there is still significant work to be done to ensure the facilities meet an acceptable standard for students and staff. Recent experiences have highlighted ongoing issues with cleanliness in dormitories and ablution blocks, as well as maintenance of the grounds, which impact the overall experience for those attending camps.

Fairbridge must accelerate the pace of upgrades to ensure the camp remains a safe, hygienic and functional space for students. Continued advocacy from ICPA (WA) will help ensure that these concerns are prioritised and that regional students have access to quality camp facilities that enhance their educational experience.

**A17**     **Lakes District Branch**                     **Rural and Remote Schools**                     **CARRIED/LOST**

***"That ICPA (WA) advocates to the Minister for Education to review the restrictive barriers that permanency has on attracting and retaining new teachers to all regional and remote schools."***



**Explanation:**

Flying squad teachers have helped to fill positions in a school in a staffing crisis, but they generally stay for only 5 weeks. The constant disruption to primary school students with teachers on a rotation has been detrimental to their learning.

The current permanency rulings are holding back our smaller schools' ability to employ staff, particularly graduates.

Permanent teaching positions are sometimes held by teachers not actively working due to extended periods of leave. Attempting to attract a teacher to a regional area for only part of a year has resulted in limited job interest in smaller regional schools. Some schools only have a certain number of contracts available and permanent positions are not always available.

Permanency positions need to be reconfigured to provide rural and regional schools with greater options and flexibility with consideration to either:

- Have permanency with the Department of Education, not with an individual school.
- If a teacher has an extended absence from the workforce, then a 12-month or greater replacement teacher contract can be offered.

**A18 Lakes District Branch*****Rural and Remote Schools******CARRIED/LOST***

***“That ICPA (WA) advocate to the Minister for Education for more support and funding for small regional and rural schools with advertising and marketing for teacher attraction.”***

**Explanation:**

Given the size of the community and the distance to everyday services, it has become increasingly challenging to attract staff. Many schools have reported difficulties in attracting and retaining staff, which is detrimental to student educational outcomes.

Small rural and regional schools are missing out on quality teachers and more must be done to attract teachers back to the regions!

Having engaging promotional material to showcase rural and remote schools as employment options is essential in attracting new teachers to the regions. Many graduates have never experienced life outside the city and may have little understanding of the communities they could be joining. Highlighting the unique opportunities, lifestyle and support available in smaller schools and regional areas can help ease uncertainty, making the transition less daunting and encouraging more teachers to consider these rewarding roles.

Community input is invaluable in understanding the social activities and services available, as it helps create a welcoming and connected environment. For a graduate or teacher moving to town, having access to this information is essential in building relationships, feeling a sense of belonging, and integrating smoothly into the community.

By actively showcasing and promoting rural schools to university students, we can encourage preservice teachers to undertake practical placements in regional areas, potentially inspiring them to pursue long-term careers in these communities.

Help at a department level is vital as our small school staff are already overburdened with the extra roles they are required to perform with a very small staff. Our educators need to remain just that, educators; they are not marketers.

Also, the staff at our small schools should not be expected to use part of their one-line budget to essentially market their school.

**A19 Lakes District Branch*****Rural and Remote Schools*****CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to the Minister for Education to continue to provide funding for the further expansion of the School of Isolated Distance Education (SIDE) science and maths trial to assist in multi-age grouping which has been benefiting student outcomes, teacher workload, attraction and retention.”***

**Explanation:**

Schools within the Lakes District Branch zone have already witnessed the positive benefits of the SIDE trial program on both students and teachers.

Lakes District has many schools with multi-age groupings; within these classrooms, the wide range of learning abilities can be significantly diverse. Staff members feel more supported in this challenging role where this service has been introduced.

Attracting and retaining teachers in rural areas of WA poses a significant challenge. Given the limited number of teachers in the system and a reluctance to relocate to rural schools, it is difficult at the best of times and any additional support that can be provided to support teachers will have improved outcomes.

Continuing the SIDE trial program will help alleviate pressure on teachers and support their retention in small schools. This initiative has allowed teachers to focus more on their classrooms, and they strongly advocate for its continuation.

**Example:**

A small school in the Great Southern with 34 children runs two classrooms. The senior room has Years 2 - 6 in it. This year SIDE is providing not just curriculum, but also assessment and reporting for maths and science to the Years 4, 5 and 6 students. This then allows the classroom teacher to focus on the Year 2 and 3 students for maths and science. The students who are attending SIDE classes are happy, excited and engaged in these lessons and meeting outcomes. Ultimately better outcomes for students and teachers.

In another small school with multi-age classrooms (PP - 3), they are struggling to deliver age-appropriate education only with the assistance of an Education Assistant 4 half days. Students are undertaking the *initialit* program where due to a lack of staff, students in Years 1, 2 and 3 are all completing the same content. The age and level range of students in this classroom makes it incredibly hard to meet their individual needs, especially with programs like *initialit*.

**A20 Midwest Branch*****Rural and Remote Schools*****CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) continues to advocate for the participation of SIDE (School of Isolated and Distance Education) lessons in small regional schools with multi-age classrooms with expertise and extension opportunities of experienced and subject specific SIDE teachers.”***

**Explanation:**

The Midwest community welcome the trial announced by the Hon. Dr Tony Buti in July 2024 that will see a pilot program to be run by SIDE. The trial will provide additional support to small regional primary schools with multi-age classrooms in the mathematics and science curriculums. If successful, the trial will be expanded to include additional schools in 2025 and beyond.

Whilst we would prefer to have an experienced teacher to teach every multi-aged class, the reality is that some of our schools have classes with more than two year levels, with a graduate teacher who is expected to teach all subjects to all year levels.

A difficult task for the most experienced of teachers. This trial allows the teacher of a multi-age classroom to pass on the teaching of the maths and/or science curriculum to an experienced and competent SIDE teacher, ensuring that the student is receiving the very best tuition. The delivery of an online lesson is a specific and specialised skill with dedicated resources that a teacher at SIDE is specifically trained to teach.

In 2023 the Cook Government announced a \$7.1 million funding boost to SIDE to ensure that it delivers a high-quality, inclusive and culturally responsive education program for students who live in isolated, regional or remote locations.

We hope that this trial is successful, however, we have some concerns as to the implementation of the trial program, and therefore its ultimate success.

- Principals were invited to commence the trial in Term 4 of 2024, where the curriculum had already commenced in Term 1, so obviously principals and teachers had concerns as to what would be covered as they had already commenced teaching in the previous three terms.
- As the trial started in Term 4 and the reporting of the subject would go for two terms, how would this work?
- Who would be responsible for the supervision of the students? How would the cost of this be covered?
- What happens if the students were working with a maths book provided by their parents, and then in Term 4 what would happen to these books?
- Principals were asked to include their school board and P&C's – however, this did not always occur and many school communities are unaware of this option for their school to participate.

This program has enormous potential to raise the standards of maths and science and many other areas of the curriculum in our small rural schools. NAPLAN data consistently reports that rural schools are in decline with all NAPLAN results. We all want the best education for our rural and remote students; however, education is no different to many other occupations. We are struggling to economically provide the right incentives to attract teachers to our small rural school. Housing, healthcare, professional development and support, high cost of rural living and living away from family and friends are all significant impediments to attracting high-quality permanent teachers.

If we can supplement the learning in a multi-aged classroom with high-quality online lessons from experienced teachers we can have our children progressing at a significant advantage to what many are currently afforded.

**Example:**

There is a Year 4, 5, 6 class of 15 students in a small rural school. When it is time for maths the Year 5's (maybe there are only 2 students?) are in a location in the classroom where they can interact online with their SIDE teacher to complete their maths lesson. These children could be completing a lesson with other students from all over the State. The possibilities are endless and the opportunity to further enrich the child's learning is something we should be encouraging, as often the alternative is not optimal.

With all of the above stated, we must remain steadfast in our approach that an online teacher in any subject is only better when the student is at a disadvantage from learning specific subject content due to the multi-age dynamics of their classroom. We are supportive of this pilot program but do not want in any way to see a diminishing role of the classroom teacher in our small rural schools.

**A21 Lakes District Branch*****Rural and Remote Schools*****CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to the Department of Education for local families to be given priority access in the enrolment process for local VacSwim programs, ensuring that children from regional and rural areas are not disadvantaged when seeking to participate in these essential swimming lessons.”***

**Explanation:**

ICPA Lakes District Branch proposes that local students be granted priority access to their closest local VacSwim program.

It is vital that local consultation takes place to ensure that enrolment procedures are transparent and accessible to all regional families, providing equitable access to these valuable programs and reducing unnecessary waiting times for local students.

We also call for better management of enrolments to ensure that when children are allocated places in the program but fail to attend, those vacancies should be offered to other children on the waitlist, allowing as many children as possible to benefit from the program.

We are aware of children who were enrolled in the country series program but did not attend, leaving gaps in the program that could have been filled by other children on the waitlist. However, these children were unable to take advantage of the opportunity because those who failed to attend had secured their places.

A "no-show policy" or "waitlist reallocation process" procedure would allow for the reallocation of places to other participants on the waitlist when someone who has secured a place does not attend. It ensures that available spots are not wasted and that other individuals on the waitlist have the opportunity to participate.

The enrolment procedure process needs to include enrolment access to the second series even when enrolled in the first series. By also allowing local children to access the second series of VacSwim sessions, we maximise the use of available spots, preventing wasted opportunities and ensuring that as many children as possible can benefit from the program.

## **STUDENT ACCOMMODATION**

**A22 Midwest Branch*****Student Accommodation*****CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to the Minister for Education for additional financial funding to be directed to residential facilities for students enrolled with a disability, with this payment being in addition to any funding that schools may already receive for the enrolled student. This funding needs to be designed to improve access and inclusion to education for students who are from geographically isolated areas.”***

**Explanation:**

Currently, students who attend boarding schools who have no other educational option for access to a local high school and who require additional support in the boarding house due to a disability diagnosis do not have access to targeted funding for support.

On average a WA student spends 25 hours and 50 minutes per week at school and 142 hours and 10 minutes per week under the duty of care of a residential facility. Multiplying this over 40 weeks of education throughout the year creates a staggering number. Students are in the care of residential facilities for more time than they are at school – but with no funding directly targeted towards higher provision of care, education and qualifications for staff, and increased staffing level to ensure that their needs are being met.

Unfortunately, students with a diagnosed disability do not ‘turn’ their diagnosis off at the end of the school day (which attracts funding), and by the very nature of a disability being diagnosed, it is with them for life, including their educational journey. True inclusion and accessibility for our geographically isolated students should take into account their time in residential facilities. There should be an additional payment made to schools or residential facilities as a supplement to ‘Individual Disability Education’ funding to support the specific needs of a student living with a disability in the residential boarding house system.

These vulnerable, geographically isolated students are supported in the school, but in many schools are left to navigate the complexities of a boarding house alone, without appropriate guidance and support.

Brave are the families who try to educate geographically isolated kids with a disability through a boarding house system for access to education. This journey is full of hope and dreams for an inclusive education for our students who will need it the most to navigate the complexities of life. Braver are the kids who give it a go.

We want all our WA geographically isolated students to have equal opportunity for education.

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

**A23** Lakes District Branch

**Student Accommodation**

**CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Health to prioritise support and funding for students with specific needs (e.g. Neurodiverse, medical and mental health) when attending residential colleges.”***

**Explanation:**

Students with specific needs, whether neurodiverse, medical, or mental health-related, face unique challenges when living away from home to access education. Residential colleges are not just a place to stay; they serve as a home environment where students require appropriate care, supervision, and support to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. However, current funding and support structures often fall short of meeting these students’ complex needs outside of school hours.

Without adequate resources, residential college staff may struggle to provide the specialised assistance required, leading to negative impacts on both students and staff. The lack of appropriate support can result in heightened stress, disengagement from education, increased mental health struggles, and, in some cases, students being unable to remain in a residential setting thus ultimately limiting their access to schooling.

**A24** Lakes District Branch

**Student Accommodation**

**CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to the Minister for Education to increase funding for staff training to support students in residential colleges with specific needs (e.g. neurodiverse, medical and mental health).”***

**Explanation:**

Residential colleges play a crucial role in providing accommodation and pastoral care for students living away from home to access education. However, when these colleges accommodate students with specific needs such as Autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, or mental health challenges the demand on staff increases significantly.

Unlike mainstream schools, where specialised support services and funding structures exist during school hours, residential colleges must provide care and assistance outside of these hours. Staff are often required to assist with daily routines, social integration, emotional regulation and crisis management all of which require additional training, resources, and staffing capacity.

Without adequate funding and support, staff may struggle to meet the complex needs of these students, leading to increased stress, burnout, and difficulty retaining skilled personnel. More importantly, insufficient support can negatively impact the well-being and educational success of students who rely on residential colleges for stability and care.

By ensuring appropriate funding, residential colleges can:

- Provide specialised training for staff to better understand and support students with specific needs.
- Increase staff-to-student ratios, ensuring individualised care and supervision.
- Access therapeutic and behavioural support services tailored to the needs of students.
- Create a more inclusive and supportive living environment, improving student outcomes and overall well-being.

Investing in additional support for staff at residential colleges is not just a matter of fairness it is essential to ensuring that students with specific needs have the same opportunities to thrive as their peers.

**A25 Midwest Branch**

***Student Accommodation***

**CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to the Minister for Education and the Department of Education to include in Standard 8: Boarding of the ‘Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools’ a specific requirement that all students residing within a residential boarding house with a disability have a care plan in place for accommodations and planning.”***

**Explanation:**

Currently, students with a disability diagnosis enrolled in a residential facility are managed in a variety of ways, with no uniform way of communicating and addressing their needs while in the boarding residence. In some schools, Individual Education Programs (IEPs) have a section to encompass their needs and in other schools, it is just a verbal undertaking between boarding staff and parents of the needs of the child. Midwest Branch would like to see real change take place in this space with the implementation of best practices and true access and inclusion processes that lay the foundation for a successful and enjoyable boarding experience for our regional, rural and remote students.

*Taken from the WA Education Department Website, “Registration of Non-Government Schools”*

**Policies and procedures**

Policies and procedures must be in place for student boarding facilities which detail how a safe, healthy and supportive boarding environment for all enrolled boarders, including those with disabilities, is being provided and maintained at all times. Students, parents and staff must be given a clear and comprehensive statement of these policies and support their implementation.

**A26 Midwest Branch *Student Accommodation* CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to the Minister for Education and the Department of Education to include as part of the registration and accountability process of all residential boarding facilities (inclusive of CEWA, WA Department of Education Residential Colleges and other forms of secondary education residential facility) a specific requirement that all students residing within a residential boarding house with a disability have a care plan in place for accommodations and planning.”***

**Explanation:**

Currently, students with a disability diagnosis enrolled in a residential facility are managed in a variety of ways, with no uniform way of communicating and addressing their needs while in the boarding residence. In some schools, Individual Education Programs (IEPs) have a section to encompass their needs and in other schools, it is just a verbal undertaking between boarding staff and parents regarding the needs of the child. The Midwest Branch would like to see real change take place in this space with the implementation of best practices and true access and inclusion processes that lay the foundation for a successful and enjoyable boarding experience for our regional, rural and remote students.

**A27 Midwest Branch *Student Accommodation* CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to the Minister for Education for additional financial funding to be made available for the purpose of upgrades to WA State-run residential colleges.”***

**Explanation:**

Geraldton Residential College has 100 students enrolled and a capacity of 120. There is a current waiting list for boys' enrolment. The campus is in serious need of refurbishment and upgrades to facilities. The current budget allows for 4 rooms to be modernised per year at a cost of \$23,000 per room. At this rate, it will take 30 years for all rooms to have an upgrade to modern standards.

## **TEACHER TRAINING**

**A28 Goldfields Eyre Branch *Teacher Training* CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) continues to investigate the possibility that universities who offer the Bachelor of Education allow/encourage preservice/student teachers to spend time as home tutors on stations as part of their practical placements.”***

**Explanation:**

By working with the universities, isolated families who educate their children through SOTA could offer student teachers an immersive experience that would benefit themselves, the families and SOTAs. This scheme would likely encourage preservice and student teachers to apply for positions with SOTAs once they graduate and would benefit isolated families by providing them with a home tutor dedicated to education who understands the system and can more confidently deliver the curriculum. SOTAs could also be encouraged to support this program and offer student teachers the opportunity to work closely with classroom teachers to take online classes as part of their practical requirements.

## **TRAVEL**

### **A29 Eastern Districts Branch**

#### ***Travel***

**CARRIED/LOST**

***"That ICPA (WA) requests the Minister for Transport ensure that School Bus Services (SBS) guarantees all rural children a realistic option to access their local school by removing the complimentary classification and ensuring that even small bus runs are serviced."***

#### **Explanation:**

Access to a safe and reliable school bus service is essential for regional students. The current system, which classifies some students as complimentary passengers, creates uncertainty and inequity, often leaving families without a guaranteed transport option. Small bus runs are frequently overlooked, making it difficult for children in lower-density areas to attend their nearest school.

A commitment to servicing all eligible regional students without the constraints of complimentary classification will provide certainty for families and ensure every child can access their local school, regardless of location.

### **A30 Eastern Districts Branch**

#### ***Travel***

**CARRIED/LOST**

***"That ICPA (WA) requests School Bus Services (SBS) implement a clear and structured communications process that ensures consultation with School Bus Advisory Committees (SBAC), contractors and school principals before advising parents of potential changes to services, to avoid unnecessary confusion and miscommunication."***

#### **Explanation:**

Recent service reviews by School Bus Services (SBS) have caused significant frustration for families due to premature communication with parents before seeking input from the School Bus Advisory Committees (SBAC) and other key stakeholders. This has led to unnecessary back-and-forth adjustments, creating stress and uncertainty for affected families.

A transparent and structured communication process is essential. Section 11.5 of the SBS policy states that service reviews should be conducted in an open and transparent manner with in-person engagement from SBS representatives, SBACs, contractors, and school principals. However, this has not always occurred in practice.

By ensuring that consultation happens first, SBS can develop practical, well-informed service routes before parents are advised, reducing unnecessary confusion and providing greater certainty for regional families.

### **A31 Midwest Branch**

#### ***Travel***

**CARRIED/LOST**

***"That ICPA (WA) requests School Bus Services (SBS) work with principals, school councils and P&C's for the formation of school bus advisory committees, as per the operational guidelines 11.5 consultation and communication in student transport assistance policy operational guidelines."***



**Explanation:**

This will improve the following:

**1. Relationship**

Improve the current relationship between all parties, promoting a space to understand collective perspectives and work towards positive outcomes.

**2. Communication**

There is an immediate need for clearer and timely communication

**3. Community Knowledge**

Communicate the advantages of re-engaging with community knowledge.

**A32 Lakes District Branch*****Travel******CARRIED/LOST***

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to the Minister for Transport and the Department of Transport to provide additional staffing, training or restructure of the School Bus Services (SBS) division to support regional and rural families to ensure open, collaborative and timely communications in determining school bus routes.”***

**Explanation:**

School Bus Services provide an amazing service transporting regional and rural children to and from school often covering vast distances and facing many local challenges. However, communication between SBS, bus contractors and parents must be improved.

Collaboration between local government shires, SBS and contractors is inefficient and lacks ongoing consultation throughout the year.

The Transport Operation Policy item 11.5 states that under the Consultation and Communication: ‘The process of reviewing either a single service route or an area review of multiple service routes will be conducted in an open and transparent way. SBS will engage School Bus Advisory Committees (parent, shire and school representative groups), contractors and schools to ensure all affected parties are provided with the opportunity to discuss any concerns.’

Given that the policy has documented the intent of the ‘Consultation Process’ it is evident that an improved and effective process needs to be implemented by the School Bus Services division to deliver this outcome.

A structured communication process detailing the involved processes to the School Bus Advisory Committees to improve transparency to improve the outcomes for regional families utilising the school bus service in remote and rural areas.

School Bus Advisory committees are well-placed to understand the projected needs and student numbers on any given route. This would support SBS when considering 5-year projections and the viability of the route and often the best practical route to reduce a child’s travel time on a school bus.

**A33 Lakes District Branch*****Travel******CARRIED/LOST***

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to School Bus Services (SBS) to ensure that families and bus contractors receive a minimum of two (2) weeks advance notice to the start of the school year or term in the event of any alterations or cancellations to a school bus route.”***

**Explanation:**

Effective communication regarding potential impending issues, alterations or cancellations well in advance is essential for all families utilising the school bus service. A documented timeline outlining the process for school bus route alterations, including input and review by impacted families and School Bus Advisory Committees before final approval, is imperative.

Parents are not receiving bus timetables or routes in a timely manner, thus causing undue stress on parents and carers when making preparations for school.

**A34 Midwest Branch*****Travel*****CARRIED/LOST**

***“That ICPA (WA) advocates to School Bus Services (SBS) and the Department of Education to extend eligibility to students travelling 2.5 km, offer complimentary seats where available to those under 2.5 km and incorporate special circumstances into item 3.5.1, titled considerations listed on page 33 of the SBS Operational Policy Manual.”***

**Explanation:**

Binnu Primary School currently has 9 pupils enrolled. Two families consisting of 4 students meet the criteria to access the current bus run of approximately 20 km. A family with three children living 2.5 km south of the school, not situated on the existing bus route, has been denied seats consecutively due to not meeting the 4.5 km criteria. Access was requested solely to assist the student's mother attend employment in Northampton. This denial leans the families' logistical needs towards enrolling the children in Northampton to the detriment of Binnu Primary School enrolment numbers.

Considering the very small number of students on the bus, the distance of the current route, and the possible impact on enrolment numbers at a rural school, this situation could meet the criteria for complimentary seats under special circumstances if such a consideration was incorporated into the SBS Operational Policy Manual.