

## SCHOOLS

### A 27. NEBO BRANCH

**“That Nebo Branch would like to thank the Department of Education for its quick action in carrying out upgrades to water infrastructure at the Valkyrie State School, and for its ongoing support with views to long term water solutions at the school.”**

#### **Explanation:**

The Valkyrie State School since its establishment in the early 1970s has never had a permanent water source and has relied solely on the collection of rainwater for all student, staff, amenities and grounds use. In recent years the school has completely run out of water, resulting in bottled watering being brought in and deliveries of potable water received to refill tanks. Following a detailed case study presented to the Department from our branch via the Qld ICPA State Branch, and through the school’s requests through Qbuild, in 2021 the school received substantial plumbing upgrades, and the installation of 4 new rainwater tanks at the school and staff residence. These upgrades have significantly improved our water storage capabilities and the community as a whole would like to express our gratitude to the Department. Going forward, we look forward to continuing to work closely with the Department in seeking further outcomes for more permanent water sources and solutions for the school.

**CARRIED**

### A 28. NEBO BRANCH

**“That Nebo Branch would like to thank ICPA Qld for its support, guidance and continued advocacy regarding the ongoing water issues in rural schools throughout Queensland.”**

#### **Explanation:**

In 2021 Nebo Branch presented a detailed case study to the Qld State Branch regarding significant water issues at the Valkyrie State School. Our Branch would like to express our sincerest gratitude for the advocacy you have provided surrounding this issue, helping to navigate a rather unprecedented issue with the Department. Our understanding from your delegations, is that the DOE have identified that there are over 200 schools throughout Queensland that do not have a permanent source of water. We feel strongly that this is a long term issue in which ongoing advocacy to the Department is required to get policy and parameters enacted that will see permanent water solutions for each and every school one day.

**CARRIED**

### A 29. NEBO BRANCH

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to prioritise assessments and upgrades to water infrastructure at rural and remote schools that are not connected to a permanent water supply, and further commit to long term projects that may be required in providing more permanent and reliable water sources for rural and remote schools.”**

#### **Explanation:**

Following delegation feedback to our 2021 motions regarding water infrastructure and what water sources are relied upon at rural and remote schools, it was revealed by the Department that approximately 200

schools throughout Queensland are not connected to main water supplies. Of those schools identified, there is no differentiation between those that are solely reliant on rainwater and those that may be operating off a bore or other reliable water source which may have more than sufficient and surplus to their needs, and these schools likely do not need any further assistance or investigation. We are seeking that when the Department investigates all of these schools that they firstly meet with those schools reliant on rainwater alone as a matter of priority.

We are further seeking that the Department make consideration of several things regarding water at rural schools, emphasising that we understand that this is a complex and long term discussion that will evolve:-

That where a school does not have a permanent water source, that the Department continue working closely with the school to achieve long term solutions that enables them to have water usage that is aligned with their metropolitan counterparts. The Valkyrie State School received a report that was commissioned by the DOE which concluded that rainwater tanks and trucking in water met a daily usage calculation based on a per head formula of which they deemed to be sufficient and no further water resources at the school are required. Our understanding is that the Department are indicating they've met their obligations to us and do not intend on assisting in achieving any other water source in the future. Our community feel this is not a sufficient outcome, rather a band-aid to an issue that will continue to live on, and seek that schools in our circumstances, be kept on the agenda for further upgrades and options that will one day provide for more holistic use of water for grounds, gardens and staff residence;

That the Department give consideration to enacting policy and parameters around water usage at rural schools that goes beyond personal usage. We are of the understanding that no precedent exists for what a school can reasonably expect in terms of provision of water in a range of areas being:-

personal consumption by school personnel,

school grounds usage to establishment of and maintenance to a lawn, gardens, grassed sports oval, horticulture projects such as fruit and veg gardens, green house projects etc;

staff residence usage for both personal use, and enjoyment of their residence being a lawn. This directly affects attraction and retention of staff to rural and remote areas who rely on their residence for leisure and enjoyment outside of school hours as they reside in areas not connected directly to townships.

Permanent, long term water solutions and infrastructure at rural schools is imperative. We acknowledge each schools' circumstances and solutions are unique and that this is an enormous area to explore. We feel strongly that in order for rural schools to both survive and thrive, reliable, permanent water is essential to ensuring this. We also urge the DOE to continue working with schools that remain proactive in seeking further outcomes, and do so in a timely and supportive manner.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 30. NEBO BRANCH**

**“That Nebo Branch would like to thank the Department of Education for its quick action in carrying out upgrades to the Valkyrie State School fencing, lighting and signage.”**

#### **Explanation:**

Following our 2021 motion at the Cunnamulla State Conference regarding safety and security concerns at the Valkyrie State School due to lack of fencing, lighting and signage, we are pleased to have received these upgrades being carried out mostly in 2021, with the balance being carried out by the end of this year. These upgrades have greatly improved the overall safety and security and the community as a whole would like to express our gratitude.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 31. SOUTHERN DOWNS BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to resolve the long term and ongoing situation with Acting Principal positions causing disruption in rural and remote schools.”**

**Explanation:**

Rural and remote students are more disadvantaged by the process whereby Principals are 'acting' in a position that is held by another Principal who is 'acting' for another, etc. Therefore, the principal's position in a rural and remote school is dependent on many other acting roles throughout the state and can change more frequently than in larger, metropolitan schools. Short-term principal tenure can cause huge disruption to rural and remote schools and communities through lack of consistency of long-term strategic direction, stalling of progress and inability to build strong community relationships.

This issue has been raised by multiple branches for more than 20 years and there has been no change. Rural and remote students and communities continue to be disadvantaged.

**CARRIED**

**A 33. CHARLEVILLE BRANCH**

**"That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education and Queensland Catholic Education Commission to ensure that there is a balance of experienced and graduate teachers in rural and remote schools."**

**Explanation:**

It is imperative that there be a balanced number of experienced Teachers and graduate Teachers in rural and remote schools. Graduate Teachers require support and mentorship from experienced Teachers, within their own school. All Teachers should also attend Professional Development (PD) sessions throughout the year.

There is a school in Charleville which has been experiencing an imbalance of experienced and inexperienced Teachers. In 2021, 4 of the 6 Teachers were graduates, with these same graduates continuing on as second year Teachers in 2022. They have had very little support due to limited experienced Teacher availability. With the majority of Teachers being graduates, they have had limited opportunity to attend PD sessions as the school would be understaffed. When graduate Teachers come to Charleville there are not enough experienced Teachers within the schools to adequately support them, unlike schools in metropolitan areas which have a more balanced mix of graduate and experienced Teachers.

**CARRIED**

**A 34. ALPHA BRANCH**

**"That ICPA Qld lobby Education Queensland and the Minister for Education to urgently address the criteria used to assess small school staffing allocations and not solely base allocations on number of students."**

**Explanation:**

Small schools with multiple year levels in one classroom, including kindy to Prep & Year 6 need individual assessment for teacher allocation. Current practice is a number formula, when a small school reaches a specific number of students, extra staffing hours are supplied by Education Queensland. However, this assessment is restrictive and does not adequately reflect the demands placed on staff at small schools with multiple ages, abilities, special needs, classroom space and resources. Small school P & C's should not have to carry the financial burden of trying to make up the financial difference between Education Queensland funding for teachers and what is actually required to ensure individualised learning can occur. Education Queensland should develop individualised assessment criteria for staffing allocation that is not based solely on numbers.

**CARRIED**

## **S 12. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld continue to lobby the Department of Education to provide an additional 0.5 teacher allocation to one-teacher schools where the total enrolment exceeds 15 students and number of K-2 students enrolled represents 50 % or more of the total school enrolment.”**

### **Explanation:**

The implementation of Kindy means that in our one-teacher schools children now range in age from 3 years to 12 years. Children representative of such a diverse range in age adds significantly to the workload of a single teacher responsible for the learning outcome of all students. Teacher aides are an invaluable asset to small schools and play a vital role in assisting with classroom management and the implementation of learning activities. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the teacher to plan and adjust lessons to suit the diverse range in age and ability in a small school setting.

It should also be noted that a kindy program is very different to a Prep-6 program, with a much stronger focus on student directed learning through structured and unstructured play experiences.

In addition to planning and teaching, the workload for a teaching principal in a one-teacher setting extends beyond the classroom to include the administration and business management of the school, along with dealing with the day-to-day issues that would be shared with other staff in larger schools, such as grounds keeping, maintenance, dealing with parents, chasing snakes and fixing water pumps that have stopped working! The demand that younger students place on teacher time should be addressed by increasing the teacher allocation to one- teacher schools with more than 15 students where 50% or more of those students are representative of years K-2.

**CARRIED**

## **S 13. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby DOE to revisit the employment arrangements for additional staffing (cleaners, schools’ officers, etc) at small, remote schools in order to develop a more flexible model that better reflects the unique challenges of recruiting and retaining staff in these locations.”**

### **Explanation:**

Many of our rural and remote schools are in locations where there are no available locals to fill part time roles in the school, such as cleaners, maintenance, teacher aides and schools’ officers. Under the current staffing models, a person that may be willing to take on more than one role may require a different contract for each role and may be paid from different sources of funding. This increases the workload on school business managers and makes the roles less inviting when recruiting.

A possible employee is far less likely to consider relocating to a school for a part time role compared to a full-time role. For example, a small school may only be allocated 15 hours a week for a cleaner, which is not enough for someone to consider moving house. In many cases that would barely cover rent. Because it can be so hard to attract people to these part time roles, teachers, teaching principals, business managers and aides end up taking on the extra workload in many cases.

We would like to see a more flexible staffing model available for schools to use where someone could be offered a role that may include a number of smaller, part time roles bundled together under a single contract.

**CARRIED**

## **S 14. TAMBO BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to provide adequate teacher housing to sufficiently meeting the needs of a varying demographic, particularly in rural and remote communities where ‘teacher’ housing has been reallocated to the Government Employee Housing portfolio.”**

### **Explanation:**

In Tambo, the school has 11 teachers, and only 4 houses owned by the Department of Education. This is not sustainable for the long-term education requirements of our small community.

The housing situation for teachers in many small communities continues to be untenable. Government Employee Housing (GEH), which owns and manages all Queensland Government employee housing, was introduced in recent years to allow for teachers, police, nurses, doctors and other government employees to access housing in isolated communities where rentals were limited and allow them to use the surplus from housing sales to reinvest in construction, as well as upgrades and maintenance of existing housing. This reallocation has meant that many communities are now faced with limited options for teacher accommodation, as well as limited options for those teachers with larger families. The difficulties associated with accessing suitable housing for a varying demographic of staff within a rural and remote community are impacting on the attraction and retention of teachers within our schools.

### **Case Study:**

In Tambo we had a family of 7 where the mother accepted a teaching position in our local school. She moved her family from the coast, 1,000km away to live in a house that she thought she would spend her 3 year teaching contract, however because the QLD Education Department had only rented it for the short term due to the house being for sale (and it sold), this teacher and her family were left feeling isolated and concerned in a new town and possibly without a job as they were faced with the prospect of moving back to the coast without a job or still having a job but facing the prospect of being homeless in a remote community. Luckily for this family, a house in Tambo did come up for rent, however it wasn't suitable for such a large family, so 2 teachers were forced to move out of their share house and move into other accommodation so that the family could then move into their old house. This left a large family and 2 singles feeling displaced. The housing crisis in Tambo and many other small communities is dire. Houses just aren't getting built anymore due to the rising cost of materials, freight etc in rural and remote towns. The number of children in Tambo is growing, which in return means that our school is maintaining and, in some years, growing in numbers, however maintaining teacher numbers without teacher accommodation is proving impossible.

## **CARRIED**

## **S 15. WESTMAR INGLESTONE BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to ensure that clusters of small schools in rural and remote areas have relevant and sufficient support in place for Principals who experience situations of trauma and adversity with their students.”**

### **Explanation:**

In the event situations of trauma and/or adversity for students and/or their family, Principals are the first port of call for support to the student, siblings, and families to ensure that there is capacity for education to continue, as well as providing support to siblings for their wellbeing and education. Principals currently must find their own way to ensure that the school is properly equipped, Individual Education Plans are designed and implemented, as well as making sure the needs for wellbeing and safety are met. Principals subsequently require increased support, in regard to direction and wellbeing, as well as assistance to ensure that they are able to cater for the needs of that student and continue with their responsibilities for the day to day running of their school and its students. There is a need for a transparent process that Principals can access to provide guidance and support as required.

**CARRIED**

**S 16. WESTMAR INGLESTONE BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to ensure that in Rural and Remote small schools, where a student enrolls with a physical disability, or if an enrolment changes to include a physical disability, there is an immediate process to ensure that facilities are acceptable and accessible in a timely manner.”**

When families move to rural areas, there are limited (if any) choices of schools to enrol their children in. This is made increasingly difficult should a child have a physical disability. As such, it is essential that the Department is rigorous in its processes to ensure school facilities meet the needs of these students or can be upgraded in a timely manner to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff.

**CARRIED**

**S 17. BOLLON BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to allocate more resources to the mental health of rural and remote students, particularly those engaged in Distance Education.”**

**Explanation:**

Access to mental health services in rural and remote areas is limited. This is particularly so for vulnerable groups like children and families doing distance education. Some services, such as the Wellbeing in Schools Program (WISE) program, funded through the Western Queensland Primary Health Network, provide in-school psychological support for students at small schools in rural areas with mild to moderate mental health issues. The Bollon Branch of ICPA proposes that the equivalent services be provided, as needed, to the students doing distance education. For example, online mental health support based on a referral from online school teachers. These services could be provided via telehealth by (preferably rural-based) psychological service providers, funded through local Primary Health Networks.

In addition, funding to implement a “building resilience program” targeted to those students leaving distance education and entering boarding school, might help with this huge transition, and could be delivered as online lessons as part of the final semester of primary school.

**CARRIED**

**S 18. QUEENSLAND STATE COUNCIL**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Premier of QLD, Education Minister, the Department of Education and Department of Agriculture to work together with Industry to create a state run agricultural school with boarding facilities in QLD.”**

**Explanation:**

QLD, a state with a diverse and vast agricultural production currently has no school facility dedicated to learning these skills regardless of if a student is from a rural area or an urban area. Educating and skilling students to learn not only the academic but also practical components of working and being able to gain employment or further study in a growing industry is imperative for future food and fibre supply. Working with Industry will also help to ensure the materials taught are relevant and appropriate for skills and knowledge transfer. Other than Victoria, QLD is the only state that does not offer these opportunities.

**CARRIED**

## **S 19. TAMBO BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Minister for Education to establish a dedicated Agricultural High School with Co-Ed boarding facilities in Qld to meet the needs of all Rural and Remote Students and any students wishing to further develop their skills in these areas.”**

### **Explanation:**

The closures of the four Agricultural Colleges in Qld, Burdekin, Dalby, Emerald and Longreach has created a void in Agricultural education in Queensland. Whilst we acknowledge and appreciate that some schools are offering an element of agriculture in the curriculum, it is only a minor component. The students undertaking these courses are only seeing a fraction of what is involved in the running of an agricultural business or a grazing property. For a full understanding of the processes, and to be job ready, students need to undertake a full suite of learnings that would be provided by a dedicated Agricultural High School. Currently the Vocational Education model is not meeting the needs of students and families who wish to gain a broader understanding of Agriculture. Given that Agriculture is one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy, the shortfall in Agricultural studies beggars belief.

Currently there are four dedicated Ag schools in WA and two in NSW, all at capacity, clearly demonstrating the need for these facilities. It is time for the Qld Government to take this on notice and establish an Agricultural High School in Queensland for all students who wish explore agriculture as a career.

**CARRIED**

## **S 20. TAMBO BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to ensure students from Bypass eligible schools are given priority enrolment over mainstream school students who are choosing to study a subject via Distance Education.”**

### **Explanation:**

The bypass school procedure and related documents have been in place since 2002 and it is time to review these documents to ensure that they are current and relevant. There are presently only 19 Bypass schools. To ensure that the students that remain in the communities that have bypass schools have the best possible education and opportunities, it is vital that they are given priority access. Students that choose to stay in these communities should not be disadvantaged due to low enrolments and less specialised teachers when they go to enrol in Distance Education and miss out on places in classes. We must continue to support the purpose of Distance Education being for students that are burdened by distance. We should be protecting the students’ rights to a broad range of subjects and a diverse education that will enhance their future career aspirations.

**CARRIED**

## **S 21. TAMBO BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to ensure that students who attend a bypass eligible school, as well as their parents/caregivers, are fully informed of all available avenues, including Distance Education, to access a full suite of suitable curriculum offerings that are available to that student to match their interests and future study/employment aspirations.”**

### **Explanation:**

It is currently acknowledged in the *Bypass Schools Procedure* that, ‘distance education enrolment and/or

virtual schooling enrolment are currently required to complete the senior secondary program.’  
(Bypassing procedure -<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/bypass-schools-procedure> )

This statement needs to be supported with a procedure that schools follow to ensure that students are having timely and equitable access to these distance education classes with the support from their principal and parents/caregivers, to make subject choices that match their interests. When making their subject choices in the preceding year, students and their parent/caregivers should be offered the Distance Education options at this time. *(This aligns with giving Bypass students priority access to these classes)*

The students’ needs should be able to be met by offering them access to the broad range of subjects if and where they are offered, despite their location in a bypass school that may only offer limited classes because of low enrolments and less specialised teachers.

This new procedure needs to be about keeping very clear, open communication between Schools of Distance Education, bypass school principals, students, and parents/caregivers.

**CARRIED**

**A 51. TAMBO**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Recreation, Sport and Arts and other relevant departments to develop a funding scheme that helps bring qualified sports coaches into Rural and Remote communities.”**

**Explanation:**

Many rural and remote children miss out on the opportunity to be coached by qualified sports coaches and play sport on the weekends. It would be helpful if our small communities could access funding to bring these coaches to our children more often. We try to bridge this gap with many sports camps being run across the state, but it comes with great cost. Given that Queensland is hosting the Olympics in 10 years' time this is the perfect time to start developing and spotting the sporting talent that exists in rural Queensland.

**CARRIED**