

# Isolated Children's Parents' Association Qld Inc



## 2021 Conference Agenda Motions

## BOARDING SCHOOLS/ HOSTEL

### A 1. MOONIE BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Inc. lobby the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Training, the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and the Minister for Education to investigate the establishment of more weekly boarding facilities in major regional towns to attract more people to live in isolated communities.”**

#### Explanation:

Qld has only 2 mainstream boarding facilities to service state high schools. If more large towns, for example Goondiwindi which now has two high schools, had youth hostels or similar, more families living in the isolated outer regions could access and afford to educate high school children. Sending high school children to a city for education is not for all, even if they could afford fees. Many regional towns have had hostels for secondary students in the past and with government support new facilities could be established again.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## COMMUNICATION

### A 2. ST GEORGE

#### Motion

**“That ICPA QLD lobby Telstra to establish a unit specifically for Distance Education Families to access for installation of phone lines required for educational purposes.”**

#### Explanation:

With the cancellation of Telstra Country Wide there is a loss of knowledge and understanding of the uniqueness of remote settings and what is required for the installation of phone lines in these areas. If you have more than one child in Distance Education, it is encouraged that you have more than one phone line for ease of timetabling and less clashes within the schoolroom. A lot of rural families struggle to get onto the correct person at Telstra to explain their situation and to get the process happening to get their phone line installed. Being rural, many city companies do not understand where we live so talking to Telstra can get frustrating. This in return, is turning off many Distance Education families in installing second phone lines as it is put into the too hard basket, or they have tried to call and not got the correct response, so they give up.

**CARRIED/LOST**

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### A 3. ST GEORGE

#### Motion

**“That ICPA QLD lobby QLD Government to introduce a payment for the installation of second phone lines as required for educating students through Distance Education”.**

#### Explanation:

Schools of Distance Education are requesting families install second phone lines to allow for more flexibility in on air lessons. As families with several students completing their education through Distance Education often require students to go on for on air lessons at the same time. The subsidised connection of a secondary phone line would alleviate this problem and ensure students are able to receive their lessons.

**CARRIED/LOST**

### A 4. QUEENSLAND STATE COUNCIL

#### Motion

**"ICPA Queensland thanks the Department of Education for the extra bandwidth provided to schools during the online learning period caused by Covid and continuing it after the return of normal schooling"**

**CARRIED/LOST**

### A 5. ALPHA BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA QLD Inc lobby the Department of Education for an increase to the ICT subsidy for geographically isolated students, to more adequately reflect the current costs of broadband connectivity in remote classrooms.”**

#### Explanation:

Education Queensland provides an annual subsidy for geographically isolated students currently enrolled in an SDE of \$500 to assist with offsetting the costs of broadband Internet access for the home classroom. This subsidy has not increased over the years as the demand for data and classroom connectivity expenses have grown. The average cost of a broadband connection to an SDE schoolroom is approximately \$85/month\* (BIRRR Survey stats), leaving some families significantly out of pocket for broadband access, particularly when they have only one child in the schoolroom.

The SDE curriculum, materials and resources are predominately accessed and delivered online, thus broadband connectivity is an essential service for SDE classrooms. The current ICT subsidy needs to more adequately reflect the costs of broadband.

**CARRIED/LOST**

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## A 6. NEBO BRANCH

### Motion

**“That Nebo Branch would like to thank ICPA Qld Inc. for their quick action and advocacy following our communications motion carried at the 2020 conference”.**

### Explanation:

The Valkyrie State School has had limited internet connection, and has been raising the issue with the Department of Education since approximately 2015, to no avail. We are thrilled to have now been upgraded to “Skymuster” via a satellite system which has greatly improved overall internet access. Further, the school has also received a satellite phone installation, which provides a safe, reliable resource if a situation arises where our communication systems are down. This has been a long-awaited upgrade, and we sincerely thank ICPA Qld Inc. for assisting in seeing resolutions for both of these matters.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## CURRICULUM

## A 7. CAPRICORNIA BOTA

### Motion

**“That the ICPA continue to lobby the DOE to ensure Geographically Isolated children are provided with equitable active exposure to Arts, Music and Sports.”**

### Explanation:

Geographically Isolated Children often have limited access to **active** exposure to the areas of Arts, Music & Sports. To provide equitable learning outcomes in these areas more of an emphasis on exposing the children to these subject areas in a group setting that involve their peers and taught by subject professionals like qualified sports coaches, Music Teachers, Dance Instructors and Artists is required. Learning in a group setting in these subject areas would allow the children to experience the richness that these subject areas can provide rather than the arduous task of learning and performing individually. The lack of active exposure to these subject areas often results in inequitable skill set development which in turn affects academic performance and confidence when geographically isolated children migrate to boarding school. There has been a notable shift in content within the V8 curriculum that has added a layer of complexity to teaching for the often-untrained Home Tutor which also stands to affect academic outcomes. Geographically Isolated children deserve equitable active exposure to these subject areas instead of being compelled to comply to curriculum requirements.

**CARRIED/LOST**

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## A 8. JULIA CREEK BRANCH

### Motion

**“That the QLD ICPA lobby the Department of Education and Training and the Minister for Education to fund a Curriculum Resource Review full-time position within each School of Distance Education.”**

### Explanation:

The C2C writing team, which produced our classroom materials, has been disbanded, however the materials are constantly needing to be reviewed and updated, including the supporting resources. Therefore, there needs to be a teacher employed, in the specific position to continue the process of +review and updating of resources. We are currently on version 8 of the curriculum, a process of review which required all classroom teachers to be involved in many adapt and adopt days, whereby these teachers were taken away from “on air” contact with their students, to review and update ILM resources. As the curriculum review process is due again within 2 years, we are calling for a curriculum experienced teacher to be based at each school of distance education, whose sole responsibility is reviewing and updating materials and liaising with teachers and home tutors. This position needs to be in addition to the current allotment of teachers at these schools of distance education, not an additional role for a current teacher to be given, or a teacher removed from their current position with no one to replace them.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## DISTANCE EDUCATION

## A 9. SPRINGSURE/ROLLESTON BRANCH

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. continue lobbying DoE and the Qld Government to ensure that Geographically Isolated children’s needs are not overlooked by the schools of Distance Education.”**

### Explanation

Geographically Isolated children’s educational needs are at risk of being overlooked by the Schools of Distance Education as ‘by choice’, medical and ‘single subject’ enrolments escalate. Currently one of the Distance Education School campuses has over 6 times more part time students (>4000) than full time students (>600). Geographically Isolated students who do not have access to daily face-to-face schooling should be prioritised within Distance Education in terms of resources, space and support.

**CARRIED/LOST**

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## A 10. CAPRICORNIA BOTA

### Motion

**"That the ICPA continue to promote the invaluable role the Home Tutor plays within the Distance Education system to the DOE & SDE principals."**

### Explanation:

To protect the important role that a well-informed/professionally developed, engaged and fully invested Home Tutor plays in the education of children in the distance education setting.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## A 11. CAPRICORNIA BOTA

### Motion

**"That ICPA continue to lobby the DOE to ensure that in-service activities (minischools) & field service activities (clusters) continue to be provided by SDE's."**

### Explanation:

The impact that isolation and social distancing has had across the world during the 2020 pandemic has highlighted the importance of social connectedness. Therefore, moving forward it is critical that the DOE are reminded of how vitally important events such as mini schools and clusters are to children living in isolated areas. These activities are a fundamental requirement for isolated children to develop social skills, sense of belonging to a school community and to engage with teachers and peers in a school setting.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## A 12. SPRINGSURE/ROLLESTON BRANCH

### Motion

**"That ICPA Qld Inc. emphasise to the DoE the importance of property clusters for Geographically Isolated (GI) children and their teachers."**

### Explanation:

Property clusters are extremely beneficial to both students and the Distance Education teaching community as this gives teachers the opportunity to interact with their students within their own environment. Teachers within Distance Education have an extraordinary role within the education system and this helps them to understand the barriers that their students face on a daily basis as well as offering them a once in a lifetime experience!

**CARRIED/LOST**

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### A 13. SPRINGSURE/ROLLESTON BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. emphasise to the DoE the importance of GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED (GI) children experiencing face-to-face contact with their peers and teachers in more ways than just the regular classroom environment.”**

#### Explanation:

It is important for Geographically Isolated (GI) children to be able to experience face to face contact with their teachers and classmates during mini-school and property clusters. They need to know how to interact with their peers, learn how to play sport and interact with the greater community. These afterschool activities are everyday occurrences for children living in an urban community and it is important that GI students are given the same opportunities wherever possible. These opportunities were incorporated into mini-schools in the past.

**CARRIED/LOST**

### A 14. ALPHA BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA QLD lobby the Department of Education and the Minister of Education to ensure Schools of Distance Education maintain their flexible curriculum delivery mode and support students and families who choose to complete part or all of their schooling offline.”**

#### Explanation:

It is essential that Schools of Distance Education provide their students the flexibility to complete part or all of their curriculum offline, and allow families to find the balance that provides the best possible learning outcomes for their child. For many students spending multiple hours online per day is not an effective learning environment. Schools of Distance Education should ensure that students are provided with digital materials that can be printed if the families choose this line of delivery, and ensure that families are aware that this option exists. Schools of Distance Education should not in any way make families feel that offline delivery is not an available option.

**CARRIED/LOST**

### A 15. CAPRICORNIA BOTA

#### Motion

**“That ICPA lobby the Department of Education to make sure that online delivery at Distance Education schools does not become the only delivery method available.”**

#### Explanation:

Online delivery of individual subjects does not work for every family. Home tutors are well informed, engaged and fully invested in their student's education and should be supported with adequate resources if they choose to deliver a subject themselves.

**CARRIED/LOST**

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## A 16. MOUNT ISA BRANCH OF THE AIR

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld seek assurance from the Department of Education that papers and resources required by distance education families be developed and received in a timely manner.”**

### Explanation:

Distance Education families are heavily reliant on the resources and materials provided by their schools in order to educate their children. Curriculum development needs to be completed and materials sent out/made available to families well in advance of the day that the items are actually needed by the student in the classroom. We are grateful that some Schools of Distance Education/Schools of the Air still support families with print materials when they are required for learning however product development timelines for new curriculum need to be evaluated and considerate of the length of time that print material can take to be delivered to students in more remote locations to ensure all distance education students have their learning materials in time for their lessons and home tutors have adequate time to prepare for lessons.

*(Example – To Be Added)*

**CARRIED/LOST**

## A 17. CLERMONT BRANCH

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to provide an online teaching platform for state distance education lessons with functionality equal to or better than the former Blackboard Collaborate platform. “**

### Explanation

In mid-2020, the Blackboard Collaborate program which has been used for distance education lessons for a number of years was replaced with Blackboard Ultra. Blackboard Ultra has less functionality than the previous platform, making online lessons less collaborative, manageable, engaging and user-friendly. Whereas previously students were able to work on the screen for the teacher to see their work, provide feedback and give support and guidance in real time, the Ultra platform has reduced the opportunity for this to occur. It was indicated that Ultra was only an interim measure until such time as an adequate replacement was found, however at this time no improved service which provides a more positive learning experience for distance education students has been forthcoming. There are many other platforms available for online conferencing and collaboration and we would like the Department to promptly provide a platform which gives distance education students the best possible online learning experience. It is disappointing that with some much advancement in this space, especially in the last twelve months, that Queensland distance education students have been forced to take a backwards step in the provision of their education.

**CARRIED/LOST**

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## A 18. MOUNT ISA BRANCH OF THE AIR

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. request that the Department of Education ensures any new distance education online teaching/learning platform or change of platform be thoroughly investigated, proven to be working well and school families receive support, before these changes are implemented.”**

### Explanation:

The delivery of distance education is becoming increasingly reliant on online teaching and learning. In order for online educational experiences to be effective, it is essential that the online platform used to deliver the lessons is user friendly, easily accessible and that support is provided for students and families as they navigate the lessons. The Department of Education needs to ensure that the implementation of a new platform has been thoroughly investigated to ensure it is appropriate for use by families and that adequate training and support is provided to ensure students and families are able to use the platform without hesitation or glitches.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## A 19. CAPRICORNIA BOTA

### Motion

**“That ICPA lobby the DOE to provide findings, recommendations and progress of various reviews carried out to assess the facility needs of Distance Education Schools into the future.”**

### Explanation:

There have been a number of reviews conducted by DOE to assess the futuristic needs of SDE facilities but very little accountability, transparency & feedback provided to interested parties in relation to the long-term plan for facility upgrades. Consultation with end users is critical to ensure that the complexities experienced by the DE delivery model are taken into consideration to assist in providing equitable education outcomes for rural and remote learners.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## A 20. ALPHA BRANCH

### Motion

**“That ICPA QLD lobby the Department of Education and the Minister of Education to ensure Schools of Distance Education P & C's with onsite camping facilities, are immediately supplied (in writing) with a complete list of any fire, health, safety or COVID regulations that are currently preventing each SDE from accessing purposely built camping facilities.”**

### Explanation:

Alpha Branch has provided an extensive table of a timeline of events to QLD ICPA that demonstrate the steps that CSDE P & C has gone to in an attempt to try and resolve these issues with no success. The issue needs to be rectified immediately, the red tape departmental blockade and excuses need to stop, and discussion needs to be transparent and open with those involved, so that families can get back to using these purpose-built facilities.

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No SDE family should be penalised from accessing educational, social and emotional support, because of their location, postcode or bank balance. The restriction of access to P & C built facilities is placing families at more of a safety risk than the use of the facilities which, to the best of our branch's knowledge, meet all required COVID, health, fire and safety regulations. These buildings were not designed, fundraised for or intended to be used as classroom facilities, however this is exactly what is occurring, at the expense of SDE students, with red tape barriers being used as an excuse to block access. As stated in the February edition of News & Views, the Minister said that *"the Government remains committed to providing a great education to children, no matter where they live,"* we implore State Council to ensure that the Minister is fully aware and understands the implications of removing access to camping facilities for geographically isolated distance education students.

## CARRIED/LOST

### A 21. ALPHA BRANCH

#### Motion

**"That ICPA QLD strongly lobby the Queensland Minister of Education, to urgently allow onsite camping (that meets existing health, safety and COVID regulations) in P & C funded, purpose-built facilities at schools of distance education (SDE), to enable full utilisation by geographically isolated SDE families as they have in the past, and as was intended when these facilities were funded and built by the families that use them."**

#### Explanation:

Our motion reflects the urgent need for the Education Minister to allow purpose-built camping and catering buildings to be utilised as intended, to support the social, emotional, educational and financial needs of SDE students and their families.

During the extraordinary times of the COVID pandemic, SDE families were understanding of the restrictions put in place by Education Queensland. However, now that restrictions have been removed for other facilities such as school camps and all schools are operating at Response Level 1, it is our view that SDE catering and accommodation should be allowed again. The SDE's have no issue in having to meet the current respective COVID or health and safety requirements, and this needs to stop being used as an excuse as to why students and families cannot access these buildings.

This situation is not just occurring at CSDE, with other SDE's across QLD also being told they cannot access purpose-built buildings that in many cases were paid for by the families using them. These buildings were custom built, with significant investment and fundraising from SDE families, to enable an affordable facility for both catering and camping during school events, such as minischools. They have become an integral component of attending an SDE, where students who would normally not be able to interact face to face with peers, can come together and develop social skills and friendships. They also provide a place for isolated families to receive friendship, support and guidance as they navigate often difficult and remote parenting in isolated areas.

The facilities have filled a void in affordable camping for families who have been experiencing ongoing costs associated with drought and personal hardship. Accommodation, particularly during the tourist season, in these larger regional centres, comes at a premium cost and thus it is our fear that families prevented from accessing affordable accommodation will stop attending SDE events altogether, with significant mental health implications. A decision that no SDE family should have to make, when there are viable and affordable facilities being blocked by Education Queensland.

Children and families will be more at risk with cases of families having to source accommodation in motels, shared mining facilities, caravan parks and hostels, which pose additional safety risks and expenses.

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In the February edition of News & Views the Minister assured branches that student well-being remains paramount, consequently the Minister should be reviewing the decision to block access to SDE accommodation facilities immediately to ensure the well-being of these SDE students and families is prioritised.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## **A 22. CLERMONT BRANCH**

### **Motion**

**“That ICPA QLD Inc lobby the Department of Education and the Minister for Education to immediately reverse the decision to not allow onsite camping facilities-at schools of distance education so geographically isolated students and their families can use the facilities as intended under the previous joint arrangements families had with schools and the department.”**

**Explanation to be finalised**

**CARRIED/LOST**

## **A 23. YARAKA ISISFORD BRANCH**

### **Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld (Inc) lobby the State Minister for Education to allow on site or nearby affordable accommodation at geographically isolated Schools of Distance Education for families to attend mini schools and other school-based activities.”**

### **Explanation:**

Mini Schools are extremely important for geographically isolated Distance Education students. This is often their only opportunity to interact with their peer group both socially and in a classroom situation. Being able to connect and network to break the day-to-day isolation of their lives is vitally important to the wellbeing and mental health of these children.

In the case of Longreach School of Distance education, on site hostel style accommodation has been available for students and families at nominal cost. Fifty percent of the initial cost of the building was raised by the school P&C Assoc and general community. Changes to Asbestos and fire safety rulings meant the building was deemed unsafe, but no solution or offers to upgrade or replace were forthcoming. Instead, Education Qld has stated that no accommodation will be allowed on school grounds.

The stroke of a pen has left families with no option but to stay at expensive motels if the children are to attend mini school. The large influx of tourists into our region sees all available accommodation booked up for months. LODE has indicated to EQ that the parents and community will fund raise to erect a new building, only requiring EQ to supply adjacent land. This request was refused.

Distance Education in rural and remote areas is unique and does not fit in the same box as mainstream schools and as such should not be in the “one size fits all” category but be given recognition within the EQ system of the very different needs such as on-site accommodation. The closure of these facilities is again a major step backwards in equity of education for geographically isolated students.

**CARRIED/LOST**

### **Diamond Sponsors**

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## A 24. SPRINGSURE/ROLLESTON BRANCH

### Motion

**“That ICPA QLD Inc. lobby the QLD Minister for Education to immediately identify and address the barriers faced by geographically Isolated Families in accessing purpose-built accommodation and catering facilities at Schools of Distance Education.”**

### Explanation:

Some Distance Education schools have been prohibited the use of purposely built onsite accommodation funded and built by the P&C specifically to help families with accommodation throughout mini schools and overnight activities. We acknowledge Covid has played a role in the present circumstance, however the doors were locked shut PRIOR to this current pandemic and are still locked to this day. This overnight accommodation is important for these children and families to not only alleviate some of the financial burden but also to help with the ever-important bonding of the children. This important bonding, although available to students within a mainstream school or living in suburbia is, unfortunately, not available to distance students. For many families, these mini schools are the only times that the children can play and associate with their classmates and teachers both within school hours and after. The uniqueness and often isolation of distance learning requires a strong support mechanism for parents and home tutors. The ability to be together during this time is of great benefit to the mental wellbeing and learning priorities these families must deal with and pass on to the children. Not being able to spend as much time together as possible throughout these mini schools is detrimental to the success of these children’s education. The Springsure/Rolleston Branch strongly advocate for a fair and deserving social and academic education for these already geographically, socially disadvantaged children and families. Every child deserves a great start to their education and having onsite overnight accommodation for families to utilise and access, is allowing these families to have just that.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## A 25. CAPRICORNIA BOTA

### Motion

**“That the ICPA lobby the DOE to work with schools and P&C’s to ensure that onsite accommodation facilities previously used by families when attending SDE’s for in-service activities such as minischools can continue to be used as they were previously.”**

### Explanation:

SDE families who have previously utilised onsite accommodation facilities during mini-school have been impacted by these facilities not being able to be accessed due to not meeting DOE safety standards. High costs associated to week long stays, especially in the case of larger families are having a significant impact financially. Families have indicated that they feel that their children who have thrived socially and emotionally by the added face to face contact these onsite accommodation facilities have provided have been negatively impacted since the sites have been inaccessible.

**CARRIED/LOST**

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## A 26. BELYANDO / MT COOLON BRANCH

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to ensure purpose built camping facilities on Schools of Distance Education campuses are made available when overnight stays are required for school events.”**

### Explanation:

Families across a number of Schools of Distance Education have been prohibited from accessing their on-site, community funded, P&C built infrastructure since prior to 2017.

Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has certainly brought about a need for alternative arrangements for a period of time, this exclusion from purpose-built sheds for families who attend face to face education opportunities has been occurring well prior to its advent.

These facilities provide a critical link for students in facilitating the development of social and emotional skills of both geographically isolated and medically enrolled students at SDE's. The camping facilities also provide the families who choose to use them much needed support and can underpin the fabric of an SDE, bringing together staff, students, educators and families in a safe, supervised, familiar environment that is in alignment with several DoE Policies. SDE's who have worked hard to establish these facilities benefit greatly from the fruits of their labour and are often chosen by families depending on their circumstances to allow equitable access to critical face to face time between students and their teachers that meets their needs regardless of their individual circumstances.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## A 27. CLERMONT BRANCH

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education and Minister for Education to consult with distance education families to ensure sustainable, equivalent and suitable alternative camping and recreation options are available in place of current facilities. “**

Explanation to be finalised

**CARRIED/LOST**

## A 28. BELYANDO / MT COOLON BRANCH

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to enable School of Distance Education's to enter into formal arrangements with organisations who utilise onsite camping facilities.”**

### Explanation:

Current policy exists within the “Community Use of School Facilities - Guidelines” that would allow SDE's to enter into mutually beneficial formal arrangements of the use of non-department funded, on site camping facilities. These arrangements have the capacity to alleviate the DoE's concerns around usage liability and all relevant policies. This would allow geographically isolated families to resume the use of camping facilities on SDE sites.

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By way of further explanation, the following information is an extract from this policy.

- **Joint Development Arrangement**

- *A Joint development agreement (JDA) is the appropriate document where the proposed community use involves capital works and requires the construction of new school facilities or the upgrade of existing school facilities and these are to be funded in whole or in part by a community user.*
- *An example of a JDA is the construction of lights on the school oval funded by a community sports group and for use by both the school and the community sports group.*
- *As complex legal and other issues will require negotiation (e.g. duration of agreement, ongoing management, maintenance, construction and financing), a JDA takes significant time to formalise.*
- *Each JDA will be different as they need to reflect the actual responsibilities and contributions agreed to by the parties.*
- *Advice from Legal and Administrative Law Branch (LALB) is required when developing and formalising a JDA. This is in addition to consultation and approval being required for the JDA from the regional infrastructure manager and regional director and Infrastructure Services Branch through the Infrastructure Programs and Delivery unit (as the unit in managing capital works delivery).*
- *A JDA proposal with a value **not exceeding** \$200,000 is managed and approved at regional level in consultation with the regional infrastructure manager, regional director and LALB.*
- *A JDA proposal with a value **greater than** \$200,000 requires approval by the Minister or Director-General or their delegates in consultation with Infrastructure Services Branch, regional director and LALB.*
- *The JDA must be developed by LALB and the principal does not have the delegated authority to enter into these arrangements.*

- **Lease**

- *If you are contacted by a third party seeking to enter into a lease of school facilities, you must contact your regional infrastructure manager before making any in-principle agreements relating to the third-party use.*
- *A lease is the grant of a right of exclusive possession of State property such as a school facility, school land or any part of a school.*
- *If a lease is granted, the lessee will be entitled to exclusive possession of the leased premises during the term of the lease and obtains a proprietary interest in the leased premises.*
- *If a lease is granted, the State remains the owner of the leased premises however, unless written into the lease, the school is not entitled to enter, use or otherwise deal with the leased premises without the lessee's permission.*
- *A lease must be developed by LALB and requires approval by the Executive Director, Infrastructure Operations.*
- *The principal does not have the delegated authority to enter into these arrangements.*

These arrangements provide the department with an opportunity to immediately initiate proceedings to help mitigate the social marginalisation geographically and medically isolated students have continued to suffer.

**CARRIED/LOST**



## A 29. CLERMONT BRANCH

### Motion

**“ICPA QLD lobby the Department of Education to reimburse SDE P & C's for their contribution to the purpose-built accommodation buildings if they can no longer be used as intended under the previous joint arrangements families had with schools and the department. “**

Explanation to be finalised

CARRIED/LOST

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

### Q 30. TAMBO BRANCH

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Minister of Education for an immediate permanent increase in the Living Away From Home Allowance Scheme.”**

### Explanation:

It has been 5 years since the last permanent increase in the LAFHAS of 1.7%. Since then the percentage of total support has eroded from 53.4% down to 41.2%. The expenses relating to educating children away from home, where there is no viable alternative, continues to escalate. It is becoming more and more difficult for families to find the funds to afford to provide their children with secondary education away from home whilst remaining in the local community. The exodus of families from rural and remote areas continues unabated due to the costs associated with education.

CARRIED/LOST

## A 31. MOONIE BRANCH

### Motion

**“That ICPA Inc. lobby the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Training, the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and the Minister for Education to substantially increase the Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS) payment to attract more people to live in isolated communities.**

### Explanation:

Families choose not to seek employment in isolated communities due to a lack of access to adequate schooling for their children. Families hesitate to relocate to these areas due to dwindling primary school enrolments and the increased costs associated with boarding school fees.

The average cost to send a child to boarding school in 2020 was \$33, 532.18, excluding other expenses such as uniforms, textbooks, technology and extra-curricular activities. Increasingly, many rural and remote families struggle to meet these costs. Boarding school fees in 2020 rose by 8%, while in the last quarter of 2020, tuition increased by only 1.2%. An increase in the LAFHAS payment will give an incentive to families to migrate or remain in rural areas and encourage future generations to return to isolated communities.

CARRIED/LOST

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### A 32. CAPRICORNIA BOTA

#### Motion

**“That the ICPA lobby the DOE to provide a user-friendly platform for all educational related financial assistance & agency support for easy reference.”**

#### Explanation:

Currently, it is difficult for those who are not familiar with the system to access information relating to all of the financial assistance and agencies that are available to assist with education. It would be extremely helpful if this information was consolidated in one location and listed ALL assistance available for education for easy reference in times of need.

**CARRIED/LOST**

### A 33. CAPRICORNIA BOTA

#### Motion

**“That the ICPA lobby the appropriate government departments to provide an “Emergency Crisis Payment” to families enrolled within Distance Education settings in the event of exceptional circumstances.”**

#### Explanation:

When Distance Education is the only education option for families living remotely and a personal crisis (e.g. Accident/injury/extreme weather event) directly affects the Parent/Home Tutor, the dependent children stand to be disadvantaged due to the Home Tutor being unable to fulfil their normal duties within the schoolroom. The In-Home care scheme is difficult in a normal timeframe let alone in an emergency situation. This new proposed payment would require to be assessed on an individual basis and the funds to be directly used to provide short-term relief to families in the form of providing funds to recruit a replacement Home Tutor. This would help ensure that educational outcomes of dependent children were minimised in any such event.

**CARRIED/LOST**

### A 34. JULIA CREEK BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA lobby State and Federal government departments for the introduction of a Home educator financial allowance package, “Distance Education Teaching Allowance”, paid to families enrolled in a state-based school program and educating their children at home via the distance education model, where distance education is the only option due to geographical isolation.”**

#### Explanation:

Currently children enrolled in distance education receive between 6 and 11 hours per week of online based contact with a centre teacher. A Home Tutor (used in this context to refer to a parent/guardian who supervises and instructs the student/s in their home based isolated classroom) or a governess (used in this context to refer to an adult employed by the family to supervise and instruct the student/s in their home based isolated classroom) is necessary not only for the supervision of students whilst on air with their centre teacher, but also to deliver the curriculum of all other KLA's that are not taught on air

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(in some cases the SDE teacher is only teaching 1 subject e.g. English). Families have had to employ a 'governess' at their own expense, or one parent/guardian must relinquish a contributory financial position to supervise and teach their children for the school week. The role of home tutor/governess is vital for children in the isolated classroom to ensure children attend all scheduled online lessons and complete all other KLA work required. Children in the early years cannot be expected to manage their own time, nor can children in the older grades be expected to learn independently and unsupported.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## SCHOOLS

### A 35. NEBO BRANCH

#### Motion

**"That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby the Department of Education to review fencing and safety measures at staff accommodation at rural schools".**

#### Explanation:

The Valkyrie State School is isolated in its location. It is positioned on highway road frontage, nestled between neighbouring rural cattle properties. The closest town of Nebo is approximately 60 kilometres away. The Valkyrie State School is the only landmark between Nebo and Middlesbrough, a further 100 kilometres away. It also has a vacant block next to it, which is utilised by a transport and main roads camp when projects are being conducted, which is then occupied by a large number of men. The school is often approached by travellers for use of their toilet, water, amenities, fuel (which we don't have), and telephone. Given the high volume of mining traffic that passes, these types of call-ins for amenities are becoming more frequent and worrying for the staff and families who reside at the school grounds, and occur at all times of the day, night or weekend. The closest neighbouring house is approximately 3 kilometres away and not close enough to provide monitoring or assistance in these circumstances.

Our current resident is a high school graduate, 18year old female teacher-aide who is the only resident at the school grounds. Her residence is positioned a short 100 meters or so off the highway and is the first point of contact by travellers when outside of school hours. There is also a pull over bay opposite the school which is utilised by trucks who stop and camp the night to break up their journey.

Many of the previous resident principals have expressed feelings of being unsafe due to the proximity to the highway and the isolated location.

There is a small chain mesh fence around the staff accommodation which is easily passable. There is no security lighting. There is nothing to deter travellers from entering the yard or contacting this resident, which we believe is a great cause for concern and personal safety risk. Any persons would also then be free to enter the school grounds. The school grounds has a high aluminium fence only along the front side, which stops right at the boundary of the staff residence, and the remainder of the school grounds premises is barbed wire on the remaining 3 sides. We are keen to see this type of high aluminium fencing continue to encompass all of the residence as well, together with security sensor lights for greater visibility and signage indicating private residence.

For accommodation residences in rural, isolated locations, greater protection, deterrence and security is needed. If these upgrades are undertaken throughout rural schools, as well as ensuring a greater level

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of security while staff are residing there, it would make their accommodation, and belongings more secure during periods of school holidays when they are often vacant.

**CARRIED/LOST**

**A 36. NEBO BRANCH**

**Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby the Department of Education Qld undertake an audit of all rural schools to ascertain whether the current number of rainwater storage tanks on their grounds is sufficient, that their plumbing and guttering is appropriately connected to capture any rainwater, and implement a program for the ongoing testing of the water and cleaning of the tanks”.**

**Explanation:**

Ample, clean drinking water should be a basic necessity at all rural schools. The Valkyrie State School solely relies on rainwater for use at the school grounds for drinking, kitchen, toilets, and activities. There is no other water source available. When water runs out, it is trucked in through the generosity of a neighbouring mining company. Rural areas are often subject to prolonged dry periods. This causes difficulties in obtaining water, which necessitates operating on a far more reduced usage than our metropolitan counterparts. Our schools are very conscious of their water use as being a precious resource. Assisting rural schools to have greater water storage, preferably utilising all available sheds and rooflines for optimal/maximum rainwater storage, would see them have more in reserve for the dry times, and more available for any activities or projects they may like to undertake. Having the storage is only part of the solution, ensuring that all gutters, pipes and plumbing is capturing the water is equally as essential to having greater water storage.

The water storage tanks that the Valkyrie SS does have, have never been reviewed by anyone within the Department to ascertain its suitability and safety for human consumption. Given that this is their only source of drinking water, we would like to see a program whereby there is someone who can, on an annual basis, check the quality of the water, cleanliness of the tanks and rectify if necessary.

**CARRIED/LOST**

**A 37. NEBO BRANCH**

**Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby the Department of Education Qld to install further water storage at the staff accommodation residences at rural schools”.**

**Explanation:**

Having sufficient water storage available for personal and recreational use is a necessity to all residences, especially in rural and isolated locations. The Valkyrie State School has a Principal residence, and a donga type single residence for a teacher-aid or additional staff member. These residences share 3 rainwater tanks between them. There is no other water source available. When the residence are at full occupancy, the principal residence traditionally has had a family of 4-5 and a single teacher-aid on site. The rainwater available for use between them all is extremely limited and restricted for personal and household use only. Sharing the same issue as with the school grounds, once water is needed, especially in times of low rainfall, we rely on the generosity of a neighbouring mining company who truck in water to fill up these tanks.

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Given the isolated location of the school, the staff do not have the option of exploring a town or park for recreational activities. They are limited to their own backyard, which is small, dry and bare due to no water available to establish a simple lawn or gardens. It would be a great advantage to our rural areas to have the simple enjoyment of a lawn and garden, and would greatly assist in making it more attractive and liveable to future applicants once staff move on. It would also improve the quality of living of the current residents.

#### **CARRIED/LOST**

#### **A 38. NEBO BRANCH**

##### **Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby the Department of Education Qld to support any rural school that endeavours to obtain a reliable water source (other than rainwater) at the school grounds and staff residence, and that they treat any school without a reliable water source as a priority in assisting them in their journey.”**

##### **Explanation:**

The Valkyrie State School was established in 1974. It has never had a permanent source of water. The school has relied solely on rainwater catchment. Underground water is not an option due to extreme amounts of salinity, as well as being scarce and expensive to locate and equip. Other options are far more costly and complicated to achieve. The water usage at the school has been strictly limited to personal consumption, kitchen, toilets and some small projects. The school has never had a grassed oval, or a continuous area of lawn for the children to play. The school cannot host a sports day, or a cluster sports day, due to the absence of a grassed oval. The school lawn has periods of life if there is a good wet season, but once it dries off the lawn dies off. Children have also sustained injuries over the years due to the dry, gravel surface of the current ground in the absence of any grass.

The P&C committee has spent years thoroughly investigating every possible avenue of gaining a permanent water source at the school, which could be obtained, stored and utilised to establish and maintain a lawn, oval, and other projects, (as well as the staff residence lawn and gardens). This would then leave the rainwater to be utilised throughout the year for personal use, without the need for refill by the generosity of the neighbouring mining company.

The Valkyrie P&C committee have extensively fundraised and researched, and are now in a position to undertake a project of re-establishing, by excavation, a dormant dam adjacent to the school grounds on neighbouring state held land which is a stock route. Other Government Departments involved have been extremely supportive, and have prepared and endorsed the relevant Water Agreement. However, the DOE have declined to execute the agreement and we believe have not given this issue the diligence it desperately needs.

The school community have dealt with every piece of correspondence from the DOE in a quick, informative and substantial approach. The P&C are fully prepared to meet all costs involved, in implementing, maintaining and anything else associated with this project.

This has been a hugely disappointing exercise for our community. Our children are greatly disadvantaged by not being able to have physical exercise classes, sporting lessons, extra-curricular activities and the list goes on. In past times of limited water, our children have been told not to flush the toilets to preserve water until the next truck delivery arrives, which can take several days. Especially in these times of COVID, when personal hygiene and handwashing is so critical, having ample water available has never been more important. These conditions would be unthinkable to a metropolitan school; however, they are the reality for many of our rural schools that operate on limited rainwater only.

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Given the enormous amount of work our community has put in to achieve an outcome so close to giving us a permanent solution, it is baffling that the DOE are still resisting and delaying executing the Water Agreement. We are fortunate to have now had backing from our local State Member Mr Dale Last who is taking the matter further in parliament on our behalf. We strongly urge the DOE to immediately and urgently assist us in finalising this Water Agreement.

Any rural school without a permanent water source faces the same array of challenges. In this modern world, with the resources available, it is simply not acceptable that our children attend a school that is bare of such a basic, simple and vital resource as a lawn/oval and water availability for basic hygiene.

**CARRIED/LOST**

### **A 39. MOUNT ISA BRANCH OF THE AIR**

#### **Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld lobby relevant bodies for the inclusion of special consideration in the new Covid 19 rules for schools regarding accommodation and camps held on school grounds to allow small rural schools and Schools of Distance Education/ Schools of the Air to use existing accommodation facilities at these schools, when deemed safe to hold these activities.”**

#### **Explanation:**

Recently the use of facilities at some small rural schools and Schools of Distance Education for accommodation and school camps has been prohibited. These facilities have for many years provided geographically isolated school communities a chance to come together during face to face school activities as well as offering school families inexpensive and easily accessible accommodation options for school events. Due to the vast distances’ families live from schools, limited opportunity for socialisation for many distance education students, as well as difficulty sourcing affordable accommodation in some rural and remote areas the availability of these facilities as an accommodation option for geographically isolated students and their family’s needs to continue. Our branch asks that special consideration should be given to schools in these areas to allow families to continue to utilise accommodation facilities at these schools as they have been previously.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## **SPECIFIC NEEDS**

### **A 40. CHARTERS TOWERS' BRANCH**

#### **Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld Inc lobby for online Speech/Occupational etc Therapies, to be included as Telehealth Medical Benefits Scheme items to help with the cost of such therapies for rural and remote children.”**

#### **Explanation:**

Online therapy sessions allow rural and remote children regular access to a therapist. However, the cost of online therapy can be substantial. The financial status of families may limit the effectiveness of these sessions if the family cannot afford for their children to attend online therapy session on a regular basis.

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## TEACHER EDUCATION

### A 41. TAMBO BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby the Minister for Education to provide a financial bursary, similar to the Future Teachers' Bursary Pilot Program, which allows Senior Students in ALL Queensland schools to apply for assistance when completing eligible university subjects relative to Education degrees.’**

#### Explanation:

The Future Teachers' Bursary program was piloted by the Department of Education over the past few years in order to encourage Queensland senior secondary students to pursue a career in teaching. However, this bursary was limited to State School students only, and therefore excluded those senior students from rural and remote areas who are most likely to return to these areas in their future careers. It is vital that all students in Queensland be offered the same opportunities when they show interest in a career in teaching, and therefore Independent and Catholic schools must also be included in any future programs. The success of the Future Teachers' Bursary pilot program can in no way be accurately assessed due to the exclusion of so many senior students across the state. Financial support can prove a powerful incentive for students who may be interested in a career in education, but be unable to pay the associated fees to get a head start while still at school. A fully inclusive bursary program could prove a powerful tool, not only to encourage more potential teachers, but to encourage more that will teach rural!

**CARRIED/LOST**

## TRAVEL

### A 42. CLERMONT BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Transport and Main Roads to ensure rural and remote school bus routes are prioritised for maintenance and repair to ensure school bus runs can continue unhindered.”**

#### Explanation:

Kilcummin State School services approximately 20 families in the Kilcummin District. Up to half of those students utilise the Kilcummin State School East Bus Run Service that travels on the Kilcummin-Diamond Downs Road to travel to and from school daily. The road is continuously and consistently in disrepair and requires more and more frequent grading and re-sheeting due to high volumes of heavy traffic generated from the local cropping, grazing and mining industries who share the road with the school bus on a regular basis. Ideally, the sealing of the road would allow its upkeep and responsibility to potentially return to Isaac Regional Council instead of The Department of Transport and Main Roads as well as allow further distance to be travelled by the bus in allocated time frames to meet students and thus ease travel requirements of families to access their education in a physical school setting. The bus run is often partially suspended by the Bus Operator due to the deteriorating and unsafe condition of the road between scheduled maintenance by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

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## A 43. NEBO Branch

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby Translink and any other Government Departments that the threshold for the allocation of children required for a rural school *Class 1* bus run, be lowered from 5 children to 3 children, and that should the circumstance arise where numbers fall below the threshold for a period of time, that the bus run cannot be cancelled/removed, only that it can be made dormant until such time that it is reinstated when numbers rise again.”**

### Explanation:

The number of children on a rural bus run can fluctuate greatly due to many of the following factors: -

- The age of residents - family generations changing; rural areas particularly see the circle of life where multiple generations live and work in the area. It may be the case that children from the next generation start families of their own, and it is some years before their children are of school age. If there are no other school age children in the district on that particular bus run then there may be a period of time where the bus is not in use, or that there may not be enough numbers to meet the current threshold either by that family alone or a combination of other younger families within the district.
- Families move to, or move away from the area through employment. This is often the case with contracting families coming to the district to assist with work on properties. It is a consideration to these families when taking up a position whether or not there is a bus run for their children to travel to a school before accepting a position. It is also the case that the nature of these workers can be temporary or not long term, and this too can cause a turnover of families in and out of the area.
- Seasonal conditions - our region, like many throughout Qld recently, have been in prolonged periods of drought. The weather, and its extremes, be it dry or wet, can mean an influx, or departure of contract workers and their families.
- Loss of families due to mining acquisitions - our region has an established mining industry, often mining companies are purchasing neighbouring rural property at hugely inflated prices. This causes the departure of rural families and their workforce from these mining acquired properties, many of whom were also supporting the bus run and the rural school. Once they take over, the mining companies often do not utilise the residence to have new families come in, and as such, a gap in numbers is left.

All of these factors greatly impact the number of children within a rural location requiring a rural bus run and means numbers can rise or fall, year in year out, making it difficult to meet the current threshold number. Just the loss of one family could be enough to impact a rural bus run. With the current threshold for a new bus run to be established, it would be extremely difficult for one to be created, if a district were to lose the run due to a fall in numbers. The establishment costs, regulations and requirements to establish a new bus run is difficult and a deterrent to many families. Keeping a bus run allocated during these times of low numbers would mean that a bus run can easily be reinstated once children numbers are viable. In the meantime, the bus would still have expenses such as annual registration etc. which is why the ongoing allocation is necessary to meet these costs.

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#### A 44. TAMBO BRANCH

##### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Minister of Education that the Education Department administer remote school bus runs. “**

##### Explanation:

Small localised remote school bus runs are lost in the enormity of the TransLink department. These bus runs are expected to comply with criteria that is designed for urban and regional locations. Remote bus runs are exposed to many more variable and vagaries than more urbanised areas and by nature do not fit in to a standard set of rules and regulations In order to have more flexibility in the management of these very small runs, whose student passengers are critical to the small school numbers that the bus run services, it is imperative that these runs are administered by the Rural and Remote division of the Department of Education.

**CARRIED/LOST**

#### MISCELLANEOUS

#### A 45. QLD STATE COUNCIL

##### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Queensland Government to make Education a stand-alone Ministerial Portfolio.”**

##### Explanation:

Currently the Minister for Education is also the Minister for Industrial Relations and the Minister for Racing! These portfolios have no connection to Education and introduce elements into the Department of Education’s roles and responsibilities which simply have no relevance. For example, the Department of Education’s most recent draft Strategic Plan for 2021-25 includes references to electrical incidents and injuries as well as ensuring a sustainable racing industry in Queensland. Whilst we agree that racing in rural communities is a wonderful investment, we do not agree that it belongs within a portfolio that should be prioritising the education of our children. In the current situation, it would appear that the Queensland Government do not see Education as a vital portfolio and thus have not given it the priority and value it deserves. It is time that the government put Education at the top of the list with the recognition that it deserves as a stand-alone portfolio, rather than possibly assigning extra portfolios which sit within a Minister’s area of interest.

**CARRIED/LOST**

## A 46. JULIA CREEK BRANCH

### Motion

Julia Creek branch of the Queensland Isolated Children's Parents' Association wishes to express interest in hosting the ICPA State conference in 2023, in the town of Julia Creek in the McKinlay Shire.

### Explanation:

Julia Creek branch would like to show our support and gratitude to Qld ICPA by hosting conference. We believe we have the resources within our town, and support of members, local businesses, and wider North West Qld community to successfully facilitate conference.

**CARRIED/LOST**