



Progress Report

2023 Federal Conference Motions

Rural Schools Portfolio

Compiled March 2024

At the post conference Federal Council meeting the Rural Schools and School Travel portfolio was separated into two separate portfolios with two councillors to lead each one separately.

We thank Minister Clare for including ICPA (Aust) as a stakeholder in the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) Ministerial Reference Group. The National School Reform Agreement is a joint agreement between the commonwealth, states and territories to lift student outcomes across Australian Schools.

<https://www.education.gov.au/review-inform-better-and-fairer-education-system/review-consultations/ministerial-reference-group>

Federal Council participated online and in person in these discussions and look forward to continued involvement.

A Summary report can be found here: <https://www.education.gov.au/review-inform-better-and-fairer-education-system/resources/better-and-fairer-education-system-consultation-paper>

The above report echoes the concerns of many members. Attraction and retention of teachers in our rural, remote and regional schools is difficult due to the complexities of the environment they find themselves in. The report acknowledges that some schools find it hard to attract and retain skilled teachers, these schools are often in rural, regional, and remote locations.

The National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (December 2022) was developed by all education ministers across Australia. This plan is well underway and is designed to attract teachers in all areas of education, both in the metropolitan and rural areas. There are five priority areas – two that deal directly with improving teacher supply and keeping the teachers we have.

ICPA (Aust) is encouraged that all governments are finally recognising the shortage of teachers in our schools and are putting plans in place to address this worldwide concern. Unfortunately, it is rural and remote schools that are often at the wrong end of the supply chain when teachers are deciding which school best meets their needs and metropolitan schools are often favoured over rural and remote schools for teaching placements.

Incentivise experienced teachers into rural, regional & remote positions

The Rural Schools portfolio received one motion from the Goldfields Eyre branch in Western Australia at the Federal Conference in Darwin in 2023.

A letter was sent to the Minister for Education, Hon Jason Clare MP in October 2023 acknowledging the December 2022 Education Ministers' Action Plan to address the national teacher shortage and that government have recognised the unique needs and made this a priority for regional, rural and remote areas.

ICPA (Aust) requested that the federal government run an incentive program to attract experienced teachers to rural, regional, and remote schools, similar to that recently implemented by Rural Health Outreach Fund (RHOF). This program could be run in line with some of the current state and territory programs which would in time assist with the attraction and retention of experienced teachers for our geographically isolated students.



Assistant Minister for Education, Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm replied on behalf of Minister Clare. In this reply, Senator Chisholm mentioned the recently announced Commonwealth Teaching Scholarship Program and special measures to reduce the HELP debt for teachers in very remote areas of Australia.

More information on these programs can be found on the following links.

<https://www.education.gov.au/teaching-scholarships> <https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-loan-program/reduction-help-debts-teachers-very-remote-areas>

He also explained that addressing teacher shortage is a national priority, state and territory governments are responsible for employing teachers and may also have initiatives in place to attract and retain teachers in rural and remote communities. Some of these initiatives may have similarities to RHOF and Senator Chisholm encouraged ICPA (Aust) to reach out to the state and territory governments with our concerns.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to follow the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan and the National School Reform Agreement. We invite members to contact Federal Council for any further information.

Portfolio Leader- Naomi Okst

To view the full 2023 Federal Conference Motion Update Report click [here](#).