

STATE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

BOARDING, HOSTELS AND SECOND HOMES

Motion 1. Marla Oodnadatta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA requests the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to consider increasing the State Education Allowance (SEA) to a stepped allowance, based on the tuition fees families incur, to better support families accessing boarding education.”

Explanation:

We thank Minister Boyer for his response regarding this motion last year, indicating that the SEA is currently under review and remains subject to ongoing discussion and further consideration. We would appreciate being included in this discussion before decisions are finalised.

Currently, the SA SEA provides \$5,269.37 per year to all families who qualify for the Assistance for Isolated Children’s Basic Boarding or Second Home Allowance, regardless of the varying tuition costs of boarding schools or distances families must travel.

Many South Australian families live in regions where students have no access to secondary education due to geographic isolation. For these families, boarding school is often the only way for students to access a complete education, including face-to-face teacher support, peer interaction, and extra-curricular opportunities such as sport, music, and cultural activities.

Rising tuition and cost-of-living pressures mean families struggle to afford boarding school fees without adequate assistance. It is essential that government support keeps pace to ensure equitable educational outcomes for these students.

By comparison, Queensland’s LAFHAS allowance covers tuition up to \$3,245 per year, with an additional 50c per \$1 for fees exceeding that amount, up to a maximum of \$10,625. A similar stepped approach in South Australia would more fairly support families facing higher tuition costs, ensuring children can access the full educational and developmental benefits of boarding school without undue financial burden.

Motion 2. North West Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA advocate to the Department for Education (DfE) to review and increase the State Education Allowance (SEA) and the Remote Travel Allowance (RTA) by retaining the current base rate, introducing a stepped tuition component linked to actual boarding costs.”

Explanation:

The current State Education Allowance provides a flat annual payment of \$5,269.00 to families who qualify for the Commonwealth Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding or Second Home Allowance. This payment no longer reflects the true and rising costs associated with educating geographically isolated students who must attend boarding school due to lack of local access to secondary education.

For many remote families, boarding and tuition fees exceed \$60,000 per child per year, excluding essential additional costs such as travel, uniforms, technology and incidental expenses. Unlike regional families, geographically isolated families are generally unable to access five-day boarding options due to distance, transport constraints and limited schooling availability, leaving full-time boarding as the only practical pathway to secondary education.

A stepped funding model that aligns additional support with actual tuition costs and includes a higher Remote Area Travel Allowance would help facilitate a more equitable framework. A similar approach to Queensland’s Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme (LAFHAS) would better recognise the financial realities faced by remote South Australian families.

We propose that the existing SEA base rate be retained, with the introduction of an additional stepped tuition component calculated at 50 cents per dollar of tuition costs above a defined threshold, up to a capped combined allowance of \$15,052.99. The Remote Travel Allowance should also be reviewed and increased using a distance-based sliding scale.

These changes would provide more targeted, fair and sustainable support to geographically isolated families and help ensure equitable access to education for rural and remote students across South Australia.

Motion 3. Marla Oodnadatta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA requests the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to review and increase the Remote Travel Allowance (RTA), with payment based on the actual distances families travel rather than a flat rate per student.”

Explanation:

We acknowledge and appreciate the 2024 increase to the Remote Travel Allowance. However, we urge the Department to consider a more equitable model that reflects the real distances families travel from their homes to boarding schools. The current \$516 per student is significantly lower than the \$2,266 available to Queensland families under the Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS).

Queensland’s Travel Allowance (RATrA) provides a practical benchmark:

- **Eligibility:** Queensland resident with a child in approved boarding (state or non-state), living over 50 km from the nearest suitable school.
- **Payment Structure:** Paid per semester
- **Allowance Rates (per student/year):**
 - Minimum: \$185
 - First 500 km: \$1.04 per km
 - Additional km: \$1.73 per km
 - Maximum: \$2,266
- **Application:** Annual application required

A distance-based RTA would reduce financial pressure on families and support them in providing their children with quality education, ensuring students can access boarding school opportunities without undue hardship.

Motion 4. Flinders Ranges Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA work with the Department for Education (DfE) to review the process for claiming the State Education Allowance (SEA) and Remote Travel Allowance (RTA) and renewing those claims annually.”

Explanation:

The SEA and RTA is available to geographically isolated families with secondary school children boarding away from home. Parents apply to the DfE Transport Services Unit and receive four payments each year, at the end of each term.

When applying for SEA, families in our branch have received no response when lodging forms through the process on the “Travel concession and allowances” website. At the very minimum, families should receive acknowledgement when documents are lodged. Families are then required to renew each year, but no information is provided about the process for doing so.

The current system would be improved by the establishment of a dedicated SEA email address, with an automated response acknowledging receipt of applications, with working office hours and contact details of the relevant people included in any correspondence. The website should be updated to include more detail about SEA lodgement and annual renewal processes. Recipients of SEA should also, as a matter of course, be advised of the annual renewal process.

Motion 5. State Council

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA request that the Department for Education add an emergency funding component to the State Education Allowance (SEA) for the foreseeable future to help families cope with extraordinary increase in fuel and travel costs.”

Explanation:

With fuel prices almost doubling overnight, the financial strain that is being placed on families when transporting their children to and from boarding school has been immense. With no end in sight to the global conflict that is influencing the fuel prices, SA ICPA are asking that the Department for Education and the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, create an emergency component of the State Education Allowance to help families with these inflated costs.

There has already been some indication that families are opting to not visit their children as often or bring them home for weekends due to the rising costs and this has the potential to have a negative effect on the mental health of these students and their families.

Motion 6. State Council

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA continues to engage with denominational and independent boarding schools in Adelaide to advocate for the establishment of a designated ICPA bursary at each school/college.”

Explanation:

For ICPA students, particularly those residing in rural and remote areas where access to face-to-face schooling is often limited to School of the Air during primary years, pathways to secondary education present significant challenges. Available options include Open Access College and other distance education providers, homeschooling, private boarding arrangements, or enrolment in boarding schools. In some cases, families are faced with the difficult decision to relocate to metropolitan areas, resulting in social, financial and workforce impacts on rural and remote communities.

Where financially viable, boarding schools offer one of the most suitable and comprehensive educational pathways for many ICPA students. These schools provide high-quality academic, social and emotional development opportunities, equipping students with the skills and confidence to pursue further education, employment, and leadership roles. Importantly, many students return to their rural and remote communities, contributing to their sustainability and future workforce.

While existing scholarships and bursaries offered by boarding schools are acknowledged and appreciated, they are often limited in number, highly competitive, and based on selection criteria that may disadvantage rural and remote students. Many ICPA students have not had access to face-to-face schooling or opportunities such as club or representative sport due to their geographic isolation, impacting their competitiveness for these awards.

SA ICPA acknowledges and thanks those Adelaide boarding schools that engaged following a similar motion in 2025. SA ICPA will continue to build on these relationships and encourages schools and colleges to become members of ICPA to further develop their understanding of the unique challenges faced by geographically isolated students and families.

Through ongoing engagement and collaboration, SA ICPA seeks to encourage the establishment of designated ICPA bursaries at each boarding school/college. Such bursaries would improve equity of access to education for rural and remote students and ensure that financial barriers do not prevent them from accessing appropriate secondary education opportunities.

Motion 7. Port Augusta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA call on the Government of South Australia, the Australian Boarding Schools Association, and relevant boarding schools in Adelaide to work collaboratively to investigate and establish a coordinated travel scheme for boarding students to enable travel home on exeat weekends.”

Explanation:

The scheme would allow participating schools to coordinate transport for students travelling north of Adelaide, with a shared drop-off and collection hub in Port Augusta, giving families from northern and remote areas the opportunity to collect their children significantly closer to home.

For many families, accessing boarding education in Adelaide already involves long distances and considerable expense. On exeat weekends, parents are often required to undertake a full day's travel each way to collect and return their children. With fuel prices remaining high, the cost of these trips can quickly add up, making regular travel home unmanageable for some families.

This not only places financial strain on households, but also limits students' ability to return home, reducing valuable time with family and connection to their communities. In addition, long-distance driving increases fatigue and road safety risks for families travelling extensive outback distances.

A coordinated travel scheme supported by boarding schools, the Australian Boarding Schools Association and the South Australian Government would provide a practical, fair and much-needed solution.

The scheme would:

- Ease the financial pressure of rising fuel and travel costs.
- Reduce the need for long-distance driving, improving safety outcomes.
- Support student wellbeing by making exeat travel more accessible.
- Strengthen connections between students, families and their home communities.
- Provide a sensible, shared transport option through a centralised Port Augusta hub.

Case Study:

We've had children at boarding school in Adelaide for the past seven years, and exeat travel has been one of the biggest ongoing pressures for our family.

With no family base in Adelaide, every exeat means doing the full trip to collect and return our kids. For us, that's an 8½-hour drive each way, essentially two full days on the road, and the fuel costs alone add up quickly.

Over time, the strain became such that we ended up buying a unit in Adelaide just to make exeats workable. While that's helped, it's a significant extra cost and definitely not something every family can do.

Carpooling sounds like a solution, but in reality, it's been very difficult to make work. I've often offered lifts to others but have never been able to organise one for my own children.

Flights into Coober Pedy would be an obvious alternative for us, but they remain prohibitively expensive. This is something that has been raised previously, but without any real progress, it continues to sit out of reach for families who would genuinely benefit from it.

A shared travel scheme in the shape of a bus trip to Port Augusta would make a huge difference. It would cut down my travel time by half, reduce costs, improve safety, and make exeats and the start/end dates of terms far more manageable.

I know this would benefit many families, not just remote and isolated but also the rural communities that surround Port Augusta.

Edwina Bowie, Wilgena Station, North West Branch

Motion 8. North West Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA advocates to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, to investigate the feasibility of establishing a purpose-built government residential college located in metropolitan Adelaide for students from regional, rural and remote South Australia for Years 7–12."

Explanation:

Currently, there are no government residential college in the Adelaide metropolitan area available to secondary students. While South Australia has some well-established regional boarding facilities in Cleve, Burra and Lucindale, there are no broadly accessible government boarding options within the metropolitan area for students whose educational needs require them to attend school in Adelaide.

With the continuing rise in private boarding fees, many regional, rural and remote families face significant financial pressure when choosing metropolitan schooling. A government residential college in Adelaide would provide a more affordable and equitable option for families.

Families may choose Adelaide for secondary education due to:

- access to extended family support,
- more frequent and flexible transport options, including regional air and coach services,
- access to specialised academic, vocational, sporting or medical services,
- broader subject and pathway offerings to meet individual student needs and interests.

We emphasise that the intent of this motion is not to undermine or reduce the viability of existing regional residential colleges and private boarding schools. Rather, it seeks to explore an additional affordable option in Adelaide to support families whose circumstances require metropolitan schooling.

Investigating the feasibility of a purpose-built facility, possibly on an established metropolitan secondary school site, would enable government to assess demand, infrastructure capacity and long-term sustainability, while ensuring equitable access to secondary education for students from regional, rural and remote South Australia.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Motion 9. Marla Oodnadatta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA requests the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to provide financial support to families through a Remuneration for the Isolated Classroom Supervisor (RICS), recognising the vital role of supervisors in assisting students eligible for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC).”

Explanation:

Children educated through distance education often rely on an isolated classroom supervisor at home to facilitate learning, provide supervision, and support curriculum delivery. These supervisors play a crucial role in ensuring students can access and engage with their schooling effectively, particularly in remote areas where teacher contact is limited.

Currently, families bear the full financial responsibility for employing supervisors, which can create significant economic strain, especially for households with multiple school-aged children. Providing RICS for eligible families, particularly those receiving AIC, would recognise the professional contribution of supervisors and reduce the financial burden on families, ensuring students receive consistent, high-quality educational support at home.

This support would directly contribute to equitable educational outcomes for remote learners and assist families in sustaining their children’s access to distance education without undue financial pressure.

We appreciate the Minister’s response to our previous motions regarding this issue however wish to point out that whilst Open Access has over 900 families, less than 5% of these students attend distance education in their own home. The majority of students are completing subjects through OAC that are not offered at their school site yet these students still receive the support of a paid person their school. The State Government wants to ensure fair distribution of support across all distance education families yet the majority receive supervision within a school paid by the department yet our families receive no support. This is hardly a fair distribution.

Motion 10. North East Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA State Council request the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to provide financial assistance towards the cost of supervising students in a Distance Education classroom.”

Explanation:

The role of the Distance Education Supervisor is essential for the education of children studying via Distance Education. Families living remotely are dependent on Distance Education as the only means of accessing a government school, such as School of The Air.

Families must choose to either employ a supervisor, or have a parent take on the role. Either choice comes at a high financial cost to remote families, with either a wage having to be paid or a parent having to give up work, to supervise the student/s.

Assistance is urgently required to compensate families for the high cost of educating their children in a government school.

Motion 11. North West Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA request the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to investigate remuneration for geographically isolated families supervising students enrolled through Open Access College (OAC), Port Augusta School of the Air (SOTA), as per the enrolment policy.”

Explanation:

The OAC Enrolment Policy (October 2023) requires that all students (except adult students) always have a parent or supervisor available to ensure appropriate supervision, child safety and engagement in learning programs. For geographically isolated families, this places a compulsory instructional and supervisory responsibility on parents or appointed supervisors, who are integral to the delivery of distance education. This role should not be voluntary as is the current case.

Motion 12. Port Augusta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA requests the Department for Education to establish a Distance Education Home Supervisor Allowance.

Explanation:

South Australia encompasses vast remote regions where traditional schooling options are limited. Families in these areas often rely on distance education to provide their children with quality education.

In these circumstances, a full-time home tutor or supervisor—most often a parent—undertakes the role of primary educator. This includes delivering daily lessons, managing administrative requirements, and supporting their child’s learning, all while balancing household and station responsibilities. This allowance would recognise the significant contribution of geographically isolated families, primarily mothers, who dedicate substantial time, effort, and resources to supporting their children’s education in remote areas.

This level of commitment often requires families to reduce or forgo off-farm employment, resulting in lost income and difficult workforce trade-offs. In addition, the financial burden associated with distance education—including educational resources, technology, and internet access—can be considerable. An allowance would help ease these pressures, particularly during challenging seasonal conditions and ongoing workforce constraints.

Motion 13. Port Augusta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA requests the relevant departments to increase the School of the Air travel reimbursement rate from \$0.32 per kilometre to align with the current Australian Taxation Office rate of \$0.88 per kilometre.”

Explanation:

The current reimbursement rate of \$0.32 per kilometre no longer reflects the true cost of travel. Families engaged in School of the Air programs often undertake frequent and long-distance travel to access essential educational activities, resources, and face-to-face interactions.

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) sets a standard car expense rate of \$0.88 per kilometre (for the 2024–25 financial year), which more accurately reflects the costs associated with fuel, vehicle maintenance, and general wear and tear.

Aligning the School of the Air travel reimbursement with the ATO rate would provide more appropriate financial support to geographically isolated families and help ensure equitable access to essential educational opportunities.

Motion 14. Marla Oodnadatta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA urges the Department for Education to increase the travel allowance for School of the Air (SOTA) families attending face-to-face events, to better reflect the true costs of remote travel.”

Explanation:

Face-to-face events are vital for children learning through distance education, enabling them to meet teachers, connect with peers, and extend their learning beyond home. Many SOTA families live over 500 km from Port Augusta, often travelling long distances on unsealed roads.

The current 32c/km reimbursement does not cover rising travel costs or lost income. Doubling the allowance would ensure families can attend without financial strain, safeguarding students’ learning and social participation.

For example, for 20 families travelling 500 km to five events, the increase would amount to \$16,000, ensuring equitable access for all remote students. Supporting our rural and outback families would also keep more families in these areas, a step to safeguarding the future of the agriculture industry and food supplies.

Motion 15. North West Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA requests the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, to review and increase the School of the Air (SOTA) travel reimbursement provided to geographically isolated families, to ensure equitable access to education and to better reflect the true cost of private vehicle use.”

Explanation:

Geographically isolated families in South Australia travel significant distances to access education services, including School of the Air activities, examinations, therapy services and essential face-to-face programs. In the absence of public transport or school bus services, these families must rely entirely on private vehicles. The rebate needs to be increased to consider the increase in fuel prices, the current state of the outback roads and wear and tear on private vehicles.

While the Open Access College receives a grant from the Department for Education to provide a travel allowance for some distance education travel requirements, current reimbursement levels at 32 cents per kilometre do not reflect the true and increasing costs of operating a vehicle and filling it with fuel.

This concern is further heightened considering recent fuel supply disruptions across Australia. While it is anticipated that market conditions may stabilise, there remains uncertainty about the duration and longer-term impact of increased fuel costs, particularly for families in remote regions who have limited alternative transport options.

Students in metropolitan and many regional areas benefit from subsidised or free public transport options. In contrast, remote South Australian students must undertake long-distance private travel to participate fully in their education.

The New South Wales government School Drive Subsidy program supports families with 74 cents per kilometre in areas with limited or no public transport. South Australian families should not be put in a position where they must choose between the cost of fuel and their child participating fully in their compulsory schooling.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & CARE

Motion 16. State Council

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA lobby the South Australian Government and the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to establish a state-funded Early Years Allowance for children aged 3 - 4 years who meet the eligibility criteria for the Assistance for Isolated Children – Distance Education (AIC-DE) allowance.”

Explanation:

We speak often in this room about equity in education, and we speak about the right of every child to access opportunities regardless of their postcode. Yet in South Australia today, some of our youngest, and sometimes the most vulnerable, children remain invisible in the funding system.

Children aged three and four in geographically isolated areas are entitled to early learning, but they are not supported to access it. Their families must create learning environments at home, travel vast distances for limited face-to-face opportunities, and absorb significant costs, all before their child reaches compulsory school age.

We know that early childhood is essential. It is the foundation upon which all future learning is built. When we fail to support children in these critical years, the consequences follow them into primary school, into secondary education, and into life.

This motion does not ask for special treatment. It asks for recognition, recognition that isolation begins at birth, not at Reception. It asks that South Australia lead with foresight and fairness by establishing an Early Years Allowance aligned to existing AIC Distance Education criteria.

By supporting families in the early years, we are not only investing in children, but we are also investing in stronger communities, better educational outcomes, and a more equitable future for regional South Australia.

Children aged 3–4 years living in geographically isolated areas of South Australia face significant barriers in accessing early childhood education. While the State Government’s rollout of universal access to 15 hours of preschool for three-year-olds is strongly supported, remote and isolated children remain disadvantaged due to their exclusion from financial assistance available to school-aged students.

Families educating young children in remote settings must establish home learning environments and support participation in early childhood programs without access to targeted funding. This places additional financial and logistical pressure on families already managing distance, workforce commitments and limited service availability.

SA ICPA proposes the introduction of a state-funded Early Years Allowance, aligned to the current AIC-DE rate (approximately \$4,980 per child), to support equitable access to early learning for geographically isolated children.

This allowance would:

- Assist families to establish appropriate home-based early learning environments
- Support participation in early childhood programs such as Remote and Isolated Children’s Exercise (RICE) services
- Offset costs associated with supervision, learning resources and engagement in face-to-face sessions
- Encourage participation in early learning during a critical developmental period
- Current service delivery models require many families to travel significant distances to attend face-to-face early learning opportunities, including return journeys of up to 1,280 kilometres, with accommodation costs frequently exceeding \$1,100 per visit. These barriers limit participation and reduce opportunities for early socialisation, developmental observation and intervention.

- The withdrawal of CaFHS nursing, paediatric and allied health outreach services in many remote areas has further reduced opportunities for early identification of developmental delays. Participation in early childhood education provides essential observational data, including contributions to national measures such as the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC).

The proposed allowance would mirror the principle of the State Education Allowance (SEA), which provides a state-based top-up for eligible boarding students, and extend similar recognition to the early years for geographically isolated families.

Investment in early childhood education is widely recognised as delivering strong long-term social and economic returns. Supporting equitable access for remote children will reduce later educational disadvantage and align with the South Australian Government's Flying Start early years reform agenda.

Motion 17. North West Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA request the Minister for Education, Training and Skills and the Chief Executive of the Office for Early Childhood Development to establish an appropriate funding mechanism comparable to the Community Child Care Fund Restricted (CCCFR) program to enable the ongoing delivery of the Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise (RICE) Playday program beyond June 2027."

Explanation:

The RICE Playday program is currently funded through the Community Child Care Fund Restricted (CCCFR) grant, supporting the delivery of early childhood education and social connection opportunities for families living in remote and regional South Australia who cannot access traditional early childhood services due to distance and geographic isolation.

The CCCFR program primarily supports services operating under the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) model. As Playdays are not a childcare service but rather a playgroup-style early learning and family support program, RICE has been advised to consider alternative funding models or transition to a childcare-based service model.

Due to the small and dispersed populations in remote areas, and the distances families would need to travel, a CCS childcare model is not viable for these communities. The current funding agreement will continue until June 2027, when it will be reassessed. While it has not been formally stated that the program will cease, RICE has been advised to seek alternative funding options.

Funding models must recognise the unique circumstances of geographically isolated families. RICE Playdays provide essential early childhood learning opportunities, social connection and family support for children living in remote areas where no early childhood services are accessible. Educators travel to stations and small communities to deliver planned learning experiences aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework, supporting children's development in identity, wellbeing, learning and communication while also providing important support networks for isolated parents.

Supporting outreach early childhood programs such as RICE Playdays aligns with broader government priorities around school readiness, early childhood development and improving equitable access to services for children living in regional and remote communities.

Without programs such as RICE Playdays, many children living in remote South Australia would have no opportunity to participate in early childhood learning or peer interaction prior to starting school. Outreach programs are often the only practical way to deliver early childhood support in these regions.

If funding cannot be secured beyond 2027, many geographically isolated children may lose their only opportunity to access early childhood learning and peer interaction before beginning formal schooling.

Case Studies:

"RICE Playdays are an incredibly important and valued service within our remote community, and ongoing funding is essential to ensure their continuation for families like ours.

Living in an isolated area, opportunities for young children to socialise are extremely limited. For our two-year-old, RICE Playdays provide the only regular chance to interact with other children of a similar age outside of our immediate family.

These days are more than just play—they are a vital part of his early development. Our child also has a slight speech delay, and these sessions play a significant role in encouraging both socialisation and speech development. Being around other children and engaging in guided, age-appropriate activities led by early childhood educators helps build his confidence, communication skills, and ability to express himself in ways that we simply cannot replicate at home. It exposes him to new experiences, language, and learning opportunities that are critical at this stage of life.

Equally important is the impact RICE Playdays have on parents and caregivers. These gatherings provide a rare and meaningful opportunity to connect with other families living in similar circumstances. For those of us on remote stations, it can be isolating, and the chance to come together, share experiences, and support one another is invaluable. Conversations often extend beyond day-to-day life, offering a safe space to discuss challenges, including those related to mental health, parenting, and the unique pressures of life on the land.

RICE Playdays strengthen not only our children, but our entire community. They foster connection, resilience, and wellbeing in a way that no other service currently provides. Without continued funding, families like ours would lose a vital support network and our children would miss out on critical developmental and social opportunities.

The continuation of RICE Playdays is not just important—it is essential."- Jessica Whittlesea, Mt Eba Station SA, North West Branch

"Being geographically isolated means that our children and families often miss out on opportunities for early learning and social connection. The playdays provided by RICE bridge this gap by providing children with enriching experiences that build language, social, emotional and cognitive skills. Through play and interaction our children learn how to communicate, share and problem solve, these skills form the foundation for later learning success.

For parents like myself these play days offer more than just a link to professional support and advice, they create opportunities to share our experiences and ideas, encouraging each other as parents and educators. A chance to finish a cup of tea while it is still hot and hold an uninterrupted conversation, the importance of which cannot be overstated.

My four-year-old will tell anyone who will listen about the RICE playdays she has attended, they have been a core memory in her early childhood; it has given her the opportunity to connect with other children that she will share her schooling journey with, in the coming years. Families drive hours to attend these play-days and always will because it is always worth it. It would be heartbreaking for the same opportunities to not be available for my younger children and their peers due to inadequate funding, come 2027." - Shona Amos, North Well Station SA, North West Branch

Motion 18. North West Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA advocates to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to investigate the feasibility of establishing a sustainable, fit-for-purpose funding model for flexible early childhood education and care services in rural and remote South Australia, including in-home programs such as the Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise (RICE), in partnership with the Commonwealth, to address current service gaps and reduce the impact of childcare deserts."

Explanation:

Families in rural and remote South Australia face significant barriers accessing early childhood education and care (ECEC), including vast distances, limited service availability, workforce shortages, and a lack of informal support networks.

RICE Outback Childcare program provides a critical, place-based service through flexible, short-term in-home care tailored to the operational and seasonal demands of remote families. However, as this model sits outside traditional Child Care Subsidy (CCS) structures, families are required to meet the full cost of care, creating a significant affordability barrier and limiting access.

We acknowledge the Australian Government's investment in ECEC, including the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) and recent reforms such as the introduction of the 3 Day Guarantee under CCS, however these initiatives do not adequately translate to regional and remote areas.

As a result, children in isolated communities continue to fall between funding models not designed to accommodate flexible, non-centre-based service delivery.

This motion calls for the State Government to investigate practical, solutions, including co-investment or alternative funding models, to support flexible, fit-for-purpose services such as RICE.

Without targeted reform, rural and remote children, in South Australia, will remain disadvantaged in accessing early childhood education.

Motion 19. North East Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA State Council support Federal Council with their lobby to extend the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education Allowance to children who are participating in eligible pre-compulsory early childhood programs."

Explanation:

The age of enrolling in pre-compulsory early childhood programs now extends to 3-year-olds. The cost of setting up a suitable learning area, supplying a laptop and suitable consumables, and the travel cost to attend face to face activities is yet another financial burden on remote families as they do their best to give their children the educational opportunities their urban peers have.

Motion 20. Port Augusta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA and the Port Augusta Branch extend its sincere thanks to Child and Family Health Service (CaFHS) for their ongoing efforts and support in working collaboratively with Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise (RICE) to join playday visits to provide health checks for babies, children, and mothers living in remote communities."

Explanation:

RICE & CaFHS have signed a 12-month agreement to work in collaboration and attend RICE play days. This initiative is still a work in progress and in its very early stages, and we acknowledge and appreciate their willingness to be involved in its development.

RURAL SCHOOLS & SCHOOL TRAVEL

Motion 21. State Council

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA advocates to Regional Express (REX) Airlines to introduce a fixed or capped concessional airfare for school and tertiary students travelling to and from rural and remote South Australian locations for the purpose of accessing education."

Explanation:

Rural and remote students in South Australia should have equitable access to educational opportunities, including the ability to travel to and from boarding schools and tertiary institutions.

SA ICPA represents approximately 120 member families, with a significant proportion of students required to live away from home to access secondary and tertiary education, most commonly in Adelaide.

The cost of air travel from regional centres such as Coober Pedy, Mount Gambier, Port Lincoln, Ceduna and Broken Hill places considerable financial pressure on these families. Access to consistent and affordable airfare options would significantly reduce this burden and improve access to education.

SA ICPA requests that Regional Express (REX) Airlines explore the introduction of a subsidised or capped student fare scheme for both school-aged and tertiary students travelling for education purposes. A successful example of this model exists in Queensland through the 'Bush to Boarding' program, where REX provides concessional, capped fares on selected regional routes, offering families greater certainty and affordability. These fares are also offered with flexible booking conditions to accommodate student travel requirements.

Noting that REX has recently undergone a period of Voluntary Administration, SA ICPA remains hopeful that, as the airline stabilises, consideration can be given to implementing a similar initiative for South Australian students to ensure they are not disadvantaged by their geographic location.

Motion 22. Port Augusta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA advocates for airlines servicing northern South Australia to introduce a dedicated student fare."

Explanation:

As raised in previous motions, this remains an ongoing priority. Boarding students travelling home during term continue to face the choice between lengthy bus journeys which significantly reduce their available time at home, or the high cost of airfares.

Families are often forced to shorten long weekends to allow for up to two days of travel by bus, as the cost of flights is prohibitive. Introducing a student fare would help ease this burden and improve access to more practical and time-efficient travel options for regional students.

Motion 23. Marla Oodnadatta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA advocates to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills for the introduction of a student airfare concession for school and tertiary students travelling between their home location and the nearest major centre where flights operate, in circumstances where a student airfare is not currently available."

Explanation:

Boarding school presents many challenges for families living in rural and remote areas, with travel being one of the most significant. The cost and time involved in getting students home for exets and school holidays continues to increase, placing additional pressure on families.

Many students must undertake long bus trips or travel extensive distances by private vehicle to reach their home communities. In some regions, flights are available from nearby major centres that could significantly reduce travel time; however, the cost of airfares often prevents families from using this option.

Time spent at home is extremely important for boarding students. Reducing travel time would allow students to maximise this time with family while also easing the logistical and financial burden placed on parents.

Motion 24. State Council

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA asks the Department for Education (DfE) to increase the Car Allowance component of the Student Travelling Allowance Scheme, which is paid to families who transport their children to school or bus stops"

Explanation:

The DfE's claim payment for the Student Travelling Allowance needs to better reflect the increasing cost of living, rising fuel and vehicle maintenance costs, and the additional impacts of current road conditions and fuel supply challenges faced by rural and remote families. It remains one of the lowest rates in Australia. This means the rate parents receive to transport their children to bus stops or school barely covers the cost of fuel, let alone vehicle maintenance, depreciation, and time away from work.

The rising cost of living and ongoing inflation continue to place significant financial pressure on rural and remote families. Fuel prices remain volatile, and the current fuel supply challenges across regional areas have further exacerbated both cost and accessibility, placing additional strain on families who have no alternative but to travel long distances.

Following recent widespread rains across South Australia, many rural and regional road networks have been significantly impacted, with large washouts, road damage, and deteriorating conditions. These factors increase travel times, fuel usage, and vehicle wear and tear, while also raising safety concerns for families transporting children.

In these environments, four-wheel drive vehicles are not optional but essential for safe travel. The cost of purchasing, maintaining, and operating these vehicles—including tyres, servicing, and repairs—is substantially higher than for standard city vehicles, and significantly greater than costs faced by metropolitan families.

The current allowance does not adequately reflect these realities. An increase is necessary to ensure families are not financially disadvantaged due to their geographic location and can continue to safely access education for their children.

Motion 25. Eyre Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA State Council asks the Department for Education (DfE) to increase the Car Allowance component of the Student Travelling Allowance Scheme, which is paid to families who transport their children to school or bus stops, to better reflect the increase in cost of living and rising fuel/car maintenance prices".

Explanation:

The DfE's claim payment for student travelling allowance is currently one of the lowest rates in Australia. This means the rate parents are paid to get their children to bus stops, or school barely covers the cost of diesel, let alone the wear and tear on vehicles and time lost from working. The rising cost of living and inflation are challenges for families, and the travelling allowance should increase to reflect these factors. The current diesel price is one of the costs not reflective of the allowance and the price of four-wheel drive tyres. With dirt roads that are not always in fair condition, four-wheel drives are necessary to maintain safety for families, and the cost of running these cars is substantially higher than the same car in the city and significantly higher than the cost of running a smaller city car.

Motion 26. Eyre Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA State Council work with the Department for Education to address conditions that hinder isolated schools in getting Bus Drivers who provide a significant service to families of these areas."

Explanation:

There are many potential bus drivers in isolated areas, but often they choose to be employed in more suitable work settings.

There are several factors that seem to affect driver decisions in our local area.

- To successfully apply potential drivers must first pay for and pass a medical, which potentially also involves travel if a specialist is required, all at their own cost. In other country locations closer to Adelaide, the cost ramifications of this are mitigated by distance, however in isolated locations this tends to build up.

- Driver accreditation also needs to be applied for and paid for. For someone who is semi-retired (a typical scenario in these areas) and looking at low hours and staggered times position such as an am and pm bus driver, this is not an appealing scenario, which can take a few months to unfold.
- Driver's work am and pm, not a great combination of work hours. Schools are then at times compelled to come up with a modified job situation which does not always suit a school's needs.
- Professional support for bus drivers is also needed here to support them in their role. The work situation of a bus driver can be extremely stressful. They perform a role which involves managing a vehicle and a bus full of kids. It is especially a role which is the focus of parents and can erode driver confidence. This is a combination of roles which require support and training and would contribute to drivers stepping down at times.
- Professional development in the skills and methods for managing school students on a bus would make drivers feel more competent and confident, contributing to a longer period of work in this job.

Motion 27. North East Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA requests that the Department for Education provides extra funding to rural and remote schools to allow additional Student Support Officers (SSOs) to be employed."

Explanation:

SSOs provide a significant and valuable service to rural and remote schools in helping to deliver successful learning outcomes to students in these locations. Where student numbers restrict the number of teachers that can be employed SSOs enable a greater diversity of learning activities, learning challenges and behaviours to be managed under teacher direction. However, funding allocations to rural and remote schools make it difficult to engage sufficient SSOs where they are needed.

Motion 28. Marree Air Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA requests the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to rezone Leigh Creek Area School from Zone 4 to Zone 5 in The SA School and Pre School Education Staff Enterprise Agreement (2024) in order that financial incentives for teachers better reflect the substantial change in the Leigh Creek Community."

Explanation:

The SA School and Pre School Education Staff Enterprise Agreement (2024) outlines the current Country Incentives available to South Australian School and Pre School teachers for schools and preschools located in Country Zones 2,3,4 or 5.

In 2026 Zone 5 schools such as Marree Aboriginal School and Coober Pedy Area School provide \$21155.00 in country incentives in the first year through annual cash incentives, one off incidental payments, compensation for adverse environment, increased cost of living and abnormal depreciation on motor vehicles. There is also a 50% rental subsidy available.

Zone 4 schools receive roughly \$10000 less per teacher per year in country incentives, being at \$11,705 and those eligible receive only a 20% rental subsidy. This inequity is resulting in advertised positions at Leigh Creek being over looked by applicants and is reflected in the lack of applicants for advertised and readvertised positions posing significant staffing issues at Leigh Creek Area School.

Since the last Enterprise bargaining agreement, the Leigh Creek community has changed significantly with a reduction in population and town amenities and facilities including medical, sporting facilities and police presence being scaled back or closed. There is now a desperate need to fill teaching positions. The school is often under staffed placing increased pressure on the staff available or the school is staffed by temporary relief staff which is impacting the quality of the teaching and learning. The school is currently mostly staffed by the country relief pool or relief teacher pool as the financial incentives available to staff working on temporary contracts of 19 days or less is a more attractive offer than an ongoing or annual contact under the current incentives.

The current situation sees all students in years 7-12 being taught via Open Access and only supervised by teachers in another classroom through a line of sight in an adjoining classroom. This is significantly impacting the teaching and learning and is reflected in the high numbers of students leaving education prematurely and not completing SACE and/or VET opportunities.

There are 5 full time teaching positions and currently only 1 is filled with a staff member, the other positions are patched and filled when staff are available through the country relief team. Rezoning as an area 5 school will help attract teaching staff for annual and ongoing contracts which is needed to provide continuity for our students. The rezone to zone 5 would better reflect the current situation and living and working conditions in Leigh Creek.

This current enterprise agreement extends to 2026 and should be open for review this year.

Motion 29. Flinders Ranges Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA requests the Department for Education (DfE) and the Minister for Housing and Urban Development to increase the availability and improve the standard of government staff housing in rural and regional communities to support the recruitment and retention of essential workers, including those employed in education."

Explanation:

Rural and regional communities are experiencing a significant shortage of suitable housing for essential workers, including teachers, school support staff and health professionals. For example, Orroroo Area School currently employs 39 staff members, but the town has only five departmental houses available. Several staff are living in temporary or unsuitable accommodation due to the lack of available housing in the district. In some cases, the quality of existing departmental housing is well below the standard expected for professionals relocating to regional communities.

Housing availability within surrounding towns is also extremely limited, with few rental or purchase opportunities. This significantly impacts the ability of schools and services to attract and retain staff. For example, the principal of Orroroo Area School was unable to secure suitable housing when relocating to the town in 2025 and has been living in a small temporary residence for over 12 months, which has not been suitable for accommodating family. A School Services Officer was forced to decline a position supporting a high-needs student at Booleroo Centre District School in 2026 due to an inability to secure accommodation. The housing shortage has also affected staffing in other sectors. For example, Orroroo Health Service is currently housing four permanent nursing staff due to the lack of rental or affordable housing in the community. It is also providing shared overnight accommodation for additional permanent and casual staff, which is less than optimal for shift or any workers.

In addition to the shortage of housing, there are concerns about the condition of some existing government residences, which require refurbishment to meet appropriate living standards.

The lack of suitable housing is a significant barrier to attracting and retaining essential workers in regional communities. Addressing both the availability and quality of government housing would support workforce stability and ensure vital services such as education and health can continue to operate effectively in rural South Australia. A coordinated approach across government agencies is required to ensure housing availability keeps pace with workforce needs in rural and regional communities.

Motion 30. Flinders Ranges Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA write to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Department of Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) and Local Councils/Government to highlight the importance of a sufficiently maintained road network to ensure our members are able to access educational opportunities and essential services."

Explanation:

Roads are critical in providing remote and isolated families access to educational facilities, access to school events, health services, early childhood support and mail delivery. Failure to sufficiently maintain the road network puts people at risk in the short term while we await repair. In the long term, continued neglect of appropriate road maintenance programmes places the entire region at risk, as families across remote and regional South Australia depend on roads for our livelihoods.

The Flinders Ranges branch has members who attend School of the Air, families who drive into small rural schools each day and families with boarding students.

To allow safe travel, it is essential that unsealed roads are repaired. The quality of outback roads and their maintenance programmes have deteriorated in recent years. Roads need to be sufficiently maintained to support all families' access to compulsory education.

Motion 31. Marree Air Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA request the Member for Stuart to review the response to recent flood events and establish a dedicated taskforce to support rural and remote families in maintaining access to educational services for children during and throughout the recovery phase of extenuating circumstances."

Explanation:

The recent flooding in the far north of South Australia has highlighted the difficulties faced by our families to access basic needs when the roads are cut off. Teachers in the Marree Aboriginal school could not get back to Marree and it took multiple days for State Emergency Services (SES) to coordinate flights. There was not a clear pathway to get authorisation for the pilot to collect them. This was also an issue with the mail as there was not a clear pathway with Australia post as to who can authorise the post to be collected by a plane when the road is cut off for several weeks. Marree Aboriginal School did not receive some supplies for over 8 weeks as the freight carrier could not come up. A review of these shortcomings is required so we can workshop ideas to address the issues moving forward. Establishing clear pathways to coordinate SES, Department Roads & Transport, food drops and essential services such as post and education supplies for our remote and rural families.

Case study:

Kaeli May – Depot Springs Station

Incident Description

For six days the kindergarten class was left without its director/educator. The flooding made it unsafe and logistically impossible for the teacher to travel to the school. Alternative arrangements, such as relief teachers or remote instruction, were either unavailable or not feasible given the location and circumstances.

Impact on Students

The absence of a teacher for six days had several implications:

- **Interrupted Learning:** Kindergarten students missed out on structured learning activities critical for early development.
- **Routine Disruption:** Young children rely heavily on routine and the sudden absence of a teacher created uncertainty and inconsistency.

Impact on Families

The families of the affected child faced additional stress:

- Concerns about the quality and continuity of their children's education.
- Difficulty making alternative care arrangements on short notice.
- Frustration regarding limited communication or contingency planning.

SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS

Motion 32. North East Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA State Council request the Minister for Education to make targeted funding available for the provision of Speech Pathologists and other Allied Health staff in rural and remote schools, and in particular for distance education students."

Explanation:

There is a general lack of all Allied Health staff, including but not restricted to speech pathologists, servicing rural and remote areas in the education sector. There is also a long term and well documented understanding that early intervention and ongoing therapies give students the best possible chance of not 'falling through the cracks' and risking their education being compromised on a permanent basis. Also, it is widely acknowledged that any issue affecting a student's ability to learn is exacerbated by remoteness and distance. Providing funding specifically to address this issue would go a long way to closing this gap.

Motion 33. Flinders Ranges Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That SA ICPA calls on the Department for Education (DfE) to increase funding and support for students with learning difficulties who are not eligible for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding, in rural and remote schools."

Explanation:

Many students in rural and remote areas are experiencing learning difficulties or disabilities but do not qualify for NDIS support. As a result, schools often lack the resources required to properly support these students. Teachers and school support officers (SSOs) require additional training and resources to effectively assist children with diverse learning needs. Rural and remote schools also face significant challenges accessing specialist services and appropriate facilities. Without additional funding and support students in these areas are at a disadvantage compared to their metropolitan peers. Increased funding would help ensure equitable access to education support and improve outcomes for students with learning disabilities regardless of their location.

Case Studies:

Kaila Mason – Yednalue Station

Imagine telling your child to dream big.

You tell them they can be anything they want to be. That there are no barriers to what they can achieve and that with hard work and determination their dreams can become reality.

But then they walk into the classroom, and the system begins to let them down.

Struggle after struggle. Questions left unanswered. Not because teachers don't care, but because the resources and funding simply are not there.

My second child lives with dyslexia and significant learning difficulties. She is bright, curious and capable, but the barriers she faces in the education system are very real — and living in a rural area only makes those barriers greater.

Accessing support is incredibly difficult. Assessments often come with long waiting lists, and in many cases, families are forced to travel long distances and pay privately just to have their child properly assessed. This places a significant financial and emotional burden on families who are already doing everything they can to support their child.

Even once a diagnosis is received, the support available is limited. Learning disabilities such as dyslexia are often not recognised under the NDIS, leaving schools with minimal funding to provide the specialised support these students require. Teachers and School Services Officers try their absolute best, but they are often expected to support complex learning needs without the training, time or resources needed to do so effectively.

For my child, this is not just an educational challenge — it is an emotional one. Every day she walks into a classroom knowing that tasks many of her peers find easy will be difficult for her. Reading, writing and

processing information can take far more effort and time. Standing up in front of the class or being asked to read aloud can bring feelings of anxiety and embarrassment.

Over time, this impacts a child's confidence and self-belief. I have watched my daughter question her intelligence and wonder why learning seems so much harder for her than it does for others. Watching your child struggle mentally and emotionally in front of their peers is truly heartbreaking.

There is also still a stigma surrounding dyslexia and learning disabilities. Too often these children are misunderstood or labelled as not trying hard enough, when in reality they are often working twice as hard just to keep up.

Children in metropolitan areas frequently have greater access to specialists, tutoring services and intervention programs. In rural and remote communities, those supports are limited or simply unavailable. This means that where a child lives can determine the level of help, they receive — and that should never be the case.

My daughter is resilient and determined, but resilience should not be something children are forced to rely on simply to access education. They deserve support, understanding and the opportunity to reach their full potential.

No child should have their future limited by their postcode, or by a system that fails to recognise the support they need.

Anonymous Parent

I want to share my experience as a single mother of a child with Dyslexia and Dyscalculia while living in a rural community where the capital city is over 500km+away. Having a child with Dyslexia and Dyscalculia can feel like an uphill battle when living in rural areas. You watch your once bright, bubbly child start to decline not just in their education but in their confidants emotionally. I've watched my child try so hard. Harder than most people will ever realize. I've seen the frustration when what we see as the simplest task seems impossible for my child.

Like many families out here, we love our small school and the incredible teachers and SSO's that work so hard with the resources they have and with the limited training in these areas. But the reality is that rural families like mine are often faced with barriers when it comes to accessing support and services for children with learning difficulties. Many learning difficulties like Dyslexia and Dyscalculia aren't covered by the NDIS, which means the specialized support children need often falls back on families to organize and fund themselves. Living remotely makes this even harder. Access to specialists such as educational psychologists, speech therapists, or Dyslexia/Dyscalculia tutors can be extremely hard. We are limited to specialists that will travel.

The cost of travel, the limited means of travel, assessments and ongoing support are emotionally and financially draining on families. As a parent, living this experience it's important for me to advocate for my child and other families in similar position with a child with learning difficulties. Rural families need access to the same specialized support services that families in larger towns and cities can reach more easily. Our children deserve the same opportunities to support that would make their learning experience better.

Motion 34. Marla Oodnadatta Branch

CARRIED/LOST

“That SA ICPA requests the Minister for Health and Wellbeing and the Rural Support Service in SA Health to include ‘geographically remote families’ as an eligibility criterion in the Patient Assistance Travel Scheme (PATS), allowing access to specialists beyond the nearest facility when appropriate.”

Explanation:

Current PATS rules require families to see the nearest specialist unless a GP provides a medical reason, which often forces remote children to miss multiple school days for very short appointments. This disrupts learning and wellbeing and increases the burden on families.

Allowing geographically remote families to access specialists in major centres enables multiple appointments in a single trip, minimises school absences, and makes PATS funds more efficient.

Adding this criterion ensures fairer access for country families, aligns with PATS' aim of supporting equitable specialist care, and recognises the importance of student attendance for remote learners, particularly those eligible for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC).

This change aligns with the original intent of PATS, 'supporting equitable access to essential specialist care', while addressing the unique challenges faced by rural and remote families.

ADMINISTRATION

Motion 35. Marree Air Branch

CARRIED/LOST

"That Marree Air Branch host the 2027 SA ICPA State Conference."