

COMMUNICATION

A 2. ST GEORGE

“That ICPA QLD lobby Telstra to establish a unit specifically for Rural and Remote Families to access for installation of phone lines required for educational purposes.”

Explanation:

With the cancellation of Telstra Country Wide there is a loss of knowledge and understanding of the uniqueness of remote settings and what is required for the installation of phone lines in these areas. If you have more than one child in Distance Education, it is encouraged that you have more than one phone line for ease of timetabling and less clashes within the schoolroom. A lot of rural families struggle to get onto the correct person at Telstra to explain their situation and to get the process happening to get their phone line installed. Being rural, many city companies do not understand where we live so talking to Telstra can get frustrating. This in return, is turning off many Distance Education families in installing second phone lines as it is put into the too hard basket, or they have tried to call and not got the correct response, so they give up.

Carried

A 3. ST GEORGE

“That ICPA QLD lobby QLD Government to introduce a payment for the installation of second phone lines as required for educating students through Distance Education”.

Explanation:

Schools of Distance Education are requesting families install second phone lines to allow for more flexibility in on air lessons. As families with several students completing their education through Distance Education often require students to go on for on air lessons at the same time. The subsidised connection of a secondary phone line would alleviate this problem and ensure students are able to receive their lessons.

Carried

A 4. QUEENSLAND STATE COUNCIL

"ICPA Queensland thanks the Department of Education for the extra bandwidth provided to schools during the online learning period caused by Covid and continuing it after the return of normal schooling"

Carried

A 5. ALPHA BRANCH

“That ICPA QLD Inc lobby the Department of Education for an increase to the ICT subsidy for geographically isolated students, to more adequately reflect the current costs of broadband connectivity in remote classrooms.”

Explanation:

Education Queensland provides an annual subsidy for geographically isolated students currently enrolled in an SDE of \$500 to assist with offsetting the costs of broadband Internet access for the homeclassroom. This subsidy has not increased over the years as the demand for data and classroom connectivity expenses

have grown. The average cost of a broadband connection to an SDE schoolroom is approximately \$85/month* (BIRRR Survey stats), leaving some families significantly out of pocket for broadband access, particularly when they have only one child in the schoolroom.

The SDE curriculum, materials and resources are predominately accessed and delivered online, thus broadband connectivity is an essential service for SDE classrooms. The current ICT subsidy needs to more adequately reflect the costs of broadband.

Carried

A 6. NEBO BRANCH

“That Nebo Branch would like to thank ICPA Qld Inc. for their quick action and advocacy following our communications motion carried at the 2020 conference”.

Explanation:

The Valkyrie State School has had limited internet connection, and has been raising the issue with the Department of Education since approximately 2015, to no avail. We are thrilled to have now been upgraded to “Skymuster” via a satellite system which has greatly improved overall internet access. Further, the school has also received a satellite phone installation, which provides a safe, reliable resource if a situation arises where our communication systems are down. This has been a long-awaited upgrade, and we sincerely thank ICPA Qld Inc. for assisting in seeing resolutions for both of these matters.

Carried

S 1. NEBO BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. raise awareness to the relevant Communications and Government Departments of the limited and unreliable mobile phone coverage, and the impact that the closure of the Telstra 3G network will have on rural and remote schools and communities.”

Explanation:

Telstra has announced that in 2024, they will switch off 3G mobile coverage, and that users will be on 4G or greater. Currently, most parts of Queensland outside of a major city are still on a network which bounces between 3G and 4G. These networks in rural and remote areas are unreliable, with poor service, and in many places no service at all. The concern is that the mobile service towers and infrastructure currently in place are not adequate to provide the upgraded service to anyone in a rural or remote location when this changeover occurs, as we are already experiencing issues when we are meant to be phasing over to, or already on a 4G network. We are seeking that Telstra prioritise upgrading all rural areas to the appropriate tower with a stronger and wider coverage, able to handle the multitude of users (particularly in areas that are remote yet have highly populated mining camps) and assess areas of low to no coverage and ensure that they are being properly captured and catered for in the new changeover to ensure that no one is worse-off. Failure to properly prepare, and upgrade rural and remote areas would have a hugely negative impact if we are left with poorer to no connection in the absence of the 3G network, as it is currently relied upon as the sole source of communications for schools for phone and internet services for operational functions, lesson delivery and learning resources, and some families providing education via distance education.

Carried

S 2. NEBO BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. raise awareness to the relevant Communications and Government Departments of the mobile phone black spots throughout rural and remote Queensland, particularly on school bus runs.”

Explanation:

Explanation: Many parts of rural and remote Queensland have limited, to no mobile phone coverage. In our region for example, the regional towns such as Nebo, Middlemount, Dysart, Clermont etc have coverage, but once you travel greater than 20 - 40 or so kilometres inland or away from them, the further you go, the poorer to quickly non-existent for vast distances the lack of service and coverage becomes. The Valkyrie district has 3 separate bus runs from north, south and east, all of which have black spots along their respective journeys. Even with a booster aerial, there are complete black spots with no coverage on these bus routes. This is a safety concern should an accident or incident occur in these sections. We are seeking that Telstra identify all rural bus routes in Queensland that have black spots, and upgrade the coverage in their areas to ensure that all routes can be travelled with sufficient mobile coverage.

Carried