

## COMMUNICATIONS PORTFOLIO MOTIONS 2024

### **A 1. NEBO BRANCH**

Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to extend internet coverage to include teacher housing that is connected to rural and remote schools.”**

#### **Explanation:**

Staff at rural and remote schools are regularly providing feedback that they have limited connectivity, particularly with unreliable internet coverage. This in turn creates a desire to relocate back to towns and cities where connectivity is easily accessible and doesn't hinder their daily lives. This is a particular issue at schools that are not connected to a township, and the teacher accommodation is in close proximity or connected to the school such as Valkyrie, Clarke Creek, Mistake Creek and Kilcummin.

A large portion of our lives is spent connected to devices, and with the added factor of isolation, having connection electronically in lieu of physically, is of great importance. We understand that the RORR's Scheme, with specific financial allowances for employees who are based at a TR4-7 schools, does not have a specific component for connectivity, or allowance to assist an employee having to gain additional means to gain an internet connection. With the rise of Starlink, as we understand, a partnership is now in place with the Department where it is being implemented at rural and remote schools. A simple solution could be to install a booster facility at the teacher housing, which would allow the staff who are also residents at the school to have a secure and reliable internet source.

We regularly receive feedback that undertaking this task themselves is both cost and time prohibitive. This, to some extent, would address the issue of attracting and retaining staff to rural and remote areas. Given the essential nature of connectivity, we urge the Department to consider ways that would financially support, or invest in greater infrastructure to supply, rural and remote staff who reside on site with greater access to a reliable internet connection. Our rural teaching staff have a multitude of things to juggle on any given day. Facing patchy to no internet when they come home is extremely detrimental to their social and mental wellbeing. It is imperative that we find better solutions so that they have reliable ability to connect with their family and friends that are considerable distances away from them whilst they undertake teaching employment in rural and remote areas.

**CARRIED**

### **A 2. KINDON BRANCH**

Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education and all stakeholders to provide connectivity to ensure the safety of rural and remote school students, their families and school staff at standalone schools.”**

#### **Explanation:**

The lack of phone coverage in and around rural and remote schools is a major concern for the staff of

these standalone schools. These schools are isolated from rural townships and there are no other buildings in the vicinity. Due to their location, schools are constantly managing passing people who have no business being on the school grounds when they come inside the school boundary to receive help. This is a major safety concern for both staff and students. These schools have limited staff and when one is called away to assist a visitor to the school, this interrupts the students learning and places them in a vulnerable position without adult supervision.

Schools who need celfi boosters are affected once they move out of range of that device so if there is an incident away from the main building, they do not have service where the incident is. This is not good enough and would not happen in a city school.

Currently at Kindon State School there is a Telstra tower at Wyaga which is ten kilometres away. This tower gives coverage approximately three kilometres either side and the next structure heading east is Kindon State School. Of course, people are going to go to the school to call for assistance if needed because they have no other choice. In the meantime, our staff and students are subject to safety issues which could be fixed if there was enough connectivity surrounding the school.

**CARRIED**