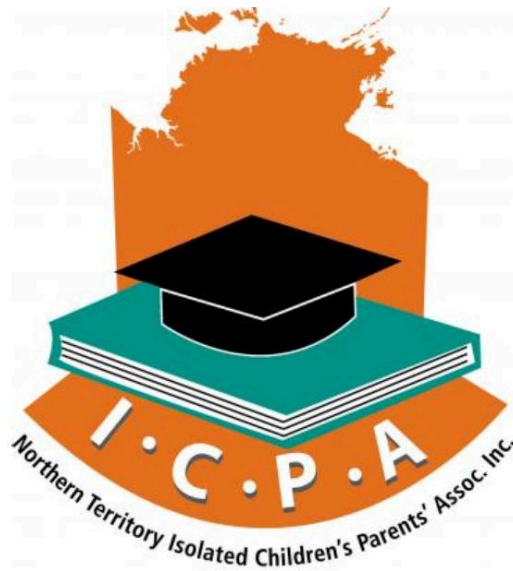


**Isolated Children's Parents' Association
Northern Territory State Council Incorporated**



Policies

For review and approval at Annual Conference & AGM, March 2025
Last Approved at Annual Conference & AGM, May 2002

ICPA NT Policy Process

As per ICPA NT Constitution (2024)

Clause 8 POLICY

- a) *The policy of the Association shall be related to education and other issues that have an influence on educational opportunities for geographically isolated children in Australia.*
- b) *Policy shall be established at Annual Conferences (held in accordance with Section 17 of this constitution) and affiliated branches must abide by this Policy.*
- c) *A two thirds majority of registered delegates shall be required to amend the "Policy Statement" portions of the Association's Policy. Three months' notice of any proposed alteration shall be given in writing to the Secretary and the Secretary shall notify all affiliated Branches of such proposed alterations at least two months prior to Annual Conference.*
- d) *Policy Objectives are determined by resolutions carried at annual conferences. The Council will then incorporate these into the Policy documents.*

Definitions

The "Policies" of the Association is a statement of guiding principles which shall determine the Association's course of action in achieving its aims; and is developed and amended in accordance with this Constitution.

The "Objectives" of the Association are particular goals to be achieved in the implementation of the Association's policies as determined by resolutions at Annual Conference.

Portfolio motions presented, debated and voted on at the annual conference form the Policy Objectives, which are updated accordingly by the Council to reflect the motion outcomes. The numbers in brackets after each Objective relates to the year the relating motion was presented.

Instructions for how to update these Policies can be found in our internal procedural documents.

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1. ALLOWANCES

This Policy should be read in conjunction with all other Portfolio Policies

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks to achieve educational opportunities for geographically isolated students through government funded allowances to subsidise the costs incurred in gaining access to intra and interstate educational facilities and resources.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Adequate conveyance allowances for students being transported privately to and from a school or institution to be: (2011:3, 2012:4)
 - based on annual kilometres travelled (2024:3)
 - in line with the ATO mileage reimbursement rates (2009:2)
 - flexible in regard to the vehicle used. (2012:2, 2012:3), (DE 2018:15)
2. Adequate financial assistance for travel costs (via air, road and/or rail) for geographically isolated students to access educational institutions throughout the schooling year. (2002:2, 2009:3, 2011:2, 2019:1, 2021:S1, 2021:5, 2022:6, 2024:3) (Boarding motions 2017:5, 2018:4, 2018:6)
3. Student concessional air fares for rural and remote students to travel by air between their place of residence and educational institution. (Boarding 1997, 2015:1, 2016:3, 4, 2017:3, 2018:4, 2020:8) (General 2002:2, 2003:2)
4. The continuation of the Tertiary Fares Reimbursement Scheme, including for students who study interstate, provided the course of study is not available in the Northern Territory. (1986)
5. Financial assistance to subsidise travel and accommodation for rural and remote students with diagnosed special needs to access qualified specialists. (SN 2016:12, 2017:1, 2018:18, 2019:21, 2020:19, 2021:12, 2022:13) (General:PATS 1985, 1986, 1988, 1993, 1994)
6. Financial assistance for rural and remote distance education students (including pre-schoolers participating in an approved distance education early childhood program) for costs associated with: (2004:2, 2004:3, 2005:3, 2006:2, 2011:4, 2012:5, 2013:1, 2014:1, 2015:1, 2023:2, 2023:6, 2023:F2, 2023:F3, 2024:4, 2024:8, 2024:9) (ECEC: 2016:9, 2017:3, 2018:14)
 - the establishment and maintenance of a rural and remote distance education classroom
 - attending school functions (2002:3, 2004:3, 2005:4, 2006:3, 2021:5, 2022:4, 2023:5 (DE 2018:15)
 - travel costs associated with the collection and delivery of materials required for distance education. (1991, 1992, 1997)
7. Allowances to assist with the costs of boarding at a school, a hostel, in a private home, or in a second home within the Northern Territory or interstate. (2006:4, 2009:1, 2010:1, 2011:1, 2020:1, 2020:2, 2021:2, 2022:1, 2022:6, 2024:7) (Boarding 2017:2, 2017:4, 2018:5, 2019:3, 2019:4, 2023:7)

8. A Living Away from Home Allowance for geographically isolated Northern Territory boarding students. (Boarding 2016:1, 2017:1, 2018:2, 2018:3, 2019:5, 2019:6) (2020:3, 2021:3, 2022:2)
9. Financial assistance for rural and remote students to access sporting and cultural opportunities. (General 2011:2)
10. Allowances available to geographically isolated students are:
 - non-means tested (1986)
 - reviewed regularly to ensure they are adequately meeting the needs of geographically isolated students (2020:4, 2021:5, 2022:4, 2023:3, 2024:2, 2024:3)
 - aligned with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). (1990, 2000, 2001)
11. The Allowance application process is simple, streamlined, transparent and timely. (2002:3, 2010:3, 2010:4, 2018:1, 2019:2, 2020:4, 2020:6, 2020:7, 2021:1, 2021:5, 2021:6, 2022:3, 2022:5, 2022:7, 2023: 1, 2023:4, 2024:5, 2024:6) (DE 2018:16)
12. A government allowance is available to fund geographically isolated distance education home tutors in recognition of the essential work they perform. (Allowances 2002:1, 2003:1, 2004:1, 2005:2, 2006:1) (DE: 2015:1, 2016:1, 2017:3, 2018:3, 2019:14, 2020:11, 2020:12)
13. Geographically isolated distance education home tutors and their employers receive an allowance or incentive to study remotely whilst in full-time employment. (TT 2023:11)
14. The Northern Territory Government pays for the issue or renewal of the Working With Children Clearance (Ochre Card) for geographically isolated distance education home tutors. (2023:F1)

2. ACROSS THE BORDER EDUCATION

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Allowances Policy

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks to ensure that geographically isolated students enrolled in a School of the Air or distance education school in a state or territory other than where they reside receive the same standard of educational services and financial assistance.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Rural and remote students who reside interstate but are enrolled in a Northern Territory School of the Air or distance education school receive the same financial assistance as those living within the Northern Territory. (2024:9)
2. Recognition is given that often rural and remote students who reside interstate and are enrolled in a Northern Territory School of the Air or distance education school are accessing the nearest school available to them. (2024:9)

3. BOARDING

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Allowances and Curriculum Policies

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks to ensure that all rural and remote students who must board away from home for primary and/or secondary education have access to a boarding facility either within the Northern Territory or interstate, which is appropriate to their educational needs and wellbeing.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Boarding staff have the relevant training in the knowledge and skills required to work in boarding facilities. (1998)
2. Priority is given to geographically isolated students when boarding places are being allocated.(1998)
3. Counsellors are available to boarding students, particularly those living away from home for the first time. (1992)

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Allowances, Distance Education and Small Rural Schools Policies

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks a reliable, equitable, cost effective communication system for all rural and remote students to enable them to access an equitable education.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Quality communication services, comparable to those available in urban areas and demonstrating similar reliability, speed, economy, features, voice quality and data rate, are available at no greater cost to students residing in rural and remote locations. (2014:1, 2015:5, 2016:5, 2017:1, 2017:4, 2018:7, 2018:10, 2019:8, 2019:9, 2019:10) (DE 2020:13, 2020:14, 2020:15, 2020:16, 2021:9, 2021:11, 2021:13, 2021:14)
2. Internet costs for geographically isolated students enrolled in schools of distance education are paid for by the government. (DE 2021:7, 2021:8, 2022:9, 2022:10, 2023:6, 2023:7, 2024:10) (Comms 2019:F1)
3. Small rural schools have adequate internet services to enable optimum education delivery. (SRS 2017:1)
4. Geographically isolated distance education students are provided with the technology (hardware and software) required for their schooling. (DE 1991, 1992, 1998, 2009:1, 2020:17)
5. The Universal Service Obligation (USO) and the Universal Service Guarantee (USG) obligations are fulfilled in the provision and functionality of essential communications services that are reliable, fit for purpose and maintained at a fully functioning standard. (2004:1, 2016:8, 2017:2, 2017:3, 2017:5, 2018:8, 2018:9)
6. A minimum weekly mail service for delivery & return of distance education materials, at no cost to the geographically isolated family. (2003:1)

5. CURRICULUM

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Distance Education, Small Rural Schools and Tertiary & Training Policies

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks to ensure that all rural and remote students have access to curriculum material deliverable via digital and print platforms, which provides the same educational opportunities as those available to urban students.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Agricultural subjects such as land sustainability content (ie. conservation and land management) and Food and Fibre production are integrated into appropriate learning areas of primary and secondary school curriculums. (2019:11, 2020:9) (TT 2019:23)
2. Core curriculum in all years is current and of a high standard and a system of assessment is carried through all core subject areas. (DE 2019:15)
3. The development of parts of the curriculum contain an appropriate local orientation reflecting the needs and lifestyle of the geographically isolated students. (DE 1995)
4. Distance education curriculum materials are simply structured with clear direction to ensure successful delivery by geographically isolated home tutors, many of whom are not trained teachers. (General 1995)

6. DISTANCE EDUCATION

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Allowances, Communications, Curriculum and Special Needs Policies

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks to ensure that all geographically isolated students have affordable access to a publicly available distance education service of an equitable standard to those accessing mainstream education.

OBJECTIVES:

1. The continuation and development of standalone Schools of the Air and School of Distance Education. (2006:2, 2018:14, 2019:12, 13, 2020:10, 2021:10, 2022:10, 2023:8, 2024:12)
2. All students and home tutors have the necessary support, equipment, technology and training required to fulfill year level expectations, to access on-air lessons and to communicate effectively with the school. (2009:1, 2017:2, 2018:11, 2019:16, 2020:17)
3. Interactive learning platforms are reliable, of a suitable quality and upgraded as required. (2004:3, 2005:1, 2006:1, 2006:3, 2009:3, 2017:1, 2018:12)
4. Technology enhances rather than replaces face-to-face interaction for students, teachers, parents/caregivers and home tutors. (Curriculum 1992)
5. Schools collaborate to ensure maximum benefits are gained from all available distance education materials and resources. (1996)
6. All students receive at least one full school day home visit per year with special consideration given to those students with special needs. (1998)
7. Students have access to adequate in-school opportunities with teachers and peers and extra-curricular activities such as camps, excursions and sporting activities are maintained. (2022:S1)
8. School health, dental and optical screening is available to all rural and remote students and parents and caregivers are provided with information to ensure awareness of how and where services can be accessed. (General 1994, 2009:1, 2009:2, 2010:1)
9. Distance education schools have access to the necessary staff, facilities, equipment, resources and internet to meet the needs of geographically isolated students. (2002:1, 2004:1)
10. Distance Education schools have full time Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specialists on staff. (2024:11).
11. A government allowance is available to fund geographically isolated distance education home tutors in recognition of the essential work they perform. (Allowances 2002:1, 2003:1, 2004:1, 2005:2, 2006:1) (DE: 2015:1, 2016:1, 2017:3, 2018:3, 2019:14, 2020:11, 2020:12)
12. Support for volunteer home tutors programs to provide respite to mothers/supervisors for short periods of time in the geographically isolated distance education classroom. (General 1984, 1992, 2001)
13. Implementation of a National Working with Children Check (WWCC) that ensures consistency and efficiency in child protection across all states and territories. (General 2015:14, 2015:13, 2019:28)

7. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Allowances, Communications, Distance Education and Small Rural Schools Policies

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks the provision and access to an appropriate and affordable range of early childhood education programs and childcare services for all rural and remote children.

OBJECTIVES:

1. All rural and remote children, prior to the commencement of school, have access to early childhood programs delivered by providers such as distance education schools, mobile playgroups or rural schools. (2014:1, 2014:2, 2015:6, 2015:8, 2015:10, 2016:10, 2016:11, 2017:1, 2017:2, 2018:15, 2018:16)
2. Mobile Early Childhood Services are adequately funded, maintained and expanded throughout the Northern Territory where required and are available to all rural and remote children who require the service. (2016:12, 2017:4, , 2019:17, 2020:18, 2021:11, 2024:16)
3. Flexibility in funding models and provision of early childhood education and care services to address the unique needs of rural and remote families. (2022:12, 2023:9, 2024:15)

8. ROAD TRAVEL

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Allowances Policy

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks to ensure strategies are in place to enable safe passage for educational access in regions affected by climatic conditions or where transport is difficult due to rough terrain, impassable roads or lack of regular public transport services.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Ongoing funding for continued road maintenance and upgrades on all roads (including remote and arterial) used for educational access. (General 2004:2, 2005:2, 2009:3, 2010:2, 2011:1, 2012:1, 2013:1, 2014:1, 2015:13, 2016:14, 2017:1, 2017:2, 2018: 20, 2018:21, 2019:26, 2019:27, 2020:23, 2021:18, 2022:15, 2023:12)
2. The Northern Territory Government encourages and facilitates information reporting and sharing from on site rural and remote families of local area road conditions to ensure safe passage for educational access. (General 2018:22)
3. Seat belts are compulsory in all vehicles that convey school students. (General 1997)

9. SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Allowances, Communications, Curriculum and Special Needs Policies

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks to ensure that Small Rural Schools are able to provide a high standard of educational services and facilities.

OBJECTIVES:

1. The teacher registration process is monitored to ensure teachers living in rural and remote locations can retain their teacher registration. (2016:1, 2018:17) (General 2017:3)
2. One teacher schools are provided with adequately funded relief teachers where required. (1990, 1993, 1994, 1995 2019:19)
3. Rural and remote families are reimbursed costs incurred when a small rural school is closed for five consecutive days or twenty days per term during the published school term dates. (2019:20)
4. Student to teacher ratios are consistent with Schools of the Air. (2002:1)
5. Extra resources are made available to provide a wide range of educational opportunities for students in small rural schools. (General 1993, 2016:2)
6. School health, dental and optical screening is available to all rural and remote students and parents and caregivers are provided with information to ensure awareness of how and where services can be accessed. (General 1994, 2009:1, 2009:2, 2010:1)
7. Community consultation regarding possible closures of small rural schools due to projected enrolment numbers or other factors. (1986)

10. SPECIAL NEEDS

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Allowances, Distance Education and Small Rural Schools Policies

(Special Needs includes students with disabilities, learning difficulties and/or gifted and talented students.)

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks to ensure access to appropriate funding, support, resources, facilities and services to enable maximum educational opportunities and outcomes for rural and remote students with special needs.

OBJECTIVES:

1. All rural and remote students have access to specialists (eg. Allied Health) for the early identification of and ongoing assessment and intervention for learning difficulties, and processes and progress are well documented and available to parents/caregivers, home tutors and teachers. (1989, 2000, 2001, 2018:19, 2019:22, 2020:20, 2020:22, 2021:13, 2022:14)
2. An equitable allocation of funding to schools and rural and remote students to provide specialist services and facilities for isolated children with special needs. (1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003:1)
3. Principals and teaching staff are adequately trained in recognising children who may have specific learning difficulties and, if intervention and special programs are required, can deliver same in consultation with the specialist (eg. Guidance Officers). (1983, 1999)
4. Support for special needs teachers at distance education schools to enable them to better educate and support families and home tutors of special needs students in the geographically isolated environment. (2024:1)
5. The continuing provision of fully qualified special needs teachers and above standard staffing formula/establishment for all Distance Education Centres. (1984, 1989, 1992, 1994, 1998)
6. The special education teacher to student ratio is no more than 6:1 in small rural schools. (1998, 1999)
7. The delivery of specific education needs assistance by specialists (eg. Allied Health) utilising School of the Air studios for enrolled special needs students. (2020:21)
8. Incentives for Allied Health specialists (eg. Speech Therapists) to encourage them to live and work in rural and remote areas. (1989, 1999)
9. Adequately maintained and staffed regional centres to develop appropriate educational courses and prepare individual education programs to suit the needs of isolated children with special needs. (2000, 2001)
10. Adequate and ongoing counselling services for rural and remote families of children with special needs. (1989)
11. Teacher training programs for the identification of possible hearing problems in students and teaching strategies for hearing impaired students. (2000)

11. TERTIARY AND TRAINING

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Allowances and Curriculum Policies

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks to ensure access to affordable tertiary and training opportunities which will enable rural and remote students to pursue the career path of their choice.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Geographically isolated distance education home tutors and their employers receive an allowance or incentive to study remotely whilst in full-time employment. (2023:11)
2. Geographically isolated distance education home tutors have access to training pathways to gain tertiary qualifications. (1994, 1997, 2023:10) (General 2003:1, 2003:3)
3. Agricultural, Conservation and Land Management training courses continue to be delivered in the Northern Territory. (2019:24, 2019:25)
4. An adequate range of courses with an external option through approved Northern Territory Tertiary Education institutions. (1995)
5. Pre-service teacher training includes modules which prepare students to teach in small rural schools (eg. multi-age classrooms) and it is compulsory for student teachers to do a unit of prac placement in a remote area school. (1993, 1994)

12. COVID-19

STATEMENT: ICPA NT seeks to ensure the unique needs, circumstances and challenges of rural and remote students accessing educational facilities across borders is considered by the government when formulating and imposing COVID-19 restrictions.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Geographically isolated students who are enrolled in a Northern Territory School of the Air or school of distance education (and their families) are able to cross the border and enter the Northern Territory for the purpose of accessing education (General 2021:15, 2022:17)
2. Exemptions to geographically isolated students from 'COVID-19 quarantine at government facilities' allowing quarantine at the family home providing 'quarantine at home' requirements are met (General 2021:14, 2022:16)
3. Mandatory quarantine at government facilities are free of cost for geographically isolated students whose permanent place of residence is in the Northern Territory (General; 2021:17)
4. The provision of an information pack to assist families applying for an exemption from 'COVID-19 quarantine at government facilities' for geographically isolated students attending educational facilities interstate. (General 2021:16)
5. The National Code for Boarding Students is endorsed and implemented by the Northern Territory Government. (Boarding: 2022:8)