

## TRAVEL

### A 45. TAMBO BRANCH

**“That ICPA Qld lobby Translink and any other government departments to request the conveyance allowance for rural and remote students be calculated from the home garage-not the property boundary.”**

#### Explanation:

Currently rural and remote families are compensated for travel from their property boundary to their nearest bus stop or school gate, if there is no bus. However, this is not a true reflection of the distance that rural and remote families are required to travel to either a bus stop or the nearest school.

For example; a family’s house is located 20km from their boundary, but their boundary is 8km from the bus stop, as it currently stands they are only getting paid for the 8km.

For rural and remote families that don’t have access to a bus run, they may be travelling 80km to school, the first 25km gets them to their boundary and then it is 55km from the boundary to school, they are only being paid for the 55km.

#### CARRIED

### A 47. TAMBO BRANCH

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Transport and all other relevant departments to ensure that rural and remote bus drivers/owners are being paid for children that are absent from their bus due to weather events, illness, or a pandemic where children are unable to attend school.”**

#### Explanation:

It is imperative that bus drivers are remunerated properly and equitably for providing a bus run for rural and remote schools and families. If rural and remote children that catch a rural and remote bus service are unable to get to school due to weather events, such as rain that makes unsafe and often unpassable road conditions preventing children from getting to the bus, illness, or a pandemic like Covid 19, it should not mean that the service provider misses out on being paid for something that is out of everyone’s control.

#### CARRIED

### A 48. NEBO BRANCH

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education, Department of Transport and Main Roads and Translink to make Kindergarten children attending local schools that offer State Delivered Kindergarten an allocation so that they can travel on designated Class I bus runs.”**

#### Explanation:

We are seeking that Translink include in their policies guaranteed seating allocation for kindergarten attendance children. Formal recognition of kindergarten children is required for bus operators to receive any State Government financial assistance. Currently, where space permits, bus operators are transporting kindergarten children on their service as a matter of goodwill. Whilst in many cases the inclusion of these children will assist in the long term viability of bus runs due to increased numbers, there may be short term instances where the total number of children seeking to travel on a bus run may exceed the number of allocated seats a small bus has capacity to carry. In these instances we are seeking that there be provision

made to allow some discretion and decisions of the local community, together with either their bus committee or bus operator, to decide how any additional numbers will be handled. We would be seeking that in making the allocation a guarantee, that a small bus operator should not be automatically necessitated to upsize their bus to accommodate the extra numbers if it a short term increase.

Since State Delivered Kindergarten has now been in place at any State School throughout Queensland since 2019, it is time that these students be provided for in alignment with all other students.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 49. DAWSON VALLEY BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld seeks written clarification from the Department of Transport and Main Roads on rules for transporting children who are three years of age and turning four on unseatbelted rural school buses.”**

##### **Explanation:**

At least one school bus operator servicing our small P-10 school has requested permission from the Department of Transport and Main Roads to carry children who are three years old and turning four who attend the local community kindy and childcare when room on the bus is available. The Department has given the school bus operator verbal authority to carry these pre-school-age children on unseatbelted buses however when written confirmation was requested by TECCA, the Department has only provided guidelines and information. These advise that a student who is four years or older is exempt from the requirement to use an approved child restraint on a school bus fitted with seatbelts but is silent for a child that is younger than four traveling on a school bus without seatbelts.

In one instance, the school bus operator received verbal permission from the Department to carry a three-year-old child turning four who attends Theodore Early Childhood Centre (TECCA) however when written approval was sought for TECCA it wasn't provided. Her sister attends prep at Theodore State School so the school bus is already stopping at their pick-up point, travelling to Theodore State School and TECCA, and there are seats available on the bus. Consequently, the parents are having to put their school-age child on the bus then follow the bus for 16km to TECCA to drop-off their younger child 2-3 times per week. The parent then returns along the same route past their home and bus stop to travel 50km to their workplace. In another instance, the school bus operator requested and received verbal permission from the Department to carry a three-year-old child turning four from Cracow to Theodore to attend TECCA 2 days per week. The request was made to save the mother traveling 200km in total for drop-off and pick-up on each of those days. Verbal permission was given so this child was transported on the school bus. In this case written permission was not requested as, at the time, it was not required by TECCA.

This is becoming an access and inclusion issue as support teachers notice a stark difference between children with and without prior kindy/preschool learning and socialisation exposure once they enter the schooling system. Without the ability to utilise the bus service, many rural families will be unable to access early learning centres and therefore miss out on a vital pre-prep education.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 50. YARAKA ISISFORD BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Queensland Government and Qantas/QantasLink to reintroduce the ability to book one-way resident fares for the benefit of travelling students and geographically isolated families.”**

### **Explanation:**

Children and families in remote areas are being disadvantaged as they can no longer book one-way resident airfares on Queensland Government subsidised routes. Qantas in partnership with the Queensland Government provides subsidies for eligible residents of a town or city serviced by Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Moranbah, Longreach, Barcaldine or Blackall Airports. Eligible residents can access discounts starting from 20% off the Qantas-controlled component of return fares only (i.e. excludes government taxes, security and airport charges) from the listed regional airports to their nearest capital city or major town. To book a resident's airfare, residents also need to be a member of the Qantas Frequent Flyer program which automatically links the passenger's eligible residential address. Qantas does offer the option for regional residents to join their Frequent Flyer program for free. The onset of COVID-19 saw Qantas reduce their local customer service presence in these regional areas as well as removing the ability to book one-way resident fares through local booking agencies. The only current option is to book a return residents airfare from the passengers nearest regional airport to their nearest capital city or major town, which is placing increased financial pressure on rural families. Due to costs and time constraints, families are often not able to drive long distances to collect children from boarding schools and travel dates are often not known in advance. There are examples of families having to pay upwards of \$500 for a single one-way airfare between Brisbane and Longreach. Re-introduction of flexibility around booking resident fares for one-way trips has the potential to save geographically isolated families hundreds of dollars. Qantas could easily implement this option via their website and by also re-introducing the ability for local booking agencies to book one-way fares for eligible residents. Motion approved via email after it was proposed at branch teleconference meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022

### **CARRIED**

### **S 27. WESTERN DOWNS BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld Inc lobby the relevant authorities to consider the impact on rural families who have students living away from home, when transport timetables are changed and preclude them from utilising economic forms of transport to get their child/children home or to school at weekends and holidays.”**

### **Explanation:**

Transport in regional and rural areas must take into consideration the impact of change on the local community. Students who can travel home via bus or train should be able to do so without impacting their schooling as well as balancing their family wellbeing. We have several families in our district impacted by the recent changes in the bus timetables which decrease the amount of time children can spend at home on a weekend and negatively impacts on their family both financially and emotionally.

In December 2021, Greyhound won the contract to provide the government subsidised outback bus service. Prior to that, Bus Qld had held the contract.

Since the changeover, several services on a weekend have disappeared making it very difficult to get kids home from boarding school for the weekend and back to Toowoomba in time for school on a Monday.

<b>Bus Qld Toowoomba-Miles</b>	<b>Greyhound Toowoomba - Miles</b>	<b>Bus Qld Miles-Toowoomba</b>	<b>Greyhound Miles-Toowoomba</b>
Friday Afternoon approx. 3:40pm departure	Friday afternoon 4pm departure	Friday Afternoon service	5am and 1pm departure on weekdays
Saturday Morning approx. 9am departure	No service offered on Saturday	2 x Saturday afternoon services at 2pm and 3pm departure	5am departure only on Saturday

Sunday Morning approx. 9am departure	No service offered on Sunday	2 x Sunday afternoon services at 2pm and 3pm departure	5am departure only on Sunday
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As can be seen, students can still come home on a Friday evening, just as before however they either must catch a 5am bus back to Toowoomba on Sunday morning which makes it little point coming home or 5am Monday morning which sees them late for school or is not an option if the boarding facility does not have the capability to cater for returning students on a Monday morning. This has a negative impact on students and families.

**CARRIED**