

TRAVEL PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT 2024

The Conference held in 2023 at Julia Creek saw several travel motions presented and carried.

ALLOCATED SEATING FOR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

This motion has been raised by members for the past few years. Given the increasing rollout of State Delivered Kindergarten in rural and remote areas, this issue is becoming of greater importance to members with young students.

As Head of the Travel Portfolio, I raised this issue many times with Ministers and other government representatives at the Premier's North and Northwest Regional Community Forums including then Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Acting DG Sally Stannard (who has since been appointed DG TMR). It has also been raised in written and verbal communications as well as face to face with Dept of Education and Translink representatives. Both Departments are seeking case studies highlighting the challenges young students are facing in accessing kindergarten and ICPA would encourage you to share these to strengthen our ongoing advocacy on this matter. In addition to making it a priority in our 2023 Key Issues Document, State Council also made a submission to Treasury earlier this year seeking a funding commitment to redress this issue.

FINANCIAL PAYMENT PARAMETERS FOR RURAL BUS RUNS

Members were worried that with electronic tagging of buses, whilst alleviating concerns of children being left on a bus, might negatively impact the financial sustainability of rural bus runs whose daily numbers can fluctuate due to circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the service provider such as extra-curricular activities, road conditions and weather. ICPA has written to Translink regarding this issue.

CONVEYANCE ALLOWANCE

This issue is one of ongoing concern to our members. As with Kindergarten students, this issue was raised at several Regional Community Forums as well as in verbal, written and face to face communication with relevant stakeholders. Feedback remains largely the same – further information is required. As State Council has mentioned many times, we require case studies to show how members have been negatively impacted through the current policies and procedures in order to make meaningful progress.

State Council has also written to Translink regarding CA eligibility for those families who, given the problems faced in having a Kindergarten student allocated a seat on a school bus, use private transport to access kindergarten in their local community. With other grades eligible for financial support to offset transport costs, parity is sought for these younger students also accessing government provided learning opportunities.

RURAL AND REMOTE BUS RUN RESPONSIBILITY AND OVERSIGHT

For the second time in recent years, this motion was brought to conference and carried. This reflects members' concerns that the Department of Main Roads and its Translink Department don't fully understand the unique needs and circumstances of rural communities and student's families. This concern is underscored by the lack of progress ICPA Qld has been able to make regarding kindergarten student access and the recalculation of Conveyance Allowance eligibility. ICPA Qld has raised this issue again and the response remains the same – at this point in time there is no appetite for change and Translink remains the best placed to administrate travel related to schooling access.

RURAL BUS SERVICE SUPPORT

ICPA Qld State Council continues to provide letters of support and provide information, when requested, to regional Translink offices, in order to support the retention of rural bus routes/services. We have also provided information to members seeking advice on creation of rural bus routes.

GREYHOUND BUS ADVERTISING

It is with great excitement that ICPA Qld has unveiled its advertising on the back of two Greyhound bus services – one from Townsville to Mt Isa and the other from Brisbane to Mt Isa. We thank Greyhound for their generous support and ask you to keep an eye out for the ICPA back window when you are out and about. Don't forget to send us a picture if you do.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is still much work to be done in the Travel Portfolio space, but we continue to move forward albeit not at the pace State Council and its member's desire.

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