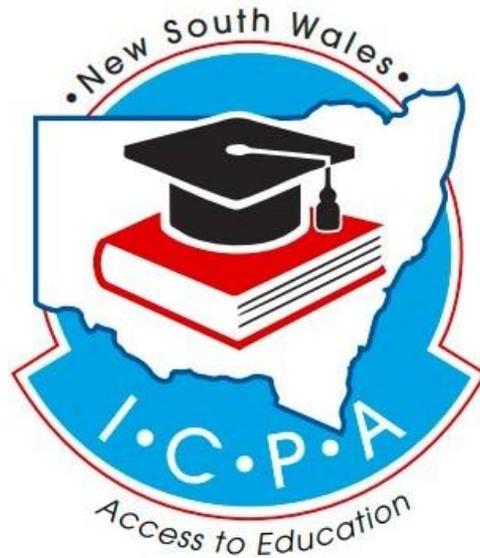


THE  
ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION  
OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC



*54th Annual Conference*

*Broken Hill 2026*

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*Agenda  
Programme*

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**Tuesday 24 March 2026**

**DAY ONE**

8:00 am	<b>Registration</b>	
8:30am	<b>Welcome and Explanation of Conference in booklet</b>	<b>Annabel Strachan</b>
8.32 am	<b>Singing of the National Anthem/school presentation</b>	<b>Students from the Broken Hill School of the Air</b>
8:40am	<b>Welcome to Conference and the Broken Hill Shire</b>	<b>Mayor Tom Kennedy</b>
8.50am	<b>Introduction of Conference Convenors And conference announcements</b>	<b>Suzannah Palmer &amp; Laura Finch</b>
	Introduction of NSW State Council	<b>Libby McPhee</b>
	Distribution of voting cards	<b>Laura, Tegan &amp; Kirsty</b>
	Introduction of invitees	<b>Libby McPhee</b>
	Adoption of the Minutes of the 2025 Conference as circulated electronically.	
	Adoption of Apologies as received and as posted in the conference room.	
9:00 am	<b>Opening of Conference</b>	<b>Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch Life Member – Anita O’Connor</b>
9.05 am	Demonstration of a motion being debated	<b>Tanya Mitchell, David Butler, Laura Stalley</b>
9.10 am	<b>ICPA-NSW President’s Report</b>	<b>Annabel Strachan</b>
9.15 am	<b>Acknowledgement of Country</b>	<b>Alma School Junior AECG</b>
9.20 am	<b>Travel Report and Branch Motions</b>	<b>David Butler Travel Portfolio Leader</b>
9.35 am	<b>Guest Speaker</b>	<b>Dean White Regional, Rural, Remote &amp; Unique Settings Directorate Executive Director</b>
9.50 am	<b>Distance Education Report</b>	<b>Laura Stalley Distance Education Leader</b>



Education



9.55 am	<b>Rural Schools Report and Branch Motions</b>	<b>Annabel Strachan</b> <b>Rural Schools Portfolio Leader</b>
10.15 am	<b><u>MORNING TEA</u></b>	
10:45 am	<b>Continue debating Rural Schools Motions</b>	
11.20 am	<b>Allowances Report and Branch Motions</b>	<b>Tegan Barton</b> <b>Allowances Portfolio Leader</b>
11.40 am	<b>Address from ICPA Federal President</b>	<b>Louise Martin</b>
11.50 am	<b>Conference Keynote Speaker</b> <b>Director Wattseed Consulting Services, Teacher and Author</b>	<b>Sarah Donnelley</b>
12.30pm	<b>Specific Student Needs Report and Branch Motions</b>	<b>Bronwyn Tofaeono</b> <b>Specific Student Needs Portfolio Leader</b>
12.50 pm	<b><u>LUNCH</u></b> ICPA-NSW Slideshow on achievements Lunchtime session with Transport for NSW.	
1.40 pm	<b>Song</b>	<b>Clancy Griffiths</b>
1.45 pm	<b>Guest Speaker</b>	<b>Mr Richard Stokes</b> <b>Chief Executive Officer</b> <b>Australian Boarding Schools Association</b>
1.50 pm	<b>Boarding Schools, Agricultural High Schools and Hostels Report and Branch Motions</b>	<b>Laura Stalley</b>
2.10pm	<b>Guest Speaker</b>	<b>Elise Petty NBN Local Executive Manager – Education &amp; Regional Stakeholder Relations Regional &amp; Remote</b>
2.25 pm	<b>Announcement of the Winner of the ICPA-NSW Sporting Bursary</b>	<b>Sally Argent Smith</b>





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2.30 pm **Guest Speaker**

**Nicole Ward Senior Regional  
Corporate Relations  
Manager Rural and  
Regional Affairs, Corporate  
Affairs, Risk & Legal  
(CARL) Telstra Group Ltd**

2.45 pm **Presentation**

**Annabel Strachan**

2.55 pm **AFTERNOON TEA**

3.30 pm **Communications Report and Branch Motions**

**Libby McPhee**

3.40 pm **Guest Speaker**

**Danielle Chapman  
General Manager Fundraising,  
Marketing and Advocacy  
Royal Far West**

3.45 pm **Continue debating Branch Motions**

4.30 pm **Collect voting cards and close of Day One  
Announcements from Convening Committee**



**The Tronox Conference Dinner will be held in Broken Hill Civic Centre**

**Time: 7:00pm**

**Guest Speaker: Jo Ker – White Cliffs Public School Teacher**

**Dress: Semi Formal/Smart Casual**

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**Wednesday 25 March 2026**

**DAY TWO**

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8:00 am **Start of Day Two**  
Members to sign AGM Attendance Sheet

8:30 am **ICPA-NSW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

9:15 am **Close of AGM and Welcome Guests to their Seats**

9.20 am **Tertiary Report and Branch Motions**

**Tanya Mitchell**

9.30 am **Guest Speaker**

**Lesley Harvey  
Child, Adolescent and Family  
Clinical Lead - RFDSSE**





Education



9.35 am Continue debating motions

10:00 am **MORNING TEA**

10.30 am **Guest Speaker**

**Caron Bowen**  
**Relieving/ Director Local**  
**Operations Early**  
**Childhood**  
**Department of Education**

10.35 am **Early Childhood Report**  
**Early Childhood motions**

**Kirsty Wilson**

11.15 am Debate any remaining Branch Motions

11.30 am Debate Supplementary motions

12.00 pm Debate Floor Motions

12:30 pm **LUNCH** - ICPA-NSW Slideshow

1.30pm **Breaking Barriers Panel of Speakers**  
**Sarah Rolton- CUC Director, Network Engagement.**  
**Jane Vaughan - CEO Big Sky Stories**  
**Vicki Olds - Director, Tibooburra Multi-Purpose Centre**  
**Kylie Green - Principal, Broken Hill and Hay School of the Air**  
**Emily Baxter - Manager, Blossom Rural Speech Pathologist**  
**Amy Williams – Dolly’s Dream**

**Chaired by Aimee Volkofsky**

2.15pm Continue debating any remaining motions

3:00 pm **AFTERNOON TEA**

3:30 pm Closing Formalities – Thank Conference Convenors  
State Council Farewells  
Collect voting cards

**The South 32 Post Conference Dinner at The Old Brewery - Topsy Camel**

**Time: 6.30pm**

**Dress: Smart Casual**



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Education



### List of Attendees

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation/Position</b>
Annabel Strachan	President and Rural Schools and Curriculum Leader
Tanya Mitchell	Immediate Past President and Tertiary Portfolio Leader
Libby McPhee	Secretary and Communications Portfolio Leader
Georgina Luckraft	Vice President and Treasurer
Britt Anderson	Vice President, Publicity Officer, and Webmaster and Merchandise Officer
David Butler	Travel Portfolio Leader
Laura Stalley	Boarding Schools, Agricultural High Schools and Hostels Portfolio Leader and Distance Education Portfolio Leader
Kirsty Wilson	Early Childhood Portfolio Leader
Tegan Barton	Allowances Portfolio Leader
Elizabeth Rosser	NSW/Vic Lone Members Officer and The Top Wire Editor
Bronwyn Tofaeono	Specific Student Needs Portfolio Leader
Louise Martin	ICPA (Aust) President
Sally Brindal	ICPA (Aust) Vice President and Communications Portfolio Leader
David Butler	Nyngan Branch Life Member
Anita O' Connor	Tibooburra/Milparinka Life Member
Bree Wakefield	Convening Committee
Laura Finch	Convening Committee
Stacey Wilson	Convening Committee
Sally Crozier	Convening Committee
Rebecca Pearce	Convening Committee
Mia Lawrence	Convening Committee
Suzannah Palmer	Convening Committee
Ali Allison	Convening Committee
Jess Pluckrose	Convening Committee
Carly Smith	Convening Committee
Kirsty Wilson	Balranald Branch Delegate



Joanna Gall	Broken Hill Branch Delegate
Prue Ritchie	Bourke Branch Delegate
Amanda Bell	Bourke Branch Delegate
Bec Bunyan	Hay Branch Delegate
Michelle Crossley	Hay Branch Delegate
Bronwyn McKeon	Hay Branch Delegate
Jessica Barry	Hillston Branch Delegate
Melissa Sandford	Louth Branch Delegate
Rachael Nielsen	Louth Branch Delegate
Elizabeth Rosser	NSW/Vic Lone Members Branch
David Shrimpton	NSW/Vic Lone Members Branch
Laughlin Ross	Nyngan Branch Delegate
Heather Whigham-Reid	Nyngan Branch Delegate
Kerrie Johnston	Rankins Springs Branch Delegate
Sally Argent-Smith	Rankins Springs Branch Delegate
Fiona Hotchin	Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch Delegate
Monique Townsend Betts	Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch Delegate
Francesca Collins	Walgett Branch Delegate
Tegan Douglas	Wentworth Branch Delegate
Maddie Jonas	Wentworth Branch Delegate
Nerida Healy	Wentworth Branch Delegate
Bessie Thomas	Broken Hill Branch Observer
Rebecca Zadow	Broken Hill Branch Observer
John Allison	Broken Hill Branch Observer
Michael Anderson	Broken Hill Branch Observer
Rainie Weston	Broken Hill Branch Observer
Hannah Smyth	Broken Hill Branch Observer
Sonja O'Connor	Broken Hill Branch Observer
Amy Mannion	Broken Hill Branch Observer
Sarah Harris	Broken Hill Branch Observer
Sarah Sandow	Hay Branch Observer
Deborah Nielsen	Louth Branch Observer
Alan Johnston	Rankins Springs Branch Observer
Tahlei Mannion	Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch Observer
Bernadette Maxwell	Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch Observer
Vicki Dowling	Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch Observer
Tennille Siemer	Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch Observer
Rebecca Pedler	Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch Observer
Lorraine Kuerschner	Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch Observer



Education



Robyn Ingram	Wentworth Branch Observer
Rachel Fitzgerald	Wentworth Branch Observer
Clancy Giffiths	Wentworth Branch Observer
Nadia Simmons	Wentworth Branch Observer
Douglas Melrose-Rae	Independent Schools NSW
Bronte Lee	Rural Adversity Mental Health Program
Marisa Pickett	Rural Adversity Mental Health Program
Annette Ohlsen	RFDS South Eastern Section
Rochelle Olsen	RFDS South Eastern Section
Lesley Harvey	RFDS South Eastern Section
Elise Petty	nbn Co
Kerryn Shearman	nbn co
Richard Stokes	ABSA
Stuart Delaney	ABSA
Nicole Ward	Telstra
Joshua Fulwood	Telstra
Peter Spinx	Telstra
Dianne Lawson	The Salvation Army
Russell Lawson	The Salvation Army
Heather Brown	Tronox Mining Australia
Gabby Maynard	Tronox Mining Australia
Vicki Olds	Tibooburra Multi-Purpose Centre
Emma Fenton	Outback Mobile Resource Unit
Jack Galvin Waight	AEU NSW Teachers Federation Branch
Brett Bertalli	AEU NSW Teachers Federation Branch
Janice Dexter	Transport for NSW
Steve Tonkes	Transport for NSW
Amanda Ferrari	The Boarding School Collective
Samara Anderson	Fox & Lillie Rural
Angus Whyte	Remote Australians Matter Ltd
Kelly Eglinton	Western Landcare NSW Inc
Tracey Lauritsen	Western Landcare NSW Inc
Diana Anderson	Western Landcare NSW Inc
Caron Bowen	Department of Education
Angela Bannon	Department of Education
Dean White	Department of Education



Sarah Barton	Premier's Department
Danielle Chapman	Royal Far West
Sarah Rolton	Country University Centre
Priscilla Luschwitz	Bourke and District Children's Services
Christine Plummer	Western Local Land Service
Kaye Gottschutzke	Western Local Land Service
Emily Baxter	Blossom Rural
Amy Williams	Dolly's Dream
Lesley Harvey	Royal Flying Doctors Service
Kimberly Grabham	The Riverine Grazier
Sarah McConnell	ABC Radio Broken Hill
Sarah Donnelley	Keynote Speaker
Johanna Ker	Dinner Speaker / Teacher at the White Cliffs Public School
Jane Vaughan	Big Sky Stories
Kylie Wallis	Fairholme College Toowoomba
Christina Fay	Ballarat Grammar
David Drain	The Armidale School
Katie White	Abbotsleigh
Tom Giles	Wesley College
Anthony Begg	Saint Ignatius College Riverview
Robert Gill	Sacred Heart College, Marcellin Campus
Noni Ayling	Wenona School
Lynne Young-Dwarte	Centre for Effective Reading
Serena McLean	Centre for Effective Reading
Hannah Whittlemore	Kinross Wolaroi School
Justin McInnes	Kinross Wolaroi School
Courtney Coe	Calrossy Anglican School
Dianne Cameron	Calrossy Anglican School
Danielle Fairthorne	Kincoppal Rose Bay
James Peters	The King's School
Joanne Hallinan	Loreto Normanhurst
Luke Morrissey	St Gregory's College
Peter Trenorden	Westminster School
Natasha Wilkins	Ravenswood School for Girls
Kylie Green	Principal Broken Hill School of the Air



Education

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## Opening Speech from the President

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Welcome to the 54th Annual Conference here in Broken Hill. It is an honour to gather with so many dedicated representatives from across New South Wales as we come together to address the pressing issues surrounding educational access for rural and remote students.

I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to each of you for making the commitment to be here and for representing your branches with such dedication. While it is natural for new delegates to feel a little nervous as we begin, please remember that we support one another throughout this conference.

This year, portfolio reports have been streamlined to ensure we have adequate time to hear from our invited guests, who bring valuable insights and support for our ongoing work. These reports are included in your conference folders, and I encourage you to review them carefully, as they represent significant preparation and thought.

As we commence the proceedings, I look forward to the meaningful discussions, constructive debate, and shared learning that define our time together. Thank you once again for your commitment and for the important role you play in advocating for the education of rural and remote student

Our departmental representatives present today play an essential role in our advocacy work. We also acknowledge the many organisations, schools and stakeholders with whom we collaborate closely, and who continue to be strong supporters of our Association. We appreciate the attendance of the boarding schools represented here and thank them for their ongoing commitment to educating rural and remote students. Your presence reinforces our shared responsibility and collective investment in improving educational outcomes for these communities.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Broken Hill Branch conference convenors, who, together with their team, have undertaken the significant responsibility of organising this year's conference. Their efforts have ensured a well-planned and engaging





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conference, and I am confident we are set for a memorable event. I encourage you to enjoy the opportunities available in Broken Hill, and to make the most of the time we have here.

Branches traditionally approach State Council to express their interest in hosting a conference. We encourage any branch considering this to speak with a State Councillor, as hosting provides an opportunity to showcase the local community and can also assist with branch fundraising.

I would like to thank our Federal representatives, President Louise Martin and Sally Brindal, for being here today. Your perspective on all matters, and particularly those of a federal nature, is very much appreciated. It is wonderful to have you all in attendance and reassuring to know that we are all here because we want the best possible education for rural and remote students.

To date, 68 conference motions are scheduled for debate and decision. While only delegates are eligible to vote, we warmly encourage guests and observers to participate in the discussions. Over the years, State Council has found that guests often contribute valuable insights which, when shared, strengthen the quality of decision making.

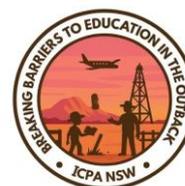
Every motion passed over the next two days will be sent to the relevant Minister, department, stakeholder, or organisation. Each motion is submitted in writing and later followed up during our two annual deputations. These motions form the basis of our one-page briefs, which are distributed not only to the intended recipients but also to additional departments, stakeholders, local members, and opposition or shadow ministers.

If branches receive feedback on any of your motions during the year, please ensure it is considered and incorporated when preparing the updated motion for the following conference.

Delegates have three minutes to present their branch’s motion explanation. A bell will sound at the two-minute mark and again at three minutes. State Council requires the full explanation to support post conference follow-up, so please be assured that every issue will be heard. If any amendments have been made to your explanation, ensure the updated version is submitted to the technical table at the end of the day or immediately after presenting.

State Councillors will demonstrate how we present a motion.

Please use the microphones provided, as all conference proceedings are recorded to assist with preparing the minutes. When you are presenting a motion or offering a comment, we kindly invite you to come to the microphone so everyone can hear you clearly.





Education



Could I please ask everyone to clearly identify themselves for recording purposes? For example: “Annabel Strachan, Louth Branch,” or “Richard Stokes, CEO, Australian Boarding Schools Association.” If you are presenting a motion, please read the motion from the screen provided.

When you completed your registration form, you were asked to indicate if you did NOT want your photo used for ICPA media purposes. I hope everyone has had the opportunity to do this. If you have not, and you do not wish to have your photograph used, please let the front desk know. Additionally, if our photographer invites you to be in a photo, kindly remind her that you are unable to participate.

We kindly ask everyone to switch their mobile phones off or set them too silent.

I know our hosts, the Broken Hill Branch members, and the convening committee have been looking forward to this day for quite some time. On behalf of State Council, I congratulate you on your outstanding preparation for the 54th Annual State Conference.

May the next two days be both enjoyable and enriching for everyone. Let’s commence.

**Annabel Strachan**  
**President**





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## President's Report

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As an organisation, ICPA has always stood firmly for one core principle: that every child living in rural and remote Australia deserves equitable access to a quality education. This belief continues to guide and motivate our work. Yet it is important to pause and consider—what does educational equity actually look like for the families and communities we represent?

At its foundation, our goal is to ensure that rural and remote children can access broad and engaging curriculums, taught by outstanding teachers, in schools led by effective and supportive principals. It means starting opportunities early, identifying children who may be at risk of falling through the gaps, and ensuring they receive the specialised support they need. And above all, it means ensuring that no rural or remote child is denied the chance to experience an education that brings all these essential elements together.

This is the base level of education that every child deserves—no exceptions. Many of the issues tied to achieving this standard are explored in greater detail throughout the portfolio reports and motions that will be discussed over the coming days. Together, they reflect the depth of our commitment and the collective determination of our branches, councillors, and members across New South Wales.

Balranald ICPA Branch hosted a wonderful conference at Euston in March 2025. We sincerely thank them for their excellent preparation, which set the foundation for a couple of days of rigorous debate. The resort style venue was fabulous, and I was pleased to see first time delegates feeling comfortable and actively contributing to discussions.

Following the conference, letters were sent to relevant ministers and organisations with whom ICPA-NSW State Council will meet during Deputation Week, beginning on 3 June 2025. This includes Courtney Houssos, Acting Deputy Premier of NSW and Minister for Education and Early Childhood, with whom ICPA-NSW is engaged in ongoing discussions on several issues.

The year 2025 began with climate disasters for many of our members—severe drought, unprecedented flooding, and continuing population decline across regional communities. These factors make it even more difficult for regional, rural, remote and very remote families to manage the 'liveability' of their lives while striving to achieve educational equity for their children.



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These longstanding challenges have now become critical, and new contemporary issues are emerging as a result of recent events.

ICPA-NSW remains hopeful that future NSW Government decisions around education will be made only after genuine community consultation, as championed by Roy Butler MP, Member for Barwon, through his successful Regional Community Consultation Bill 2020 (June 2024).

In early June, State Council travelled to Sydney for our annual deputation. Over several busy days, all council members engaged in a wide range of meetings, including a full day dedicated to discussions with politicians at Parliament House. Deputation continues to be an invaluable opportunity to meet with as many representatives as possible, enabling us to advocate directly for conference motions. These meetings are crucial for progressing our priorities and ensuring our concerns are clearly communicated to influential stakeholders.

In addition, Libby McPhee, Britt Anderson, and I attended the Federal Conference in Adelaide, where the South Australian State Council hosted an excellent event. Over two days, we engaged in robust debate and heard from inspiring guest speakers.

One key outcome from the conference was the decision to advocate for a home tutor allowance, now referred to as Remuneration for the Isolated Classroom Supervisor (RICS). A universal name across all states and federal levels will help streamline communication and advocacy efforts.

The conference addressed 71 motions, 19 supplementary motions, and several floor motions. It was a well-attended and productive event, and I extend my sincere thanks to all NSW branches that attended and contributed to the discussions.

In September, the Executive returned to Sydney for follow-up meetings arising from our June deputation. During this visit, we were able to reconnect with many of the same politicians, as well as meet with others who were unavailable earlier in the year.

We were particularly fortunate to secure meetings with Mr Murat Dizdar, Secretary of the NSW Department of Education. These discussions were highly constructive and continue to deliver meaningful outcomes for ICPA-NSW members.





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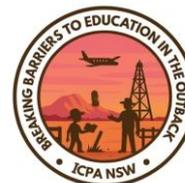
ICPA-NSW meets with the NSW Department of Education every three months to share updates and raise issues affecting rural and remote students. These regular meetings help maintain advocacy momentum, provide timely feedback from families, and ensure we stay informed about policy developments. The Department shares relevant updates, while we highlight emerging challenges and priorities. However, a substantial portion of our work will continue to focus on the state government, as it remains the major public provider of education. It is essential that ICPA-NSW ensures the government delivers what is needed to optimise educational opportunities for regional and remote students. We are fortunate to work with dedicated people across the Departments involved in rural and remote education and school travel—individuals who consistently make themselves available whenever issues arise.

We also recognise that these staff are often limited by budgets and competing priorities. Even so, I remain confident that the departmental representatives we work closely with genuinely prioritise the interests of our children and collaborate with ICPA wherever possible to achieve better outcomes and generally believe that the Department want to deliver a great public education system throughout NSW.

On 23 October, ICPA-NSW proudly participated in the Premier’s Rural, Remote and Regional Advisory Council meeting, convened by Premier Chris Minns. This Council was established to provide direct advice to the Premier and Ministers on issues affecting rural, remote, and regional communities, and being invited to join is an honour. The participants were personally selected by the Premier, making ICPA-NSW’s inclusion a truly outstanding achievement and a powerful recognition of our organisation’s influence, credibility, and longstanding commitment to equitable education for geographically isolated students. Our place on this Council ensures that the voices of rural families are heard at the highest levels of government. Meeting twice annually, the Council provides a significant platform for us to contribute insights grounded in real lived experience—an opportunity that reinforces the vital role ICPA-NSW plays in shaping policy for rural and remote education.

ICPA-NSW continues to advocate strongly for rural and remote families, and we rely heavily on our branches to keep us informed about the issues affecting your communities. Your insights shape our priorities and ensure we address the real challenges faced across the state.

After conference, we welcomed Beth Rosser, Michelle Crossley and Bronwyn Tofaeono to State Council—Michelle as Membership Officer, Beth as Lone Members Officer and Bronwyn as Specific Student Needs. They’ve been embraced wholeheartedly and have hit the ground running. We’re grateful for their enthusiasm, energy, and commitment to this great organisation.





Education



We extend our thanks to Claire Butler, Georgina Luckraft, and facilitator Kalen Sowter for securing FRRR funding to deliver workshops in remote communities—and for ensuring their successful delivery. We are also incredibly grateful to all branches who helped organise these events; your support enabled local participation and strengthened community connection. I had the pleasure of attending the workshop in Bourke and was thoroughly impressed by the session’s quality and by the positive feedback from attendees. Initiatives like these are vital in supporting families living in rural and remote areas.

One of the most valuable aspects of our annual conference is the involvement of the Department and other key stakeholders. Their participation facilitates constructive dialogue and joint problem-solving to improve educational opportunities for students in rural and remote areas.

During our December meeting with the Department, we highlighted the importance of having a department representative attend the full two days of the upcoming conference. Their presence enables branches to present motions directly to key decisionmakers and receive timely feedback, strengthening collaboration and ensuring the perspectives of rural and remote families are fully considered. I would like to thank Dean White for committing his time to be here for both days despite a demanding schedule. We hope the discussions will be as valuable for him as his participation is for our members.

Beginning in Term 1, 2026, the NSW Department of Education has confirmed that very remote schools—Weilmoringle, Enngonia, Louth, Wanaaring, Tibooburra, White Cliffs, and Clare Public Schools—will each receive a fulltime second teacher. This achievement is the result of extensive collaboration between ICPA-NSW, the Department, and the Secretary for Education. When discussions began in June 2025, the proposal was to convert existing 0.4 FTE positions into permanent roles. However, ICPA-NSW strongly advocated that such small fractional positions would remain unfillable due to vast distances and limited additional work opportunities. By our October Mini deputation on, the Department had agreed to convert these roles into fulltime permanent positions. This is a significant win for these schools, ensuring continuity of learning, reducing closure risks during staff absences, and providing vital support for teaching principals in isolated communities. Moving forward, this presents an excellent opportunity for early career teachers to experience life and work in remote and very remote TP1 schools while also gaining a pathway to permanency within the Department. When teachers spend time in these communities, they often find the work deeply rewarding and choose to remain in the area. ICPA-NSW thanks the Secretary of The NSW Department





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of Education and the Executive Director, Regional, Rural, Remote and Unique Settings Directorate for listening to our concerns and adjusting these roles accordingly.

Congratulations to Clare Public School on their 40th anniversary—it looked like a wonderful celebration with many great activities. These small schools are essential to our isolated communities, and we hope all our small schools enjoy many more milestones ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Broken Hill convenors and their team. Taking on the responsibility of hosting the 2026 Annual Conference is no small undertaking—you have embraced it with dedication, vision, and professionalism. The countless hours of planning, coordination, and behind-the-scenes effort that go into delivering a conference, and the Broken Hill Branch has risen to the challenge with outstanding commitment.

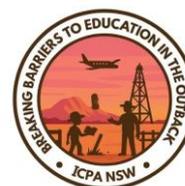
On behalf of ICPA-NSW and everyone gathered here today, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the entire Broken Hill team. Their hard work is an indication to the strength, capability, and community spirit of our branches. This is an achievement the whole region can be incredibly proud of.

Broken Hill has such a rich and unique history, and we hope we will have the chance to experience some of it over the coming days.

This year, we have seen Gabie LeLievre step down from Council. Gabie has been an exceptionally hardworking councillor who, during her time with us, developed the new webpage—an achievement that was no small undertaking. She later took on the role of Assistant Secretary, which she fulfilled tirelessly, contributing countless hours to ICPA. We will certainly miss Gabie and hope she enjoys some well-earned time for herself.

Libby McPhee will be stepping down as Secretary, and her departure marks the end of an extraordinary chapter. Her commitment and drive have gone far beyond what the role demands, with countless hours poured into ensuring everything runs seamlessly. Libby has singlehandedly coordinated every deputation—a monumental achievement that speaks volumes about her determination and skill. Her professionalism has set an exceptional standard, and ICPA-NSW offers its deepest thanks for the remarkable contribution she has made during her time as Secretary.

To our ICPA State Councillors—thank you. Your hard work, your generosity of time, and your deep commitment to rural and remote education make this team something truly special. You give far more than is ever asked, and you do it with heart, humour, and determination. It



*PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT*



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is your spirit that keeps ICPA moving, growing, and making a difference. I am sincerely grateful to be a part of this wonderful organisation.

Thank you to everyone for your ongoing commitment to rural and remote education. Your dedication truly makes a difference, and ICPA-NSW looks forward to working with all our members in the year ahead.

**Annabel Strachan**  
**President**



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## Travel Report

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**Madam President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. I present the Travel Portfolio Report for 2025.**

ICPA-NSW State Council has been working with Transport for NSW (TfNSW) on a variety of issues on behalf of our members. These include bus services from Yanco to Broken Hill, the School Student Transport Scheme and transport for interstate students to access boarding education in NSW.

TfNSW has provided the following updates on these issues.

NSW TrainLink ran a bus service from Yanco to Broken Hill and return for boarders at Yanco Agricultural High School on the June Long Weekend last year, NSW TrainLink also had plans to operate a service for the end of Term 2, beginning of Term 3, if required. The trial service did not operate for the remainder of 2025 due to low passenger numbers and limited interest. TfNSW will work with Yanco in 2026 to determine if it will be offered again or not.

The School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS) coach services are showing a high rate of ‘failure to show,’ raising significant concerns about the viability of continuing these services in certain regions. Of particular concern are figures indicating that only 11 per cent of students are actually boarding their SSTS service. SSTS coaches are contracted to supplement NSW TrainLink’s timetabled train and coach services. SSTS coaches operate when there is an anticipated increase in patronage that will impact the ability for the general public to travel. However, with up to 89 per cent of students failing to board, it is increasingly difficult to justify the continued provision of these supplementary services. NSW TrainLink is working closely with schools to reduce the high rate of ‘failure to show’ and last-minute cancellations. Historically, schools used an ‘opt-out’ booking process, where all students were automatically booked on services unless parents cancelled. Many parents did not cancel when transport was not required, leading to significant inefficiencies. To address this, NSW TrainLink is now requesting schools to adopt an ‘opt-in’ process, ensuring students are only booked on services when parents specifically request transport. This change aims to improve accuracy, reduce unnecessary costs, and maintain the viability of these supplementary services.

Transport for NSW has worked with NSW TrainLink to introduce a process that allows students who do not reside in NSW but attend Yanco Agricultural High School to book a paid seat at a discounted rate on an existing service. Under this process, parents will complete a



Education



Student Endorsement Form provided by Transport for NSW and submit it to the school for endorsement. Once endorsed, the form will be sent to NSW TrainLink, who will manage the booking and provide parents with confirmation and a secure payment link. NSW TrainLink has advised that the first travel movement under this arrangement will be offered for mid-Term 1, when Yanco students are scheduled to travel in March 2026. Parents of interstate students attending Yanco who wish to use this service to travel to Deniliquin should contact the school for further information. Note: This process will be fully managed by NSW TrainLink

During the year there were questions asked if Lord Howe Island students who are enrolled at Camden Haven High School, (about 30 kms south of Port Macquarie) as mini school students were eligible for the flight subsidy, yes, they are. Once approved, parents can claim the subsidy for travel between the student's home and the mini school location. This process is consistent with that used by students currently enrolled with E-Calrossy at Tamworth.

To ensure applications are processed correctly, it is important that parents:

Select Camden Haven High School – Distance Education as the school on the application form.

Enter the student type as 'mini school'.

This will help avoid applications being incorrectly rejected.

At the end of each semester, Camden Haven High School will confirm the number of trips each student made between home and the mini school location. The subsidy payment will then be calculated and issued based on the information provided by the school.

**David Butler**  
**Travel Portfolio Leader**





THE BOARDING SCHOOL COLLECTIVE

## Travel Portfolio Motions

### **A 1. Bourke Branch**

*“That ICPA - NSW request the Minister for Roads and Regional Transport, Transport for NSW (TfNSW), in consultation with the NSW Department of Education, reinstate reliable and direct School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS) bus services for boarding students.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Boarding students residing in Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett, and attending schools in Tamworth and Armidale, no longer have consistent access to a direct SSTS bus service. The former service provided a direct journey of approximately 570 kilometres, completed in around seven hours. Over the past two years, the reliability and availability of this service has significantly declined.

Families are now offered an alternative travel arrangement involving a NSW TrainLink bus from Bourke to Dubbo via Brewarrina, followed by a transfer in Dubbo to an SSTS bus travelling to Tamworth via Coonabarabran and Narrabri. This transfer does not allow adequate time for students to access basic amenities, including the purchase of meals. The revised route adds more than 300 kilometres and an additional four hours of travel time to the journey. As a result, the total travel time from home to school in Tamworth is now approximately twelve hours, more than double the travel time required by private vehicle. These extended travel times are physically exhausting for students, with families reporting that recovery can take up to three days, impacting student wellbeing, readiness to learn, and overall boarding experience.

The NSW TrainLink bus service operating between Bourke and Dubbo is considered wholly unsuitable for unaccompanied boarding students. Branch members have raised significant concerns regarding student safety during this journey, including exposure to inappropriate and distressing behaviour by other passengers.

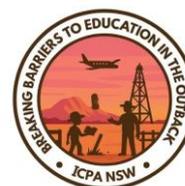
Reports from families indicate that during these journeys students have been exposed to antisocial and unsafe behaviours such as substance misuse, incidents of family violence, and inappropriate public conduct. Such environments are not appropriate for school aged students travelling alone and present an unacceptable risk to their wellbeing.

Due to these safety concerns, branch members have advised that they will no longer permit their children to travel on the Bourke to Dubbo TrainLink service. Information provided to the branch indicates that such behaviours are not isolated incidents but are commonly experienced on this route. These further underscores the need for the reinstatement of a safe, reliable and direct SSTS bus service specifically designed for school students.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**



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Education



## A 2. Brewarrina Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests The Minister for Roads and Regional Transport and Transport for NSW to reinstate the original bus route from Bourke through Walgett to Tamworth, in order to reduce travel time.”*

### **Explanation:**

Boarding school children from Bourke and surrounding towns rely heavily on bus services to reach Tamworth, a major regional education hub.

The current altered bus route runs Bourke → Brewarrina → Coolabah → Dubbo → Coonamble → Tamworth, taking 12 hours.

This long journey is exhausting for children, especially at the start and end of school terms when they are already managing heavy bags and emotional transitions.

The old route needs to be reinstated Bourke → Walgett → Tamworth bus service.

Travel time would be reduced to 8 hours, saving 4 hours compared to the current route.

This direct connection avoids unnecessary detours and provides a smoother journey.

Shorter travel means children arrive at school less tired and more prepared for learning.

It also means less time on the road reduces risks associated with long-distance travel and improves overall wellbeing.

Faster travel allows children to spend more time at home during breaks, strengthening family ties. Less time spent traveling is an extremely important factor that must not be dismissed as the impact on the wellbeing of both the child and their families is significant.

A direct route ensures timely arrival for school commitments, exams, and term start dates.

Restoring the route ensures Walgett students are not disadvantaged compared to peers in other towns.

Reinstating the Bourke–Walgett–Tamworth bus route is not just about efficiency—it directly supports the health, safety, and educational success of boarding school children. By reducing travel time from 12 hours to 8 hours, this service would make a significant difference in their lives and provide fairer access to regional education opportunities.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**



### A 3. Hay Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW advocate to the Minister for Roads and Regional Transport and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) for access to free transport to school for students in rural and remote towns that attend the local school, where there is no other public transport available.”*

#### **Explanation:**

NSW Transport sets minimum distances from schools for students to access free transport to school, depending on their age, where alternative transport such as trains, trams or taxis is not available. Year 3 – 6 students must reside further than 1.6 km straight line or 2.3km walking distance from school and year 7-12, 2km straight line or 2.9km walking to access transport assistance.

Families living within the specified radius requiring their children to travel to school on the bus need to purchase annual school bus passes without any assistance (currently in Hay it is \$100 per child per year). This can be prohibitive, particularly for those with multiple school-age children.

Extreme weather in rural and remote areas, particularly in summer and winter with very high and very low temperatures respectively, can make walking or riding to school very uncomfortable, particularly for younger children. Not all families are able to drop and pick up children due to working or other commitments, but they need to know that their children are safely getting to and from school if they have already left the home.

Providing a reliable transport option for students would improve school attendance and also alleviate pressures on families, knowing that their children are safe enroute to school.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### A 4. Wentworth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW request Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads be informed by the impact on the economic productivity and sustainability of small towns when deciding to reinstate a bus route.”*

#### **Explanation:**

The Wentworth area comprises several small schools and townships that would benefit significantly from the reinstatement of bus routes. Unfortunately, on multiple occasions when patronage has reached the required threshold, communities have been advised that the criteria have changed.



Education



Transport for NSW needs to recognise the fundamental differences between bus services in remote locations and those operating in more densely populated areas. In remote communities, the broader economic and social costs can far exceed the operational cost of providing a bus service.

The absence of reliable transport directly affects individuals' ability to participate in the workforce, students' capacity to remain living at home while attending high school, younger siblings' access to education, and overall enrolment numbers at local primary schools, which in turn impacts the sustainability of small towns.

Removing a family's access to education has consequences that extend well beyond the individual student.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

#### **A 5. Bourke Branch**

*"That ICPA-NSW advocate to Transport for NSW the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads the New South Wales and Queensland cross-border Commissioners to consider, case by case, School Drive Subsidy applications for families residing near a border, whose nearest school is situated in NSW."*

#### **Explanation:**

A member resides 7km from the NSW/Queensland border. Although their property title is registered in Queensland, their postal address, mailbox, nearest township, and nearest NSW school are all in NSW. This family's children have attended boarding school in Dubbo because the family home is approximately 236 km (almost a three-hour drive) from the nearest NSW school. There is no available public transport.

The family has been deemed ineligible for the NSW School Drive Subsidy solely because the Lot and DP of their residence lie within Queensland, despite their clear connection and service alignment to New South Wales. Queensland authorities will only provide support from the home to the state border, leaving the family without adequate assistance for educational travel.

This motion seeks for ICPA-NSW to advocate for an individual case or policy-based solution enabling families in cross border situations to access travel assistance in line with their functional NSW schooling and community ties.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**



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## Distance Education Report

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**Madam President, distinguished guests, fellow State Councillors, members, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to present the Distance Education Report for ICPA-NSW for the 2025 year.**

Firstly, I would like to thank the Broken Hill Branch for hosting the 2026 Conference.

Last year, we were excited about the review into Distance Education, which stemmed from a motion raised at the Bourke Conference. Following the Conference, the findings were published, resulting in twelve recommendations:

Recommendation 1: The Department should simplify and streamline distance education enrolment policies and procedures to enhance equitable access for all students.

Recommendation 2: The Department should standardise distance education enrolment process, including alignment of enrolment application timeframes from government and non-government schools.

Recommendation 3: The Department should implement data systems to:

- enable provision-wide and system-level data monitoring of student outcomes
- ensure they are fit-for-purpose for distance education schools and improve data quality.

Recommendation 4: The Department should define and support provision-wide consistent, flexible virtual education models of delivery which focus on quality, evidence-informed online teaching and learning practices.

Recommendation 5: The Department should update policy to support equitable student access to courses in the NSW curriculum, regardless of where they live or their circumstances.

Recommendation 6: The Department should address the following distance education operational matters that support student wellbeing:

- defining and monitoring student attendance
- management and reporting of disengaged students



Education



- work, health and safety implications for in-person delivery.

Recommendation 7: The Department should work towards future staffing models which enable:

- more accessible and equitable curriculum offerings for students across NSW
- a flexible virtual education workforce focused on quality, evidence-informed online teaching and learning
- an ongoing focus on staff wellbeing and distance education as a career pathway and
- professional learning specific to the distance education environment.

Recommendation 8: The Department should:

- establish a function which brings together all 11 distance education schools and Aurora College under common leadership
- develop a consultation plan for the implementation of recommendations from the review report.

Recommendation 9: The Department should leverage and support the development of online curriculum resources by distance education schools.

Recommendation 10: The Department should implement measures which address the challenges of reporting enrolments for funding purposes.

Recommendation 11: The Department should implement funding and delivery model options for distance education aligned with delivering access to an equitable curriculum offering across NSW.

Recommendation 12: The Department should implement consistent learning management and student management systems for use across the provision.

Since the announcement of the review, ICPA-NSW has been involved in consultations with the NSW Department of Education regarding several recommendations, including the review





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of distance education enrolment procedures, attendance monitoring, and technology in distance education classrooms.

We are pleased that upgrades to the School of the Air (SOTA) Broken Hill studios have now been completed, resulting in an increase in the number of satellite lessons students receive each day. Unfortunately, the SOTA playground has still not been completed; however, some upgrades have commenced.

ICPA-NSW has also communicated concerns to the NSW Department of Education regarding the limited play space for SOTA students. Currently, students only have access to a cemented area before and after school, and access to the adjacent oval requires leaving school grounds, which is neither ideal nor practical. Additionally, there is no permanent shade or sun protection in place, of particular concern given the high temperatures experienced in Broken Hill.

The Department has been working with the Principals of both SOTA and Broken Hill North Public School. The proposed plan includes:

Installing a set of double gates to allow safe access for SOTA students to the Broken Hill North Public-School oval.

Installing an appropriately sized shaded area within the oval, following consultation with the Principals regarding size and placement.

Following Conference, we received concerns from members regarding the shift of the Help Desk to a centralised ITD model. We raised these concerns with the Department of Education and were advised that the change is intended to uplift service levels and ensure broader ITD awareness of SOTA’s needs, rather than relying on a small number of individuals.

The following changes have occurred:

**Ticketing and Support Requests:** All tickets must now be logged through EdConnect, the Department’s single gateway to the helpdesk system. This allows consistent capture, measurement, and monitoring of performance. A SOTA-specific form within EdConnect Online is being implemented to streamline requests and improve response times. For critical incidents, schools may still contact team members directly, with the requirement that a ticket is raised for tracking and follow-up.

**On-Site & Field Support:** The on-site field service teams will be augmented by the broader regional field services team (Dubbo & Broken Hill) to balance workloads and ensure more





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widespread knowledge across a larger team, rather than just four members. Scheduled visits will remain in place to provide direct in-person support when required.

Service Level Commitments: Expected response times will be aligned with ITD's broader service framework to ensure timely resolutions. Remote support will be enhanced to provide quicker fixes where possible, reducing wait times for on-site interventions.

Support Escalation Process: If an issue remains unresolved within the designated timeframe, there will be clear escalation pathways to ensure rapid intervention where needed.

Comparative Improvements: Under the previous model, support was dependent on a small team with limited reach. The new approach ensures a structured and consistent level of service with a broader knowledge base and improved response times.

Following further discussions with the Department, we were advised that tickets raised by Geographically Isolated (GI) students are automatically prioritised based on user details and reviewed by a dedicated assignment group. Additional information includes:

GI student tickets can be raised with the EdConnect – Distance and Rural Technology (DART) Support team

Phone: 1300 32 32 32 (Option 5)

For School of the Air families, two dedicated support channels are available:

Phone: 1800 338 737

Email: [homesteadsupport@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:homesteadsupport@det.nsw.edu.au)

Tickets lodged via EdConnect for School of the Air families are prioritised through the site description "School of the Air Home Supervisor".

As we know, distance education relies heavily on technology, and we have continued to advocate for up-to-date and reliable technology in home classrooms. While some issues remain, the Department of Education has provided laptops to families experiencing difficulties, and some families are trialling Starlink services.

Following Conference, ICPA-NSW conducted a survey, with key findings including:





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- 92% of distance education families rely on personal internet services to deliver schooling.
- 59% rate Department-supplied NBN as unsatisfactory, with 0% rating it as “amazing”.
- 83% of families using personal internet rely on Starlink.
- 63% of students experienced access issues to online lessons in Term 1, 2025.
- 58% of students experience stress due to technology disruptions.
- 59% of families spend more than one hour per week troubleshooting Department-supplied NBN.
- 43% spend more than one hour per week dealing with Microsoft Teams issues.
- 21% of families do not yet have Department-supplied NBN due to installation delays.
- 97% believe their child would benefit from Wi-Fi and a portable learning device.
- 54% spend more than \$400 per year, and 37% more than \$600 per year, on additional technology.
- 76% would prefer to use their own internet if a subsidy were provided.

ICPA (Aust) has continued to advocate strongly for remuneration for home supervisors educating geographically isolated students through distance education, adopting the term Remuneration for the Isolated Classroom Supervisor (RICS). Last year, all states and ICPA (Aust) were invited to a Round Table with the Hon. Fiona Nash to discuss this further.

Throughout the year, we have received several online enquiries, and I encourage members to continue reaching out with concerns or case studies, as these strengthen our advocacy and amplify our collective voice.

During our Deputation in Sydney, we continued to advocate for geographically isolated distance education students with key stakeholders, where member case studies proved invaluable in supporting our advocacy.

**Laura Stalley & Tegan Barton**  
**Distance Education Portfolio Leaders**





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## Rural Schools and Curriculum Report

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### Federal Council, Members of ICPA, Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Balranald ICPA Branch hosted a wonderful conference at Euston in March 2025. We sincerely thank them for their excellent preparation, which set the foundation for a couple of days of rigorous debate. The resort style venue was fabulous, and I was pleased to see first time delegates feeling comfortable and actively contributing to discussions.

Following the conference, letters were sent to relevant ministers and organisations with whom ICPA-NSW State Council will meet during Deputation Week, beginning on 3 June 2025. This includes Courtney Houssos, Acting Deputy Premier of NSW and Minister for Education and Early Childhood, with whom ICPA-NSW is engaged in ongoing discussions on several issues.

We were particularly fortunate to secure meetings with Mr Murat Dizdar, Secretary of the NSW Department of Education. These discussions were highly constructive and continue to deliver meaningful outcomes for ICPA-NSW members.

Beginning in Term 1, 2026, the NSW Department of Education has confirmed that very remote schools—Weilmoringle, Enngonia, Louth, Wanaaring, Tibooburra, White Cliffs, and Clare Public Schools—will each receive a fulltime second teacher. This achievement is the result of extensive collaboration between ICPANSW, the Department, and the Secretary for Education. When discussions began in June 2025, the proposal was to convert existing 0.4 FTE positions into permanent roles. However, ICPA-NSW strongly advocated that such small fractional positions would remain unfillable due to vast distances and limited additional work opportunities. By our October mini deputation, the Department had agreed to convert these roles into fulltime permanent positions. This is a significant win for these schools, ensuring continuity of learning, reducing closure risks during staff absences, and providing vital support for teaching principals in isolated communities. Moving forward, this presents an excellent opportunity for early career teachers to experience life and work in remote and very remote TP1 schools while also gaining a pathway to permanency within the Department. When teachers spend time in these communities, they often find the work deeply rewarding and choose to remain in the area. ICPA-NSW thanks the Secretary of The NSW Department





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of Education and the Executive Director, Regional, Rural, Remote and Unique Settings Directorate for listening to our concerns and adjusting these roles accordingly.

Another significant outcome from our meeting was progress on the Hay motion regarding the reopening of Booligal and Carrathool Public Schools. Both schools have been in recess, yet there is now substantial community interest in bringing them back into operation. Current enrolment projections indicate 10 children for Carrathool and 8 for Booligal, these figures may have changed as they are from our last conference. In addition, two teachers residing in the Booligal district have expressed interest in local employment, strengthening the case for reopening.

While the preferred outcome is the full reopening of both schools, we also discussed an alternative model, such as establishing a satellite campus linked to Hay Public School. Initially, the review to determine viability was scheduled for the end of 2026. However, after outlining the community impact of delaying potential reopening for yet another year, the Secretary of Education agreed to bring the review forward to Term 1, 2026, with an outcome for both schools to be delivered by Term 2.

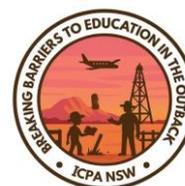
It remains evident that community needs are not always central to the Department of Education’s assessment of small remote schools. Yet for rural and remote areas, these schools are vital to community survival. Without local schooling options, families are discouraged from living in or returning to these regions, placing long term community viability at risk. A one size fits all approach to school provision simply does not work in remote NSW, and school closures have far reaching consequences.

For many children, attending another school in these areas would require daily travel of up to 100 kilometres or more, these trips are often on unsealed roads with wildlife hazards, making this an impractical and exhausting option for young students and their families. These challenges highlight the critical importance of retaining local schooling to support both student wellbeing and the sustainability of isolated communities.

ICPA-NSW will continue to advocate for NSW Remote and very remote TP1 Department of Education (DoE) Primary schools be reclassified to host dually enrolled preschoolers from age 3 and Secondary Distance Education Students. The primary schools would host the above students thus becoming education hubs for their remote locality.

The changes required for this to be effective are listed below:

Preschoolers and secondary Distance Education facilities within the DoE schools would function in a “pop-up, pop-down” arrangement as needed due to volatile populations in remote and very remote NSW.





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The 'line of sight' to DE students no longer be the responsibility of primary school TP1 & TP2. Instead, the DE preschool teacher and DE secondary teacher would industrially be obliged to oversee the Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO) who is working with the child.

SLSO's would have supervision either via the DE principals via zoom, teams or cameras installed in the classroom to allow autonomy from the K-6 classroom.

The DE preschool and secondary students would have dual enrolment with the DE centres and the TP1 or TP2 schools, thus covering the physical liability of the students.

If new buildings are required to achieve a pragmatic solution for catering to the DE students, the DoE would supply transportable buildings for the length of time they are required. An example is the second staff accommodation building at Louth PS which is on wheels and can be transported at any time.

Remote and very remote 3-year-olds are to be included in the priority criteria for preschool, to enable them to achieve their 600 hours before school and address any early intervention strategies required.

Complaints continue to present a significant challenge for our small schools. When concerns are raised regarding a TP1 principal, they are directed to the Director, Educational Leadership (DEL), yet this is where the process appears to stall. One of our local TP1 school's reports that numerous complaints have been lodged, but not a single response has been received from the Director, despite some complaints being more than six months old. Parents and administrative staff feel abandoned by the Department and believe their concerns are not being taken seriously. As a result, two children have already been withdrawn to undertake Distance Education—despite having a school on their doorstep—and three more are expected to follow. This school was expected to begin 2026 with nine enrolments; however, ongoing concerns raised by parents and administrative staff mean that enrolments could fall to just four if two remaining parents withdraw their children. Such a decline poses a serious risk to the viability of any small school and is an unacceptable outcome for the community. These small schools are vital to their communities, and stronger, more transparent complaint handling processes are urgently needed. When students are removed, the viability of the school is threatened—not due to a lack of enrolments, but due to insufficient support from the Director, Educational Leadership. Both principals, staff and families require timely, consistent, and meaningful responses when significant issues arise. Without this support,





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communities risk losing schools that are essential to their long-term sustainability. At present, the only support appears to be directed toward the principal, while families and staff have been left to fend for themselves. This situation is likely to have a detrimental impact on our local community, with lasting consequences.

ICPANSW acknowledges that a formal process exists for managing these complaints; however, when parents feel their concerns are not being heard, they turn to ICPA-NSW for support because they no longer know where else to seek assistance. As leader of the rural school’s portfolio, it is my responsibility to assist our members wherever possible.

The motion from Balranald regarding the removal and shutdown of safe zones and evacuation centres at rural and remote NSW schools was clarified by the Department. They explained that such changes will only occur when a suitable alternative is available. This approach is intended to ensure that schools can reopen as quickly as possible following an emergency.

The B4 Kindy program delivered in small TP1 schools, has not achieved the level of effectiveness anticipated by ICPA-NSW. In one TP1 school, it has been reported that the program is effectively non-existent. Parents have been travelling up to 100 kilometres one way, only to find their children engaged in passive activities such as watching movies or playing video games. Consequently, by the end of last year, no children were attending—not due to an absence of eligible students, but because parents could not justify undertaking extensive travel without any remuneration or support, such as the School Drive Subsidy (SDS).

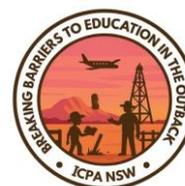
The B4 Kindy program is intended to support the recommended 600 hours of preschool for four-year-old children. However, for this model to operate effectively and provide meaningful early learning outcomes, the following requirement is essential:

The B4 Kindy program must be developed by a qualified preschool teacher, who is also required to undertake regular school visits to ensure correct implementation, assess enrolled children, and provide support to the SLSO to guarantee that each child receives a high-quality preschool education.

Remote and very remote communities remain deeply frustrated by the ongoing lack of access to consistent, high quality preschool education. While it is encouraging that larger centres are now increasingly well supported, this progress has not extended to the three and four-year-olds living in very remote parts of NSW. Despite ICPA-NSW’s sustained advocacy since 2011—now spanning an entire generation—these children continue to miss out on the crucial early learning opportunities that research consistently shows are especially beneficial for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds.



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A consistent handover for newly appointed TP1 principals which includes a structured first term induction program would support a smooth administrative transition, build understanding of multistage classrooms, monitor student progress, and allow for an informed review of existing resources before any new purchases are made. Following discussions with the Department of Education regarding this motion, it has been confirmed that a formal handover process—including a detailed program—should already be in place for all new principals. If this is not occurring in your school, please contact us so we can follow up with the Department and ensure that the required processes are implemented.

For future motions, ICPA-NSW would greatly appreciate branches taking the time to review their existing motions rather than automatically resubmitting them each year. Please ensure that any motion your branch wishes to put forward is still relevant and reflects your current circumstances. If you have received feedback or outcomes from previous motions, we ask that you incorporate this information when drafting a new one.

Our councillors devote considerable time and effort to ensuring that motions are accurately prepared and forwarded to the appropriate Ministers and stakeholders. To support this work, it is essential that ICPA-NSW is provided with clear, current, and evidence-based information. This helps us advocate effectively on your behalf and strengthens the impact of each motion raised.

I want to say a big thank you to the Broken Hill convenors and their team. Taking on the 2026 Annual Conference is a huge job, and you've tackled it with so much dedication, energy, and good spirit. All the planning, organising, and behind the scenes work that goes into pulling a conference together really shows, and the Broken Hill Branch has stepped up with amazing commitment.

Once again, I want to thank my fellow councillors who take time out of their already full schedules to support our ICPA-NSW members and advocate for motions. Your dedication is what achieves our outcomes for our members—your commitment to seeing branch motions through to the right ministers and stakeholders. Your advocacy takes motions to the highest levels. Your persistence ensures that families in isolated communities are heard—often when no one else is listening.

**Annabel Strachan, Laura Stalley and Kirsty Wilson**  
**Rural Schools Portfolio Leaders**



## Rural Schools and Curriculum Motions

### A 6. Brewarrina Branch

*"That ICPA-NSW request the relevant NSW Government Ministers continue to advocate for rural, remote and regional children, no matter how they are schooled, to be able to access lifesaving swimming lessons."*

#### **Explanation:**

The NSW Government rolled out a \$6 million Learn to Swim initiative—targeting communities with low socioeconomic status, multicultural backgrounds, First Nations people, and those in regional areas—which was a welcomed investment. However, significant gaps in its delivery and execution have left many of the very children it aims to support unable to access the program.

Despite appointing fifteen providers to service targeted regions, implementation in the Far West has been particularly problematic. One service provider, designated as the contact for Bourke, Brewarrina, Walgett, and Wilcannia, informed families that sessions in Bourke were already full for late 2025 and early 2026. Upon further inquiry, it became clear that the service provider was only delivering the program to one public school.

This narrow delivery model has caused frustration among families in the Bourke region. The program should have been made available to all primary aged school children regardless of their enrolment status. As a result, a large number of rural and remote primary aged children have missed out on the opportunity to participate in these vital swimming lessons.

Community consultation was notably absent in the rollout of this initiative. An enhanced community engagement strategy would have increased participation to ensure the program reached those most in need. Unfortunately, the program has only reached a very small proportion of the primary aged children in the Bourke area.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### A 7. Brewarrina Branch

*"That ICPA-NSW advocate NSW State Government to provide funding for training swim Instructors within local communities."*

#### **Explanation:**



Education



Primary aged children from rural and remote communities across New South Wales and regardless of what school they attend face significant barriers to accessing qualified swim instructors, which directly affects children's safety, confidence, and participation in aquatic activities. Unlike metropolitan areas, many country towns have limited or no access to accredited instructors, resulting in long waitlists, inconsistent lesson availability, or families having to travel considerable distances for essential water-safety education.

Drowning remains one of the leading causes of accidental death among Australian children, and the risk is heightened in rural areas where waterways such as dams, rivers, and irrigation channels are part of everyday life. Ensuring that children in these communities receive high-quality swimming and water-safety instruction is not a luxury—it is a critical public-safety measure.

However, the cost of training and accrediting new instructors is often prohibitive for small communities, volunteer-run pools, and local councils. Without financial support, many towns simply cannot attract or upskill the instructors needed to deliver reliable programs.

Such funding would:

- Strengthen water-safety outcomes for rural and remote children
- Build local capacity and reduce reliance on external or seasonal instructors
- Support community-run pools and programs to remain viable
- Reduce inequity between metropolitan and regional access to essential life-saving skills
- Encourage local employment and skill development

Investing in instructor training is a proactive, cost-effective strategy that empowers communities and protects children. By lobbying for this funding, ICPA-NSW can help ensure that every child—regardless of what school they attend—has access to high-quality swimming and water-safety education close to home.

## Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### A 8. Louth branch

*“That ICPA-NSW request that TP1 and TP2 schools in remote areas are able to employ cleaners under the school budget to enable local community members to be easily employed.”*

### Explanation:

Currently cleaners are employed through JOSS who travel from Bourke and Cobar. There is a shortage of cleaners in both towns of which the flow on effect is no cleaners being allocated



to Louth Public School. Current staff members are currently filling the void. It is requested that the cleaner role be allocated under the school budget to allow for current staff or other local community members to be easily employed rather than undertaking the JOSS training requirements which are excessive in their physical expectations for the role.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

#### **A 9. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the Homes NSW 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.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

#### **A 10. 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.

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**



Education



### A 11. 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 in very remote schools.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Currently, the rental subsidy is deducted from the rural teacher incentive. The housing provided by NSW DoE in some rural villages are 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 1, People.

#### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### A 12. Louth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests Teaching Housing Authority of NSW to ensure that rental agreements for Principals or Teachers in TP1 and 2 schools align with the NSW School Calendar to ensure housing is consistently available for incoming principals or teachers.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Teaching housing is an incentive provided to rural or remote principals and teachers. Access to housing is essential for a smooth transition into a new role. When a teacher or principal finishes at a TP 1 or 2 school, their lease contract should conclude before the beginning of the next school term so there is time for the residency to be cleaned and the new tenant to move in prior to the start of school.

#### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### A 13. Broken Hill Branch

*“That ICPA NSW advocate to the NSW Department of Education and Teacher Housing Authority of NSW to urgently address the shortage and poor condition of teacher housing in the Far West area, recognising the significant impact this has on teacher recruitment, retention, and educational outcomes for students in isolated and remote communities.”*

#### **Explanation:**



Broken Hill and the surrounding areas are classified as a remote community and continue to experience persistent difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified teachers. A major contributing factor is the severe shortage of suitable teacher housing, coupled with the poor condition of existing Department of Education owned accommodation. Many homes are ageing, inadequately maintained, with inadequate security and not fit for purpose, particularly for teachers relocating with families.

The lack of safe, modern, and affordable housing significantly diminishes the effectiveness of existing rural and remote incentives. High staff turnover and unfilled vacancies disrupt continuity of learning, place additional strain on remaining staff, and negatively impact student wellbeing and educational outcomes.

Outcome Sought:

Improved access to safe, modern, and well-maintained teacher housing in Far West NSW to strengthen teacher recruitment and retention, support workforce stability, and ensure equitable educational opportunities for students in remote NSW communities.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 14. Louth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the School Infrastructure Team - Department of Education to fix and reinstate the use of the pool at the Wanaaring Public School.”*

#### Explanation:

The pool at Wanaaring Public School is currently not in use due to cumulating factors over time. The parents of students at the school cannot access swimming or survival lessons for their children unless they drive a 400km round trip. Previously these were taught at the school as a part of the school’s HPE program as done at many other schools. Given there is no pool or access to lessons within a 200km radius, we request that this asset is repaired and maintained.

- An assessment of the pool has been undertaken, and the local Asset Management office is currently working to rectify the compliance issues and taking the necessary actions to ensure the pool system is fit for use.
- Works at this stage are anticipated to be completed by 30 June 2026.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 15. Louth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests that the Minister for Education and Early Childhood, enable remote and very remote TP1 and TP2 NSW primary schools to become education ‘hubs’, in which students from preschool to year twelve can have practical access to public education.”*



Education



**Explanation:**

The most practical model for preschool and secondary students who are unable to go away to boarding school and/or do not have a suitable home environment in which to access their schooling, is a pop-up pop down model in their local TP1 or TP2.

The populations in these areas are very volatile and thus the pop up and pop down model is the most practical and cost effective.

These are the facts:

It is recommended that 15 hours a week of preschool be available for ALL four-year-olds. And...

Australian children are required by law, to be at school until they are

- at the end of the year in which you reach the age of 17 and 6 months
- when you reach the age of 18
- at any age if you have completed the minimum requirements for graduation from secondary school.

This is rendered impossible in practical terms for some remote students in NSW

The NSW government, through now 3 different governments has had this anomaly pointed out to them for over a decade. LNP and Labour state governments have agreed and even actioned the pop-up pop down preschool model.

We believe the above motion is a practical solution. It is, in fact, the only solution. It has been proven to work in Qld an example being at Julia Creek State School (JCSS). Students are enrolled with Mount Isa School of the Air (MISOTA) through distance education and attend JCSS in a separate room specifically for secondary students. The students are supported by a teacher's aide.

Louth Branch ICPA fervently hopes the present government will effectively implement these pop-up pop down education hubs in remote and very remote NSW for preschool.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**





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**A 16. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education remote and very remote schools’ teaching principals and teachers’ staff incentives, includes financial assistance to move to and away from their position for temporary and non-departmental roles also.”*

**Explanation:**

Louth ICPA believes this ‘bespoke’ incentive would be a significant incentive for staff considering working for any length of time in a remote location. Due to the remoteness of where the schools are located, there is great expense attached to accessing removalist services. This would also assist with residencies being vacated in a timely manner for cleaners and new staff to move in, which has been an issue at some TP 1 and 2 schools.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

**A 17. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW lobby the Director, Educational Leadership (DELS) responsible for remote, very remote TP1 & 2 schools, and DE schools to direct and encourage the principals to organise multiple sports/cultural events/camps run together each school year, in additional to swimming and athletics carnivals.”*

**Explanation:**

Prior to covid, Louth, Wanaaring, Enngonia, Weilmoringle Public Schools and students from Bourke distance education campus – would meet at least three times a year, at any of the school bases hosting different activities for the students. They varied from science camps, art lessons, author talks and sporting days with the host school sourcing coaches, artists, authors and scientists to educate and entertain the children.

These events/camps are essential for students of these small schools who do not have access to these opportunities in their remote settings. In addition to this, it is important for their social wellbeing to interact with other students as many schools have under 10 students.

ICPA would like to see the return of these events into small school planning requirements.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

**A18. Bourke Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education ensure that Connected Communities Directors of Educational Leadership (DELs) are included in regular meetings held between ICPA-NSW and Department of Education representatives.”*





Education



**Explanation:**

Many of our rural and remote areas have Connected Communities Schools but as a body Connected Communities are not present to hear the issues and concerns discussed at conference or in deputations. It would be beneficial to have a representative from Connected Communities leadership attend as part of the regular meetings between Department of Education and ICPA-NSW.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

**A 19. Louth branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW request the Department of Education to leave TP1 and TP2 Principal positions as “acting” for a minimum of 12 months before permanent appointments are made.”*

**Explanation:**

Recruitment of principals and teachers in TP1 and TP2 schools is challenging due to location and the diversity of the roles. At times, whoever applies for the role is granted it due to lack of interest which does not always provide the school with the best outcomes and at times has been very detrimental to the student’s education and the community networks associated with the school.

Prior to permanent appointment we ask that the DEL consult with the school community which includes all staff and all parents. We request that the principal position in these schools remain with the “acting” title for a minimum of 12 months to ensure that the person is the right fit for role and community, which is essential for success in these positions. If after 12 months the person is not deemed to be a suitable candidate for the permanent position, we ask that the role is re-advertised.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

**A 20. 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.”*





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**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.

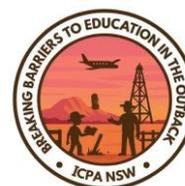
Whilst the teacher is based at a Central School in the district, the Hub and Spoke Program position is shared with three small schools in the area with the Principal of the Central School determining when the Hub and Spoke teacher can be released from that school to attend the other three TP1 & TP2 schools when needed. The base school keeps the teacher if the Hub and Spoke teacher is not booked by the other small schools and is at no charge to them. The small schools have to pay for this position out of their own school budgets. Thus, creating the problem of the small schools having very little access to this position. As far as we understand the Hub and Spoke Program (initially known as Rural Area Relief) was set up to address the lack of relief teachers in rural and remote areas with TP1 and TP2 schools having priority with their bookings. A solution would be that another area of the Dept of Education would manage the Hub & Spoke teacher bookings.

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.

The Dept of Education's response to last year's motion about this issue noted that "The majority of NSW public schools led by teaching principals receive at least two fulltime teaching staff as part of their base staffing entitlement". This is not the case for TP1 schools where they are funding extra teachers from their own school funds.

This position is currently 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 one or two years, therefore it is necessary to ensure that this position is retained for TP1 and TP2 schools. To better attract and retain staff for these positions would be to offer the Hub and Spoke position as a permanent position rather than the current casual position which could also attract more experienced and proficient teachers.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**





Education



### A 21. 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, Routine Planned Maintenance funding is allocated based on a Life Cycle Maintenance model and prioritised through consultation with the Assets Management Unit. While principals of TP1 and TP2 schools are involved in the prioritisation process and can manage works up to \$50,000 with local asset team approval, there remain limitations on how these funds can be spent that restrict the ability to address immediate, practical needs specific to their schools.

For small rural schools, principals are best placed to understand the day-to-day maintenance priorities that directly impact the learning environment, staff morale, and student wellbeing. For example, repairs to staff room blinds or replacement of ceiling fans—classified as ‘new fittings and fixtures’ and currently excluded from Routine Planned Maintenance funding—can significantly improve comfort and functionality, yet schools are unable to allocate their funds toward these improvements.

Granting TP1 and TP2 principals’ greater autonomy over expenditure decisions within Routine Planned Maintenance funding would allow schools to respond flexibly and efficiently to their unique maintenance needs. This approach would ensure that maintenance funds are directed toward projects with the most immediate benefit, improving safety, comfort, and the quality of the learning environment for students in small rural schools.

#### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### A 22. Broken Hill Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW advocate to the NSW Department of Education for amendments to attendance policy to allow public school principals to approve absences caused by local weather and road conditions as explained absences, where access to school is impacted by unsealed or dirt roads.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Students living in rural and remote areas of NSW commonly rely on unsealed or dirt roads to access public schools. Localised weather events, including heavy rainfall, flooding, or road





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damage, can make these roads unsafe or impassable, even when no official weather warnings or transport cancellations are in place.

Under current NSW Department of Education attendance requirements, absences resulting from these local conditions are frequently recorded as unexplained, as they do not meet the defined criteria for an explained absence. This results in rural and remote students and families being disadvantaged for circumstances beyond their control, despite making reasonable and safety-based decisions.

Allowing principals discretion to approve absences based on local weather and road conditions would:

- Recognise the unique access challenges faced by rural and remote public-school students
- Promote equity in attendance reporting across metropolitan, regional, and remote NSW
- Support student safety and wellbeing
- Acknowledge principals’ local knowledge and professional judgement

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 23. Hay Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW continues to advocate for the Booligal and Carrathool Public Schools to be reopened.”*

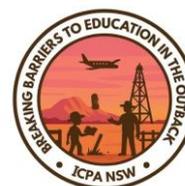
#### Explanation:

ICPA Hay branch would like to thank New South Wales ICPA State Council for their continued advocacy in regard to the reopening of the Booligal and Carrathool public schools.

Booligal is a small village 75 kilometres north of Hay with a population of approximately twenty people, servicing the surrounding pastoral district. The Booligal School opened in 1871 and provided many opportunities for the children of the district. It went into recess in 1999 and reopened in 2003 when enrolment numbers rebuilt. With larger holdings in general and a flood in 2022 which saw families move their children to town, the number of school age children in the district fell and the school again went into recess.

Carrathool is a small town of around 200 residents, according to the 2021 Australia Census. It is located 64 kilometres from Hay and, like Booligal, services the local district, including the Cotton Gin development nearby. It went into recess at the end of term one of 2022 due to declining student numbers.

Hay Branch has undertaken a survey of the local Booligal and Carrathool communities to gain an understanding of potential enrolments for both schools. While Booligal future





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enrolments are currently limited, Carrathool has strong potential enrolments of thirteen plus. We have been made aware that the DoE will be making a decision by the end of term 1 this year as to the likelihood of these schools reopening. If they are not able to be opened as individual, independent campuses then we strongly recommend that a different model be looked at and at a minimum, that community access to these venues be reinstated.

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. Booligal and Carrathool are two of the small villages in which HCS operates and also hosts 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 delay means children, educators and families are missing out on the opportunity to use these venues which would enrich the mobile programs currently being delivered. Booligal Mobile Service has been running at capacity with a waitlist. Both schools meet the regulated requirements and Department approved 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. These facilities could also be made available for other community endeavours, such as adult education (First Aid training etc) and community exercise programmes, further enhancing the wellbeing and strength of these small and isolated communities.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**



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## Allowances Report

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**Madam President, distinguished guests, ICPA members, ladies and gentlemen.**

I am pleased to present the Allowances Portfolio report for 2025.

Since joining State Council at the 2024 State Conference, I have gained a greater understanding of the allowances and subsidies available to rural and remote families. Throughout the year, State Council has raised key allowance-related issues with relevant State Ministers, departments, and organisations on behalf of our members.

Everyone in this room has a connection to rural and remote education, and for many families, this comes with significant additional costs compared to those living in metropolitan areas. Thank you all for making the effort to attend the 2026 State Conference in Broken Hill, and a special thank you to the Broken Hill Branch for hosting us. These conferences are always a valuable opportunity to reconnect, share experiences, and renew our commitment to advocating for rural and remote families.

At the Euston Conference, seven motions were presented under the Allowances Portfolio, all but two were carried. Two were withdrawn. Following the conference, correspondence was sent to the relevant NSW Ministers and departments.

The Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) payment rate and income eligibility threshold are reviewed annually by the department. We continue to seek improvements in this area. A member survey was distributed to better understand current experiences, and this information will support our ongoing advocacy around LAFHA rates and eligibility.

In July, NSW State Council attended the Federal Conference in Adelaide there were 9 motions relating to Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) and, Fringe Benefit tax for remote people. There was strong debate around the rising costs of boarding school and the adequacy of AIC payments.

Many students living in rural and remote Australia do not have access to a local secondary school and must attend boarding school to complete their education. The gap between the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance and actual boarding costs continues to widen, placing increasing pressure on families. ICPA (Aust), supported by 20 key rural organisations, has formally called on the Federal Government to increase AIC support to cover 55 per cent of costs, rather than the current 37 per cent. This open letter to Minister Rishworth is available on the ICPA website.



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Distance Education is delivered within the home, meaning families must fund and organise a supervisor. In many cases, this role is taken on by a family member, often resulting in reduced workforce participation and financial strain. ICPA (Aust) has prepared a fact sheet outlining these challenges, which I encourage members to review.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our ICPA Federal Councillors for their ongoing efforts in advocating for federal allowance issues that directly affect ICPA-NSW members.

The beginning of 2025 saw increases to many state and federal allowances and subsidies, which is encouraging given the current cost-of-living pressures.

DoE NSW are reviewing the LAFHA. There are many motions on the 2026 conference agenda for debate regarding increasing the LAFHA.

ICPA-NSW maintains a comprehensive list of available allowances and subsidies, including eligibility criteria, closing dates, and contact details. This information is published in 'The Top Wire' and is also available by contacting State Council. I encourage all members to review this information, as you may be eligible for support that you were not previously aware of.

When applying for allowances, families are encouraged not to self-assess their eligibility. Instead, provide all required information and allow the formal assessment process to take place — the outcome may be more positive than expected.

It is encouraging to see new allowance motions coming forward from ICPA-NSW branches. As new challenges emerge, member input and case studies remain vital. State Council will continue to progress these issues, advocate on your behalf, and keep members informed of any developments.

Thank you.

**Tegan Barton**

**Allowances Portfolio Leader**



## Allowances Motions

### A 24. Nyngan Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW advocate to the NSW government that they support the addition of a Geographically Isolated student-based loading to the Schooling Resource Standard.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Education funding from the Federal Government to the States is calculated using the School Resource Standard.

<https://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/schooling-resource-standard>

At present there are 4 student-based SRS loadings. The SRS loadings provide additional funding for student priority cohorts and disadvantaged schools. A school's SRS can include up to 4 student-based loadings and 2 school-based loadings.

Loadings are not affected by capacity to contribute.

The 4 student-based loadings are the:

- student with disability loading
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander loading
- socio-educational disadvantage loading
- low-English proficiency loading.

A student may attract funding under more than one loading.

The 2 school-based loadings are for:

- o School size
- o School location.

The Department calculates the loadings for each school each year.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### A 25. Nyngan Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW advocate to the NSW government that they work with the Australian Federal government to support and facilitate a financial Remuneration for Isolated Classroom Supervisors (RICS).”*

#### **Explanation:**

It is imperative that the critical and integral contribution that classroom supervisors make in ensuring equitable access to education for student in remote locations is part of the funding process. Geographically Isolated students should be funded based on the location in which



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they learn, not where their school is located, as is presently the case. When the Australian Federal government identifies Geographically Isolated students as a priority cohort, in the Schooling Resource Standards, and calculates their funding based on their isolated classroom location, this then provides a student-based funding loading.

That funding is then distributed by the Australian Federal government to the NSW government, who must then manage and administrate those funds.

That funding provided to the NSW government will cover the higher costs of supporting Geographically Isolated students at the location in which they learn - travel to contact events, appropriate technology and most importantly Remunerating the Isolated Classroom Supervisor (RICS)

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

#### **A 26. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW support the formation of a Remuneration for Isolated Classroom Supervisor (RICS) to assist geographically isolated families whose only schooling option for their children is Distance Education.”*

#### **Explanation:**

The ICPA has been advocating for many years for an allowance or subsidy to support Geographically Isolated families with the ongoing costs of Distance Education. This has been occurring at State and Federal levels of ICPA. Unfortunately, with little traction and the issue being bounced between state and federal governments.

The introduction of a Remuneration for Isolated Classroom Supervisor would provide critical financial recognition of the essential work performed by home supervisors who deliver education to students enrolled in Schools of Distance Education across Australia. For geographically isolated families, Distance Education is often the only available option for primary and secondary schooling. Under current federal requirements, students enrolled in Distance Education must receive appropriate supervision during their learning. In practice, this responsibility commonly falls to a parent—usually the mother—or a paid home supervisor.

As the Australian Government’s own Distance Education policies note, this supervision may be provided by “an employee or parent,” highlighting that direct support is a mandatory





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component of distance learning. In many cases, this requirement results in a parent needing to forgo paid employment on the property, in the community, or at an outstation, to educate their children. This significantly impacts household income, placing further financial strain on already isolated families. When families do employ a home supervisor, the costs are substantial. Home supervisors are commonly paid between \$50,000 and \$75,000 per year, depending on experience and location. In addition to wages, families are typically responsible for providing accommodation, meals, internet, and other living expenses, which significantly increases the total outlay.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 27. Brewarrina Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW work with boarding schools to encourage and support the creation and expansion of scholarships within secondary schools specifically for geographically isolated children with poor learning outcomes, enabling them to access secondary school education and the tailored support they need to thrive.”*

#### Explanation:

Rural and remote children already face barriers such as limited access to resources, fewer specialist teachers, and geographic isolation. When combined with poor learning outcomes, these challenges compound, leaving many students without the support they need.

Scholarships can help level the playing field by opening doors to schools with specialized programs and resources.

Private schools often have greater capacity to provide individualized learning plans, smaller class sizes, and access to specialist staff (e.g., speech therapists, occupational therapists, special education teachers). Scholarships ensure that children with poor learning outcomes in rural areas are not excluded from these opportunities due to financial constraints.

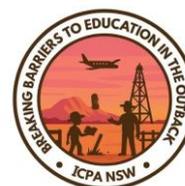
Education should be inclusive, regardless of geography or ability. Scholarships for rural children with poor learning outcomes that demonstrate a commitment to equity, ensuring that every child has the chance to reach their potential. This reduces systemic inequality between urban and rural communities.

Supporting these students’ early leads to better educational outcomes, higher employment prospects, and greater independence in adulthood. Investing in scholarships reduces future costs associated with unemployment, healthcare, and social services. It also strengthens rural communities by empowering young people to contribute meaningfully.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered



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Education

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BROKEN HILL

### A 28. Wentworth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister for Education and NSW Treasury remove the adjusted income test for LAFHA for secondary students.”*

#### Explanation:

There are extremely limited places available in NSW public boarding schools, and it is widely recognised that many students in rural and remote NSW do not live within reasonable access of a public high school. For these families, boarding is not a matter of choice but a necessity. The average cost of boarding in NSW, excluding tuition, is estimated to be between \$20,000 and \$40,000 per year. When tuition is included, the total cost to families commonly exceeds \$50,000 per child, per annum.

Under the proposed 2026 income test, families earning more than \$84,456 are no longer eligible for assistance. It is difficult to understand how a household earning approximately \$90,000 per year could reasonably be considered capable of meeting these costs without support, particularly for families with more than one child requiring boarding. In many cases, this income would not cover the fees for even one child.

Current policy settings risk placing additional pressure on families in rural and remote communities, potentially forcing them to relocate simply to access essential education services. It is critical that NSW policy considers the long-term impact on regional populations and the broader economic and social costs of depopulation in remote areas.

For students who do not have access to a public high school, the income test should be removed to ensure equitable access to education and to provide genuine support to families in rural and remote NSW.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### A 29. 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 and rather assess their eligibility for the Living Away from Home Allowance primarily on distance from the nearest government or non-government boarding school.”*





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**Explanation:**

We call on the NSW Government to urgently address the profound inequity faced by families with secondary-aged students living in the Geographically Isolated Far West of New South Wales.

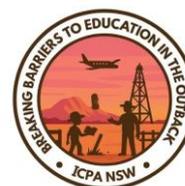
Families in this region experience barriers to secondary education that are unparalleled elsewhere in the state. For most students in the Far West, accessing a public secondary education requires leaving the family home and travelling extraordinary distances to attend boarding school. This places significant financial, logistical and emotional pressure on students and families and undermines the principle of equitable access to public education. The reality is stark. The only three public boarding schools in NSW are located between 751 km and 1,130 km from Broken Hill:

- Hurlstone Agricultural High School – 1,130 km (co-ed)
- Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School – 1,036 km (boys)
- Yanco Agricultural High School – 751 km (co-ed)

There are limited to no public transport options available to access these schools. Many families in the Geographically Isolated Far West also live more than 100 km from Broken Hill, compounding travel costs, isolation, and safety concerns. These distances are not comparable to those faced by families in other parts of NSW.

While distance education is technically available, it is not an equitable substitute for face-to-face secondary schooling. Secondary distance education is highly restrictive and does not provide students with the same academic support, subject choice, extracurricular opportunities, social development, or hands-on learning experiences as in-person education. For many students, it is not an appropriate or effective alternative.

At the heart of this motion is equity. Although families in Geographically Isolated Far West NSW may qualify for the Federally funded Australian Isolated Children Allowance (AIC), this allowance does not reflect the vastly different circumstances faced by families living extreme distances from any secondary schooling option. A family living 50–60 km from a regional centre, also eligible for the AIC, cannot be reasonably compared to a family required to send a child more than 1,000 km away to access secondary education. The challenges faced by families in the Geographically Isolated Far West are far more complex and severe. The NSW State Government currently provides little to no direct financial assistance to families in our region who face significant barriers to accessing a NSW public secondary boarding school. Families receiving the AIC cannot apply for the NSW Government’s Boarding Scholarships for Isolated Students (BSIS).





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Furthermore, eligibility for the NSW Government's Living Away from Home Allowance in 2026 requires a family's adjusted income for the 2024–2025 financial year to be below \$84,456. This income threshold is prohibitive and excludes many families from applying. It must be acknowledged that a family earning above this threshold will experience financial hardship when required to fund boarding school fees, travel, and associated expenses to send their child thousands of kilometres from home to access a secondary education.

We therefore call on the NSW Government to:

1. Exempt families living in Geographically Isolated Far West NSW from the Living Away from Home Allowance Adjusted Income Test.
2. Assess eligibility for the Living Away from Home Allowance primarily on distance from the nearest government or non-government boarding school.

Failure to address this inequity will have long-term consequences for Far West NSW. Families, including essential professionals such as teachers, primary and allied health workers and National Parks and Wildlife staff, will be forced to leave the region due to the lack of affordable access to secondary education.

Equitable access to public education is a fundamental responsibility of government. Families in the Far West should not be disadvantaged simply because of where they live. This motion seeks a fair, practical and targeted solution to ensure that students in geographically isolated Far West NSW are afforded the same educational opportunities as their peers across the state.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

#### **A 30. Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education expediently review the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) and increase the total payment to adequately reflect the actual cost in 2026 of a child who must board to access secondary education”*

#### **Explanation:**

The 2026 payment of \$2 580 is insufficient in covering the additional cost of a child boarding for secondary education. The cost of living has increased boarding school fees. We are all living with the cost-of-living pressures, but it becomes acute when you must send your child hundreds of kilometres away to access secondary education.





THE BOARDING SCHOOL COLLECTIVE

The Australia Institute found it costs families \$4967 a year to send a child to high school, not boarding school just high school.

Imagine having to discuss with your 13-year-old child who has never been able to play team sport, as they have been educated at home through distance education, who desperately wants to play team sport, sorry we can't afford to have you board and play a sport. Or perhaps that musical instrument they now have access to, sorry we can't afford that either. These are not some abstract conversations, but real-life financial decisions families must make in 2026.

By increasing the LAFHA to reflect the actual costs in 2026 this will relieve some of the financial burden to some of the most vulnerable and isolated families therefore allow more equitable access to secondary education.

<https://australiainstitute.org.au/post/australian-high-schools-the-most-expensive-in-the-world-new-research/>

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 31. Wentworth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister for Education and NSW Treasury provide an immediate increase to a minimum of \$5,000 and indexed annually in line with education-specific inflation to the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) for secondary students who do not have access to a public high school.”*

#### Explanation:

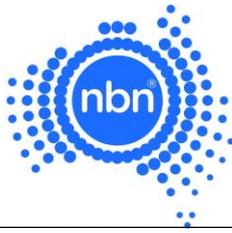
All other states and territories have acknowledged the significant increase in costs associated with accessing secondary education where no local option exists. New South Wales continues to lag in providing meaningful assistance to students from remote communities.

Boarding school fees have continued to rise at a rate exceeding inflation, making access to secondary education increasingly unaffordable for many families. With very limited places available in NSW public boarding schools, families are compelled to seek private boarding options simply to ensure access to education. This is not a matter of choice; these families live considerable distances from the nearest public high school and have no alternative but to send their children away to complete their secondary education.

To adequately support these families, the base payment must be increased.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





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## Specific Student Needs Portfolio Report

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**Madam President, distinguished guests, fellow state councillors, members, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to present the Specific Student Needs Portfolio Report for ICPA-NSW at the 2026 State Conference.**

Having recently stepped into the role of Specific Student Needs Portfolio Leader, I would like to begin by acknowledging Gabie Le Lievre and Myfi Kellahan for the dedication and strong advocacy they have brought to this combined portfolio. Their commitment to representing the needs of families in rural and remote communities has established a solid foundation for this important work.

I look forward to continuing the valuable work that has already been undertaken.

The Specific Student Needs portfolio remains an important area of advocacy for ICPA-NSW. Families in isolated communities continue to experience challenges accessing timely assessments, specialist services and appropriate educational support for students with additional learning and wellbeing needs. Distance, workforce shortages and long waiting times often delay early identification and intervention, placing additional pressure on both families and schools.

A key area of focus continues to be advocating for more accessible school-based platforms for assessment and diagnosis of learning and wellbeing needs for children living in rural and remote NSW. Improved access within school settings would allow for earlier identification and more timely interventions, reducing the need for families to travel long distances to access specialist consultations and services.

The 2025 Review of the Disability Standards for Education further reinforces the importance of this work. The Review highlights that, despite existing legislative protections, students with disability continue to face significant and systemic barriers to equitable participation in education. It identifies ongoing issues with inconsistent implementation of the Standards, limited awareness among educators, and inadequate or unclear consultation and complaints processes.





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The Review also notes gaps in the continuity of reasonable adjustments during external assessments, work placements and transitions between educational settings. These challenges can be particularly pronounced for students living in rural and remote communities, where access to support services and specialist advice may already be limited.

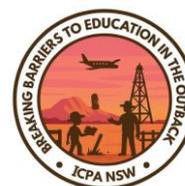
To address these issues, the Review focuses on strengthening the implementation of the Disability Standards for Education, embedding clear and nationally consistent principles for inclusive decision-making, and clarifying the responsibilities of assessment authorities, course developers and placement providers. Overall, the findings highlight the need for clearer guidance, stronger accountability and improved collaboration across the education system to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers.

ICPA-NSW will continue to advocate for equitable access to assessment, early intervention and appropriate support for students with additional needs in rural and remote areas. Ensuring that the intent of the Disability Standards for Education is realised in practice is essential for improving educational outcomes and participation for these students.

As I begin my tenure in this role, I look forward to working with State Council, branch members and relevant stakeholders to continue the important advocacy undertaken in this portfolio. I also look forward to engaging with branches across the state to better understand the challenges faced by families and schools, and to ensure that their experiences inform our ongoing advocacy.

I thank members for their continued support and look forward to contributing to the work of this portfolio in the coming year.

**Bronwyn Tofaeono**  
**Specific Student Needs Portfolio Leader**





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## Specific Student Needs Motions

### **A 32. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Health to ensure that there is antenatal, postnatal and infant early years support services available to rural and remote parents.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Rural and remote parents need accessible services catering to antenatal, postnatal and early years stages. The development of resources and services for isolated children and parents are needed to ensure equity of access to support, especially in 0-3 years to ensure children start preschool without disadvantage because of where they live.

#### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### **A 33. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the relevant Ministers for Health & Education to enable equitable access for 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 access vital support.

#### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### **A 34. NSW/Vic Lone Members Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW advocates to the Department of Health and the Minister for Health for the age at which children have sole access to their Medicare records to be increased from 14 to 18 years with child consent”*



### **Explanation:**

#### Case Study 1:

Parents of children in rural and regional areas often face significant challenges when their children turn 14, the current age at which they gain sole access to their Medicare records. In one example, a boarding family struggled to manage school immunisation records and medical correspondence while their daughter was seriously ill at school, highlighting the practical difficulties of remote management. The legal requirement for a 14-year-old to have total authority over their medical needs can create safety and logistical issues, as teenagers are generally not developmentally ready to make complex health decisions independently. Increasing the age of sole access to 16 would better align with developmental readiness and allow parents to support their children in managing health needs, particularly for rural families who often must coordinate care from a distance.

#### Case Study 2:

Even when children are home from boarding school, the current system creates barriers for parents. For example, a parent could not access their son's immunisation details after he injured his hand on rusty wire during school holidays. The parent was not permitted to speak directly to Medicare, and the child had to set himself up in my Gov and request permissions — despite the parent being responsible for care. The parent was also unaware that the Medicare access age was 14, highlighting a systemic communication failure.

### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

#### **A 35. Broken Hill Branch**

*“That ICPA–NSW requests the NSW Department of Education for formal recognition and permission for appropriately qualified school counsellors and school psychologists to diagnose Specific Learning Disorders (SLDs) within the school setting, where this aligns with their professional qualifications and scope of practice. “*

### **Explanation:**

Families in rural, remote and regional NSW face ongoing barriers to accessing timely psychological assessments for Specific Learning Disorders and other diagnoses. Limited local services, long waitlists, and the significant costs involved including assessment fees, travel, accommodation, fuel and flights. These place additional strain on families already managing geographic isolation.

School counsellors and school psychologists hold postgraduate qualifications and are trained in administering and interpreting psychological assessment tools used by private practitioners



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to diagnose Specific Learning Disorders. However, current restrictions prevent them from formally diagnosing SLDs within schools. The School Counselling Service is well placed to do these assessments as they work within the education system, across rural and remote schools, often hold a dual qualification as a teacher/ psychologist and are familiar with the programs and interventions being delivered already within their schools.

Families are frequently required to seek private assessments, far from home at considerable expense, even when equivalent assessments can be completed locally through school-based services. This inequity disproportionately affects students in rural and remote communities and often leads to significant delays in diagnosis, intervention, and access to appropriate educational adjustments. Late diagnosis and lack of timely intervention can have significant flow-on effects impacting the child's academic outcomes, social and emotional wellbeing and increased drop out risk.

Allowing qualified school counsellors and school psychologists to use their full scope of practice supported by consistent training and clear departmental guidelines would:

- Improve equity of access for rural and remote students
- Reduce financial and travel burdens on families
- Enable earlier identification, and more timely evidence-based intervention
- Better utilise existing expertise within the public education system

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 36. Broken Hill Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW seek changes to NSW Department of Education policy to ensure rural and remote public-school students with Specific Learning Disorders receive timely identification, assessment, in-school allied health support, and evidence-based intervention.”*

#### Explanation:

Students in rural and remote NSW already face unique educational challenges due to distance, limited access to specialist staff, and reduced local resources. For students with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD), these challenges are amplified.

Key barriers include:

- Early identification: Teachers in remote schools often have limited professional development in recognising SLD, delaying early intervention.
- Formal assessment: School counsellors and psychologists cannot formally diagnose SLD forcing families to seek diagnosis from external assessment services (often in metropolitan



areas) which can delay or result in no formal diagnosis due to restrictions related to distance, high financial burden and/or availability.

- Allied health access: Schools often lack on-site speech pathologists or other allied health professionals, limiting assessment, diagnosis and intervention.
- Evidence-based intervention: Staff may not have training, resources or staff allocations to deliver proven SLD interventions, reducing their effectiveness.
- Systemic and logistical barriers: Bureaucratic requirements, travel distances, and resource constraints disproportionately affect rural and remote students, widening educational inequities.

Without adequate support and early identification and diagnosis and intervention, students with SLD in remote areas, are at risk of falling further behind academically, experiencing reduced engagement, impacting academic outcomes, social and emotional wellbeing and increased dropout risk.

We ask for measures that:

- Provide professional development for all teachers in early identification of SLD
- Allow more timely and equitable diagnosis by allowing the School Counselling Service to formally diagnose SLD.
- Ensure in-school allied health support, including speech pathology and learning support specialists
- Increase staff training in evidence-based SLD interventions
- Address systemic barriers to equitable support for rural and remote students

## Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### A 37. Louth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW advocate the Department of Education and the Department of Health to provide developmental screening for Distance Education and remote and very remote schools.”*

#### Explanation:

ICPA request the Department of Education and the NSW Health to ensure developmental and learning-needs screening is conducted within schools to enable early identification and intervention. Children in rural and remote communities face significant barriers to early identification and support for developmental, behavioural, and learning needs.

Current wait times for essential assessment and intervention services—such as those provided by Royal Far West—have reached 18 months to 2 years, placing children at risk of starting school without timely or appropriate support. Local preschools, kindergartens, and early-



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years services often lack adequate screening tools, specialist staff, and stable funding to identify and address developmental concerns early.

ICPA-NSW urge the Department of Education and NSW Health to utilise existing services such as the RDFS, to transport specialist services to these already established clinics in remote areas.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 38. Brewarrina Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW advocate to the Minister for Health to ensure that private specialised tutors for children in rural and remote areas with learning disabilities (such as dyslexia and dysgraphia but not limited to these conditions) are subsidised for the cost of extra tuition.”*

#### Explanation:

Private specialised tutors play a crucial role in early intervention for children with dyslexia and dysgraphia but not limited to these conditions, as they provide targeted, research-based strategies that directly address each child’s specific learning needs.

Early support from trained professionals helps children strengthen phonological awareness, reading fluency, handwriting, and written expression before difficulties become more entrenched. Children need 6mths of specialist tutoring or early intervention program before diagnosis can be made.

Children in rural and remote areas are often significantly disadvantaged due to limited access to qualified specialists, fewer school-based resources, and long wait times for assessments and support and costly expense. This lack of availability and expense can delay intervention during the most critical developmental window, widening the learning gap and affecting confidence and long-term academic outcomes. By prioritising access to specialised tutors—particularly for rural communities—children are far better positioned to thrive both academically and emotionally.

Private tuition is expensive, and rural families often face additional financial pressures due to isolation, travel costs, and limited access to services. Subsidising specialised tutors would ensure equity of access, so that children in rural and remote areas are not disadvantaged simply because of where they live. This aligns with the principle of educational fairness, ensuring every child could reach their potential.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered



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## Boarding Schools, Agricultural High Schools and Hostels Report

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**Madam President, distinguished guests, fellow State Councillors, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to present the Boarding Schools, Agricultural High Schools and Hostels Report for 2025.**

In 2025, the NSW Department of Education announced that Farrer Agricultural High School will transition to a co-educational model, with girls expected to enrol from 2028. Members have contacted us regarding this change, and in response we have conducted a survey, with the results to be announced at Conference.

ICPA-NSW has been advocating for the creation of a girls' boarding facility in the north due to the current lack of options for girls. In addition to this a co-ed' boarding facility in the Central West of the state, due to the distance from state run boarding facilities in the Far West. This advocacy focuses on expanding opportunities rather than altering existing facilities at Farrer.

ICPA-NSW also holds a seat on the Boarding Scholarships for Isolated Students (BSIS) Selection Committee. These scholarships are available to students who do not qualify for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) and who attend one of the state-based agricultural boarding schools in NSW — Farrer, Hurlstone and Yanco. We thank the Department of Education and the Principals of these schools for providing ICPA-NSW with a voice in the allocation of these scholarships. We encourage members to apply if they meet the eligibility criteria.

We would also like to remind members that if their child is not accepted into one of the state-based agricultural boarding schools in Year 7, they should continue to apply in subsequent years, as places do become available.

Other issues raised with our key stakeholders include the introduction of a boarding facility at one of the designated NSW public sports high schools to provide rural and remote students with an affordable opportunity to explore Olympic and elite sporting pathways, ensuring equitable access to high-performance sporting opportunities.

Last year, a motion was raised regarding the establishment of a public agricultural boarding facility at the Dhurringile Prison site. The Victorian Department of Corrections has since confirmed that the Dhurringile site has become redundant due to changes in the management of low-security inmates across Victoria. The property is now undergoing a formal process of



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decommissioning and assessment for potential repurposing for other government use or future sale.

The Victorian Department of Education and the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) are aware of this process and are working with the Victorian Government to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of young Victorians. It was noted that:

Funding for new schools or education facilities is considered through the annual State Budget process.

Funding decisions are based on demographic data, enrolment projections and statewide infrastructure priorities, including specialist education needs.

Any property considered for reuse as an education site must undergo significant modification to meet strict student safety requirements set by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

The Government has assured that all potential public uses and private investment opportunities for the Dhurringile site are being assessed through a formal, staged process.

At the Euston Conference, discussions took place regarding the closure of Allison House in Broken Hill at the end of Term 1, 2024. Following this, the committee developed and distributed a questionnaire across far-west NSW to families on pastoral properties and in small communities including Tibooburra, Milparinka, White Cliffs, Packsaddle and Pooncarie, among others.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather definitive data on the ongoing need for the boarding house and its potential financial viability and sustainability. Information was collected on the number of children, their current ages and school years, the years in which families would be interested in boarding, and the length of time they would require accommodation while attending public high schools in Broken Hill. Families were also asked whether they would support an increase in fees per term, above the level of government assistance received by many isolated children, to ensure continuity of secondary education.

After careful consideration of the results, particularly the age profile of future students, the committee made the decision to explore reopening Allison House for boarders at the commencement of the 2027 school year.





THE BOARDING SCHOOL COLLECTIVE

This year, we were honoured to be invited to present information about ICPA-NSW and how we support our members at the AISNSW Boarding Network Meeting, held online. This provided a valuable opportunity to engage with the broader boarding community across NSW. Thank you to AISNSW for the invitation.

We also extend our thanks to Richard and the team at ABSA for your ongoing support and guidance. Your work within the boarding sector and your depth of knowledge are a significant asset.

Several Councillors attended Boarding Schools Expos across various locations, providing valuable opportunities to connect with Heads of Boarding, Boarding Supervisors and Enrolments Managers. Thank you to Amanda and her team for their continued support. For members with children currently boarding, preparing to board, or considering the boarding journey, we encourage you to join The Boarding School Collective on Facebook, which offers excellent resources and podcasts.

The 2026 Boarding School Expos will be held at:

- Dubbo – 15–16 May
- Wagga Wagga – 29–30 May
- Goondiwindi pop-up – 22 July
- Moree pop-up – 23 July
- Tamworth – 24–25 July

Following Conference, we reached out to boarding schools across NSW, the ACT and Victoria to confirm their membership status. Memberships can sometimes lapse when Heads of Boarding change roles, and we are working to re-engage those schools. We encourage boarding schools to notify us of any staffing changes.

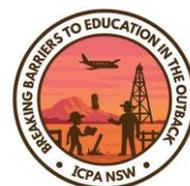
Federal Council requested data on the average cost of boarding in NSW to support advocacy for an increase to the AIC. As ICPA-NSW covers NSW, the ACT and Victoria, we collected the following information where available:

NSW (excluding public boarding): \$31,623.37

NSW (including public boarding): \$30,216.76

ACT: \$35,290.00

Victoria: \$32,216.23





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Note: The boarding fee listed represents the highest fee charged, as costs may vary across Year 7–12 levels at some schools. This information has been compiled from publicly available school website data and is accurate to the best of our knowledge. As data was manually collected, minor human errors may exist.

The information has been gathered for ICPA-NSW advocacy purposes to support our representation of rural and remote families.

This year, we also received several online enquiries relating to boarding schools, scholarships and enrolment processes. We encourage members to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Finally, we thank those boarding schools that have attended conference in Broken Hill. We hope you take back valuable insights into the challenges faced by rural and remote boarding students before they arrive at school, as well as an appreciation of their unique way of life.

**Laura Stalley & Britt Anderson**

**Boarding schools, Agricultural High Schools and Hostels Portfolio Leaders**



## Boarding Schools, Agricultural High Schools and Hostels Motions

### A 39. NSW/Vic Lone Members Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW advocates to the Department of Education for Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School to remain a single-sex boys’ school, and for the establishment of a separate all-girls agricultural high school to service northern and central NSW.”*

#### **Explanation:**

##### Case Study:

Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School is the only public selective agricultural day and boarding high school for boys in Australia. Recent community consultation showed low support for co-education from the current and former school community, with the Farrer School Council formally agreeing that Farrer should remain single sex and advocating for equitable boarding options for girls at another site. Historically, similar institutions—such as Yanco and Hurlstone Agricultural High Schools—have been co-educational for decades, yet no dedicated all girls state agricultural boarding school exists to offer choice for families.

#### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### A 40. Bourke Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education rescind its decision to transition Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School to a co-educational model and instead explore alternative options for expanding high quality public boarding opportunities for rural and remote girls and boys without altering the successful long standing single sex structure of Farrer.”*

#### **Explanation:**

On 9 December 2025 was announced that Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School become a co-educational agricultural school.

Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School has, for generations, provided a unique and highly effective single sex boarding environment tailored to the educational, social, and developmental needs of young men from rural and remote NSW. The school’s structure allows boys to learn and grow with fewer social pressures, supported by wellbeing and behavioural programs specifically designed for adolescent boys, and strengthened by a culture of mateship, responsibility, and practical agricultural learning that has been refined over decades. Farrer’s strong reputation for agricultural excellence, its proven boarding program, and its consistent record of producing capable, confident young men make it a vital and irreplaceable option for rural families who rely on it.



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While girls absolutely deserve equitable access to high quality public boarding education, this should be achieved through investment in new or expanded facilities—not by altering the long-standing identity and successful model of Farrer. Maintaining Farrer as a boys’ school preserves choice, continuity, and a proven pathway for rural and remote boys, while the Department can and should explore separate, purpose-built opportunities to meet the needs of rural and remote girls.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 41. Wentworth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister for Education provide more public boarding schools in NSW.”*

#### Explanation:

While we acknowledge and thank the Minister for increasing boarding opportunities for girls through the introduction of boarding at Farrer, there remains a significant shortage of available places for students requiring access to secondary education.

We have previously requested that Olympic Pathway schools be opened as boarding facilities to ensure that talented students from rural and remote areas are afforded the same opportunities as their metropolitan counterparts.

The Minister for Education must now consider further measures to support students in rural and remote communities in accessing their fundamental right to education, while also enabling gifted students to reach their full potential.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 42. NSW/Vic Lone Members Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW advocates to the Department of Education for increased transparency in the selection and placement processes for selective agricultural high schools, including Farrer, Hurlstone and Yanco, to ensure that geographically isolated students are equitably considered for boarding placements.”*



### Explanation:

#### Case Study:

Students from geographically isolated communities face unique barriers in accessing high schools such as Farrer, Hurlstone and Yanco, where limited boarding places and unclear selection processes can disadvantage rural students. Even when considered on academic and sporting merit, isolated students may have fewer opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities due to distance, placing them at a disadvantage compared with their metropolitan peers. For many families, the cost of private school boarding is beyond their means, making access to state high school boarding essential. Clearer, more transparent allocation processes would ensure that students from rural and remote areas are fairly considered.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 43. Bourke Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW request the Department of Education review and amend uniform policies for boarding students during mid-term leave weekends and school holidays, particularly for boarders who are required to travel on public transport in areas with a high risk of harassment or targeting due to wearing school uniform.”*

### Explanation:

Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School boarding students in Years 7–11 are currently required to wear their formal Grey Uniform when leaving the school on SSTS or public transport services, in accordance with the Uniforms for Boarders on Leave policy.

One travel option offered to students includes an SSTS service for part of the journey, followed by public bus travel for the remaining approximately 400-kilometre trip from Dubbo to Bourke. It has been identified that travelling in school uniform places these students at increased risk of being targeted while using public transport and moving through regional centres.

Several other boarding schools in Tamworth, Sydney, Bathurst and Dubbo have amended their uniform policies to allow students to travel in smart casual attire during leave periods, reducing the visibility of boarders and improving student safety and wellbeing.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 44. Broken Hill Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW continues their advocacy to support the opening and ongoing operations of Allison House Student Accommodation in Broken Hill.”*



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**Explanation:**

Allison House Student Accommodation is a private/non-government boarding facility for isolated and remote children to access public secondary education in Broken Hill. It is the only boarding facility in Far West NSW. Allison House is currently closed and looking at reopening so it can provide essential accommodation and pastoral care to isolated students accessing secondary accommodation in Far West NSW.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**



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## Communications Report

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**Madam President, Invited Guests, Federal Council, Fellow State Councillors and Members, it does give me great pleasure to present the Communications report for the 2025 year.**

### 3G

In 2025 we saw a significant shift towards satellite-based communication, which has rapidly become the primary option for many rural and remote families. With the shutdown of 3G, households with no viable alternative were effectively forced to adopt satellite services—often at considerable personal cost. Advocacy for subsidies or reimbursement of this infrastructure remains a key priority of the portfolio.

We are still awaiting a response to our letter following the Hay Branch motion at last year’s conference, seeking feedback on the impact of the 3G shutdown on rural NSW families.

### School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI)

The SSBI has been a highly successful and has been well supported with 30 000 families utilising the initiative which equates to 75 000 people. These families will be supported by the program until 30 June 2028. NSW and Victoria were the two states that had the most take up of the initiative. 28% in Victoria and 23% in New South Wales.

### NBN Sky Muster Plus Premium Plans

These plans offer unlimited data and maybe a solution to your communication world. Please reach out to a retail service provider (RSP) should you be looking for new connection plans.

### Project Kuiper- Low Earth Orbit Satellite (LEO)

NBN Co’s LEO satellite solution, Amazon Leo, is expected to be available from mid-2026. This development should provide additional connectivity pathways for rural and remote customers.

### Digital Divide

ACCAN continues to advocate for a national free public Wi-Fi program to support access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and government programs. While digital exclusion has improved, it remains significant: 20.5% of Australians are excluded or highly excluded, with even higher rates among older Australians (66.3%), First Nations people (40.9%), and public housing residents (45.2%).



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### **Regional Digital Connectivity Program (RDCP)**

This program started in 2019. Only 9% of government funded towers are shared, there are 1400 towers funded by the taxpayers, 1000 sites are Telstra, 260 Optus, 130 TPG, that is why when you have anything other than Telstra in our remote areas you cannot get service. 75% of the towers are single carrier towers, which the Government has funded. If they shared the towers all users would get service in these areas. The reasons for lack of mobile coverage in NSW, MNO (Mobile Network Operators) is that Governments and businesses want to deliver to high population areas where commercial returns are greatest. Rural and remote does not have the customer base to offset high build and operating costs across equipment of multiple MNOs.

NSW has around 68% service across the landmass. There is 6,800kms of road with no mobile coverage, but Regional Services NSW think it is more like 10,000-12,000kms. Telstra says they are covering 99.7% of the mobile network.

Each Telstra/TPG & Optus tower have been offered \$1M to upgrade. West of the Newell highway has very little coverage

### **Telstra's Space X's -Starlink System**

Telstra introduced satellite-to-mobile messaging in partnership with SpaceX, enabling compatible phones to send and receive text messages outside mobile coverage areas. The new Telstra Satellite Messaging product aims to offer improved connectivity for remote customers. Note that JB Hi-Fi-sold mobile phones do not currently support satellite messaging.

### **Telstra's Regional and Remote Helpline**

This dedicated support line—1800 990 853—is available Monday to Friday, 8 am to 7 pm AEDT.

### **Telstra's calling**

Customers may now have noticed a verified blue tick displaying “Telstra” when receiving legitimate calls, helping to reduce confusion with scam callers.

### **New Data Cable**

There is a new data cable of 600mps from Melbourne to Sydney with off shoots into regional communities.





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The Intercity Fibre Network, also known as the Aura Network, is a significant investment by Telstra InfraCo aimed at enhancing Australia's digital infrastructure.

It is connecting major cities and providing access points to regional and remote areas, supporting high-capacity, low-latency connectivity.

- The network is designed to meet the growing demand for data-intensive applications, such as AI and cloud services, enabling businesses to efficiently share and process large amounts of data.
- With speeds of up to 60 to 80 Tbps, it aims to support the next generation of data growth and improve connectivity across Australia.
- The network is expected to create around \$5 billion in economic uplift for regional Australia, contributing to the development of local businesses and services.
- This infrastructure is crucial for Australia's digital future, ensuring reliable and scalable connectivity for various industries and communities.

### Pay Phones

All pay phones now have free Wi-Fi capabilities and battery back up in disaster prone areas.

### Non- Government Digital Inclusion Strategy Advisory Group

ICPA-NSW were delighted to be invited to be part of the Non-Government Digital Inclusion Strategy Advisory Group to work through the digital inclusion strategy and review the Terms of reference

The Pillars of the strategy are:

- Connectivity
- Affordability
- Digital ability
- Accessibility
- Digital Trust and Safety

This forum was a great opportunity to let the group know that rural and remote families feel very excluded since the shutdown of 3G.

The following are the policies that ICPA-NSW have an interest in.





Education



- NSW Govt Temporary Coverage Policy which is Cells on Wheels, Govt Assets and Emergency facilities
- Feasibility Study to extend Digital Connectivity projects beyond NSW Govt Infrastructure, eg shopping centres and any new builds will have connectivity
- NSW Digital Inclusion Standard to align with NSW Digital Strategies
- Digital Inclusion guidelines for NSW Govt Public consultations
- School Student Broadband Initiative ends 2028 and needs to be extended.
- NSW Device Bank – Govt laptops out of warranty or need fixing/repairing and released to charity and vulnerable groups. This will include support and digital literacy training and internet connection.
- NSW Connectivity strategy

### **Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote (BIRRR)**

BIRRR continues to provide valuable volunteer support and resources for rural families struggling with connectivity. Their resources are available at <https://birrraus.com/>

### **Road Trips**

Both Telstra and NBN are keen to travel to branch areas and participate in information days, field days and meetings. Please be in touch if you have something coming up in your area and would like a representative from these companies. Members could benefit from the information sharing experience.

### **Regional Tech Hub**

The Regional Tech Hub is a great free resource for any telephone, or internet technical problems. The phone number for the Hub is 1300 081 029. The hub is open limited hours, but you can leave a message to receive a return phone call.

The hours of operation are:

Mon: 12 pm to 5 pm

Tues: 12 pm to 5 pm

Wed: 9 am to 2 pm

Thurs: 9 am to 2 pm





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Fri: 9 am to 2 pm

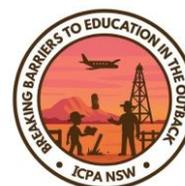
**Acknowledgements**

Thank you to our stakeholders, Telstra, nbn co, ACCAN and Regional Tech Hub who are very happy to meet with us regularly to provide information. They are also available if we have a question at any time. These stakeholders support for ICPA-NSW is very generous and very much appreciated. Thank you for the support and your generosity.

Huge thanks to my fellow State Councillors, you do a great job in your volunteer capacity.

Here's to a successful 2026 together.

**Libby McPhee**  
**Communications Portfolio Leader**





Education



## Communications Motions

### A 45. 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.

#### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### A 46. Hay Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests that the NSW Government reimburse families in rural and remote areas that have had to purchase satellite equipment needed to regain connectivity that was previously available through the 3G network.”*

#### **Explanation:**

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

Many people have become accustomed to using their mobile phones to run businesses, communicate with their schools and teachers, make medical appointments, for emergency preparedness and to stay connected to family. Since the 3G switch off, service in many regional and rural areas has become patchy or non-existent where previously service was adequate. The common advice given to these people by Telstra is that they will not regain similar service until a satellite connection such as Star Link is installed.

Many School of the Air families have also used mobile service as a backup avenue of connectivity for their children's lessons, something which is no longer viable. These same families also have the safety of home supervisors and their children in mind. With no mobile service where it used to exist, there is now no easy avenue for emergency communications, especially in schoolrooms using Department provided Sky Muster internet which does not offer Wi-Fi connectivity for devices.

Furthermore, with the recent announcement that Telstra is in the process of retiring CAN Radio phones, by 16/11/27 families will be left even more vulnerable. There is a feeling of





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uncertainty around the reliability and cost of replacement services. This form of landline has been a safety net for those in remote areas when mobile and satellite connections are down and in times of power outage, especially during emergencies.

Case Study:

Many of our members that run agricultural business, educate their children from home, travel long & remote distances to get children to school or have family members completing their education in distant locations have had no choice but to install satellite equipment at their own expense.

Case Study:

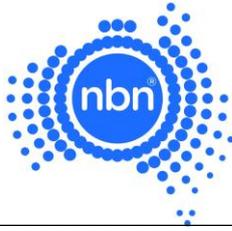
A family in our area whose children are enrolled in School of the Air used to have reasonable mobile phone service around the house locality. Since the turn off of 3G this service has diminished and can now only be reliably used with the aid of a Cel-fi booster, located in the house. The signal from the Cel-fi does not reach the free-standing schoolroom and as a result, in the case of an emergency, the home supervisor would need to leave the schoolroom, potentially leaving an injured child, to access phone service.

Case Study:

A family running a farming business and with children at various locations completing schooling, further education and trades followed the recommendations from Telstra to help restore the mobile service they had whilst 3G was still operating. However, the improvement was minimal and not as good as they had previously. They have now been advised that to enhance their connectivity they will need to install Star Link at their own expense, on top of the cost they have already encountered.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**





Education



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## Tertiary Portfolio Report

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**Madam President, Members of ICPA, Federal Council, ladies and gentlemen.**

The past 12 months have been a period of sustained advocacy, policy engagement, and strategic action for ICPA-NSW in the tertiary education space. Across Australia, rural and remote students continue to face significant barriers to accessing and completing tertiary education, and the ICPA- NSW's tertiary portfolio has remained focused on addressing these inequities. Drawing on the most recent tertiary reports and federal updates, the following outlines the major themes, achievements, challenges, and ongoing priorities that have shaped the tertiary portfolio over the last year.

The tertiary education environment for rural and remote students remains defined by persistent structural barriers. These include:

- High relocation and living costs
- Limited access to local tertiary providers
- Inconsistent credit transfer arrangements
- Shortages in student accommodation
- Gaps in academic and wellbeing support
- Limited access to placements and practical training opportunities

The ICPA- NSW's advocacy over the past 12 months has focused on these systemic issues, with particular emphasis on improving financial support, strengthening institutional accountability, and ensuring equitable access to tertiary pathways.

During the 2025 State and Federal Conferences major tertiary motions addressed critical barriers for rural and remote students. These included:

- Condensing tertiary training pathways to allow faster completion and workforce entry
- Ensuring universities provide high-quality support for rural and remote students





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- Improving credit transfer and advanced standing processes between institutions
- Strengthening partnerships between tertiary institutions and industry to improve placement access
- Continuing support and funding for Country University Centres (CUCs)

These motions formed the basis of the ICPA-NSW advocacy with state government, including correspondence with the NSW Minister for Education, Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, the Minister for Regional NSW, and relevant departmental bodies.

One of the most significant ongoing issues is the financial burden placed on rural and remote students who must relocate to pursue tertiary study, which was emphasised in ICPA Australia's submission to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report. ICPA-NSW has continued to highlight that aspirations are often dictated by financial capacity, not academic ability or career goals.

The organisation has continued to advocate for:

- Improved access to Youth Allowance
- Fairer independence criteria
- Increased relocation scholarships
- Better support for students undertaking compulsory placements

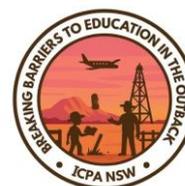
These financial issues remain central to ICPA-NSW tertiary agenda, as they directly impact participation, retention, and completion rates for our rural and remote tertiary students and apprentices.

Country University Centres or Regional University Hubs have become a vital part of the tertiary ecosystem for rural and remote communities. Over the past 12 months, ICPA-NSW has also continued to advocate for:

- Sustained funding for existing Centres
- Expansion into additional rural and remote regions
- Stronger partnerships between Centres and universities



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CUCs provide essential infrastructure—study spaces, technology, academic support—and help reduce the need for relocation. Their continued operation is seen as critical to improving tertiary access. We are pleased to advise of the expansion of Regional University Study Hubs (RUSH) with 10 new centres opening in: Clermont, Moranbah and Hughenden QLD, Hay and Tumut NSW, Northam and Kununurra WA, Kangaroo Island SA, Hamilton VIC, St Helens TAS, and Burnt Pine Norfolk Is. This brings the total number to 56 centres across the country. CUC's and RUSH locations are also being accessed by high school students to study Distance Education or access study after hours.

Another major theme in the past year has been the need for greater consistency in credit transfer and advanced standing arrangements. Students moving between institutions—often due to relocation, course availability, or personal circumstances—face inconsistent recognition of prior learning.

ICPA-NSW has pushed for:

- Nationally consistent credit transfer frameworks
- Better communication between universities and students
- Improved Academic support, particularly for students studying online or from remote locations.
- Mental health and wellbeing services
- Access to tutors and mentors
- Culturally appropriate support for Indigenous students

Although the tertiary portfolio appears to focus on university pathways, we also monitor developments in vocational education and training (VET) with record numbers of our youth enrolled in job training and apprenticeships.

Over the past 12 months, the ICPA-NSW has continued to advocate for:

- Improved access to VET programs in rural and remote areas
- Better financial support for apprentices who must travel for block training





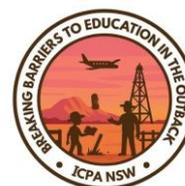
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- Stronger alignment between VET programs and regional workforce needs

These issues remain highly relevant as regional Australia continues to face workforce shortages in key sectors such as health, education, and trades. High cost of living and relocation limits access to placements, especially when students must find and pay for placement accommodation, travel and living expenses at the same time they are already paying these costs at their place of study and while unable to attend part time work that supports them. This and a shortage of affordable student accommodation near their places of study continue to contribute to under-representation of rural and remote students in tertiary education.

While significant progress has been made, ICPA-NSW recognises that achieving true equity in all the areas of education requires a sustained, long-term commitment. The work of State Council in this year proves this ongoing dedication to ensuring that every rural and remote student has the opportunity to pursue and complete tertiary education, regardless of their postcode.

**Tanya Mitchell**  
Tertiary Portfolio Leader





Education



## Tertiary Motions

### A 47. Nyngan Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW advocate to the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to support the AgCareerstart program by co-investing in AgCareerStart, a national gap-year program connecting young Australians (18–25-year-old) with paid on-farm employment for 8 - 12 months.”*

#### **Explanation:**

The National Farmers Federation’s AgCareerStart program, funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, is now looking for governments to co-invest.

AgCAREERSTART is the only national program designed to provide a structured pathway for young Australians into agriculture. Delivered by the National Farmers’ Federation (NFF) the program offers a gap year program. It helps students learn about Food and Fibre and experience an immersive, supported on-farm experience complemented by training, networking, and career development opportunities. Its success helps bring young people back into regional rural communities and is part of our community giving an education and opportunities to young people.

<https://nff.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ACS-Prospectus-2025.pdf>

This motion is in keeping with ICPA Australia’s Curriculum priorities, specifically All sectors of agriculture including food and fibre production are embedded in the Australian Curriculum and so need to be taught in primary and secondary school.

#### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### A 48. 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:**





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

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. This will alleviate the skilled shortage that exists across Australia.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 49. Bourke Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW work with ICPA (Aust) to seek financial support for regional and rural tertiary students and apprentices who have to undertake placements to complete their qualification.”*

#### Explanation:

A final year Radiography student must undertake a 12-month full time unpaid placement to complete her degree. Student must relocate to where they are placed, to work full time without payment, find and pay for accommodation, transport and support themselves for the year with a second job, after being a student for three years.

A student has regular significant placements during their course. Students are bound to go where they are placed. Students not only have to find accommodation for this time but still have to pay rent where the student attend university, support car payments and support themselves during the placement. These students are unable to work at the part time job, but and usually have an evening job. Students are essentially paying double rent for accommodation.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered



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## Early Childhood Portfolio Report

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**Dear Madam President, Distinguished Guests, Fellow State Councillors, Members, Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Early Childhood Portfolio Report for ICPA-NSW at the 2026 State Conference.

The past year has moved remarkably quickly, yet it has been a defining year for the early childhood sector — both nationally and at a state level. Child safety has rightly been at the forefront of reform and public attention. While this focus is critical, it has limited capacity for progress in other urgent areas affecting rural, regional and remote communities.

Across New South Wales, our members continue to face significant and persistent barriers, including:

- Limited access to services
- Attraction and retention of qualified educators
- Increasing governance and compliance burden
- The complexity of navigating dual state and federal funding systems

These pressures disproportionately impact families in geographically isolated areas, where services are already scarce.

That said, there has been meaningful work undertaken by the Early Childhood Outcomes Team within the Department of Education to establish the b4Kindy program. This initiative provides access to an early childhood program for four-year-old children at rural TP1 schools where there is no accessible preschool within the community.

I would like to sincerely thank the team — particularly Lou-Anne Lind and Angela Bannon — for welcoming the input of ICPA-NSW and for maintaining open and constructive





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communication as the program has evolved. While we are disappointed that Lou-Anne is no longer in this role, we thank her for her contribution and commitment. We are pleased that Angela continues to ensure regular engagement with ICPA-NSW and we look forward to working with and welcoming new Local Operations Director, Caron Bowen. Both Angela and Caron have joined us for conference, thank you both.

During 2025, five schools participated in the b4Kindy program. In early 2026, the Department hosted orientation sessions in Nyngan and Narrabri to support and upskill School Learning Support Officers implementing the program. ICPA-NSW continues to emphasise that adequate professional support is essential for effective delivery.

Combining early learners with primary students presents unique challenges. It is critical that early childhood pedagogy is not diluted within a primary school environment. Play-based learning, developmentally appropriate practice and informed understanding of early childhood development must remain central to implementation. Critical to the success of the program will be consistent communication between the educators working directly with the children and the Early childhood teachers creating the program, to ensure suitability for the individual children enrolled. The program must not merely be provided for implementation, it must be evaluated, and, along with observations and assessment, inform the next program appropriate to the development and needs of each individual student.

We are encouraged that the Department of Education has recognised the urgent need for access to early learning in the year before school. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to ensure the program becomes a strong and sustainable foundation for children in rural and remote communities.

However, significant gaps remain.

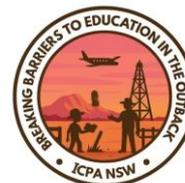
There continues to be a lack of accessible services for three-year-old children in rural, regional and remote areas. These children are not eligible for the b4Kindy program, and in many communities, there are simply no alternatives. ICPA-NSW has continued to advocate for geographic priority of access for three-year-olds; however, despite ongoing representation, there has been little policy movement to date.

Early intervention does not begin at four. For many vulnerable and geographically isolated children, access from three years of age is critical to addressing developmental vulnerability before school entry.

Distance also imposes additional time and financial burdens on families. A pilot preschool drive subsidy was introduced more than two years ago; however, no clear pathway forward



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has been communicated. Families in isolated areas continue to absorb significant travel costs simply to access early education. We understand that both Transport and Education departments are exploring solutions, but tangible progress remains limited. This remains an area requiring urgent attention.

There are undeniable gaps in early childhood education across our regions. Each child has only one early childhood. Geography must never determine opportunity, nor long-term educational outcomes.

ICPA-NSW will continue to advocate for equitable access, sustainable service delivery and recognition that early childhood education is the first building block of rural education.

I encourage members to continue sharing your lived experiences, concerns and ideas. Your stories provide the evidence behind our advocacy. Together, we can influence policy and drive meaningful change for our youngest learners.

Because where a child lives should never determine how they begin.

Thank you.

**Kirsty Wilson**  
**Early Childhood Portfolio Leader.**



## Early Childhood Motions

### **A 50. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests that 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 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 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**

### **A 51. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests that the Minister for Health 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



Education



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 centred 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 states most vulnerable children.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 52. Louth branch

*“That ICPA-NSW is requesting Director Local Operations, Early Childhood monitor the implementation of the B4 Kindy Program in Rural and Remote Areas.”*

#### Explanation:

ICPA-NSW requests the Director Local Operations, Early Childhood undertake regular reviews and support to ensure the proper implementation of the B4 Kindy Program in rural and remote communities, specifically in Louth, where the program does not appear to be functioning as intended. This needs to include early screening, intervention and ongoing assessment appropriate for preschool aged children.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 53. Louth branch

*“That ICPA-NSW request that Department of Education implement the existing play-based distance education preschool program as the content for the B4 Kindy Program.”*

#### Explanation:

There has been a commitment to provide all 4yr old children access to preschool. Currently the B4 Kindy Program is being run in TP1 and 2 schools therefore as it is not a preschool program the Department is not fulfilling their commitment to remote children to gain 600hrs of access to preschool. The department is renegeing on their obligation to provide preschool to





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remote children. We are requesting the Department roll out the Distance Education Preschool Program including the resources to the TP 1 & 2 schools.

As stated on the Department of Education website:

The b4-Kindy program is not a preschool program or preschool service. It is an integrated early learning program based upon the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and is aligned with the Early Stage 1 curriculum and pedagogy.

The Distance Education program is written and managed by Early Childhood Teachers as a good preschool program should be. It is not the responsibility of the Principal of a TP 1 and 2 to write and manage a preschool program as they are not EC trained and not under their job description.

This program was previously used in TP 1 and 2 preschools and was highly praised by teachers, SLSO’s delivering the program and most importantly the children who were well prepared for primary school.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

**A 54. NSW/Vic Lone Members Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW advocate to the Department of Education and the Minister for Education for funding to establish a preschool service independent of the Guyra Preschool and Long Daycare Centre for Guyra and district.”*

**Explanation:**

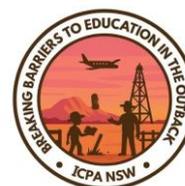
Case Study:

Guyra has one early childhood education provider — the Guyra Preschool and Long Day Care Centre, operated by the Armidale Regional Council and licensed for 29 places for children aged approximately 6 weeks to 6 years.

Guyra and district include local primary schools:

- Guyra Central School
- St Mary of the Angels Primary School, Guyra
- Bald Blair Public School – approximately 13km East of Guyra
- Black Mountain Public School – 11km South of Guyra
- Ben Lomond Public School – 23km North of Guyra (recessed 2026)

Current preschool capacity is constrained, meaning many families cannot access sufficient local preschool hours to meet the NSW and Australian Government commitment of at least 600 hours of quality preschool education per child.





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To meet these access commitments, many families must travel to Armidale or other centres outside Guyra for additional preschool places, which is a significant barrier in rural contexts due to travel time, cost, and limited transport options.

Community planning has identified the potential for a new Early Childhood Learning Centre in Guyra with up to 58 places, which would nearly double local capacity and better support children from all local schools. However, this expanded facility is yet to be funded or built as of 2026.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 55. Bourke Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW and ICPA (Aust) requests the relevant State and Federal Ministers for funding to be sought to address Early Childhood Teacher pay parity.”*

#### Explanation:

Pay parity of Early Childhood Teachers is a significant issue. An Early Childhood Teacher completes a 4-year degree course. If they elect to work in the Public School System in a rural and remote location, there are additional benefits they would get compared to working as an Early Childhood Teacher.

Early Childhood services are significantly limited in their budgets. It is important to find long term solutions to address pay parity of Early Childhood Teachers in rural and remote locations.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A 56. 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.





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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**

**A 57. Broken Hill Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the Minister for Education and Early Learning urgently address the critical shortage of long day care and preschool places in Far West NSW, including workforce shortages within early childhood education, excessive waitlists, and the lack of transparent and equitable childcare placement and triage processes. All of which are contributing to broader workforce shortages across the community.”*

**Explanation:**

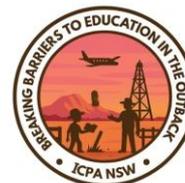
Far West NSW is experiencing a severe and sustained shortage of long day care and preschool places, largely due to difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified early childhood educators to the area. This has resulted in extensive waitlists and limited access to care for families.

The lack of available and reliable childcare is directly contributing to the wider workforce shortages in the community. Health professionals, teachers, primary and allied health workers, government employees, and other essential and skilled workers are unable to commence, maintain, or increase employment due to the unavailability of early childhood education and care. With many professionals often living away from their extended family support networks.

In addition, families report limited transparency regarding how childcare places are prioritised and allocated. The absence of clearly communicated and equitable triage processes creates uncertainty and perceptions of inequity, particularly in a remote community with few or no alternative childcare options.

On January 5, 2026, the Australian Government’s 3-day guarantee came into effect. The 3-day guarantee means all families eligible for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) are now guaranteed at least three days of subsidised early childhood education and care each week. This is a fantastic initiative which may greatly assist families, particularly mothers, re-enter the work force and help ensure that young children can access vital early childhood education.

However, if families live in an area without an adequate early childhood educator workforce and enough early childhood places to ensure they can access 3 days of childcare, then it is





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highly likely families will move to an area where they can access at least 3 days of childcare a week.

Without targeted intervention, childcare shortages will continue to undermine workforce participation, service delivery, and the long-term sustainability of the Far West communities in NSW.

**Outcome Sought:**

- Immediate and targeted strategies to attract and retain early childhood educators in Broken Hill and remote communities in Far West NSW.
- Increased capacity and long-term sustainability of long day care and preschool services
- Reduced waitlists and improved access to early childhood education and care
- Clear, transparent, and equitable childcare placement and triage processes
- Recognition of early childhood education and care as critical infrastructure underpinning professional and essential workforces in remote communities.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

**A 58. Broken Hill Branch**

*“That ICPA–NSW requests data from the NSW Department of Education to quantify the availability and capacity of preschools in Far West, NSW to determine the adequacy to deliver at least 600 hours of a high-quality preschool program for all children prior to full-time schooling.”*

**Explanation:**

The Australian government Preschool Reform Agreement is an agreement between the Australian Government and all state and territory governments to:

- strengthen the delivery of preschool
- better prepare children for the first year of full-time school.

This Agreement demonstrates the Federal Government’s acknowledgement that access to high-quality preschool is essential to ensuring all children begin their education with the best possible foundations.

Preschool plays a crucial role in supporting children in the year before they start school, providing a strong foundation for both learning and wellbeing. This year is a key





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developmental stage, where children make rapid progress socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively. High-quality preschool programs help children build confidence, curiosity and a positive attitude toward learning, which are essential for a smooth and successful transition to primary school.

If preschools in Far West NSW are unable to provide at least 600 hours of a high-quality preschool program for all children in the year before full-time schooling, children in this region may begin school at a disadvantage compared with their peers who live in areas where high-quality preschool programs are readily accessible.

It has been repeatedly shown in NAPLAN results that students living in rural, regional and remote areas have poorer educational outcomes. Whilst NAPLAN results do not capture a student’s overall progress or potential, it still provides governments with valuable data to evaluate educational outcomes across different regions and socio-economic groups.

For this reason, the NSW Government and the Department of Education must recognise the educational disadvantage faced by children in Far West NSW and prioritise the opportunities provided through the Preschool Reform Agreement. Doing so is essential to ensure these children have the same chance as their peers to begin school on equal footing and with the strongest possible start to their education.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

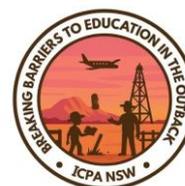
**A 59. Bourke Branch**

*“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**





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## Supplementary Motions

### S 1. Bourke Branch

*“That Transport for NSW reconsider the availability of SSTS buses to fee paying school students as a second preference to eligible SSTS passengers, allowing boarding students to bring school friends home for holiday breaks on a paid ticket, while retaining priority of access for SSTS eligible students. “*

#### **Explanation:**

Boarding families often rely upon the goodwill of day families to support their children’s extracurricular activities such as sport or medical appointments and vital social supports. Strong friendships are built and these relationships support our children whilst living away from home. Boarding families wish to invite day students to visit them at their homes, which creates a level of understanding of where the boarder’s home is.

Recent changes have meant that students not eligible for the SSTS bus are not able to travel on the route, even though these buses are not running at capacity. We have also been advised that TfNSW are considering the viability of these services into the future with a very high no show rate.

By opening travel up to paying students at the public travel rate, viability of these services could be greatly improved.

#### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**

### S 2. Bourke Branch

*“That Transport for NSW provides a practical pathway for parents/carers to book or cancel SSTS bookings directly.”*

Explanation: Transport for NSW have recently advised ICPA that they are considering the ongoing viability of SSTS services due to the high failure to show rate. Many families in our branch report that they have contacted NSW TrainLink to cancel bookings but have been unable to do so.

#### **Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**





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### S 3. Wentworth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister for Education to commission a business case for the provision of an Agricultural and Sporting Pathways College that includes boarding located near Gol Gol – Buronga.”*

#### Explanation:

Options for high school education have always been minimal in Far West NSW with the government relying on Victoria and South Australia to deliver education to the majority of children.

Many of the small towns simply have no access to secondary education, and with the refusal to extend bus routes or provide proper assistance and access to boarding, families are forced to leave. The economic cost to the Far West, through lack of options is far reaching and devastating. Putting pressure on small schools, employment, health and community.

A dedicated agricultural and sporting college, which is not offered by cross boarder counterparts in Victoria, that includes boarding would provide the much-needed secondary education families have long sought. Excellent education options will also promote economic growth and opportunities for the region as well as significantly reducing the stress of breaking up families just to access everyone’s right to education.

#### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### S 4. REMOVED BY STATE COUNCIL

### S 5. Louth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW would like to make known to Prue Car, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney and Deputy Premier that an active program is not being followed at the Louth Public School.”*

#### Explanation

After more than one meeting amongst the Louth ICPA members (who are directly connected to the Louth Public School) it has become very apparent that there is no active program with children not reaching minimum standards outlined by ACARA.





Education



One family has removed their 2 children (which on last year's numbers was 25% of the school enrolment) from the school due to the lack of learning and programming.

Another two families are also considering removing their children (which will be a total of 33% students) from the Louth Public school after requests have been made this year in week 5, to see their children's programs and the principal couldn't produce one for them to see.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### S 6. ICPA-NSW State Council

*"That ICPA-NSW advocate for a national working with children check"*

#### Explanation:

Due to NSW being sandwiched between several borders it is important that parents/guardians and employees have access to a national working with children check.

Trying to work a children's check between the various State requirements is cumbersome and difficult.

This children's check is necessary when working in school canteens and sports days.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### S 7 Broken Hill Branch

*"That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education provide funding and staffing allocation for an on-site, non-teaching Technology Coordinator as part of the standard staffing entitlement for all NSW Distance Education Schools."*

#### Explanation:

Distance Education schools operate in a uniquely technology dependent environment where reliable digital infrastructure is essential for teaching, learning, and communication with





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geographically isolated families. Teachers are increasingly required to troubleshoot technical issues, manage learning platforms, maintain hardware, support families with connectivity challenges, and administer online assessment systems. These responsibilities place additional pressure on teaching staff and reduce time available for explicit teaching and student support.

An on-site Technology Coordinator would ensure the effective management of technology systems and hardware, provide timely technical support to staff, students, and supervisors, and assist with the implementation of the ever-evolving technologies emerging used in remote learning. This role would improve the efficiency of teaching and learning delivery, reduce disruptions caused by technical issues, and ensure Distance Education schools can continue to provide high quality education to isolated students.

Providing a dedicated, non-teaching Technology Coordinator would strengthen the operational capacity of Distance Education school teachers and better support families who rely on technology as their primary access to education.

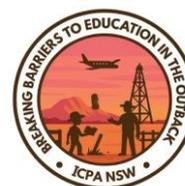
### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### S 8. Broken Hill Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education provide a permanent Department of Education email address assigned to each Distance Education home site, which remains active for the duration of the student’s enrolment at that home site and can be used by the home supervisor regardless of personnel changes.”*

### Explanation:

Distance Education schools rely on consistent and effective communication between teachers, administration staff, and home supervisors to support student learning. Broken Hill and Hay School of the Air school uses Microsoft Teams for lessons, meetings, communication, and resource sharing. Access to this platform requires a Department of Education email account. Currently, when supervisors change, schools must create or request new email access and repeatedly update contact details across multiple systems, mailing lists, and communication platforms. In some cases, supervisors may change several times within a single year, significantly increasing the administrative workload for principals, teachers, and administrative staff and slowing down the productivity of the home supervisor.





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Providing a permanent Department of Education email address linked to the home site rather than the individual supervisor would streamline communication processes and ensure ongoing access. Schools would be able to maintain a single, consistent point of contact for the home site throughout the entire enrolment of all students in the family.

This approach would improve efficiency, reduce administrative burden, ensure continuity of communication, and allow supervisors immediate access to required online learning platforms when they commence the role.

### Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### S 9. Broken Hill Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education provide assurance of a Technology Refresh Strategy for Distance Education students. Technology and hardware packages issued to Distance Education students need to be updated and replaced within a consistent and appropriate timeframe, ensuring there are no technology gaps that prevent students from participating in lessons.”*

#### Explanation:

The Broken Hill Branch would like to thank the department of education for the current roll out of the new technology package transitioning Broken Hill and Hay School of the Air existing students to Starlink. A Starlink connection is needed to provide a stable connection for Microsoft Teams which is pivotal in students learning on the chosen platform of the Department of Education.

For students enrolled in Distance Education, reliable and up to date technology is essential in accessing their schooling. Devices, software, and supporting hardware are the primary means through which students attend lessons, access learning materials, communicate with teachers, and participate in activities through Microsoft Teams.

We are asking that the NSW Department of Education maintain a consistent Technology Refresh Strategy to ensure Distance Education students always have access to current platforms and compatible devices.

When devices become outdated or incompatible with current systems before replacements are issued, students may experience difficulties connecting to lessons or accessing required





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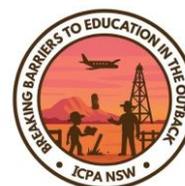
learning platforms. This leads to interruptions in learning and inequitable access to education, which is happening with School of the Air students currently while waiting for the new roll out to be completed.

A clear and consistent replacement timeframe for technology and hardware would ensure that Distance Education students always have access to functional, compatible equipment capable of supporting current educational platforms and programs. Guaranteeing continuity in technology provision would prevent gaps where students are unable to attend lessons due to outdated equipment and would support consistent delivery of high-quality education to isolated students.

**Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered**



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## Acronyms

### Terms

ECEC – Early Childhood Education and Care  
ECE – Early Childhood Education  
DEL - Director, Educational Leadership  
RRRUSD – Regional, Rural, and Remote Unique Settings Directorate  
UAC – University Access Centre  
SOTA – School of the Air  
SLD’s – Specific Learning Disorders

### Subsidies and Grants

CCS – Child Care Subsidy  
ACCS – Additional Child Care Subsidy  
AIC – Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme  
IHC – In Home Care  
CCCF - Community Childcare Fund  
BSIS - Boarding Scholarships for Isolation Students  
TAP - Tertiary Access Payment  
RICS - Remuneration for Isolated Classroom Supervisor  
SSTS - School Student Transport Scheme  
SDS- School Drive Subsidy  
LAFHA - Living away from Home Allowance  
YA- Youth Allowance

### Quality & Regulation

NQF – National Quality Framework  
NQS – National Quality Standard  
QA – Quality Area (within NQS)  
EYLF – Early Years Learning Framework  
MTOP – My Time, Our Place (Framework for School Age Care)  
ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority  
NCER – National Child Education Review  
IHCSA - In Home Care Support Agency

### Care Types/Services

LDC – Long Day Care





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FDC – Family Day Care  
 OSHC – Outside School Hours Care  
 VAC – Vacation Care Occ Care – Occasional Care  
 IHC - In Home Care  
 Kindy / P – Kindergarten / Preschool  
 Mobile Kindy/playgroups/toy libraries eg kath Dickson

### **Programs**

- RICE - Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise
- RAFS - Remote Area Family Service
- LiL - Launching into Learning - Tasmania
- FaFT - Families as First Teachers - NT
- KEYS - Keep Early Years in the Spotlight - Cunnamulla Qld
- KICS - Katherine Isolated Children's Service
- First5Forever - State Library Qld
- SVA - Social Ventures Aust

### **Workforce & Training**

ECT – Early Childhood Teacher  
 RTO – Registered Training Organisation  
 TAFE – Technical and Further Education  
 UWU – United Workers Union (sector union)  
 IEU – Independent Education Union  
 DEHT -Distance Education Home Tutor  
 TP 2- Teaching Principal with two teachers  
 TP 1 - Teaching Principal with one teacher

### **Policy, Data & Research**

AEDC – Australian Early Development Census  
 AIHW – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
 ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics  
 COAG – Council of Australian Governments (now National Cabinet)  
 DET / DOE – Department of Education and Training / Department of Education (Federal)

### **Advocacy & Sector Bodies**

ICPA – Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association  
 ELACCA – Early Learning and Care Council of Australia  
 ARACY – Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth  
 ECA - Early Childhood Australia  
 ABSA - Australian Boarding Schools Association





Education



ACaSFA - Australian Child and Family Support Alliance

DoE - Department of Education

NFF - National Farmers Federation

CUC - Country University Centres

RUSH - Regional University Study Hubs

TfNSW- Transport for New South Wales

DPIRD – Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

### **Communications**

SSBI- School Student Broadband Initiative

BIRRR- Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote

ACCAN -Australian Communications Consumer Action Network

HCRC - High-Capacity Radio Concentrator systems

CAN – Consumer Access Network

ADSL- is a copper-based broadband technology that delivers internet via phone lines

