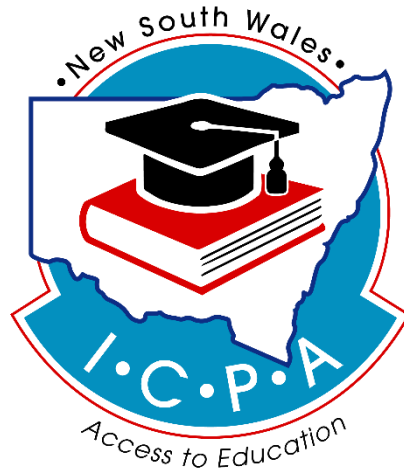


THE
ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF
NEW SOUTH WALES INC



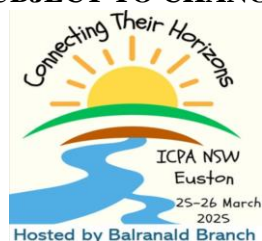
Annual Conference
Euston 2025

Branch
Motions

53rd Annual Conference

Hosted by the Balranald Branch

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ALLOWANCES

A1. Wentworth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Minister for Education and Early Learning and NSW Treasury to increase the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) by a minimum of \$4,000 for eligible students.”

Explanation:

This is already in ICPA-NSW policy however our branch feels that it is important for the Department to continue to hear that families in the Far West are struggling to meet the cost of educating their children.

These families are not choosing boarding schools, these families are choosing to provide an education for their children.

There are no public boarding schools or hostels in the Far West and families are forced into the private system to access their basic right to education.

NSW needs to urgently increase the LAFHA for boarding students to allow these students access to an equitable education.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



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A2. Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch

“That ICPA-NSW ask the Department of Education and Minister of Education and Early Learning to add an additional payment supplement to the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) of \$1500, per child, not means tested, for those who live in the Unincorporated Area due to the tyranny of distance to access public boarding high schools.”

Explanation:

Broken Hill is our branch members’ closest public transport hub. Most of our members are an additional 250- 400 km from Broken Hill. The only public boarding school you can attend to have direct student transport access to Broken Hill is from Farrer in Tamworth.

This is 1028km from Broken Hill. A student would have to travel from Broken Hill at 3:30 am, change buses in Dubbo to Tamworth to arrive at school at 7pm, a 16hr journey. In the reverse the bus arrives at 10:45 pm. Both of these options require overnight accommodation in Broken Hill, as our members’ homes are an additional 250 -400km away. If you have a daughter or choose co-educational, currently student transport options from Yanco only go to Wilcannia (200km from Broken Hill) and Mildura (296km from Broken Hill).

There is no option to even get your child to Broken Hill. With the time of day that each of these transport options take to get to Wilcannia or Mildura, it means accommodation is required prior to going on the bus or getting off the bus. If only 9 journeys are included the absolute minimum total additional accommodation cost would be approximately \$1500 (\$165/ night). This additional cost is being borne by our members due to the tyranny of distance to access a public boarding school.

Case Study: For an employee working as a childcare worker or at the National Parks in Tibooburra with a daughter, these are the travelling distances to a student transport bus: · 532km, one way in Wilcannia, travelling on over 150km of unsealed roads. · 618km, one way in Mildura, sealed roads. · 846km, one way, via White Cliffs, travelling on unsealed roads to Yanco Agricultural High School · 1065km, one way, on sealed roads, to Yanco Agricultural High.

In addition to requiring accommodation, these parents would need to take time off their paid employment to collect and transport their children due to the huge distance. An additional tyranny of distance supplement payment of \$1500 to the LAFHA is the absolute minimum amount to cover



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this tyranny of distance burden. We estimate that the total cost of this additional payment would be \$150 000/ per year based on an over inflated figure of 100 families from unincorporated accessing this payment.

Not included in the discussion have been additional trips that are required, for sickness or health reasons or even just for the wellbeing of the family as a whole being able to attend the school Ag Day, sports or speech days. All these additional transport and accommodation costs are currently borne by individual families due to the tyranny of distance from the nearest public boarding school.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A3. Broken Hill Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the relevant NSW Departments to remove the adjusted income test on the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) for people living in Geographically Isolated areas across the Far West NSW.”

Explanation:

Accessing a public secondary education in Far West NSW is extremely difficult, as most students living on remote properties and in smaller communities must leave their family home to access a secondary education. Families face difficult decisions on how they will navigate the secondary education years. There are limited options, and many barriers, including vast distances to travel and huge costs.

Many families living in remote areas choose to send their children to private boarding schools as there is only one public boarding school within 1000km drive of their home. Yet due to the high costs, for many families this is not an option. The nearest NSW co-educational public high school that offers boarding accommodation is Yanco Agricultural High School, which is an approximately 750km drive from Broken Hill, which is our members’ service area and closest link for main transport. For some residents living on isolated properties and smaller outlying communities such as White Cliffs, this distance is much further.

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A4. Walgett Branch

“That ICPA-NSW advocates to the relevant Ministers and departments, requesting that NSW initiate a State Rural & Remote Scholarship Program similar to the Pilot Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program but specifically for those children that do not qualify for Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) despite living in remote areas and being educationally disadvantaged.”

Explanation

The distance criteria for assistance for AIC excludes children who live within rural and remote towns.

Financial assistance in the form of boarding school scholarships for rural & remote towns is desperately needed to ensure the inclusion of children residing within and around small towns who do not meet the distance criteria for AIC and other available Commonwealth funding. Many scholarships stipulate that you must qualify for AIC to apply, so once again these children are left without any assistance.

According to the Bank West Educate Australia Fair Study - Far West NSW has the highest levels of educational disadvantage relative to other areas across Australia, followed by Bourke-Brewarrina, Walgett-Lightning Ridge and Moree and Wellington. A significant educational disadvantage exists for children within these small towns regardless of how many kilometres you live away from the local school.

Access to allied health services, learning support and extension opportunities, the choice of subjects are severely limited or non-existent in small towns and they don't magically appear because you live a few kilometres closer to the local school.

Many families that are excluded from the AIC are forced to leave and move to bigger centres in order to educate their children. If a teacher working in remote NSW school doesn't have adequate high school options for their children and isn't eligible for the AIC, they more often than not leave their positions as teachers and leave town. If we want to attract teachers to regional and remote areas, we need to offer them the same type of financial assistance that those eligible for AIC get. Same goes for all the families, many of which provide vital and indispensable services, whose



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roles are essential for any rural and remote town's survival such as council workers, nurses, plumbers, electricians, and police families.

There is no justification for unfairly discriminating against and excluding these children. All children in these educationally disadvantaged areas deserve assistance and an opportunity of a decent education, not just some of them!

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A5. Broken Hill Branch

“That ICPA-NSW supports ICPA (Aust) to address the inequity of assistance provided to Geographically Isolated students.”

Explanation:

The Broken Hill Branch recognises and thanks the government for the support they provide for isolated students accessing education, however the resources of the government are being stretched as the impact of increasing numbers of students being eligible under the current eligibility criteria for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC).

We understand that the AIC is a federally funded allowance, but many significantly isolated families in NSW have no other option to educate their children than through Distance Education or boarding school. Currently there are families that have had to separate the family unit and relocate to a second home, not by choice but because of necessity.

We believe that significantly Geographically Isolated family's circumstances and the challenges they face in educating their children are vastly different to families who live closer to educational facilities or transport who may still receive the AIC.

In its current format, the assistance available to families does not recognise significantly Geographically Isolated areas. We strongly believe that a more equitable approach would be to have an additional criteria which would allow a possible increase in the AIC to significantly Geographically Isolated students with the government recognising the unique and extenuating challenges these families face accessing education.



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We understand that all rural and remote families face challenges when educating their children but the vast distances that families in significantly Geographically Isolated areas must travel, clearly demonstrates equal assistance does not ensure equity of access.

From a recent poll from our branch 80%, of respondents live between 500km and 1000km from their nearest public boarding school and 44% of respondents live between 100km to 300km from their nearest public primary and high school.

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A6. NSW/VIC Lone Members Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Government bring back the two per year \$100 active kid’s vouchers, for all families regardless of income.”

Explanation:

NSW Students previously had access to vouchers that assisted them financially to participate in activities. Without this financial assistance students are no longer able to participate.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A7. Walgett Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Department of Education to better support high school students living in Very Remote NSW by reviewing the Statement of Support required for accessing the Assistance for Isolated Children boarding allowance Scheme and amend the following.

1. Add Walgett Central Community High School (CCHS) to the list of ‘Schools serving Very Remote communities and,
2. Remove ‘Difficulties with out of school care arrangements’ from the list of items considered as not suffering educational disadvantage.”



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Explanation:

Walgett is a large shire spanning 22,000 square kilometers with multiple settlements falling under Remote Australia or Very Remote Australia. A large portion of the shire is classified as Very Remote, and Cumborah, a small village within Walgett Shire classified as part of Very Remote Australia under RSGA code 5, faces educational challenges due to its geographic isolation.

Despite being zoned as very remote, Cumborah's closest schools, Walgett CCHS and Lightning Ridge CS are about 50km away, and these students fall short by a few kilometres of meeting the distance criteria for receiving the AIC boarding allowance. It is important to note that the Bank West 'Educate Australia Fair' study identified these areas as the second most educationally disadvantaged in NSW, highlighting the need for tailored support for these students.

Families not meeting the distance criteria can request a Statement of Support from the NSW Department of Education when applying for the Federal government AIC allowance. This statement evaluates factors like geographical isolation, curriculum offerings, cohort size at local schools, and parental input to determine eligibility points for successful claims.

However, discrepancies exist in how schools serving remote communities are categorised. Walgett carries a lower point value than it should due to misclassification. Walgett must be categorised as “Servicing Very Remote Communities” attracting 10 points for the application.

Additionally, the exclusion criteria regarding after school care arrangements poses a significant challenge for families in rural and remote areas and it's concerning that there are valid concerns about children's safety and well-being in these regions are dismissed under current guidelines. It's crucial that we address these issues and ensure proper support is provided for all children, regardless of their location.

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BOARDING AND AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOLS AND HOSTELS

A8. NSW/VIC Lone Members Branch

“That ICPA-NSW write to the Victorian Corrections Minister, the Victorian Agriculture Minister, and the Victorian Education Minister, supporting the repurposing of the former Dhurringile Prison Site to become a dedicated agricultural secondary school, similar to Yanco Agricultural High School, to support the educational aspirations of students wishing to pursue careers in agriculture.”

Explanation:

In July 2024 the Dhurringile Prison was closed and the site is being proposed for sale. The site is located on a large farm with classroom and accommodation infrastructure, a dairy, horticulture and large historic mansion.

Victoria is the only State that does not have dedicated selective entry agricultural high school, thus meaning Victorian students wishing to pursue an education focused on agriculture have to travel interstate. More than 10% of Yanco Agricultural High School students are from Victoria.

Agricultural high schools support students wishing to pursue an education in agriculture with hands-on real-life learning opportunities. Most agricultural high schools operate a working farm at a break even or even a profit, so that the school’s agriculture program is cost recovery.

The Dhurringile Prison site would be an ideal location for a dedicated specialist agricultural high school.

We are seeking the support of the Victorian Corrections Minister, the Victorian Education Minister and the Victorian State Treasurer to support agricultural education at a secondary level, similar to that of other States.

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A9. NSW/VIC Lone Members Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to ensure that a boarding house master/mistress ‘parent’ and alternate boarding house staff are living in each boarding house in every NSW Department of Education Boarding house to ensure students receive social, health, academic care and supervision in their boarding houses whilst living away from home”

Explanation:

The Farrer Agricultural School has one head of boarding for all boarders (who doesn't live in a boarding house) and no staff allocated as boarding house master or mistresses. The boarders need more support.

There is no overnight staff. If there is a problem in the house, the students have to get to an intercom system to contact the duty officer. Not even Year12's are allowed phones now. The duty officer goes off duty at 11pm and then a security officer is on until 7am.

For years 7 and 8, a year 12 prefect has a room in the dorm and is expected to supervise. The prefects are rarely there.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered





COMMUNICATIONS

A10. Broken Hill Branch

“That ICPA-NSW seeks clarification from Telstra in relation to the reduced connectivity in rural areas since the closure of the 3G network. 4G and 5G networks are not providing the telecommunication service that the 3G network provided”

Explanation:

Since the closure of the 3G Network in Australia, rural and remote families have been severely affected by the loss of telecommunication and connectivity services. This has affected Distance Education students’ ability to contact the school and access extra-curricular support they need. This has also become a major safety issue as members have lost communication in their school rooms and are unable to contact parents or teachers via telephone.

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A11. Louth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Telstra Corporation to resume the same if not better level of service that was provided by the 3G network to the newly updated 4G towers.”

Explanation:

Since the upgrade, the reach of service has diminished in areas that were previously covered by the 3G network. It was guaranteed by Telstra that the same level of service would remain post the upgrade, however this is not the case.

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A12. Walgett Branch

“That ICPA-NSW continues to request the Minister for Communications to ensure Telstra meets their Universal Service Guarantee of providing quality, efficient and consistently reliable services to rural and remote communities in order to be able to access education”.

Explanation:

It goes without saying children accessing Distance Education or online tertiary studies need to be able to have consistent phone and internet coverage speaking with teachers & peers, accessing lessons and researching information.

With the roll out of the new 5G system, rural and remote NSW have been lumped with an inferior system that glitches, cuts out or fails completely. Families that had previously had reasonable phone service and internet connection are reporting to have far less now the new system has been put in place. In some cases, they no longer have any coverage, at all even with expensive boosters in vehicles and homes.

The lack of connectivity is just compounding the educational disadvantage of children in rural and remote areas along with the significant impact on the people trying desperately to run businesses safely and effectively.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A13. Hillston Branch

“That ICPA-NSW works with ICPA (Aust) to advocate for better mobile phone access for rural and remote areas for the safety of children.

Explanation:

Since the 4G network changeover mobile reception has deteriorated, with dropouts, unable to make calls even with phone reception and increase in black spots. For example, children in rural and remote areas are traveling on some of the roughest roads, both bitumen and dirt/gravel and we need to ensure the safety of these children and drivers by ensuring adequate phone reception is available.

It is not good enough for Telstra to tell customers that they were “lucky” to have reception before on 3G as that area shouldn’t have had reception, we were promised “equivalent”. The government



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needs to consider if there are more viable options that could be subsidies for rural and remote families to ensure their safety.

Case Study: We had a member who was monitoring a burning tree from a lightning strike (happened 3 days before), she was due to pick her daughter up from the school bus and as she was leaving the tree started smoking. She had no phone reception (but previously had on 3G), so she had to go home to use Starlink to make the phone call to alert someone else to come and check before she could pick up her daughter.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A14. Hay Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests that Minister for DPIRD Department Primary Industries and Regional Development looks into the detrimental impact of the turning off of 3G in rural NSW.”

Explanation:

Since the 3G turn-off, many rural areas have found that they no longer have the mobile phone service that they used to.

Many people have become accustomed to using their mobile phones to run businesses, make medical appointments, for emergency preparedness and to stay connected to family, but since 3G has been switched off, these things are no longer available.

Many School of the Air families have used mobile service as a backup for their children's lessons, something that will not be able to be done. These same families also have the safety of governesses and their children in mind.

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A15. Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests Telstra to redress the inadequacy for the updated service now provided by 4G.”

Explanation:

Since the change over to the 4G network service in unincorporated NSW has decreased. Telstra guaranteed we would receive service that matched or bettered previous service, this is not the case. Before the change over our classroom supervisor was able to make a call from our school room to us in the paddock in an emergency. This is no longer a possibility as there is no longer phone service in our school room. This is creating an unsafe environment for our employees and children.

Case Study: A member of our branch was in their schoolroom when a snake entered the room while children were present. They were unable to access the Telstra network to call for assistance as they no longer have a service in their schoolroom which is located in the same yard as their house.

Case Study: Some of our members are first responders in the area and find that when attending emergency scenes, they are struggling to call emergency services to help them deal with the situation they are in. This is affecting the safety of not only the responders but also the patients in these situations.

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A16. NSW/VIC Lone Members Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the relevant authorities to ensure that all Telecommunications Call Centres do not place unnecessary pressure on remote people to transfer to Starlink for both landline and mobile service.”

Explanation:

The recent 3G switch off impacted many people who rely on the Telstra NGWL for landline service. The NGWL services were decommissioned, and Telstra migrated customers to the 4G Fixed Wireless Network 4GWL (also referred to as 4G Home Service, wireless landline or 4G Landline). This involved the installation of a smart modem either as a self-install or a technician install. Unfortunately, some people were not given this opportunity and were told they must



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migrate to Low Orbit Satellite such as Starlink, when it has now become apparent that they could have migrated to the 4GWL.

Impact 1:

After migration to 4GWL, one member had it inadvertently cancelled and upon contacting the call Centre were told the only solution was to go onto Starlink. This situation was thankfully rectified through ICPA-NSW, because the member contacted State Council and State Council assisted in rectifying it. It begs the question though; how many other people have been inadvertently moved over to Starlink instead of migrating to 4GWL?

Impact 2:

A member cancelled a NGWL landline 4 years ago, because the infrastructure still offered "micro" mobile service around the house, they did not see a need to keep the landline.

The unintended consequence of cancelling this landline was that they were not aware that years later, this would mean they would not have opportunity for migration to 4GWL when 3G shutdown. As a result, they have now lost mobile coverage around their home and have no voice services at all.

They cannot get their landline reconnected. They have no choice but to install a low orbit satellite solution such as Starlink, which is comparably expensive and requires all users to connect via a password, reliant on electricity and is not ideal in an emergency.

For the average resident who is not technically minded, cancelling an NGWL landline years ago now has detrimental impacts, because they are reliant on a low orbit satellite system that seems to be the "all eggs in one basket approach" which is not ideal in remote areas. People have resorted to UHF as a common form of communication.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered





DISTANCE EDUCATION/AHWISE

A17. Brewarrina Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to ensure that supervisors of rural and remote students learning from home are provided with professional development to deliver effective education.”

Explanation:

Currently not all Supervisors of Distance Education are provided with Professional Development. Effective teaching can increase confidence, sharpen critical thinking and equip the student with skills and resilience crucial for lifelong success.

Successful provision of professional development is essential for Supervisors to:

- A) Confidently understand and deliver set programs to ensure effective communication between Educators and students.
- B) Ensure that students understand material so that they are confident and engaged in their learning.

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A18. Brewarrina Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request that the NSW Department of Education reinstate learn to swim classes during residential or mini schools for distance education students including preschool.”

Explanation:

Learn to swim classes were include in the residential and mini school program in previous years. This does not appear to be occurring in many Distance Education Schools and for many geographically isolated preschool and primary-aged children this is the only learn to swim classes they are exposed to. For many of the children’s families it is the only access to a swimming program they can practically attend. Learning to swim is a vital part of a child’s education.

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A19. Brewarrina Branch

“That ICPA-NSW lobby the NSW Department of Education to provide Distance Education students with a coloured printer.”

Explanation:

The current printer provided to Distance Education students is only in black and white. This is a great disadvantage to students producing projects which should be in colour to enhance the overall project.

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A20. Brewarrina Branch

“That ICPA-NSW lobby NSW Department of Education to increase the level of social, emotional and physical socialisation of distance education students.”

Explanation:

There has been a decline in the level of socialisation of Geographically Isolated students in some Distance Education Centres. Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a complex, yet fundamental element of their mental wellbeing. Interactions with peer-groups and teachers in a school setting can positively influence our children by increasing their resilience.

This develops their social and emotional competency which increases their ability to cope with internal and external stressors. The current deficit of physical, social interaction for distance education students negatively impacts their mental wellbeing. Therefore, increasing the level of face-to-face interaction during the school term will support the growth of their social and emotional wellbeing. This may include and not limited to, athletics practice, learn to swim, theatre production, excursions, super camps.

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A21. Wentworth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister for Education and the Department of Education to provide a suitable outdoor environment for students at Broken Hill School of the Air.”

Explanation:

This has been a long-standing request from families at Broken Hill School of the Air that the Asset Department expedite upgrades to the outdoor space. The previous minister Sarah Mitchell MP visited the site and was appalled by the car park that the kids currently have to play in.

Broken Hill School of the Air P & C have had funds set aside for 5 years to be able to purchase outdoor tables and chairs and play equipment, yet they cannot purchase these until upgrades to the grounds are complete.

The current uneven concrete car park is the most unwelcoming environment for these kids to enjoy vital social interaction. You have more than 100 kids trying to play in a tiny space with no shade or play equipment.

The lack of play environment is contributing to bullying in the playground, social anxiety with the younger students unable to find a place to play where they don't feel intimidated by the size of the big kids and a lack of enthusiasm towards attending school where there is no shade or place to play.

This should not be a motion; this is a simple department fix and investment that should have happened many years ago.

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A22. Wentworth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request the Department of Education explore new technology platforms to deliver internet to home school sites.”

Explanation:

The introduction of Teams has been revolutionary for home school sites utilising Broken Hill School of the Air. However, continuous frustration exists amongst teachers, students and home supervisors by the frequent inability to attend lessons due to NBN not working at home sites.

The significant improvement in lesson delivery, interaction and learning is taken away when children frequently cannot join their lessons with their teacher.

It is particularly frustrating when students, families and teachers know that there are other platforms that could provide a more reliable connection and access to education could be significantly improved.

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A23. Brewarrina Branch

“That ICPA-NSW continues to lobby the NSW Department of Education to provide a secondary learning platform other than MS Teams for times when MS Teams fails to connect or work as designed.”

Explanation:

MS Teams are used by a number of Distance Education Centres to deliver their online satellite lessons. One Stage 2 child through Dubbo School of Distance Education in 2023 has endured 3 ½ terms of interrupted learning using MS Teams. In one MS Teams lesson the platform dropped the calls 54 times. MS Teams would randomly drop the call during class lessons on a consistent basis.

The NSW Department of Education Technical Team investigated the issue extensively and could not provide a conclusive answer to the program, dropping the call all of the time. Multiple devices



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have been trialed over various locations to try and identify the problem which didn't highlight the problem.

At the beginning of 2024 Term 1 school year the MS Teams problem continued, further remote investigation continued temporarily, and the student continued to experience extreme disruption and frustration. A decision was made to stop using MS Teams in the classroom for satellite class participation due to the continued problem and the student's wellbeing until someone could actually come on site and further investigate the problem. As of the end of 2024 no one has been on site to investigate the problem.

As a result, this particular year 4 student has not been able to participate in any MS Teams class lessons for all of the 2024 school year. No alternative solution has been forthcoming, so this child has not been able to participate with their classmates and interact with the class. This has had a very detrimental effect on this child's learning and wellbeing and isolated this child enormously. This child's learning has been impacted by this technical problem for now nearly two years.

No one has been able to fix the problem or come on site in 2024 and the problem continued. An alternative platform needs to be provided to ensure no child is missing out on their education. This is not a motion to stop MS Teams but to find a suitable alternative for those children who cannot get MS Teams to work.

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A24. Hay Branch

"That ICPA NSW requests the NSW Department of Education and relevant Ministers to ensure School of the Air (SOTA) families have the flexibility to choose a funded internet option that suits their individual needs, rather than relying only on NBN satellite as currently provided by the Department of Education."

Explanation:

Families accessing distance education through SOTA are currently provided with NBN satellite internet, installed and paid for by the Department of Education. With the increased use of more suitable internet options such as Starlink, which is personally accessed by many rural people for



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its speed and reliability in isolated areas, it is logical to assess whether NBN continues to be the best fit for distance education.

NBN satellite is unreliable, intermittent and does not have the speed capability of other connectivity options. The majority of SOTA families regularly experience issues that can significantly impact the delivery of online lessons.

Queensland and the Northern Territory education departments have introduced a model of providing families with a flexible funding package to access internet options that suit their individual needs, and the same approach could also be adopted in NSW.

A precedent has been set for the use of Starlink in other Government departments and agencies that operate in rural and remote areas of NSW, and the same could be afforded to SOTA families, via the Department of Education.

Many SOTA families have installed and personally paid for Starlink in their school rooms as a back-up for the inevitable NBN 'dropouts', to avoid disruption to online lessons and continuity of the education program. NBN is also directly wired into the Department and provides desktop computers which do not allow for wireless connectivity to other devices that could be used to enhance the learning experience; something which would be offered with the use of a Wi-Fi option.

As students studying remotely are already at a disadvantage, it would significantly assist in the delivery of the school program to provide them with the latest available technology and connectivity to facilitate their unique learning experience.

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PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A25. Wentworth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request the Department of Education provide at least one portable device, with the ability to access Wi-Fi, to each Geographically isolated home school site.”

Explanation:

Very frequently, the department provided desktops are unable to connect to NBN. Whilst some families have gone to significant expense to get separate reliable internet in their school rooms (such as Starlink), other families rely on internet within their home when desktops fail.

Currently many families are running multiple privately owned devices in the school room so that children can still access lessons.

By providing at least one portable device with the ability to connect to Wi-Fi, you are allowing ALL students to access lessons when other options fail, increasing their ability to access lessons when and where they need to and allowing greater ability to provide feedback between teachers and students. This would provide equity of access to ALL geographically isolated students.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A26. Wentworth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request the Department of Education perform urgent upgrades to geographically isolated home site computers to allow them to connect to private Wi-Fi networks.”

Explanation:

All forms of internet suffer from outages at various times. However, since the transition of home site computers to the NBN network, it is very apparent that NBN in remote areas suffers from very frequent outages.

This is causing frustration among supervisors, staff, students and the Help Desk Team. The result is that many lessons are being missed, and home sites are finding their own alternate arrangements.



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A very simple solution to this is to allow school computers the ability to connect to available private networks (such as Starlink, which has proved to be more reliable than NBN) via wifi, as many home isolated DE Families ensure they have access to another more reliable form of internet for their schoolroom.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A27. Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests that NSW Department of Education to allow Wi-Fi internet access in all geographically isolated distance education (GIDE) homesites”

Explanation:

All GIDE homesites have been provided with NBN Sky muster internet connection. The desktops are connected by cables only. There is no provision for access to Wi-Fi at the home site. At public school students can connect with Wi-Fi on their school campus with either a department / School provided device or with an approved and appropriate BYOD (Buy Your Own Device).

GIDE homesites are our students’ everyday classroom and they need to have access to Wi-Fi to allow more efficient completion of their daily required learning. Students have been provided with portable devices to assist with their learning needs. Such as an iPad to use for learning support applications, such readers and speech, for talk to text and screen reading. These functions don’t work without Wi-Fi and the students must leave their supervised classroom to access these features.

Students enrolled in Aurora College Opportunity class are required to have access to Wi-Fi to connect the college supplied laptop to use simultaneously as the department provided desktop at every lesson. This occurs at all face-to-face public schools; however, GIDE students have not been provided with access to Wi-Fi in their classrooms.

While there are work arounds that have been found, for these students, provision of Wi-Fi at homesites, exactly the same as other public schools should be the standard and expected.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A28. Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch

“That the Department of Education provide students enrolled in primary distance education through School of the Air, who are geographically isolated with current up to date hardware technology for their home classrooms.”

Explanation:

The Department of Education provides and installs the hardware required for students enrolled in Distance education.

Currently these home classrooms only have black and white printers. These students must be the only students in the state without access to a colour printer.

Students need access to noise cancelling earphones. Our home classrooms are noisy, which means they turn the volume up on their headphones to hear their online lessons, noise cancelling earphones helps to prevent this noise volume creeping and potential cause long term hearing damage. Even further it would be great if we could use apps to monitor the volumes and exposure.

The cumbersome desktops are provided instead of laptops which can more easily be adjusted for occupational health and safety for each age child.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered





EARLY CHILDHOOD

A29. Balranald Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education clarify the requirements for the transition program for preschool children entering primary school, sometimes referred to as orientation.”

Explanation:

There is confusion about the rules for school orientation for preschoolers to school. Is it necessary for a parent to be on site during the transition hours? This is not a feasible option for parents that already travel large distances just for their child to attend.

In the situation of there being a preschool program being delivered on site at the school, would it still be necessary and substantially productive for the transition program to be in place and integrated in the school environment for incoming kinder students to attend primary school.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A30. Balranald Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education (ECEC) and the Minister for Education and Early Learning implement 3 and 4 year old preschool programs on site in rural and remote schools throughout NSW where no other preschool program is offered in the community, by whatever funding model is best suited to the community needs.”

Explanation:

As small rural communities and schools have fluctuating enrolments, communities need certainty around education programs that can meet the needs of all children in the area. It is likely that different funding programs and models would be better suited to some schools. With a commitment to early childhood education from the NSW Education Department, local children will have a better start and better social and educational outcomes for life.



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



Positive cohesion is required between school principals, service providers and parents in the communities that have preschool children to enable the school venue to be utilised for either outsourced preschool delivery services and programs, without disrupting students and staff on school site and not further burdening schools already limited budgets to finance the program delivery, or by public preschool funding. The external programs in essence would be delivered and financed through a separate coordinator utilising the school or an alternative location as a base. for example, Clare area is an un-serviced area that has parents traveling distances of up to 200kms per day just to access limited preschool education at another site.

Positive outcomes for the outsourced program delivery: would mean:

- less financial/minimal burden to school staff
- outsourced staffing has less impact on school
- utilising empty buildings to full potential
- coincides with better transition program for students entering primary school
- helps achieve some of the recommended 600hrs of contact preschool education
- allows for in person delivery of preschool curriculum
- job boost, especially in rural and remote areas
- eases enrolment pressure in areas/preschool programs already at full capacity
- can help build/boost enrolment numbers for schools and preschools in rural and remote areas
- multiple locations for companies such as “Intereach”, Balranald Early Learning Centre, hay mobile, etc could possibly deliver to multiple sites allowing the delivery of preschool programs on site at not only school venues but preschool venues, which helps boost staffing/enrolment numbers and allows the company to extend their reach and visibility for funding of such programs
- with added enrolments of preschool students, this is important as a catchment of numbers for future primary school enrolments.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A31. Hay Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education allow early childhood services the option to utilise Department of Education facilities, including primary school venues in recess or closure, to deliver mobile early childhood education to rural and remote communities”

Explanation:

Like many rural and remote communities, the families of the Hay region rely on mobile services traveling to various locations to deliver early childhood education programs. Thankfully Hay Children’s Services (HCS) has been delivering high quality and sought after programs to isolated children for a number of years. The venues currently available to deliver the programs, however, are very limited and are not purpose fit for education. Two of the small villages in which HCS operates also host primary schools currently maintained, but not in use.

In early 2023, with the support of ICPA Hay Branch, HCS requested to use these schools to deliver programs, but they continue to await approval. This means children, educators and families are missing out on the opportunity to use these venues which would enrich the mobile programs currently being delivered. Both schools meet the regulated requirements, and the Department approved a Venue Management Plan, which include shade, indoor and outdoor spaces, suitable toilets, electricity, running water, lighting, heating and cooling.

The benefits of using these small schools would go beyond that for children and families accessing the early education programs. It would help to strengthen and enhance the general wellbeing of community members, of which many have a strong past connection to the schools and would be pleased to see them used for future generations.

Letter of support

21 November 2024

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to you regarding the use of the Carrathool and Booligal schools, which are currently in recess. At present, these buildings, yards, and their facilities are being maintained which seems a waste when they are inaccessible to anyone, including community members.



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As an Early Childhood and Primary teacher, I understand the positive impact that a safe and inclusive learning environment can have on a child's development. I am also a past teacher at Booligal Public School and have worked closely with Carrathool Public School, therefore understand the fantastic facilities available and believe they could have such a positive impact on children.

A sense of belonging

At present, our educators spend quality time in the mornings setting up the whole play space, before having to pack it up again at the end of the day due to other community members also needing to use the halls. This includes children's artworks and displays off walls and learning experiences, such as block constructions, that children have worked on during the day. Research shows that allowing children to have ownership and a sense of belonging in their learning environment helps them to feel safe and confident. How can the child have ownership when their play spaces are completely packed up and reset each week?

A flexible indoor and outdoor play space for children of all ages.

At present, our childcare services are using extremely outdated facilities at the local community halls which can become very uncomfortable in the summer and winter months due to lack of efficient heating and cooling. This is a real challenge, particularly for educators trying to provide a comfortable sleep space for the younger children.

At both Carrathool and Booligal schools, multi-purpose buildings were built in 2011, which provide fantastic play spaces with modern facilities including split systems and large verandah areas that are undercover. These buildings provide a flexible indoor and outdoor learning space that can be utilised in all weather conditions. It also provides a safe and engaging environment for younger children, such as those who may not yet be walking.

A safe and sustainable outdoor environment.

Sustainability is a huge part of the curriculum (Early Years Learning Framework) and children are encouraged to feel a sense of belonging, ownership and pride in their environment. At present, there are wonderful large, grassy areas at the schools which include safe and engaging play equipment, sandpits and even a tennis court! More importantly, there are established and maintained vegetable gardens at the schools which the children would absolutely love to utilise!



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



As you are aware, our little towns and communities in remote areas are often lacking in quality facilities that serve as a hub for parents, children and families to meet up for different purposes, including community meetings, visiting childcare services and healthcare services. Allowing local children and their families access to the school grounds and buildings will have such a huge impact on their learning and provide quality opportunities!

Regards,
Bronwyn Hicks
Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary)

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A32. Bourke Branch

“That ICPA (NSW) advocates for funding to support the infrastructure needs of Community Based early childhood education providers to deliver Childcare and Preschool services in remote towns.”

Explanation:

There are currently limited opportunities for Community Based Early Childhood Services to gain the required capital funding for significant infrastructure needs to meet demand in remote communities. This affects rural, remote and geographically isolated children, because they end up in “childcare deserts” where early childhood services are not provided.

The cost of infrastructure in remote locations is significantly higher than regional and metro settings yet there is no appropriate funding mechanism.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A33. Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education and Department of Planning and Environment, Teacher Housing Authority to investigate pathways for funding accommodation or offer rent subsidies, to teachers and educators in Early Childhood Centres that are located in remote and very remote locations.”

Explanation:

The first 5 years of a child’s life are vitally important for development in all areas, including cognitive, physical and social. While the State and Federal Governments have worked hard to establish and sustain early childhood education services in remote and very remote locations, it is very hard to attract teachers and educators to these areas. Accommodation is extremely scarce and what is available is expensive. If services could offer rental subsidies or free accommodation, it would make it easier to attract staff to remote areas.

This situation in a very remote community like Tibooburra is even more acutely felt. There is one public school and one, not for profit early childhood education facility, directly across the road from each other.

A person who wants to live and work with children in Tibooburra is much more likely to choose the job that comes with subsidised housing, which is the public school. Which in turn adds another layer to the recruitment and retention of staff for the early childhood education facility across the road, as they don’t have access to the subsidised teacher housing. We believe there is scope for both the public and other providers of early education facilities in remote and very remote areas to work together on this issue.

We have brought this motion forward in various forms for about 5 years now. It is pleasing to note that the first priority area of the Rural and Remote education strategy 2024 is "tailored housing support". We ask you to engage with the local remote communities in constructive communication and problem solving to address the lack of access for teachers and early childhood educators to housing.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered





A34 Bourke Branch

“That ICPA-NSW advocates for universal access to early childhood education and care.”

Explanation:

Evidence shows that the first 5 years in a child’s life are the most important for creating opportunities to thrive and be successful in later life. It is the most important educational opportunity we can give our children. All children, regardless of where they live, should be able to access high quality early childhood education and care.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A35. Louth Branch

“That ICPA NSW requests the Department of Education includes geographically remote three-year-olds in the criteria which enables three-year-olds to begin preschool in NSW.”

Explanation:

The Start Strong Funding communication explains their existing criteria for three-year-old inclusion to receive funding for preschool are:

- o Children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July in that preschool year and are:
- o Children with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
- o Children from low-income backgrounds
- o Children with a disability or additional needs
- o With English language needs
- o Children who are at risk of significant harm

Louth ICPA would like to see “remote” three-year-olds included in this criteria, as geographically remote children rely on intermittent specialist services and often have formidable distances to travel. This would allow them to have two years to achieve their mandated 600 hours of preschool access.

Currently, there are distance education providers not enrolling three-year-olds at all. This simple solution would ensure that remote three-year-olds are eligible for enrolment.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A36. Louth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests that the Ministers for Health and Education extend the “Brighter Beginnings” to include developmental screeners, closely reflective of the Royal Far West Healthy Kids Bus Stop, for 3-year-olds in rural and remote areas.”

Explanation:

The Brighter Beginnings program, while welcomed, does not adequately address the Early Intervention identification needs of children in rural and remote areas. The Royal Far West Healthy Kids Bus Stop Program was tailored to each communities’ needs, and in Bourke, this included a collaboration between RFW and local health service providers for a detailed health and developmental screener, including Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology, Psychology, Dental, Hearing, Child and Family Health Nurse, Community Nurse, Aboriginal Health Service to access to these disciplines by families for children, and to create a child centered approach to care, and pathways to NDIS Early Intervention if required for 3 year olds.

Providing a full developmental screener for 3-year-olds enables families and preschools to work together through this process to develop strong partnerships with health providers into and through primary school to meet the needs of the state’s most vulnerable children.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



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MISCELLANEOUS

A37. Walgett Branch

“That ICPA-NSW continue to schedule State Council online meetings, with all branches to assist with updates to procedures and protocols and provide an opportunity to discuss the running of an efficient and engaging branch”

Explanation:

Walgett Branch would like to sincerely thank all State Councillors who were involved in implementing and delivering the teams’ meetings in 2024. Your time is precious.

These meetings were invaluable to us all but especially to the very grass roots of our wonderful organisation, the branches. They have helped us all navigate the recent changes to membership, financial year recording, updates to the constitution, branch AGM’s and have kept us up to date on procedures for branch fundraising and the promotion of each branch through book prizes, bursaries etc.

The tyranny of distance was broken down by these online meetings and we had the opportunity to learn from other branches and the chance to see a lovely smiling face all from the comfort of our own home!

There is simply just not the time at Conference to discuss the efficient running of branches or share ideas. We believe these meetings relieve some of the angst in the responsibility of running a branch.

We look forward to any future meetings, especially with any assistance in helping new committees write motions.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered





RURAL SCHOOLS

A38. Rankins Springs Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Minister for Education and Early Learning to allow the Rural Remote Education Policy Unit to receive complaints from parents/staff for TP1, TP2 and Central Schools as opposed to the designated Director Educational Leadership (DEL).”

Explanation:

Parent concerns/complaints are continually being unexecuted through the current complaints process of bringing them to attention to the school’s designated DEL.

Setting up an independent body to listen and direct the concerns/complaints to the relevant DoE departments would negate the communication issues and the often limited or no understanding of rural and remote communities that are often experienced with DEL’s.

Parents are not following up complaints or even making complaints because of how intimidating DEL can be. Often parents are reduced to tears because of vindictive behaviour and frustration that they are not being heard and are treated as second-rate citizens.

In our branch we have parents from three schools experiencing the same behaviour of the DEL, that is intimidating and disrespectful.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A39. Balranald Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education to ensure that Directors of Educational Leadership (DELs) oversee, monitor and encourage consistent information at handovers for new principals in TP1 rural schools.”

Explanation:

More communication with DELs and their principals in their areas would see better organisation and workflow without unnecessary disruption to an already new year of schooling. It is detrimental to both staff and students without consistent workflow of a handover for a new school year including if there was a change of curriculum programs for the benefit of the students.

There can be complications when events are usually booked for the beginning of the year such as swimming carnivals and lessons, if the outgoing principal has not organized or booked this to happen, this can be very difficult to plan at short notice or become a missed option for the students to attend going into the new school year.

Forward planning for these events is important to not only staff but families that need to arrange for travel and accommodation options just to attend these events, this is relevant and concerning especially in tp1 schools. A possible option could include handovers to the Director of Education Leader so that smooth transitions of handover can be achieved.

With inconsistent information and difficulty accessing the department’s computer system due to contract changes for new principals means that the teaching principal has a lot of catching up to do and in some cases, it takes a whole term for all the administrative applications to be implemented.

This impacts on the productivity of the principal in the office and ultimately impacts the time spent in class with the students. contracts commence on the first day of school, however if they were dated 1st January the new principal would have access to applications and information well before the first day of school and would be able to familiarise themselves with information applicable to the new school.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A40. Rankins Springs Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests that the Minister for Education and Early Learning implements a mandatory minimum standard of training for School Learning Support Officer (SLSO) positions, either prior to or following employment.”

Explanation:

Currently SLSO positions don't require any qualifications and schools are employing people with no previous experience in this area such as retired hairdressers. Often these positions are not advertised but are simply filled by word of mouth within the school communities.

When there are behavioural issues such as meltdowns to be dealt with, the SLSO requires sufficient training/qualification to manage the situation effectively.

We do understand that there are many courses that an SLSO can access to upskill themselves in this position, however, if they choose not to, then their role and the student, are being compromised.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A41. Balranald Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests a reason and resolution as to the removal and shutdown of safe zones and evacuation Centres at rural and remote NSW schools”.

Explanation:

The removal of these categorized schools as emergency evacuation sites, regardless, if staff are not on site at all times highlights the inconsistent and lack of communication with community stakeholders and emergency services in rural areas.

It is essential during an emergency that some schools can be utilized as an emergency evacuation point and safe zone as they are the hub of the community, especially in rural and remote areas. The introduction of the change of policy that initiated the removal of these designated school sites and



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their signage for some remote NSW schools is detrimental to the ongoing safety acknowledgement of schools being a safe zone in an emergency situation.

The NSW Department of Education’s investment in communities through school facilities on site allows for these evacuation Centres to be utilised in the time of an evacuation emergency in the area. The changing of these policies limits the capacity of communities to function safely and independently. Surely all government departments should be focused on maximising local resources to best benefit rural and remote communities.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A42. Wentworth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister for Education and the Department of Education to provide an alternate program to replace the Rural Experience Program.”

Explanation:

All schools within our branch catchment have had the benefit of teachers via the Rural Experience Program. These teachers bring valuable knowledge and professional development, having come from much larger schools. They bring new ideas and learning and provide a fresh face for children in small schools.

More importantly for the additional teacher, this provides and allows for individualised teaching to the student’s point of need, which is often not achievable in a multistage classroom. By cancelling this program, the NSW Department of Education have narrowed the views and opportunities for both their teachers and their students.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A43. Louth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning separate the Rural Teacher Incentive and the rental subsidy to become individual enticements.”

Explanation:

Currently, the rental subsidy is deducted from the rural teacher incentive. The housing provided by NSW DoE in some rural villages is not up to a standard which the commercial rental market would be able to charge for. We feel that one incentive is negated by the other.

This lack of incentive speaks directly against the Rural Regional Remote Education Implementation Plan. Key area 1 ... People.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A44. Louth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to provide and maintain adequate and appropriate accommodation for staff at all remote schools.”

Explanation:

The standard of accommodation provided to Principals and teaching staff in rural and remote schools should be kept to a high standard to attract and retain staff in these regions. Recruitment and retention of teachers in these rural and remote schools is already a challenge, let alone providing sub-par accommodation. We ask that regular maintenance occurs to teaching housing.

Two examples include new teachers having to clean housing and remote school rooms on arrival. This included evidence of animals living in the house. rodent infestations, rubbish left behind.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered





A45. Wentworth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education consult widely with small school principals prior to making significant changes to budgets and staffing status.”

Explanation:

During 2023 and 2024, the NSW Department of Education made a series of major changes to school budgets and staff employment status. There was no consultation with principals, staff or the community prior to implementing these changes and no consideration for the long-term consequences on their schools.

Due to their smaller size and the reliance on the support of the community, schools in our region were disproportionately more affected by these changes. In one instance a major project the community had been fundraising for was scrapped without notice. These changes have also impacted on principals’ ability to structure their classes going forward. This has left many principals in our region struggling with appropriate classroom staffing arrangements for 2025 given they also face the challenge of multi-stage classrooms.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A46. Louth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to include an appropriate vehicle in the incentive package for Rural Schools Principals whose School is on an unsealed road. “

Explanation:

Without a vehicle attached to the school, these very remote schools are at a disadvantage in attracting staff. An arrangement for a school car to be used as a part private vehicle such as there is for some other local government staff, for example, local shires.

In small schools an added attraction is that students can be transported to school-based activities.



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



Vast distances and unsealed roads in these isolated communities coupled with the fact that there are no essential services (for example health, emergency services and tele communications) means that the school and students are even more isolated without an appropriate vehicle.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A47. Rankins Springs Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister of Education and Early Childhood to allow TP1 and TP2 Principals more autonomy on how Routine Planned Maintenance funding is spent.”

Explanation:

Currently the Assets Management Unit identify what projects will be funded with the Routine Planned Maintenance funds whilst the Principals of TP1 & TP2 schools don't have any say in where the money will be spent in their school. Often the money could be better spent in other areas that would be of immediate benefit to the students and staff. Funds associated with Routine Planned Maintenance are for carpets, painting, adjusting doors and windows, cupboards and boundary fencing.

A school where students of some of our members attend wanted to fix some old blinds in the staff room and replace ceiling fans in some of the rooms. However, they could not use the money they had available to them in Routine Planned Maintenance fund as the items requested were classified as new fittings and fixtures. Improvements need to be included in the Maintenance Fund.

ICPA-NSW State Council has completed a submission for the review into the Planning and Delivery of School Infrastructure in NSW where it is hoped that this issue will be addressed.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A48. Rankins Springs Branch

“That ICPA-NSW urges the NSW Department of Education to ensure that the Hub and Spoke Program position in rural communities is retained for TP1 and TP2 schools so that relief teaching staff can be accessed when needed.”

Explanation:

Our local schools currently have access to a Hub and Spoke Program teacher when covering teaching staff on leave or who are attending professional development. School principals are continually fighting for the positions to continue as casual teacher availability is extremely low in rural areas.

These positions are vital in ensuring schools remain operational in the event of an unexpected illness and/or leave. TP1 and TP2 schools have a low number of staff and do not have the ability to split classes in the event of an unexpected absence.

Another issue is that this Hub and Spoke Program position is shared with three small schools in the area whilst the teacher is based at a Central School in the district. Whilst Principals and teachers are accessing Professional Learning at the same time, each school can't access the relief teacher through the Hub and Spoke Program on the same day so accessing a very small bank of relief teachers is still an ongoing issue in rural areas.

In the past there have been teachers assigned to this position that do not have experience or behaviour management skills to go from school to school and have not been suitable candidates. This position needs to be filled with proficient teachers.

For the whole of the 2024 year, the Hub and Spoke Program position has remained vacant thus putting further pressure on the very small casual teaching pool that is available in the area.

We acknowledge that these positions are three or five-year contracts, however, it is very rare that staff stay in this position for much longer than 1 or 2 years, therefore it is necessary to ensure that this position is retained for TP1 and TP2 schools.



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



Perhaps the Hub & Spoke teacher could be based at a TP1 school (instead of the current Central School model) which would also assist in alleviating the current issue of trying to secure a second teacher (a position that has been advertised for over 6 months and is not filled in the TP1 school) and in the times when other Spoke schools require a relieving teacher, the base TP1 school could cover it with the Teaching Principal position.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A49. Hillston Branch

“That ICPA-NSW recommends that the Department of Education allow TP1 and TP2 schools to work collaboratively to gain a more cost-effective modes of delivery for early intervention such as services delivered by Royal Far West.”

Explanation:

Currently, there is no central point of service for Department of Education Schools in NSW. Contracts are made with individual schools, joining together would reduce administration and delivery costs.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A50. Balranald Branch

“That ICPA NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to ensure that rural and remote schools are providing the opportunity for students to apply for enrolment at the Aurora College in NSW”

Explanation:

The opportunity has to be accessed, facilitated and also known about at rural and remote schools; the following are questions asked in relation to Aurora program.

- does the principal know about the program?
- there has been shown to be a low number of enrolments to this program in western NSW.



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



- is the school willing to deliver the educational program in the school to the students enrolled in the program?
- are parents aware of the program?
- does the department promote the service?
- should there be more inclusion of promotion and delivery of the program to rural and remote students who would greatly benefit from this program, especially when entering higher education?
- can results from Naplan trigger the relevance of the need for the rollout of the program into a school?

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A51. Hillston Branch

“That ICPA-NSW recommends that the NSW Department of Education review and expand the Aurora College to meet the growing needs and interest.”

Explanation:

This year over 13,000 students across rural NSW applied and sat the entry tests to be accepted into the Aurora College. Due to the growing number of applicants many students are missing out on the opportunity to expand their learning beyond their rural classrooms. It would be great for the NSW Department of Education to expand and allow more positions to be available.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A52. Wentworth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW Request the Minister for Education clarify any future schooling plans for the growing Gol Gol and wider Wentworth Shire area.”

Explanation:

The Gol Gol area has grown rapidly, and the population continues to expand with large new developments. Local government and private investors are making allowances for this expansion,



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



yet the NSW government has not provided the community with any indication of any expansion of the primary school or options for secondary school.

It appears that NSW are happy to let families stream across the border to access education. Locals in Wentworth Shire are now seeking expressions of interest from Independent Schools due to the lack of communication or planning from the NSW Government.

Providing a future direction for the area would assist families in their planning for the future and would help the area to continue to grow.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

SPECIFIC STUDENT NEEDS

A53. Balranald Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Health and Regional Health implement an incentive program to encourage allied health professionals to come to rural and remote areas.”

Explanation:

Children benefit the greatest from early intervention. To give one example, a speech issue is usually identified at preschool. Parents are then referred to the relevant therapist at a local allied health service, however there is an increasing gap and turnover of health professionals in towns like Balranald, therefore parents may need to travel over 300kms one way to access a speech therapist or occupational therapist.

Recently with the retirement of the local GP in Balranald, there were no referrals due to no GP being available in Balranald, limiting the ongoing process of access to specialist care. The disadvantage of access to allied health professionals in rural health services settings was highlighted during the pandemic due to border closures, covid regulations and the redistribution of health specialists in our health system.



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



Telehealth was a highlighted benefit of allowing access for health specialists and their patients, but there is nothing more important than face to face appointments so that health specialists can properly perform their assessments and referrals.

The Balranald branch therefore requests that more incentives be offered to allied health professionals to work in rural and remote localities.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A54. Balranald Branch

“That ICPANSW requests the NSW Minister for Health, and the NSW Department of Health expand the recruitment process of Allied Health Staff to Rural communities by liaising with universities nationwide and advertising positions earlier to maximise interest from those students graduating the following year”.

Explanation:

It can be difficult for interstate students to engage in practical placements in NSW regional health facilities without significant interaction between the health department and the universities directly. Establishing relationships with all universities could lead to more interest from graduates. Securing graduate employees may be easier earlier in the year, as many private clinics are offering positions in August to commence in January, meaning job security becomes the focus. If NSW Health was to be able to offer positions to final year students from August, it may be easier to attract young professionals to rural health settings.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



A55. Louth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the relevant Ministers for Health & Education to enable access for parents/carers of remote students vital allied health support through funding and/or subsidies that are not covered by NDIS.”

Explanation:

Currently parents/ carers of remote students needing early intervention through allied health support are required to pay for these services. Distance Education Centres are unable to provide timely support to access school or allied health professionals because of long waiting lists or unavailable services. Time is critical for targeted intervention in a child's education.

A subsidy or funding to enable families to access providers of allied health professionals to allow them to access appropriate, timely support for their child or children. Children who do not have a significant disability cannot access NDIS fall through the gaps. The only options their parents have are to pay for it out of pocket or not to access vital support.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

TERTIARY EDUCATION

A56. Louth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the University Council of Deans to continue to look at the way credits and advance standings could be transferred from one academic transcript to another when a student moves from one university to another.”

Explanation:

Louth ICPA asks for this because we believe the circumstance is unfair when a university degree course unit has been completed and passed, but a student is required to re-do and pay again for that same unit.



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When degree courses are certified by DoE, we feel the lack of unit acknowledgment is an inequitable deterrent for students' success in achieving qualifications, requiring more time to complete (increased accommodation costs) plus having to pay twice for the unit.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

TRAVEL

A57. Balranald Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests Transport for NSW to permanently implement a School Drive Subsidy for geographically isolated preschoolers who are privately conveyed to preschool.”

Explanation:

Transport NSW has acknowledged that bus transportation of preschool aged children is not safe, due to supervision and developmental stage of this age cohort. The significant distances required for families to travel to access Early Childhood Education incurs considerable cost, often becoming a barrier to accessing services. A preschool drive subsidy in line with the criteria for the broader School Drive Subsidy would make preschool attendance a viable option for some children.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered



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A58. Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request the Department of transport to instate a direct student transport route from the only rurally located public co-educational boarding facility, Yanco Agricultural High School to Broken Hill.”

Explanation:

Students attending Yanco who live in the unincorporated area closest place to catch the student bus to Yanco is in Wilcannia or Mildura, located 200km and 296km respectively away from Broken Hill.

Broken Hill is the closest public transport hub for our members. The Mildura service arrives earlier in the day and if this service was extended it would be more beneficial to our members to allow more time with their students over an exeat weekend.

Not having a direct transport route to Broken Hill is hindering families from being able to access the only rural located public boarding facility. Not being able to access a bus to this boarding facility prevents families from accessing or considering this public boarding school due to the tyranny of distance.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A59. NSW/VIC Lone Members Branch

“That ICPA-NSW supports all children attending schools in NSW to have access to school transport and write letters to the NSW Minister for Education, The NSW Minister for Transport, and both the Cross Border Commissioner for NSW and the Cross Border Commissioner for Victoria, requesting the re-instatement of the bus service within NSW for all interstate students who access boarding education in NSW.”

Explanation:

Until recently, Transport NSW provided a bus service for the students of Yanco Agricultural College, accessible to all students, transporting students from the school to locations toward the



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Victorian border. Families were informed in September that only students who reside in NSW are eligible to use this service. The bus is still running, with plenty of empty seats.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

A60. Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests Transport for NSW to investigate solutions for enrolled day students at remote and very remote schools who require transport to a large Centre to participate in school activities and educational opportunities.”

Explanation:

Most students enrolled in Tibooburra Outback Public School have no need to access the School Drive subsidy daily. The school has always been included in the wider Broken Hill School of the Air community as well as other remote schools in the area. Educational opportunities such as annual athletics and swimming carnivals in Broken Hill inclusion in stage two and three excursions to places like Ballarat and Lake Burrendong and science focus days at White Cliffs and Tibooburra.

These students need to be transported most often to Broken Hill, which is 330 kilometres away to attend these educational opportunities. Currently these students do not meet any criteria to access the School Drive Subsidy to support them attending such important educational opportunities. The case would also apply to many other small schools across the state.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/ Deemed Covered

