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## ALLOWANCES

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### A1. Brewarrina Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW, requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning & the Minister for Social Services, to adjust the combined family’s adjusted income structure for the Living Away from Home Allowance for Secondary Students (LAFHA) to reflect the same structure as the Childcare Subsidy to compensate for inflation and the much higher cost of living in rural and remote areas.”*

#### **Explanation:**

The current limit for LAFHA cuts off at a combined family income of \$79,996. From 10 July 2023, Childcare Subsidy increased which means most families using childcare now get more subsidy. The maximum amount of the CCS increased from 85% to 90% for families earning up to \$80,000. Families earning over \$80,000 and under \$530,000 may get a subsidy starting from 90%. Depending on their income, the subsidy will go down by 1% for each \$5,000 of income they earn. The income limit for CCS also increased from \$356,756 to \$530,000.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### A2. Wentworth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning and NSW Treasury to increase the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) for eligible students.”*

There are only 3 public boarding schools in NSW, with one school being boys only, and all of the school’s agriculture based. Places at these selective high schools are competitive. Many rural and remote students are either missing out on a place or have other interests besides agriculture but have no avenue to access a public high school.



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These students are forced into the private system to access any form of mandatory high school education. The cost to access these schools has increased enormously and the stories of children missing out on schooling, families increasing their farm debt or families making the heart-breaking decision to split up the family home is increasing.

In 2023, the QLD Government announced an increase of \$4000 to their Remote Area Tuition Allowance (the QLD equivalent of LAFHA). This increase is in addition to their base rate of \$3,144. Compared to the 2024 LAFHA rate of \$2,444. It would be fantastic for the NSW Government to recognise the great need for rural and remote boarding families, in a similar way to the QLD Government.

The Minister and Treasury must address this problem and provide immediate relief, by way of an increase to the LAFHA to ensure the remote NSW students can access education they are entitled to, just as every other student in Australia.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### **A3. Walgett Branch**

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

The distance criteria for assistance for AIC excludes children who live within rural and remote towns. For many families, AIC assistance is the difference between being able to send your child to a boarding school or having to leave town to educate your children.

The reality is significant educational disadvantage does exist in these small towns regardless of how many kilometers you live from the local high school. Often these small towns have only one



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High School, leaving families with very limited options to educate their children, especially if the school is not able to meet the child's interests and educational needs.

Access to allied health services, learning support, extension opportunities and choice of subjects are severely limited or nonexistent in small towns such as Walgett, and they don't magically appear just because you live closer to the local school.

Most states recognise the need to offer bypassing of local schools that do not meet the safety, social, emotional education standards that families have a right to expect from a High School. QLD for example has 19 schools on the bypass list, NSW however only has 2 schools on the Bypass list.

The eligibility criteria for such a scholarship must ensure the inclusion of families residing in small towns who do not meet the requirements for other available Commonwealth funding. Many scholarships, including Boarding School Scholarships stipulate that you must qualify for AIC to apply, so once again these families are left without any assistance. These families offer vital and indispensable services, whose roles are essential for any rural and remote town's survival. For example, agricultural workers, retail workers, council workers, nurses, teachers, plumbers, electricians, and police families.

Tax paying families servicing rural and remote towns where there is little choice and poor educational outcomes, deserve equal access to financial assistance to educate their children. There is no justification for excluding these children. All children in these towns deserve a decent education, not just some of them!

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





#### A4. Central West Plains Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the relevant Ministers to review Rule 3 in the Application for Isolated Children form SY040 and amend to: The student does not have reasonable access to an appropriate state school for at least 20 school days in a year because of adverse travel conditions (e.g. impassable roads), or other circumstances beyond the family’s control and that once successful in the application, that application remains relevant for the remainder of the schooling years of the child.”*

#### Explanation:

In its current form, the existing selection criteria of this rule means that when it becomes a drought year and the road potentially is travelable, an AIC review means funding is then stopped, for that year.

Due to the unpredictable nature of these flooding events, it is not practicable or good for children’s stability and continuity of education to be pulling children in and out of school, pending ad hoc AIC funding. This is particularly true in drought years where finances are already tight. It is unfair educational access to have a road that the council deems prone to significant flooding risk and can be closed and inaccessible for up to 7 months of the year, e.g 2022, to then not be eligible the following year in drought when it was still closed for 18 days.

A student is regarded as geographically isolated from appropriate schooling if one of the following rules is met:

Rule 1: The distance between the principal family home and the nearest appropriate state school is at least 56 kilometres by the shortest practicable route.

Rule 2: The distance between the principal family home and the nearest appropriate state school by the shortest practicable route is at least 16 kilometres and the distance between the principal family home and the nearest available transport service to that school is at least 4.5 kilometres by the shortest practicable route.





Rule 3: The student does not have reasonable access to an appropriate state school for at least 20 school days in a year because of adverse travel conditions (e.g. impassable roads) or other circumstances beyond the family's control.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### **A5. Central West Plains Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the relevant Ministers to create a new Rule 3 in the application form - Assistance for Isolated Children SY040, to better allow for children whose education is disadvantaged by geographic isolation, but who do not meet the criteria of Rule 1 and Rule 2.”*

#### **Explanation:**

By limiting the criteria to small Central Schools (<52 students) we believe that the adoption of Rule 3 will help those in greatest need (rural children living in geographic isolation) by making AIC more accessible, but without opening it up so broadly that it becomes oversubscribed.

The student is geographically isolated (Geographic Isolation Rules 1 and 2)

You are geographically isolated if:

- Rule 1: Your family home is 56 km or more from the nearest suitable state school
- Rule 2: Your family home is 16 km or more from the nearest suitable state school and at least 4.5 km away from the nearest transport to school or there is no available transport service to that school, and this will not be provided if requested).

The new rule should better reflect the changing nature of regional living. It should be more inclusive so that AIC is available to those who most need it.

We propose Rule 3 as follows: If your geographically closest local school is a small Central School and you can show that a child will benefit from access to education beyond their local community. The benefit can be based around social, emotional, cognitive, creative, or physical advantage.



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The criteria for eligibility for AIC was drafted in the 1970's by an organisation in its infancy, based in Bourke, Western NSW. Back then, the criteria adequately met the needs of that era and community. However, in a changed environment, it no longer provides the framework that allows for fair and equitable education to all students in and around remote, rural towns that are disadvantaged by geographic isolation.

The current selection criteria excludes too many children; plenty of farm kids miss out but also 100% of the children who are not necessarily farm based, miss out as well. We are witnessing the emergence of first-generation boarding families, with parents who live and work in these small towns. They have careers in mining, are employed in an agricultural business but don't live on farm, they might own small businesses in town, or even work as nurses and teachers. The magnetic drag for these families to move to bigger Centres to provide their children with access to better educational opportunities is very strong, and it often results in them leaving small rural communities forever.

We have to better recognise and acknowledge the disadvantage faced by all students living in rural and remote communities, regardless of their proximity to town and school. Providing these families with the opportunity to apply (and importantly, be eligible for) financial assistance via AIC, means that boarding schools become a viable option, and the services and skills of these valuable community members can remain in our small rural towns.

It is undeniable that inequity exists between rural and urban education - we know this because so much is already in play to address it. There are a variety of initiatives to attract quality teachers to rural towns, with varied degrees of success. Improving access to AIC for more rural children will certainly see better outcomes for rural communities. The socio-economic rural/urban divide will only widen whenever any rural child is denied access to equitable education.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





#### A6. Central West Plains Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the relevant Ministers that Rule 2 in the application for Assistance for Isolated Children form SY040 be amended to exclude the 4.5km distance from home to bus stop criteria.”*

#### **Explanation:**

The existing selection criteria of this rule exclude rural children who’s on-farm home is located close to rural road bus stops. Farmhouses may have been built generations ago and are often located for ease of access to rural roads in wet weather. We need to better recognise and knowledge the disadvantage faced by all those living in rural communities, regardless of the proximity of a farmhouse to a bus stop.

This particular rule creates so much division and angst within the small communities of the Central West Plains branch of ICPA. It results in an unfair situation where some farming families who are closer in distance to the local school qualify for AIC, and other families who are further than 16km but under 56km do not qualify because their house is located “too close” to the road.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A7. Louth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW supports ICPA(Aust) to request the Minister for Government Services to increase Centrelink rent assistance payments.”*

#### **Explanation**

Obviously regional, remote, and very remote children need to factor in rent to their study plans. Rent is the biggest component of a student’s costs and is often prohibitive therefore to study for example in a larger city or may mean that a student has to work so much that their course suffers.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





#### A8. Brewarrina Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to financially assist rural and remote families to cover the extra expense of Kip McGrath tuition lessons.”*

#### Explanation:

Rural and Remote children are behind in literacy and numeracy and many families are turning to Kip McGrath for extra tuition support to help catch their children up, so they are not behind before starting secondary school. Each lesson costs \$65 per child per week. For one child having to partake in both literacy and numeracy lessons each week for 52 weeks a year for two years is an extreme cost- \$13,520.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

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## BOARDING AND AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOLS AND HOSTELS

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#### A9. Collarenebri-Mungindi Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning for the establishment of a co-ed State Agricultural Secondary School boarding College in Dubbo.”*

#### Explanation:

The Farrer Agricultural College at Tamworth is a popular College for rural and remote male students. The only other option that takes girls is Hurlstone and Yanco Colleges which are not





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geographically aligned for students in the north and northwest and far West of the State. Agriculture offers many careers, but students need to complete their secondary education first. We are aware that the NSW Government are not keen to build single sex schools. Such a college would alleviate the current demand and lack of places available for students wanting to study agriculture.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### **A10. Wentworth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning introduce boarding facilities for rural and remote students at one of the 7 designated NSW Public Sports High Schools – Australian Olympic Pathway Schools.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Currently, NSW only provides 3 public boarding schools that are all located at Agricultural High Schools. Whilst this is great for those wanting to study agriculture, it leaves many remote students without a public schooling option.

Travel and expenses are the biggest barrier for sporting children in rural NSW. Talented students from across rural and remote NSW deserve to be able to access specialised Sports High Schools to further develop their skills and education.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





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## COMMUNICATIONS

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### A11. Louth Branch

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

**Explanation:**

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

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

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## DISTANCE EDUCATION/AHWISE

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### A12. Brewarrina Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to provide a secondary learning platform other than MS Teams.”*

**Explanation:**

MS Teams is used by Dubbo School of Distance to deliver their online lessons. One Stage 2 child through Dubbo School of Distance Education in 2023 has endured 3 ½ terms of interrupted learning using MS Teams. In one MS Teams lesson, the platform dropped the call 54 times. No one has been able to fix the problem and the problem is continuing. An alternative platform needs to be provided.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





**A13. Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to ensure that a qualified staff member trained in literacy learning support programs, teaches the programs, live to geographical isolated Distance Education (GIDE) students.”*

**Explanation:**

Literacy learning support for GIDE families involves the students, home supervisor, parent, classroom teacher and learning support teacher. With new teaching platforms, updated technology, COVID funding and new English curriculum, we have seen an increase in identification and implementation of specific literacy support programs for these students. The experience of several members of our branch in the teaching of literacy support programs for their children has been very poor. For example, an early intervention program for Year 1 and 2, designed for delivery 4-5 times a week for about 1 hour. The home supervisor or parent has been provided with all the resources, but they must deliver the program to the student daily. This has multiplied the stress for both parents and home supervisor in educating their children.

Now technology and teaching platforms can allow a fully qualified staff member to deliver this type of program instead of untrained parents and home supervisors. Parents have seen a step in the right direction with a small group of students having their literacy support program taught live on Teams 100 % of time by a trained qualified staff member. Our members have seen a big increase in student outcomes and participation since these programs are being taught live by the qualified staff members.

We are seeking for this to continue across the board, for all students, and importantly for the future to have this as the only way literacy support programs are taught to GIDE students.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





#### A14. Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests that the NSW Department of Education- School Infrastructure investigate how to provide more physical indoor learning spaces to allow all enrolled students at School of the Air Broken Hill from Kindergarten to Year Six to attend classroom activities at the school grounds at the same time.”*

#### Explanation:

At the current time all enrolled students at School of Air Broken Hill (SOTABH) cannot all physically fit in an indoor learning space all at the same time.

In 2023 there were 146 students enrolled at SOTA BH, 2022 144 students. The average enrolled student over the last 10 years has been 130 students.

(Data accessed from [myschool.edu.au](https://myschool.edu.au), Jan 2024). In the 10 years prior to this, student enrollment was much lower. The increase in student numbers has not been met with any increase to teaching classroom spaces. Currently SOTA BH grounds has 3 teaching spaces and 4 other facilities. ([https://www.schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au/schools/5/5302.html#content\\_2](https://www.schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au/schools/5/5302.html#content_2))

The current building configuration at SOTA BH doesn't allow for all students to be on site for classroom learning experiences due to the lack of physical indoor classrooms. This means families are making extra overnight trips to Broken Hill each term to allow for all their children to have face to face learning time with their teachers. Especially at this current time, multiple overnight trips to Broken Hill substantially increase education costs for families.

Classes have been taken off site to other facilities to allow students to all be in Broken Hill at the same time. We feel this is not a sustainable solution for the future. All students should be able to be accommodated at their enrolled school grounds. We are seeking an increase to indoor learning spaces at the SOTA BH grounds. SOTA BH is located directly next to other properties owned by the Department of Education, which we would suggest would be worth investigating how the





land within proximity can be better utilised for student learning for both SOTA BH and the other school.

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### **A15. Wentworth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to provide an update on Stage 2 of the technology rollout that will include Wi-Fi, portable devices and printers that are fit for purpose.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Almost every person in this room has used a portable device today to enable them to complete daily tasks. It is a fact of modern-day life that we are constantly moving to get things done. This is also true in a home school room where some activities are completed at a desk, some outside in the sand pit, some in the sheep yards and some at another property in another state. Equipping our students with suitable Wi-Fi and devices that are fit for purpose is a necessity and allows our students equitable access to their education.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### **A16. Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch**

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

#### **Explanation:**

All GIDE homesite have been provided with NBN Sky muster internet connection. The desktops are connected by cables only. There is no provision for access to Wi-Fi at the homesite.



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At public school students can connect with Wi-Fi on their school campus with either a department / School provided device or with an approved and appropriate BYOD.

GIDE homesites are our students' everyday classroom and they need to have access to Wi-Fi to allow more efficient completion of their daily required learning.

Students have been provided with portable devices to assist with their learning needs. Such as an ipad to use for learning support applications, such readers and speech, for talk to text and screen reading. These functions don't work without Wi-Fi and the students must leave their supervised classroom to access these features.

Students enrolled in Aurora College Opportunity class are required to have access to Wi-Fi to connect the college supplied laptop to use simultaneously as the department provided desktop at every lesson. This occurs at all face-to-face public schools; however, GIDE students have not been provided with access to Wi-Fi in their classrooms. While there are work arounds that have been found for these students, provision of Wi-Fi at the homesite, exactly the same as at other public schools, should be the standard and expected.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### **A17. Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch**

***“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education provide a colour printer per home school site, for Preschool to Year 12 students studying via Distance Education due to geographical isolation.”***

#### **Explanation:**

Geographically isolated distance education (GIDE) home sites were all given new printers with the latest technology update completed in 2023, however these printers are black and white only. This doesn't allow students to have an equivalent access to technology as students in other public





schools. The DE schools have coloured timetables and send out student learning activities that are required to be printed in colour. This colour printing must then be completed at home, on printers GIDE families are purchasing and maintaining at their own cost, further increasing the cost of educating their children.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### **A18. Wentworth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to continue to explore new technology that will shape Distance Education sites into the future.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Whilst School of the Air families are rejoicing at finally being able to access technology and platforms that have been widely available to other students and the general public for years, it exists that many families have already moved beyond this and, at their own expense, adopted up to date technology in their school rooms. Families are often bypassing the Department provided technology in favour of faster more appropriate technology.

Many home sites are using platforms such as Starlink as more reliable and faster and by having their own Wi-Fi connection they can then incorporate portable devices, coloured printers and other technology that is more efficient.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### **A19. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning to implement an initiative to ensure practical access to high schooling for geographically isolated stage four students, using the existing primary school facilities in remote and very remote areas.”*



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**Explanation:**

NSW DoE does not provide practical high schooling options for some isolated high school students.

The students this motion refers to are those who are unable to successfully assimilate into a boarding school environment because of a variety of reasons. The only practical pathway left to access high school is by Distance Education.

It is unreasonable to expect a student to have any success in completing the DE or SOTA high school curriculum without a literate adult to support them and an appropriate environment to learn in. Quite obviously students- especially in stage four, need structured spaces and time and the support of an SLSO.

It has been the case that remote primary school students who are going to do DE high school repeat year six because his/her family, teacher and community recognise that is effectively their last year of education.

Isolated communities recognise it will be those students last school year.

With respect anyone who cannot believe that the above strategy is necessary in 2023; should examine the statistics citing the education levels achieved by DE high schooled students who fall into the classification of vulnerable.

We would like to see a situation in which a successful time at high school is accessible and the attendance obligation to do so is as rigorous as it is in all state schools. Therefore, truancy issues would be the responsibility of the DoE.

Louth Branch recognises the complexities with enrolments in dual schools however, we ask the Minister and the department work with ICPA-NSW to find a solution which allows access to the existing state school facilities, including a supervisor, immediately.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered







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## EARLY CHILDHOOD

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### A20. Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch

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

#### **Explanation:**

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

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

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

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#### **A21. Wentworth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning and the NSW Department of Education to provide administrative and governance learning and support for volunteer led community preschools.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Communities across NSW have been asking for administrative assistance from the government for many years. It is completely unrealistic to expect parent volunteers to be able to adequately administrate community preschools. The responsibility and expectation placed on these volunteers without training and support is beyond what can be considered reasonable. With Community Connections Solutions Australia (CCSA) recently going into voluntary administration, community preschools have lost their only avenue of support in regard to governance, management and compliance. These tasks are beyond that of a volunteer and the government step up and provide this support.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### **A22. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the relevant State Ministers to amend the lack of salary parity between four year trained early childhood teachers and four year trained primary and high school teachers.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Currently, the pay gap is so significant it is impossible to recruit and retain teachers in early childhood Centres and new recruits often use early childhood jobs as a steppingstone into the primary school sector.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





**A23. Bourke Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the relevant State 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, the additional benefits they will receive are significant 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 the pay parity of Early Childhood Teachers in rural and remote locations.

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**A24. Walgett Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning urgently address the issues that are undermining the ability of rural and remote towns to recruit and retain Early Childhood Educators.”*

**Explanation:**

The shortage of Early Childhood Educators (ECE’s) is obviously a widespread issue that is compounded in small rural and remote towns, resulting in large waiting lists for Pre-school places and the Long Day Care Centers having to reduce operating hours and reduced days. Having few if any ECE’s in these small towns not only compounds the educational disadvantage of this age group of children but has knock on effects to local schools. For example, when



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primary & secondary teachers do not have childcare for their younger children, they then must reduce their teaching hours/days.

Recruiting staff to remote areas is very difficult when there is limited or no childcare or pre-school available. Families are restricted in their working hours and days as one parent must look after the children. In some towns such as ours, we have childcare facilities we just don't have the staff to run them.

A higher level of pay is needed to encourage more people to get early childhood degrees and to retain them once they are qualified. The rate of pay for early ECE's needs to be addressed to reflect the education undertaken by educators.

Early childhood educators do not receive rental assistance or have rentals readily available to them, unlike primary & secondary teachers in remote areas. With very limited rental availability and no rental assistance, there is little chance of attracting ECE's to these remote regions.

Universities, TAFE, and other educational providers need to continue to be able to provide a variety of flexible pathways to gaining a Diploma or Degree in early childhood. Many students struggle because of the cost of studying and lengthy unpaid work placements. Subsidised course fees and financial assistance for rural & remote work placements would be of great benefit. More also needs to be done to find out why ECE's are leaving or thinking about leaving the industry. Constructive feedback and practical suggestions need to be gained from educators themselves. Input is needed from not only current educators, but also those that have recently left the industry in order to make meaningful improvements in the sector. It is essential that this information is sought out in person by travelling out to these rural & remote communities to see and hear first-hand what support is needed and what needs to be put in place going forward.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





**A25. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests that the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning communicates effectively and continuously with remote and distance education schools to ascertain whether there are eligible preschoolers who are not achieving their mandated 600 hours of preschool through lack of access.”*

**Explanation:**

As many as ten remote schools were identified by ICPA-NSW in 2014, as servicing areas without practical access to pre-schooling. The NSW DoE has since identified other sites.

Several remote DE preschools have been established. However, as the DoE is not involved in researching the changing needs of these communities, it falls on the community members to advocate for access each time there is a four year without access to preschool.

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**A26. Louth Branch**

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

**Explanation**

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

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



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- o With English language needs
- o Children who are at risk of significant harm

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

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

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

## **A27. Louth Branch**

***“That ICPA-NSW requests the Director Educational Leadership for the Mitchell Region to arrange the establishment of two days preschool at Wanaaring Public School.”***

### **Explanation:**

Louth Branch is relieved to have finally been informed that preschool at Wanaaring is to commence at the beginning of term 1 2024. However, only one day is being offered.

This is a gross inequity. In 2016, the Mandatory Universal Access agreement was signed which quoted directly from the Department of Education Website states that all 4 yrs are to be given access to “15 hours per week or 600 hours a year, with a focus on participation by Indigenous children, vulnerable and disadvantaged children”.

8 YEARS later...only half that opportunity is being granted to the kids in one of the state’s most disadvantaged villages.

At Wanaaring there are -

- four preschoolers (possibly more)
- an enthusiastic SLSO



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- Safety Net funds available
- Space within the school
- proven policies are available to ameliorate any liability issues
- DSOE is ready to enroll students in their fifteen hours a week program. To achieve that amount of mandated access, students require two days at the very least.

Louth Branch would like therefore for the children of Wanaaring to have what EVERY four-year child in Australia has been mandated to have access too. Namely access to fifteen hours a week of preschool not six.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

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## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

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### A28. Louth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister of Health to ensure that there are antenatal, postnatal, and infant early years in-person support services to be 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





**A29. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Health and Minister for Education and Early Learning to enable access for parents/carers of remote students, vital allied health support through funding and/or subsidies”.*

**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

**A30. Bourke Branch**

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

**Explanation:**

The Brighter Beginnings program, while welcomed, does not adequately address the Early Intervention identification needs of children in rural and remote areas. The Royal Far West Healthy Kids Bus Stop Program was tailored to each communities' needs, and in Bourke, this







included a collaboration between RFW and local health service providers for a detailed health and developmental screener, including Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology, Psychology, Dental, Hearing, Child and Family Health Nurse, Community Nurse, Aboriginal Health Service to access to these disciplines by families for children, and to create a child centered approach to care, and pathways to NDIS Early Intervention if required for 3 year olds. Providing a full developmental screener for 3-year-olds enables families and preschools to work together through this process to develop strong partnerships with health providers into and through primary school to meet the needs of the states most vulnerable children.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### **A31. Rankins Springs Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning to ensure that rural and remote schools have access to in-person counselling sessions for students.”*

#### **Explanation:**

There are students requiring counselling face-to-face in rural and remote schools, however, due to the lack of services being available locally, they don't have access to an appropriate face to face counselling service. Our local TP1 School, Naradhan Public School, has not had access to a regular school counselling service for over three years. The school has a significant need for regular face-to-face counselling to support students academically and emotionally and are being disadvantaged by not having this support. This year, there has been a change to the School Counsellor allocation from ½ a day a fortnight to the school (the same day is shared with another school in the district) to two full days and a half day per term, however, in this time the Counsellor needs to travel to the school and does not allow sufficient time for cognitive assessments to be administered in the school counsellor time allocations, nor does it allow for discussion with the staff about the next steps needed to be addressed for each of the students requiring any other services that may or may not be provided for through the Dept of Education.



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



The school is required to pay for OT & speech pathologist visits from its own budget and with this limited funding, it is not sufficient to employ an SLSO (Student Learning Support Officer) to assist students. Schools are obligated to fund services for students' needs outside of Dept of Education services due to wait times and lack of facilities in the area. The teaching staff are also feeling the absence of a regular school counsellor, who had previously provided support with classroom management strategies and learning adjustments to ensure every student was supported.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### **A32. Monaro Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Regional Health, to prioritise workplace health capacity with targeted scholarships as part of a program to incentivise employers.”*

#### **Explanation:**

There are many vacancies in some health fields, especially for professional medical technicians like sonographers. For example, to become a sonographer an individual must complete a post-graduate course. These courses require the student to be employed as a trainee in the field before they can enroll in the university course. However, employers want qualified employees not trainees who are a cost to their business. By offering rural students' scholarships the employer is freed of the financial obligation and will be more inclined to accept trainees.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





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## MISCELLANEOUS

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### A 33. Walgett Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW consider moving the State Conference to a slightly later time in the year to allow a little more time for the preparation and submission of motions.”*

**Explanation:**

Submission dates for motions are usually very early in the year and often right after the Christmas holidays. January is a very busy time for members and State Council members themselves. Families are flat out juggling work and children at the same time as trying to have a break themselves, so are often away or too busy to contribute to these very important motions. We feel a few weeks extra to get the children back to school and then to work on motions would allow for a lot more member input, sharing of ideas and editing!

As Sate Council need considerable time as well to work through all the motions, it may be of benefit them as well. The State Conference date may be too difficult to move, but we wanted to put it up for discussion to see if it might be of benefit and at all possible.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





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## RURAL SCHOOLS

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### A 34. Wentworth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education ensure the ‘Tell Them from Me’ parent and student feedback surveys are offered in all NSW small schools, regardless of number of students, with responses collected and actioned by the office of Director Educational Leadership to ensure anonymity is maintained.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Families and staff of small schools have advised that in past years when they have been able to access the ‘Tell them from me survey,’ they have found the responses were valuable in being able to appropriately plan ahead.

In a small school, the interaction between the school and the community is vital and families should have an appropriate avenue to report their educational experiences and expectations. It is our understanding that schools with less than 10 students are not able to participate in the survey, however we believe that it is imperative that these schools and their families have access to the survey, as a way of providing feedback where needed.

We understand the need for anonymity and therefore in a small school setting responses should go direct to the Director Educational Leadership’s office. They could then share across all small schools what is working well and what could be improved.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





**A35. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests that each Director, Educational Leadership initiate a meeting with a representative from ICPA-NSW State Council post State Conference.”*

**Explanation:**

We understand that previously, our representatives have been invited to ask for meetings with remote DELs annually. We believe however that annual meetings would be more likely to happen if the DEL calendar invited ICPA to a meeting when the DEL is visiting particular areas. Then the DELs are able to be informed of issues before, in some cases, they become a problem.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

**A36. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to include ICPA-NSW as a permanent presenter at their annual principal conference.”*

**Explanation:**

Louth Branch welcomes sharing knowledge with professional staff and believes that all communities need to discuss issues with the aim of working collaboratively towards solutions.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





**A37. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning, to ensure that there is always a ‘handover’ between principals in remote and very remote small (TP1) schools.”*

**Explanation:**

At the end of the schooling year via an online meeting, we ask the outgoing principal to provide the following to the new incoming principal:

1. A first term program would allow the teaching principal to
  - settle into the huge administrative load knowing that the students are starting their schooling in the first week.
  - become familiar with the multistage classroom environment.
  - assess the students’ academic progress and levels before having to set their own program.
  - check what resources are available at the school before purchasing new ones.
  - know the students and their families which in a small community is integral to roles in which leadership is required.
2. It is vital a discussion is had between the incoming and outgoing principals to ensure the new principal has an insight into the school and the community.
3. Principal contracts should commence on the 1st of January, allowing the principal time to familiarise themselves with information applicable to the new school prior to the 1st day of the term.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





**A38. Bourke Branch**

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

**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 our conference or in deputations. It would be beneficial to have a representative from Connected Communities leadership attend as part of the regular meetings between the Department of Education and ICPA-NSW.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

**A39. Louth Branch**

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

**Explanation:**

Rarely there is not any affordable accommodation in remote villages. It is simply disgusting that the DoE expect staff to accommodate casual staff or a second teacher, in their own homes whether they are there themselves or not, in substandard caravans or dongas nor at their own expense. There is no additional funding which allows for this extra expense. This is yet another disincentive for principals as they cannot leave their position for any amount of time as the school would be without a teacher.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





#### A40. Rankins Springs Branch

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

#### **Explanation:**

Currently the Assets Management Unit identifies what projects will be funded with the Routine Planned Maintenance funds whilst the Principals of TP1 & TP2 schools don't have any say in where the money will be spent in their school. Often the money could be better spent in other areas that would be of immediate benefit to the students and staff. Funds associated with Routine Planned Maintenance are for carpets, painting, adjusting doors and windows, cupboards, and boundary fencing. A school where students of some of our members attend wanted to fix some old blinds in the staff room and place ceiling fans in some of the rooms. However, they could not use the money they had available to them in Routine Planned Maintenance fund as the items requested were classified as new fittings and fixtures. Improvements need to be included. ICPA-NSW State Council has completed a submission for the review into the Planning and Delivery of School Infrastructure in NSW where it is hoped that this issue will be addressed.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### A41. Rankins Springs Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests that the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning holds Directors, Educational Leadership of rural and remote schools accountable when a complaint has been made about a teacher or school by a parent or parent body.”*

#### **Explanation:**

The Rankins Springs branch would like a clear and transparent outcome or resolution to any complaint that has been made regarding teaching staff in a rural or remote school or indeed any school. There seems to be a culture in some schools that sees students and their families







discriminated against for standing up for what they feel is right for their child/ren. School families and community members feel that there should be a written explanation or policy that parents can access to follow up complaints that have been made where there has been no clear resolution to that complaint.

Some schools/teachers/principals seem to have a problem communicating with parents about their children and about what is happening within the school. Parents are finding it extremely difficult to access face to face interviews with some teachers regarding the progress of their child/ren, due to the teacher/s not being resident in community. Appointments are difficult to obtain, and some parents are feeling excluded. It is crucial that parents feel that they can contact their child/ren's teacher or the school principal whenever they need to.

The previous Principal of our TP2 school recently was successful in dismissing the current School Council which then reduces the opportunities for parents and community to work in partnership with school leaders to achieve greater governance of the school.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### **A42. Louth Branch**

***“That ICPA-NSW requests that NSW Department of Education adopt a policy that ensures that school programs from TP1 & TP2 schools are physically observed by Directors, Educational Leadership.”***

#### **Explanation:**

As part of the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) we urge that the Director, Education Leadership needs to review biannually:

- the teaching principals' program,
- register of work taught
- the students completed work which aligns to that program.



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



This level of support is necessary for the teaching principal who is working in professional peer isolation (despite having access to online mentoring) and the communities they are serving who deserve the best education possible for their children.

We believe that the Director's physical presence will engender friendships and networking which will allow the Director to understand issues between teaching principals and their communities before problems arise.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### **A43. Rankins Springs Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning establish an independent body to receive complaints from parents/staff for TP1, TP2 and Central Schools as opposed to the designated Director, Educational Leadership (DEL) if an appropriate resolution has not been reached.”*

#### **Explanation:**

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

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

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





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

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### **A44. Louth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests that the Chief Executive of the NSW Land and Housing Corporation ensure that agencies responsible for the maintenance of remote teacher housing do so efficiently.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Currently we have many examples of inefficiency and negligence in the maintenance of teacher housing. Those agencies are responsible for conducting six monthly checks. Before a teacher begins an appointment, all residences must be watertight, cracks and gaps filled, paint work done.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### **A45. 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.



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



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

#### **A46. Louth Branch**

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

#### **Explanation:**

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

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### **A47. Rankins Springs Branch**

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

#### **Explanation:**

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





in rural areas. These positions are vital in ensuring schools remain operational in the event of an unexpected illness and/or leave. TP1 and TP2 schools have a low number of staff and do not have the ability to split classes in the event of an unexpected absence. Another issue is that this Hub and Spoke Program position is shared with three small schools in the area whilst the teacher is based at a Central School in the district. Whilst Principals and teachers are accessing Professional Learning at the same time, each school can't access the relief teacher through the Hub and Spoke Program on the same day so accessing a very small bank of relief teachers is still an ongoing issue in rural areas. In the past there have been teachers assigned to this position that do not have experience or behaviour management skills to go from school to school and have not been suitable candidates. This position needs to be filled with proficient teachers.

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

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

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

#### **A48. Rankins Springs Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning and the Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy Unit to ensure that regional, rural and remote schools facilitate and provide letters of reference, letters of support and/or letters of recommendation for students to their families who wish to apply for secondary school scholarships, bursaries and/or funding from private, public or independent schools and/or community organisations that provide financial support for secondary education.”*



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



**Explanation:**

A family has asked our local rural primary school for a reference from a class teacher to add to a portfolio for their child to apply for boarding scholarships in 2023. The request was refused on the grounds that public schools do not liaise with private schools or other schools according to the Department of Education's policies. The family were also told over the phone that staff are too busy to write references at the end of the year and a school report should suffice.

The concern was heightened as references have always been given upon request from the local primary school, even the previous year under the same Principal. The parent body is concerned that if simple requests like these are refused from rural and remote schools, isolated families, who already have hard decisions to make when it comes to the secondary education of their children, will be further impacted. More importantly, students will be impacted if they cannot access scholarships, bursaries and financial support from secondary schools and other community organisations. This reason alone puts families with boarding students at a severe disadvantage financially. Boarding is an additional fee that day students do not have the burden of. To bring this financial inequality back to a level playing field, any opportunity for boarding fees to be reduced must be supported.

Moving forward, Rankins Springs Branch would like to see a stronger partnership formed between isolated families and small rural and schools. We would like to see such simple requests honoured. The well-being and educational goals of isolated rural students should be promoted and encouraged first and foremost.

This motion was presented to the conference last year and to date there has been no clear decision about this issue. Whilst some DoE staff agree that schools supply a letter of reference when requested, there are some that are unsure. Rankins Springs branch is now requesting that the Dept of Education advise ICPA-NSW, of a clear directive on this issue and that DoE staff (eg DELs, Principals) should be informed of the clear decision so this can be settled for all future student scholarship applicants.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



#### A49. Rankins Springs Branch

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

#### **Explanation:**

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

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

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

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





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## SPECIAL EDUCATION

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### A50. Rankins Springs Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning to ensure that Principals work with families of students with learning disabilities to implement educational support for these students.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Every student should be able to access professional services outside of the DoE to suit their Independent Learning Plan. ILPs need to be assessed on a regular basis with the support of independent disability trained staff along with the principal and classroom teacher.

Parents of a student with Level 2 Autism at their local Central School are struggling to find support in implementing learning programs to address the educational needs of their son.

The student has access to the NDIS funding to employ an OT and other disability trained staff independent of the DoE for assistance for English & Maths for two hours per day. When the Principal was contacted by the parents about this support, they indicated that they have the final say as to whether they will allow it or not.

The student has participated in regular online tutoring at home for Maths & English and achieves 75% - 100% in all assessments but when he is in the classroom environment he struggles. It appears that the principal is not prepared to work with families for better outcomes for all students.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered







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## TERTIARY EDUCATION

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### A51. Louth Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests University Administration Centre (UAC) to look at the way credits and advance standings could be transferred from one academic transcript to another when a student moves from one university to another.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Louth Branch 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.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### A52. Monaro Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education to support rural and remote communities by collaborating with the Country Universities Centre to establish Regional University Study Hubs in TAFE Connected Learning Centres, so that communities with TAFE Connected Learning Centres can have improved and streamlined local access to both higher educational and vocational opportunities provided from one facility in the town.”*



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



**Explanation:**

TAFE NSW have established 22 Connected Learning Centres across regional NSW to support vocational students. These CLC's have modern and appealing learning spaces, fast **connectivity** and technology, and staffing support. Country Universities Centres have also been established in a number of NSW communities with very similar modern and appealing facilities and technology layout.

Smaller regional and rural communities that have TAFE CLC's include Hay, Bourke, Cobar, West Wyalong, Deniliquin and Jindabyne. We suggest that a partnership between TAFE NSW and the CUC supported by the NSW Government could relatively easily and inexpensively broaden out the vocational utilisation of TAFE CLC's to support local students in studying higher educational courses from any provider, in addition to current support for vocational courses delivered through TAFE NSW.

Smaller population Centres in regional and remote locations are realistic that it would be a seemingly very inefficient usage of government resources to have a TAFE Connected Learning Centre and a Regional University Study Hub such as the CUC operating independently in two separate facilities in town, each developed with very similar layouts and technology. Why not explore combining the two, and utilise the existing TAFE CLC facility and technology resources to also support university studies with the involvement of an organisation such as the CUC with its existing track record in this area? There will be significant financial efficiencies of utilising the one facility for both vocational and higher education, which will mean that these combined facilities will be more sustainable in smaller rural and remote populations.

We request that the NSW Minister through TAFE NSW and Country Universities Centre collaborate to explore opportunities such that existing resources in the 22 regional and remote TAFE Connected Learning Centres be better utilised by broadening access to university as well as vocational courses. Smaller regional and rural communities might then have one single location in town with streamlined access, support, industry engagement, school outreach and widening participation activities across the whole range of tertiary education.”

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





### A53. Walgett Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Skills, Tafe and Tertiary Education to increase the allowance rates for VTAS (Vocational Training Assistance Scheme) for travel, accommodation, relocation and rental assistance for Apprentices and Trainee’s in NSW.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Regional and remote apprentices and trainees travel vast distances to attend TAFE and other off the job training. These students often travel to regional cities for a block release of between 3 and 5 days which often means they must travel the day before and sometimes the day after it finishes. This is required anywhere between every 3-6 weeks throughout the year. These expenses are a heavy burden on these students who are mostly low-income earners.

The current VTAS rates are \$0.33 per kilometer for travel and \$56.00 per night for accommodation. The ATO in the year 2023-2024 works on \$0.85 per kilometer to run a private vehicle. In most regional cities it would be unlikely to be able to get a motel room for under \$100.00.

VTAS relocation and rental assistance is up to \$2,500.00 per year. In comparison Relocation Scholarship recipients for University Student’s receive \$5,385 in the first year, \$2,693 and \$1,345 after that.

Last year the Apprentices Travel Card worth \$250 to regional and remote apprentices and trainees was axed because it could be used to purchase anything. The cost to the government of each card was approximately \$900 due to administration costs.

As the VTAS system is already in existence and would only require a change of rates to allow for significant help for apprentices and trainees.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





**A54. Bourke Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW request ICPA (Aust) to seek 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. This student must relocate to where she has been sent for the placement, to work full time without payment, find and pay for accommodation, transport, and support herself for the year with a second job, after being a student for three years.

A nursing student has regular 6-week placements during her course. She is bound to go where she is placed. She not only has to find accommodation for this time but still must pay rent where she attends university, car payments and support herself during the placement but is unable to work at the part-time job she usually does of an evening to pay her bills. She is essentially paying double rent or accommodation.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





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## TRAVEL

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### A55. Collarenebri-Mungindi Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Local Government and the Local Government Association to instigate clearly marked school bus routes with lime green school bus route signs, instead of the yellow and black signs currently used.”*

**Explanation:**

The lime green sign attracts the attention of motorists because it is different to any other signs on the road. Road users should be made aware of the fact that they are travelling on a road that is also being used by a school bus. There are many factors requiring motorists to be cautious on rural roads shared by school buses. Some of these factors are dust, frequent stops that may not be visible to other road users, and rough roads. Queensland has lime green signs already in use and they are very noticeable.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### A56. Broken Hill Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests Transport for NSW to increase their allowable trips under the School Drive Subsidy program for full time boarders.”*

**Explanation:**

Currently term boarders are allowed 9 trips for the entire school year. This number includes the 8 trips driving to school at the start of each term and returning to pick students up at the end of each term.



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



This means that there is only one trip for any incidental reason that may arise for the entire school year. The added cost to families for additional trips due to compulsory leave weekends, illness or emergencies is dramatically increasing.

Carried/Lost /Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### **A57. Wentworth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests Transport for NSW to produce an information document that families can present to their new school when their children are eligible for School Drive Subsidy.”*

#### **Explanation:**

It is exceptionally difficult for families to navigate the School Drive Subsidy with schools who are not already familiar with the program or Transport for NSW. It’s even more so for the numerous families who need to send their children interstate and the schools being completely unfamiliar with School Drive Subsidy.

A simple one-page document of information that the family can hand to the school to explain what they need to do and who they contact for assistance would save time, money, and an enormous amount of frustration. This could be made available to ICPA-NSW or in the School Drive Subsidy portal with a little button that says, ‘print and hand to school.’”

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered





**A58. Hay Branch**

*“That ICPA Hay Branch wish to thank the ICPA-NSW Travel Portfolio team for their continued work and support to members when dealing with Transport NSW, to solve issues with School Drive Subsidy (SDS) applications and payments and support them in their continued advocacy for improvements to this program.”*

**Explanation:**

Members of our branch needed the team from the transport portfolio to assist them with issues arising from the difficulty navigating the SDS application program and parent portal. Without this support members would not have been able to get the assistance they are entitled to. Upgrades to the system have made important improvements and it is more user friendly but there are still issues for both members and schools dealing with the processes.

\*Case studies can be provided.

We are very grateful for the hard work and support given by the ICPA-NSW transport portfolio team.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

**A59. Wentworth Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests Transport for NSW to provide schools with detailed guidelines on what trips can be approved for all types of students who are eligible for School Drive Subsidy.”*

**Explanation:**

Since the inception of School Drive Subsidy, ICPA-NSW have heard from members who have experienced confusion over the details of the program. Schools, and especially schools with a minimal number of students on School Drive Subsidy, have little knowledge or understanding of which and how many trips to approve for individual students.



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



We feel that more education needs to be given to schools, so they can approve the appropriate number of trips per student.

This could also include Transport for NSW providing a generic form where families list the trips that they can claim each semester. Alternatively, allowing families to load each trip in the portal and then schools could log in and approve would fast track the process. Schools could then use this to cross reference with their records and assist them with approving the correct number of trips.

Carried/Lost/Withdrawn/Deemed Covered

### **A60. Broken Hill Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests QANTAS, Rex and other regional airlines to offer reduced, capped priced fares on available seats to secondary and tertiary students travelling between their place of education and their home at any time on any flight.”*

#### **Explanation:**

For many secondary and tertiary students living in rural and remote communities, air travel is often the most time efficient form of travel.

Our branch members have students travelling vast distances to attend their educational facilities. This can result in a whole day or two days’ travel by rail or road, when there are time constraints, this is not possible.

Having reduced, capped prices would enable students to travel between home and the location of their education. This would encompass secondary and tertiary students travelling for leave, practical and theory components of their course requirement and allow the security of travel to and from the closest airport when unplanned situations arise.

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### A61. Nyngan Branch

*“That ICPA–NSW impress upon the NSW Minister for Transport to provide tertiary students with a travel subsidy, similar to the School Drive Subsidy.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Following the abandonment of the regional student travel card trial we suggest providing a subsidy based on the distance from their home to the tertiary institution as a kilometre rate, assisting with travel costs at the start and end of each semester. Dependent tertiary students still live at home with their parents but are required to move away from home during semester time to access their tertiary education. With limited access to transport links in rural and remote NSW, it is an equity issue that these students have access to a travel allowance like the School Drive Subsidy for travel at the beginning and end of each semester. We are aware of the Fares Allowance but not all students meet the criteria to receive it.

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### A62. Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch

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

#### **Explanation:**

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





Tibooburra. These students need to be transported most often to Broken Hill, which is 330 kilometres away to attend these educational opportunities. Currently these students do not meet any criteria to access the School Drive Subsidy to support them attending such important educational opportunities.

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### A63. Rankins Springs Branch

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Transport to allow preschool children to travel on rural and remote bus runs in the year prior to commencing school enabling them to be included in the School Drive Subsidy and the School Students Transport Scheme for that year.”*

#### **Explanation:**

The costs relating to getting preschool children to the service’s front gate are a significant barrier for many rural and remote families. If the preschool children were included in the contract between the bus operator and Transport for NSW this would result in certainty of numbers and financial remuneration for the bus operator, as well as a definite seat for the child. For those families who do not have the option of putting their preschool child on the local school bus, the ability to receive the School Drive Subsidy to transport their child from home to preschool would be of great benefit. This would alleviate some of the costs relating to driving their own vehicle to transport the child to the preschool’s front gate. This is in line with their operator accreditation requirements which would include consultation with the preschool provider and the parents.

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**A64. Rankins Springs Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and Transport for NSW to lower the number of students required to start a non-commercial bus run as a matter of urgency.”*

**Explanation:**

Rankins Springs has had two bus runs for many years – one for the eastern and southern side of the town and one for the western side of the town. The bus run on the western side of Rankins Springs began as a community owned bus run that was run under a Transport for NSW contract. When there was only one student left on this run, the contract was lost with Transport for NSW. This bus run is now funded solely by the community and has four students. The concern has always been that if families moved back into the area serviced by the community run, we would need 15 children to apply for a new contract. This is never going to happen, but if the community thought that the number to apply for a new run was 8 they may think this was more achievable. It is the perception of getting to 15 that is the barrier.

Although a bus run may be maintained with eight students, 15 students are required to start a new bus run. This requirement means that an operator needs to purchase a Category II, which is a 14 - 24 Authorised Adult Seating Capacity (AASC – excluding the driver), bus to service the run. This would mean for example a Toyota coaster or similar bus. If the required number to commence the run was brought back to eight then a Category I, which is an 8 seater – or a 13AASC bus, is all that would be required, a Toyota commuter bus or similar. We understand that the larger bus allows for a significant growth of student numbers but would argue that the lower number of eight is hard enough to attain in most rural and remote communities so that much room for growth is not necessary. All communities are different, and consideration of this should be taken into account. Perhaps it is time that the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and Transport for NSW again looked at community owned bus runs where feasible, which would be less expensive to support.



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



The argument that Transport for NSW continually uses is that each application to commence a bus run would be considered on a case-by-case basis. If this is their position, then making the required change to the wording in the regulations (simply changing 15 to 8) should not be an issue and this motion would then be resolved. Operators researching and reading these regulations would know straight away if an application for a new commercial bus run would be worth the effort.

This motion has been presented and passed at conferences for over 20 years now and it's well overdue to have a resolution on this issue.

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#### **A65. Lord Howe Island Branch**

***“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Transport and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) to review the current School Transport Subsidy Flight booking policy for boarders travelling from Lord Howe Island.”***

#### **Explanation:**

Lord Howe Island, located off the coast of Australia, is home to a small community of resident (approximately 270 permanent residents). Due to its remote location, transportation options for residents are limited, especially for the island's high school children who need to commute to access education opportunities. Qantas is the only airline servicing Lord Howe Island. The current lack of accessibility in booking airfares poses a significant challenge for families.

Two booking options

Book online through the Qantas portal at full price (\$600 - \$900 depending on season)  
Port Macquarie Travel with the 10-day islander /local fare. The local fare has restrictions and additional costs for changes etc in which parents are required to pay out of pocket. This fare is also only available within 10 days, which sometimes often sold out with no seats available.



PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRESIDENT



Parents currently have to pay for airfares and are reimbursed. This is a significant financial burden on families. The current arrangement with Transport NSW has been unsuccessful with reimbursement never on time with parents having to chase the money. It is requested that a system or process be adopted for Lord Howe Island families to book.

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#### **A66. Lord Howe Island Branch**

*“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Transport and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) to review the current School Transport Subsidy (flights) for boarders to include travel from place of residence to School of enrolment.”*

#### **Explanation:**

Lord Howe Island is located 600 kilometres off the coast of NSW. Qantas is the only airline servicing the Island. Students currently enrolled in country or regional boarding schools such as Yanco are required to pay for additional transportation costs from Sydney to the school of enrolment. The current system is restrictive on parents and schooling opportunities for Lord Howe Island children. It also places an unnecessary financial burden on families who already can't afford the exorbitant boarding and tuition fees. It therefore stands for reason to extend the flight policy to include place of residence to school of enrolment.

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