

## SCHOOLS PORTFOLIO MOTIONS 2024

### **A 18. NEBO BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to upgrade rural and remote schools to have their facilities and amenities upgraded to ensure they are inclusive of disability access, laundry and shower facilities.”**

#### Explanation:

We are seeking the Department investigate and prioritise rural and remote school amenities and facilities that are not currently inclusive of disability access, laundry, and shower facilities. We express that these are particular issues for rural and remote schools with basic amenities. The Valkyrie SS has long advocated to the Department, the challenges we experience in not having toilet facilities with ramp access, nor having any shower or laundry facilities at our school. If we were to receive a student enrolment, potential staff member or contractor, or student family member with a disability we would not be able to facilitate them.

We have further challenges in the cases of toileting accidents, sickness or soiled clothing, the only option is to hose down the affected child. In the early days, students were taken to the teacher housing for shower access, which would be inappropriate at present day. Then the only option is to send any affected rugs, towels, clothing home with staff or family to launder themselves. We reference other schools in our cluster have ground level concrete-based facilities, that cater to younger year toilets, showers, laundry room and disability toilet and access.

These facilities are well suited to rural landscapes, can be hosed out, and easily disinfected, keeping in mind that cleaning duties are often carried out by families and staff members at rural schools. We as a community are prepared to seek financial support by way of grants, programs and reaching out to surrounding mining companies. Given we have long been a registered state delivered kindergarten, we have also been raising these issues to no avail. Rural schools generally exist with facilities that are basic, which we acknowledge and appreciate have served us well. Whilst fit for purpose across the last 35 years since we've had flushing toilets, we are seeking that the Department consider investigating whether programs or funding can be allocated to support any rural or remote schools who also have aged or inadequate amenities that require upgrades.

This support would be used to work towards solutions to achieve amenities that are inclusive of disability, laundry, and shower facilities. These upgrades would ensure the facilities are safe, hygienic, and accessible for all who attend at a school. We undertake to provide a case study as to the specific issues and challenges we have to State Council in the coming months to further support this motion.

**CARRIED**

### **A 19. JULIA CREEK BRANCH**

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

Explanation:

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**

**A 20. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to provide remote, standalone schools with an alternate power supply in the event of a power outage.”**

Explanation:

Power outages in regional areas can be frequent and remain in place for extended periods of time. These situations severely interrupt student learning, limit, or void telecommunications, and pose increased risks to students, staff, and the wider school community. Additionally, the loss of power can add significant and unique WHS risks to medically enrolled students, creating additional pressures for teachers to navigate. Power outages also interfere with school infrastructure, such as pressure pumps that are required for supply water. Without water, basic sanitation and consumption needs are not met. Schools that are stand-alone (not located in a town precinct) face greater challenges due to a lack of access to support services. For optimal educational outcomes, and student and staff safety and wellbeing, it's imperative that a backup power supply be made available to schools.

**CARRIED**

**A 21. KINDON BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education for rural and remote schools to have a generator installed as a power back up.”**

Explanation:

Currently many rural and remote schools who rely on a mains power connection are suffering when there is a loss of power. Simple services like supply of drinking water, use of toilets and washing of hands are unable to be accessed when the power goes out as all water used on the school site needs to be filtered from the tank and accessed through a pressure pump.

There is also a safety issue as many schools need Celfi boosters to have access to their telephone and internet. When the power goes out, these vital services are also lost and if an incident occurs there is no way to alert parents or authorities.

We believe that a back up generator should be installed in all rural and remote schools to ensure continuity of care, and schooling can be maintained for our children.

**CARRIED**

## **A 22. KINDON BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Queensland Department of Education to provide adequate security systems for the safety of the school and staff at rural and remote stand alone schools.”**

### Explanation:

Recently our local school was broken into, with destruction to school sheds and the school residence along with property stolen from the principal’s residence and the school. There is currently no security at the school. Buildings are locked and lights on the outside of buildings are set on a timer as a deterrent. This school is on a major highway and is extremely exposed. These types of events have a strong impact on the wellbeing of the staff, particularly those who live in the residence.

Due to the isolation of the school, staff are regularly away overnight, on weekends and for weeks at a time over holiday periods. Staff and principals are left uneasy, as there isn’t adequate security for both their own personal belongings and the school’s assets. Due to the small size of these schools, cleaners and school officers are also regularly in attendance at the school on their own, as well as administration staff working from the office alone. An improvement to security would help these staff feel safe whilst doing their job and educating our children at the school.

We believe that security systems should now be a compulsory piece of infrastructure at all rural and remote standalone schools and the installation of these systems needs to be a Department of Education expense.

**CARRIED**

## **A 23. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to provide a fully transparent and flexible transfer process to assist in the attraction and retention of quality teachers in rural and remote areas.”**

### Explanation:

The attraction and retention of quality teachers in rural and remote areas remains a constant challenge. The need for a fully transparent and flexible transfer process to allow teachers the freedom and opportunity to transfer to areas that either assist in the development of their career or meet their personal or family’s needs is critical. In the current economic climate, where cost of living pressures are extremely high in metropolitan areas, teaching in rural and remote areas can be attractive due to the financial incentives and the lifestyle that it provides. The barriers that prevent teachers the flexibility to transfer need to be addressed to ensure the uptake of rural and remote positions are not negatively affected by the ongoing teacher shortages in metropolitan areas.

**CARRIED**

## **A 24. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies relevant authorities, including the Queensland Teachers Union, to recognise the unique challenges faced by staff teaching in isolated locations by providing meaningful incentives to support and retain these teachers.”**

### **Explanation:**

It is imperative that we ensure equitable access to quality education for students across all geographical locations. However, like many rural and remote areas, we face challenges in attracting and retaining qualified teachers, leading to inconsistent educational outcomes. It is imperative to establish measures that incentivise educators to serve in these areas.

By offering incentivisation to teachers in rural and remote schools, we demonstrate our commitment to ensuring equitable access to quality education for all students and wider community benefit. Through collaborative efforts and advocacy, we can create a more sustainable and inclusive education system that empowers teachers and enriches students' lives in rural and remote communities. For permanent or contracted staff, a better incentive that supports the boundaries of living and working in a remote community would be beneficial.

Currently, \$70 a fortnight 'locality allowance' and \$60 a fortnight 'relocation travel'. This does not reflect the costs that are incurred while living in a remote community.

**CARRIED**

### **A 25. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH**

**"That ICPA Qld lobbies relevant authorities to allocate additional teacher/s on a case-by-case basis to Band 5 schools where there is either a demonstrated shortage or unavailability of support personnel, including teacher aides."**

### **Explanation:**

Staff recruitment and retention continues to be an issue for many schools. Schools located in small rural communities can struggle to source support staff due to a limited pool of available personnel in a geographically isolated location. Despite advertising vacant positions for many months these roles remain unfilled. The workload of teaching staff is adversely affected, and delivery of learning opportunities is impacted, particularly in a classroom where there are many cohorts enrolled. In instances where teacher aide positions remain unfilled for more than 6 months, and when a single classroom has a significant enrolment of K-2 students there should be some provision for the Education Department to fill these vacancies with an additional teacher. Priority should also be given in instances where enrolments include medical students and or students with identified specific learning needs.

**CARRIED**

### **A 26. JULIA CREEK BRANCH**

**"That ICPA Qld continues 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 se]ng 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**

#### **A 27. JULIA CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld works in collaboration with P&Cs, Local Governments and communities to lobby the relevant Departments for additional assistance for rural and remote schools with more than 40 children enrolled.”**

Explanation:

The additional financial assistance will be specifically for additional qualified teacher support to the school. This fund is to ensure educational standards and overall school outcomes are reached in line with their counterparts who have less children and the same staffing level. This fund allows the Principal to continue in their critical role as the numbers of the school grow and combats challenges around distance, isolation, staff retention, employment and educational outcomes.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 28. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to increase the allocation of Teacher Aide hours in rural and remote schools and Schools of Distance Education to assist with the increasing trend of students with medical diagnosis and/or require learning support.”**

Explanation:

Small schools and Schools of Distance Education are under resourced to meet the needs of students who require learning support. Teachers and teaching principals in small schools and teachers who are delivering virtual online classes within Schools of Distance Education are continually challenged to fulfill their explicit teaching duties due to the complexities within the classroom. The current funding model is not meeting the learning needs of the students nor alleviating the workload of teachers. To meet these needs of an increasing trend of students who require learning support within small schools and Schools of Distance Education.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 29. JULIA CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld requests that the Department of Education (DoE) brings primary teacher-aid hours in line with the current secondary teacher-aid hour allocation to enable rural and remote schools to support teachers to effectively resolve the unique challenges of composite classrooms.”**

##### Explanation:

Although schools are free to allocate their allotted Teacher-Aide hours where they feel it is most effective, it seems a strange anomaly that the upper school is seen as more needy than their primary equivalent. Primary students, particularly those in the younger grades, are far less independent and require more assistance to complete learning tasks when compared to the vast majority of secondary students. An increase in primary teacher-aid hours to match secondary hours is not only an equity issue but is vital to assist improving student learning outcomes. Why is it that there are such vast differences in Teacher-Aide hours between the two sectors?

**CARRIED**

#### **A 30. JULIA CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education 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 fulltime 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**

#### **A 31. ST GEORGE BRANCH**

**“That ICPA QLD lobbies the Department of Education to allocate more Non-Contact Time for teachers/ teaching principals in schools that offer State Delivered Kindergarten.”**

##### Explanation:

Schools that provide State Delivered Kindergarten (SDK) are provided resourcing for purchasing physical resources, employing a teacher aide to work with the Kindy students and an extra two hours

for Business Managers, but there is no extra Non-Contact Time (NCT) allocated to the teachers/teaching principals who are expected to be planning for this additional year level under a different curriculum. Kindergarten students are educated under the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines (QKLGs) and not under the National Curriculum that all other grades are educated under.

**CARRIED**

### **A 32. ST GEORGE BRANCH**

**“That ICPA QLD lobbies the Department of Education to allocate additional administration time for teaching principals.”**

Explanation:

Teaching principals are allocated five hours a week for administration time. With the ever-increasing workload in both the teaching and principal section of the job many small schools are self-funding more administration time for the teaching principal to ensure that all department requirements are met. If the department allocated and resourced more time, then schools could utilise the funds they have been using to pay for extra time for the principal, to purchase resources for the students. With the implementation of Version 9 curriculum, the new Framework and new Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines (QKLGs) the workload on a teaching principal that is responsible for all of this is unrealistic. There is a flow on effect from these expectations to other staff and ultimately the students as their teachers are time-pressured.

**CARRIED**

### **A 33. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to ensure that teaching principals in small schools are given the required level of virtual and face to face support so the increasing requirements of administrative tasks do not detract from valuable teaching and planning in the classroom.”**

Explanation:

The demands placed on teaching principals in small schools is enormous and ever increasing. In addition to teaching, planning, and supporting students their time is being consumed by administration tasks – such as budgeting, parental liaison, onsite staff training, planning, grant writing, staff co-ordination and school camps. In addition to an already overburden workload those small schools that are providing State Delivered Kindy programs have been required to meet increasing demands. A statewide teacher shortage compounds the situation, with Principal admin days needing to be reallocated and if necessary, decreased due to a lack of available relief or second teaching staff. Increases of pressures, responsibilities, and expectations are resulting in teacher burnout and teachers choosing to exit the profession. Additionally, career pathways are being inhibited by these experiences.

**DEEMED COVERED BY S3, A32**

#### **A 34. ST GEORGE BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to implement a Head of Curriculum Small Schools for each cluster that contain small schools with teaching principals.”**

Explanation:

With the restructure of the department, the Principal Advisors Teaching and Learning (PATL) positions and the Centres for Learning and Wellbeing (CLAWS) have ceased. PATLs provided an invaluable support to small schools including ensuring that planning was aligning to the curriculum, assessment tasks and guide to making judgements were fit for purpose and for providing updates in teaching and learning practices. CLAW staff provided on the ground support for staff in schools and helped fill the void when the PATL positions ended. With the realignment of resources to Version 9 curriculum, a HOC Small Schools would be able to provide these important supports and professional development for small schools. This would alleviate pressure on teaching principals as they ensure that in their school, teaching and learning are aligned to the new curriculum.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 35. JULIA CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies 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. As recently as term 2 of 2024 the Mount Isa school of the Air principal was removed to fulfil the position of Acting Principal at a Mainstream school within Mount Isa giving the School community less than a weeks’ notice and with an Acting Principal and Deputy Principal. Rural and remote students and communities continue to be disadvantaged when this occurs.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 36. JULIA CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education (DoE) to ensure executive positions at schools are acting for no longer than six months to allow a permanent position to be offered to prospective candidates.”**

Explanation:

A principal in an acting position makes it difficult for consistency and forward planning within a school. Until a principal has a permanent placement, the Department of Education is unable to appoint a permanent school Principal. Often, with acting executive placements, it is difficult to foster bonds and develop direction and identity within the school staff, students and parents. This is not an unusual



situation, and fulfilling permanent positions in rural and remote schools is difficult enough without this added obstacle.

**LOST**

### **A 37. AUGATHELLA BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education and the Minister for Education to ensure small rural and remote schools only have multiage classes of no more than three year levels together.”**

Explanation:

Currently, the allocative model states that schools are single teacher schools if they meet the following criteria: · less than 21 students (and no kindy students) · less than 25 students (with kindy students) The reality for small schools is that a numbers-based model does not recognise the breakdown of the students into year level cohorts or incorporate any recognition of students with diverse learning needs. A classroom teacher with as few as 8 students (well below the 21 or 25 student cut-offs) could actually have one student in each year level from Kindy – Year 6. This would require the teacher to deliver 8 different year levels of content from 2 different curriculums (Early Years Learning Framework for Kindy, Australian Curriculum for Prep-Year 6). Add into the mix any students with diverse learning needs and the teacher’s workload increases again. This is an unrealistic workload expectation for any teacher. Clearly the current allocative model alone is not a feasible way to staff our small schools. Teacher wellbeing suffers in these cases of unmanageable workload, which in turn directly impacts student learning. Quality learning experiences for students are compromised and positive learning outcomes are drastically reduced for our rural and remote students. If the above listed thresholds are exceeded the department provides an additional 0.55 teacher FTE (full time equivalent) to staff the school. This additional allocation is not even enough to maintain 2 separate classrooms across the 5-day week. This means that one teacher is still required to teach all students together at times throughout the week. Clearly, if a new allocative model took into account year levels and diversity of students, as well as numbers, a more equitable provision of education would be provided for our rural and remote students. This is why introducing a stipulation that multi-age classes in small school should include no more than three year levels is crucial.

Case Study:

(Morven State School) In recent years, Morven State School’s enrolments have fluctuated above and below the Department’s thresholds. In 2019, there were 12 students enrolled in the school from Kindy – Year 6. Only one teacher was employed to deliver quality learning experiences across the 2 curriculums for these students. As an experienced senior teacher, this teacher still struggled to meet the expectations of families and the department. Since then, the school’s enrolments have entitled them to the additional 0.55 teacher FTE in 2023 and 2024. This additional allocation alone does not ensure that 2 full-time classrooms are maintained across the week, still exacerbating teacher workload and stress. The school feels that a more equitable model would take into account the number of year levels a teacher is required to teach. This would allow quality educational experiences to be delivered to students ensuring that rural and remote students are not being disadvantaged in comparison to their suburban peers.

**LOST**

### **A 38. JULIA CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Minister for Education to provide a reduction in the teacher:student ratio in rural and remote schools with multi-age classrooms from 1:25 to 1:16.”**

Explanation:

(Case Study)

Julie Creek State School currently has 39 enrolled students with two allocated classrooms. Classroom 1: Prep-Year 2, has 14 students with a full-time teacher and a full-time teacher aide. Classroom 2: Years 3-6 has 25 students with a full-time teacher and a teacher aide (who has other roles in the school, including librarian, book club co-ordinator, and other complementary roles essential to school operation.

It is forecast that in 2035, Julia Creek State School will have 43 enrolments: 26 students in P-2, 18 students in 4-6. A full-time teacher allocation for a P-1, 2-3 and 4-6 classroom would provide a manageable teacher:student ratio, so that students receive high-quality education. Only having to plan and implement the curriculum for two year levels in one class will also assist with teacher well-being.

**CARRIED**

### **A 39. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL**

**“That ICPA Qld seeks commitment from the Department of Education and the Minister for Education to create a state-run Agricultural High School with co-educational boarding facilities, that combines academic studies with hands-on practical learning in all aspects of agriculture.”**

Explanation:

Students with an interest in any/all aspects of agriculture, including developing the diversity of skills, knowledge and capabilities required to work in agriculture, should have the opportunity to combine academic learning with practical hands-on learning. This should be delivered face to face by trade/industry quality facilitators/educators, allowing these students to gain a nationally recognised qualification and complete their senior school outcome so they can pursue a career in the industry.

In this school if Agriculture was a compulsory subject for all students in Years 7 to 10, and is offered as an elective subject for Years 11 and 12, it would not only enhance experience but give opportunity for learning and development of skills. There would be opportunity for the students to experience in a broad sense, all components of agriculture to assist them identify where their interests and strengths lie. Years 11 and 12 would offer more specific pathways, whilst the student continues to achieve relevant academic results along with vocational outcomes that are supported with workplace/industry pathways and experience.

Academics learning should be recognised and weighted the same as industry placement, training and course materials to increase the success of students to be able to transition from school to work. When students gain experience, knowledge and skills through a specific Agricultural high school this enhances not only the positive academic outcomes but employment opportunities, skills development and pathways that are relevant and required.

The provision of suitable boarding facilities (co-educational), in the sector of Agricultural learning, would provide the opportunity for a student, regardless of their original locality, to access learning, develop and grow a sense of community and engage a support network for learning, work and future pathways.

There is clearly a demonstrated need with Agricultural High schools with boarding facilities in NSW and WA, being at capacity with families calling for more facilities to be built to cope with demand. Students who complete an education at an Agricultural high school will be work ready and able to fill a gap in an area that is in dire need of skilled employees.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 40. NEBO BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld extends our appreciation, on behalf of Nebo Branch to the Department of Education for the upgrades to teacher housing residences at Rural and Remote Schools during 2023/2024.”**

Explanation:

Teacher housing upgrades by way of installation of concrete driveways have been carried out both Nebo and Valkyrie SS's. We wish to express our appreciation to the Department of Education for these works. Whilst these projects fall within a planned \$48.3 million over 4 years through the 2023–24 State Budget, we wanted to provide feedback on the positive impact these upgrades have. These greatly appreciated improvements make real, effective, and attractive changes, and increase the liveability of teacher housing in rural and remote schools. We have regularly in the past, as a Branch advocated for upgrades to our rural teacher housing, as it directly affects the ability to attract and retain quality teaching staff. At the 2023 Qld ICPA State Conference we referenced the teacher shortage across rural and remote Queensland. We would like to strongly encourage the Department to consider ongoing programs and improvements in future State Budgets, as being a worthy and vital investment into rural education. Without suitable, safe, and liveable housing, we as communities struggle to attract and retain teaching staff, and in turn our schools see a high staff turnover. This becomes detrimental both short and long term, to our rural students, families, and communities.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 41. JULIA CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to provide adequate teacher housing to sufficiently meet 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:

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.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 42. WESTMAR-INGLESTONE BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to work with their Local Accommodation Committee (LAC) and Regional Offices to develop a Housing Usage Plan to allow the opportunity for other Education Queensland (non-teaching) staff the opportunity to lease government housing while filling roles at schools.”**

**Explanation:**

Finding staff to fill positions with EQ is a difficult proposition, made more difficult by lack of housing/accommodation for people who are willing to work in regional, rural, or remote areas. Teaching staff are given priority when housing is available, however, in some situations teachers do not access government housing because they already live within the local area. In these cases, housing may sit vacant for many years while schools continue to find it difficult to employ teacher-aides or ancillary staff due to lack of rental properties within the district. It seems a commonsense approach to offer this housing to all EQ (non-teaching) staff when not required by teaching staff.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 43. YARAKA ISISFORD BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to ensure that Allied Health staff employed by the Department of Education in rural and remote locations are eligible for housing.”**

**Explanation:**

Currently the policy is that non-teaching staff are deemed eligible for housing at the discretion of the region. Generally, this does occur in more remote locations however if housing is available and offered to allied health staff employed by the Department of Education in rural and remote locations, this will help to increase retention rates in these areas. Qualified staff are more likely to stay in these locations if they have access to suitable and affordable housing.

By advocating for housing eligibility for allied health staff in rural and remote locations, we can ensure our students have consistent access to vital services, supported educational outcomes and are not being disadvantaged by where they live.

**CARRIED**

#### **S 2. JULIA CREEK BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Minister for Education to employ the Principal in a full-time Principal position, not also a class teacher role, when a graduate Teacher is employed as a classroom teacher.”**

**Explanation:**

Julia Creek State School participates in the Remote Area Incentive Scheme, where a graduate teacher is employed every two-three years into either the P-2 or the 3-6 classroom. This requires a large amount of support from the School Principal and fellow colleagues. Due to the heavy support required by a graduate teacher, professional development all teachers are required to attend, teacher absences being covered, Principal business meetings and general Principal roles in the daily running of a school, it is not feasible for the Principal to fill the role of a full-time teacher, also.

**CARRIED**

### **S 3. WESTMAR INGLESTONE BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to ensure that teaching Principals in small schools are given full-time administrative support to ensure that the current role and title of ‘Administration Officer’ is extended to be a ‘Principal Assistant’ to ensure that Principal administrative tasks can be delegated to this role, to minimise the time taken from teaching and planning in the classroom.”**

Explanation:

With the increasing administrative responsibilities of schools, this task is exacerbated in small schools due to limited days of administrative staffing. On days when there is no administrative support, the time and responsibility for these tasks rest with the teaching principal. There is an expectation and responsibility for telephones to be answered, data to be entered into systems, support staff to be coordinated and organised, logistical shuffling of staff, schooling, facilities, learning, extra-curricular and the day-to-day running of a school. With an expansion of the Administration Officer role to also be a Principal Assistant, some workload could be delegated to relieve the teaching Principal in some of these duties.

**CARRIED**

### **S 4. FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education (DoE) to ensure that continued disruptions within Schools of Distance Education and rural and remote schools are minimised due to issues with Acting Principal Positions.”**

Explanation:

Acting positions within Schools of Distance Education and rural and remote schools is not an isolated problem. The increased instability Acting or temporary appointments, particularly in executive positions, bring to these schools grows increasingly worse as the tenure of these roles is extended, sometimes for years.

As outlined in the Case Study below, an extended Acting Principal position brings instability to the school, its community and the person undertaking this Acting role and undermines confidence in the role, the leadership of the school and the Department.

Case study

Cairns School of Distance Education's (SDE) Principal position has been filled by an Acting Principal for the last two and a half years/30 months. For the first eighteen months, the existing Deputy Principal has stepped into the Acting Principal position. Every six months he had to reapply for the temporary position. His rapport and care for the school and the need for stability in the position is evidenced through his continued willingness to repeatedly apply for the role, knowing that he would have to reapply again in six months.

When the previous permanent Principal as Cairns SDE successfully applied for a full time position elsewhere, our Acting Principal went through the Department of Education's processes to apply for the permanent Principal role, the Department acknowledged his application and agreed that he met the suitability requirements but, at that time, the position had not been deemed vacant and therefore, despite meeting all necessary requirements, his application was denied.

At the end of the first eighteen months, when he once again reapplied for the Acting Principal role, his was not successful and given only a week's notice before a new Acting Principal was to assume the role. Not only did this cause distress to the person involved as he had acted in this role successfully for the previous eighteen months and been part of the school community for over a decade including in the Deputy Principal role, but it also took away leadership continuity from the school community as well as causing distress to the school community at the perceived treatment of this long serving staff member.

**CARRIED**

#### **S 5. MITCHELL-TOMOO/DUNKELD BRANCH**

**"That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education (DoE) to relocate Principals on leave of 12 months or more to an equivalent Principal level within their region rather than to a school within 50 minutes from their home base when enforcing the unattachment policy."**

Explanation:

When teachers and principals are relocated due to the unattachment policy they are transferred to a school within 50 minutes of their home base. Unfortunately, for Principals that are employed at rural and remote schools there is often not a school of equivalent band level within this commutable time frame, making it difficult for the department to enforce the policy. As a result, small schools often have an Acting Principal that is often on a term-by-term contract, that leaves both the school community and the principal in limbo and it is difficult for the school to then forward plan to improve outcomes for the students.

Principals on leave are entitled to continue living in DoE provided housing. In many rural and remote towns, there is minimal housing, often being substandard or not suitable for families which further impacts recruiting Principals to small schools. Residing in DoE housing, may also be an indication that the principal does not consider their school location to be their home base, and therefore transferring outside of the 50 minutes of their home base, but within the region would be appropriate.

**CARRIED**

#### **S 6. TALWOOD BRANCH**

**"That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to include Kindergarten children in Day 8 numbers in small schools which provide State Delivered Kindergarten."**

### Explanation:

Currently Kindergarten children in SDK schools are not eligible to be included in Day 8 enrolment figures. Although these students attend the school only 5 days a fortnight, their presence has definite impacts on the infrastructure and administration of these schools.

At Talwood State School, structural changes were made to accommodate these younger students and extra resources and staff have been required. Teachers are now required to undertake extra planning and complete different documentation to meet the guidelines which govern Kindergarten aged students.

As everyone is aware, the number of enrolments recorded at Day 8 each year affects the teacher allocation at your school. On Day 8 of 2024, Talwood SS had 20 students, one less than the required 21 to be allocated additional teacher time. With this enrolment figure, Talwood SS would have dropped back to having one large multi-age classroom of K-6 students, and a second teacher only part-time. There was obvious concern around the impact of such a large and varied class on all involved, and fortunately the Principal was able to negotiate discretionary funds to ensure a full-time second teacher remained. Whilst this was a positive outcome for Talwood SS, this may not always be the case of other schools.

Recognition of the role our small schools and staff are playing in the provision of SDK must be given, and the best way to do this is through acknowledgement of kindergarten children's enrolment on Day 8 each year.

**CARRIED**

## **S 7. SPRINGSURE ROLLESTON BRANCH**

**"That ICPA Qld continues advocating to the relevant State Education Ministers for the inclusion of Year 10 as part of the bypass school program for P-10 schools."**

### Explanation:

The Queensland education system underwent significant restructuring with the incorporation of Year 7 into High School. This restructuring resulted in the establishment of Middle School (Year 7 – 9) and Senior School (Year 10 -12). While the government has implemented strategies to support Year 10 Students in transitioning to the senior years, such as providing electives to establish a solid foundation for senior syllabuses, students in P-10 schools are disadvantaged due to a limited range of subjects offered, primarily constrained by enrolment numbers and available funding. Including Year 10 in the bypass school program may represent the next logical step in this restructuring process.

Following a successful motion brought to the state conference in 2023, the State Council has raised the issue of Year 10 inclusion in the bypass program with the Department of Education. The Department advised seeking further community clarification on the viability of Year 10 as a bypass year. Community response overwhelmingly supported the inclusion of Year 10 in the bypass program, emphasizing the interconnectedness of Years 10, 11, and 12 and the minimal adverse impact on schools, given that most students seeking further education have typically transitioned out of the school environment by Year 10. Current enrolment figures for the school stand at 8 Year 8 students, 15 Year 9 students, and 7 Year 10 students.

Recognition is extended to the State Council for their dedication and feedback, which have facilitated the progression of this motion.

**CARRIED**

#### **S 8. RICHMOND BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to ensure rural and remote students are not disadvantaged by any proposed changes resulting from the Queensland School Sports (QSS) Program review into Regional School Sport boundaries.”**

Explanation:

Exposure to all kinds of extracurricular activities is essential to the development of a well-rounded student. Exposure to sport offered through the regional competition for all rural students allows for students, to participate and explore their raw talent.

There is considerable angst within regional communities regarding the proposed changes to the Queensland School Sports boundaries. Although this review could still be on pause the current proposed options would significantly inhibit youth sports particularly in regions such as North West which could be split up to come in line with the Education Department areas. Under initially proposed amendment some of these students would have to travel in excess of 14 hours to participate which is simply unfair, unaffordable and unreasonable.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 57. NEBO BRANCH**

**“That ICPA Qld reiterates to the Department of Education and Local Government Association of Queensland, the importance and significance of a rural/remote school to a community, particularly where they are the only school within a town or locality.”**

Explanation:

In 2024 two schools in our area are celebrating significant milestone anniversaries: 150 years for Nebo SS and 50 years for Valkyrie SS. We therefore reflect and emphasise our school’s beneficial impact to the lives of all who’ve been connected, likewise for all other rural and remote schools across Queensland. We wish to express to the Department the special and important significance that a small, rural, and remote school is to a community. Particularly in the case of Valkyrie, where the school is the only landmark for the community, which is not attached to a township, and is the central hub bringing the entire community together.

Our schools host associated organisation meetings such as local ICPA Branches, and our Rural Fire Brigade. Our schools host playgroups which are a much-anticipated reprieve for rural, isolated mothers which have a focus on enhancing their mental health and providing social interaction for both mothers and children. Playgroup at rural and remote schools is also a unique introduction for bush kids into early childhood education facilitating learning and social engagement opportunities as a stepping stone prior to commencing Kindergarten. They also provide employment for persons who otherwise would not have opportunities being rural and remote.



Our schools provide important socialisation and connection for bush kids, who otherwise do not interact with many other people. By way of example, our Valkyrie school has hosted a special event for nearly every family in our district, for me personally my husband was Christened at Valkyrie and our eldest had her first birthday party at the school. Our rural and remote schools are far more than education facilities. They are the lifeblood of our communities, central meeting points, and aid during times of natural disasters or emergencies. They are also the location of all fundraising endeavours, as well as an essential service drop off point for our mail run and freight.

Many rural communities and P and C Associations have made significant contributions to the establishment and continual development of our rural and remote schools by way of considerable donations and volunteering. Nebo SS is on to some third and fourth generation family enrolments and Valkyrie SS has second-generation enrolments. Our rural schools experience times of high and low enrolments as the generations circle around. We encourage the Department to continue to recognise the multitude of roles our rural schools play in forming part of healthy, thriving, and connected communities and hold a view to continuing to support our rural and remote schools, particularly in times of low enrolments, understanding that they play an essential role to entire communities.

**CARRIED**