

# Isolated Children's Parents' Association Qld Inc



2021

Conference  
Supplementary  
Motions

## COMMUNICATIONS

### S 1. Nebo Branch

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. raise awareness to the relevant Communications and Government Departments of the limited and unreliable mobile phone coverage, and the impact that the closure of the Telstra 3G network will have on rural and remote schools and communities.”**

#### Explanation:

Telstra has announced that in 2024, they will switch off 3G mobile coverage, and that users will be on 4G or greater. Currently, most parts of Queensland outside of a major city are still on a network which bounces between 3G and 4G. These networks in rural and remote areas are unreliable, with poor service, and in many places no service at all. The concern is that the mobile service towers and infrastructure currently in place are not adequate to provide the upgraded service to anyone in a rural or remote location when this changeover occurs, as we are already experiencing issues when we are meant to be phasing over to, or already on a 4G network. We are seeking that Telstra prioritise upgrading all rural areas to the appropriate tower with a stronger and wider coverage, able to handle the multitude of users (particularly in areas that are remote yet have highly populated mining camps) and assess areas of low to no coverage and ensure that they are being properly captured and catered for in the new changeover to ensure that no one is worse-off. Failure to properly prepare, and upgrade rural and remote areas would have a hugely negative impact if we are left with poorer to no connection in the absence of the 3G network, as it is currently relied upon as the sole source of communications for schools for phone and internet services for operational functions, lesson delivery and learning resources, and some families providing education via distance education.

#### Carried/Lost

### S 2. Nebo Branch

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. raise awareness to the relevant Communications and Government Departments of the mobile phone black spots throughout rural and remote Queensland, particularly on school bus runs.”**

#### Explanation:

Explanation: Many parts of rural and remote Queensland have limited, to no mobile phone coverage. In our region for example, the regional towns such as Nebo, Middlemount, Dysart, Clermont etc have coverage, but once you travel greater than 20 - 40 or so kilometres inland or away from them, the further you go, the poorer to quickly non-existent for vast distances the lack of service and coverage becomes. The Valkyrie district has 3 separate bus runs from north, south and east, all of which have black spots along their respective journeys. Even with a booster aerial, there are complete black spots with no coverage on these bus routes. This is a safety concern should an accident or incident occur in these sections. We are seeking that Telstra identify all rural bus routes in Queensland that have black spots, and upgrade the coverage in their areas to ensure that all routes can be travelled with sufficient mobile coverage.

#### Carried/Lost

## CURRICULUM

### S 3. Charleville Branch

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby the Minister of Education to ensure that all Rural and Remote Queensland schools offering Year 11 and 12 provide the opportunity to access a full suite of subjects to their students regardless of the number enrolled in that subject and that these schools have the adequate Human Resourcing to do so.”**

#### Explanation:

In these days of online learning/teleconferencing this can be achieved in a composite class with other similar schools through Schools of Distance Education while practical components can be completed within the school facilities.

Families are leaving Rural and Remote towns due to poor choice of subject selection which in turn effects the whole community from the workforce to Kindy’s and Primary School enrolments. Students living in these towns do not always qualify for AIC or LAFAS and therefore cost of Boarding School is prohibitive.

## DISTANCE EDUCATION

### S 4. Clarke Creek Branch

#### Motion

**“That ICPA (Qld) lobby DOE to put an immediate stop to repurposing family facilities that are used for overnight camping by families during Distance Education Mini-Schools.”**

#### Carried/Lost

### S. 5 Clarke Creek Branch

#### Motion

**“That ICPA (Qld) lobby relevant authorities to accept the CSDE application for four new demountable buildings to be erected at the Rockhampton SDE campus as a matter of priority.”**

#### Carried/Lost

### S 6. Longreach Branch

#### Motion

**“That ICPA QLD Inc. lobbies Education Queensland to continue to allow on-site accommodation at schools of distance education to support the welfare of students, home tutors and families.”**

#### Explanation:

Longreach SODE (LSODE) onsite accommodation, known as the ‘Quarters’ was built by the P&C and school in 1984 when the need for onsite accommodation for isolated students travelling for field

services was apparent. In 2016, student accommodation ceased as the building was not fire safety compliance for sleeping, however the kitchen, bathrooms and dining areas continue to be in full use. In 2020, the dormitories were converted to classrooms. The school and P&C have been working towards a solution to provide alternative accommodation for students since the closure of the dormitories.

During the last five years, impacts to student learning outcomes, connection and support for students and families as well as increased costs and challenges around access and availability to suitable accommodation for students, school administration, staff and families have been significant and is an example of what can happen when onsite accommodation is closed.

Field services such as minischools, clusters and camps, for LSOE and visiting schools allow face-to-face time with teachers and classmates. 80% of LSOE students are classified as geographically isolated, travelling up to 12 hours to attend school events and time spent learning with teachers and classmates invaluable supports student learning outcomes.

LSOE has a high percentage of new and young families with 76% of students in 2021 coming from families with one or two children at school, with most also having pre-school age children. These families are new to distance education and teaching students at home. In the past, we have been able to create a support network for these families, reducing the sense of isolation, connecting with others who share similar circumstances that need no explanation and who 'get you'. These connections were developed as people spent time together in the Quarters. Now we have families who know no one, dispersed through the community in commercial accommodation and the sense of isolation is real. Students reportedly miss the intensive time with peers which for many of our isolated students is the only time they will see other children or experience a 'sleep over' together.

Due to high costs for families and availability, the way that field services are delivered by the school has evolved to reduce the number of trips that families make to Longreach during the year. We can no longer ask families to travel to multiple individual year level minischools due to cost and accommodation availability instead choosing a single, whole school cluster each term. This impacts the amount of face-to-face time teachers have with students and the learning opportunities that can be delivered across the curriculum, with implications for school administration in scheduling events in limited timeframes.

Longreach has a significant tourism industry and there is a shortage of accommodation suitable for families. Only 52% of available rooms can accommodate more than four people and all require sharing of queen or double beds. Few options allow for self-catering which is challenging for families, logistically and financially. More domestic travellers because of COVID as well as road work gangs book a significant portion of available accommodation. Supply of accommodation cannot meet demand. In Term 1, 2021, 11% of families were on accommodation wait lists to attend the annual Home Tutor Workshop. In Term 2, families slept in caravans, camp trailers and tents, stayed with friends and family, or could not attend cluster because of a lack of accommodation. At this stage only, a small number of families having secured accommodation for Term 3 cluster as commercial accommodation is completely booked out.

A 2021 survey of LSOE families revealed accommodation, fuel and food costs for four nights for each school field event is costing up to \$1500 for a parent and three children. Costs are prohibitive for many families and combined with difficulties in finding suitable accommodation are significant issues. As a tourism centre accommodation prices continue to rise and this year long standing accommodation bookings by families have been lost or cancelled. There is a high emotional cost for families finding accommodation and a loss of control of circumstances.

On-site accommodation is much more than a 'building'; it fosters essential connections and student learning and breaks down the barriers of social isolation improving wellbeing at whole school, student, and family levels.

### Carried/Lost

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

### S.7 Far North Queensland (FNQ) Branch

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby Education Queensland to extend eligibility for the Remote Area Travel Allowance under the Living Away From Home Allowances Scheme to students enrolled in Years 1 to 12 at approved schools in all States and Territories in Australia. “**

#### Explanation:

The Living Away From Home Allowances Scheme (LAFHAS) under Education Queensland has a Remote Area Travel Allowance to assist with students’ travel costs to/from study if they have to live away from home for study. Currently under the program only those students enrolled in Years 1 to 12 at approved schools in Queensland or New South Wales are eligible for this allowance. The eligibility should be extended to all States and Territories of Australia. To give a real life example, a member’s daughter attended distance education in Queensland as a geographically isolated student from Years 1 to 9, and completed Years 10 to 12 in Victoria. At the time it was the best arrangement as she wanted to go away for school, but the family could not afford boarding school. A relative offered for the student to board with them in Melbourne. The student then completed Year 10 and her senior secondary school qualification (Year 11 and Year 12) in Victoria, afterwards returning to her family home in Queensland. Unfortunately, her family were not eligible for the travel allowance which would have been an enormous support financially.

**Carried/ Lost**

## SCHOOLS

### S 8. Clarke Creek Branch

#### Motion

**“That ICPA (Qld) Inc lobby DOE to work collaboratively with small school communities to ensure that all schools regardless of geographical location are equipped with an adequate water supply in a timely manner.”**

#### Explanation:

Water is a basic and fundamental resource. Attraction and retention of teachers to rural and remote locations is challenging. Poor water quality due to low rainfall adds to the challenges faced by school staff and students. Often there are solutions to water issues but cost, tyranny of distance and failure to utilise local knowledge by those in the driving seats can cause lengthy delays and band-aid solutions that do not address water supply issues in the long term.

**Carried/Lost**

## S 9. Clarke Creek Branch

### Motion

**“That ICPA (Qld) Inc lobby relevant authorities to ensure that schools are not liable for upfront costs incurred to provide water to schools in times of drought.”**

### Explanation:

Schools should not have to utilise any school-based funding to pay for the supply of water. Schools should not have to compromise their own funding to pay for a fundamental and basic resource that is readily available to our metropolitan counterparts.

## S 10. Clarke Creek Branch

### Motion

**“That ICPA (Qld) Inc lobby DOE to provide an additional 0.5 teacher allocation to one-teacher schools where the total enrolment exceeds 15 students and number of K-2 students enrolled represents 50 % or more of the total school enrolment.**

### Explanation:

The implementation of Kindy means that in our one-teacher schools’ children now range in age from 3 years to 12 years. Children representative of such a diverse range in age adds significantly to the workload of a single teacher responsible for the learning outcome of all students. Teacher aides are an invaluable asset to small schools and play a vital role in assisting with classroom management and the implementation of learning activities. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the teacher to plan and adjust lessons to suit the diverse range in age and ability in a small school setting. In addition to planning and teaching, the workload for a teacher in a one-teacher setting extends beyond the classroom to include the administration and business management of the school as well. The demand of younger students on teacher time should be addressed by increasing the teacher allocation to one-teacher schools with more than 15 students where 50% or more of those students are representative of years K-2.

### Carried/ Lost

## Specific Needs

## S 11. Queensland State Council

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobby all educational institutions (including but not exclusive to DoE, ISQ, QCEC, Lutheran Education QLD, Anglican Schools Commission) who deliver secondary schooling in QLD to ensure that rural and remote children who require learning support and assistance in the early and middle years of schooling receive, at a minimum, the same level of support in their senior years.”**

### Explanation:

Students who are verified with specific learning needs to have adequate and continued learning support in their senior years of schooling, regardless of the number of students within their cohort requiring assistance. Students with learning needs do not miraculously grow out of this and suddenly

not need assistance in their senior years, in fact, with the importance and emphasis on the final two years of formal schooling, continuation of support is not only imperative but essential.

All rural and remote children are often already at a disadvantage with receiving their education in smaller settings, by not being a societal norm with residing outside of mainstream urban locations, which can result in limited subject selections or having relocated to boarding facilities and not having their family support network with them. These physical and emotional factors compound their learning needs.

Verified children attract funding (Federally) that is supplied to their school of enrolment to assist with their education and schools absolutely need to allow the funding to flow through to assist the child attain their QCE or other educational qualification that they are wishing to study towards. Assistance to help these students is not just required at examination time but is imperative to have with the learning of content to ensure the student is adequately prepared for examination in whichever format it is in.

**Carried/Lost**

## TRAVEL

### S 12. Tambo Branch

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld thank the Department of Transport and Main Roads for providing families with the assurance that the viability of rural school bus runs will be thoroughly reviewed (including kindergarten and pre-prep children) who would be using the service in future years, prior to any changes, as per their previous advice to ICPA State Council.”**

#### Explanation:

here has been ongoing concern around the viability of rural bus runs due to low numbers of school age children. Advice from TMR on motion 4 from 2020 state conference has allayed these concerns and families can move forward with confidence knowing that local circumstances will be taken into consideration when reviewing rural bus runs. In the Tambo district there are three bus runs with multiple families with young children hoping to access the bus runs in future years. Access to these bus services will sustain local school numbers, provide employment opportunities, support family wellbeing and most importantly will provide equitable opportunities for the students, some of whom will be travelling up to 80km to attend school. Tambo ICPA branch are heartened to hear that TMR is working so collaboratively with ICPA Queensland to provide sustainable outcomes and local solutions to the ongoing bus issues.

**Carried/Lost**

### S 13. Nebo Branch

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby Translink and any other Government Departments, requesting re-evaluation of, and modification to, the method/formula for calculating the conveyance allowance, and which families it captures (or excludes).**

**Explanation:**

Our members are eager to see Translink form a new method of calculation for the conveyance allowance that better captures and compensates all rural families for the actual total kilometres that children travel to reach the school grounds and home again each day. A more case specific method for determining eligible families is required, which should be more inclusive of rural families actual circumstances. This would be a departure from the current, ineffective ‘state wide blanket approach’. A zoning or rural classification could be considered. Provisions for exceptional circumstances should also be taken into account.

The current method of calculation sees many rural families receiving a lesser allocation due to technicalities of where the bus pickup location is currently, (the only option is their property boundary location), or no eligibility at all if their pick up point is within proximity to the nearest school. One example in our region, is a family whose property boundary is within proximity to the nearest school that they do not meet eligibility requirements. Their driveway however, to where their home is located, is approximately 23 kilometres into the property. They are currently not eligible for any allowance at all. This situation is common in our region, and leaves many families without vital financial support. The flaw in the current policy is that for these families, on paper, when just viewing their total kilometres from home to school they are eligible, however their proximity to the school from their boundary renders them ineligible, or in a much lesser allocation. They have no recourse for exceptional circumstances to be taken into account.

Our understanding of the current policy is that it is a state wide, ‘one shoe fits all approach’. In determining any change, Translink have indicated that they must take into account ‘equitable application across the state’. We believe this approach is extremely limiting, and not reflective of many rural families geographical and proximity circumstances. A suggestion could be to look at classifying schools as being “rural” and then any rural properties in proximity to that school could fall within a “rural zone” which would see greater inclusion of families who are currently ineligible. Further to this, once a family falls into the “rural zone”, the actual/total kilometres from their home garage can then be assessed and provided. This would be more case specific, with individual circumstances being appropriately taken into account.

We strongly urge Translink to recognise that a state wide approach is failing many families who need their assistance most.

Our members also express that the current conveyance allowance has not adequately risen to be aligned with the rising cost of fuel, vehicle maintenance and registration for private vehicles used to transport school children to and from the bus pickup location.

**Carried/Lost**

**S 14. Nebo Branch**

**Motion**

**“That the Nebo Branch supports ICPA Qld Inc. in their ongoing efforts to lobby Translink and any other Government Departments in requesting the conveyance allowance to be calculated from the home garage – not the property boundary”.**

**Explanation:** The Nebo Branch understands that this is an issue that has been on the agenda for decades. It is disappointing to see that the same issue still exists with no change in policy from

Translink, on such a recurring problem, despite such ongoing efforts to continually raise awareness from ICPA State Counsellors. Presently, families are compensated for travel from their mailbox at their property boundary to school. This does not adequately cover the travel rural families undertake on property for the distance travelled between their actual place of residence and their front boundary. In our area, families are travelling driveways ranging from 2 to 23 kilometres in each direction to reach their front boundary. The implication for families is that the current calculation is not reflective of the true distance travelled for children to and from school every day. Due to the location of their front boundary, and not their actual place of residence, some families are also falling into a lower allocation bracket.

Carried/Lost

## Tertiary Trade and Training

### S 15. Clarke Creek Branch

#### Motion

**"That ICPA Qld Inc reinforce to the Department of Education and the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training the importance of the support networks provided to Apprentices."**

#### Explanation:

Many rural students choose to pursue apprenticeships. Often these opportunities are offered a significant distance from the family home whereby they have no option but to relocate and live independently. For most of these young people, it is their first time in the workforce. Support Networks such as the Registered Training Organisation (RTA) are vital services at the "coal face" that help apprentices navigate through their apprenticeship.

Employers are offered many incentives to take on apprentices however these apprentices are largely left to their own devices, especially if they have had to relocate. It is imperative that they are offered support networks independent of their workplace. While we acknowledge the financial assistance of the Federal Living Away From Home Allowance for Apprentices there are many other areas that require support in order to achieve the best outcomes.

Carried/Lost

### S 16. Queensland State Council

#### Motion

**"That ICPA Qld Inc continue to lobby for the progression of the restructure of the former Longreach and Emerald Agricultural Colleges and that Agricultural based training is included in the new model."**

#### Explanation:

There is a major focus on Agriculture in Australia to be a \$100 Billion sector by 2030.

Ag colleges all around the country are bursting at the seams with enrolments and Queensland must be able to offer these opportunities to our students wishing to study in the Ag field.

Carried/Lost

## S 17. Charleville Branch

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby QCAA, DoE & TAFE to work together on an alternative weighting system for students, in relation to QCE points, who are already at an educational disadvantage and choosing an alternative educational pathway to be able to achieve the success of attaining a QCE.”**

### Explanation:

Often students who are seeking alternative pathways through their senior schooling are students who are at risk of disengagement. These students are often also students who are struggling with main stream learning. The choice and option to undertake external certificate level or diploma level courses to keep these students in school is a valid and excellent option in most cases. However, this choice also leads to these students having to miss class lesson time, often an entire day, to complete their chosen course off campus. When these students miss the class time it is their responsibility to catch up lessons and stay on track with the rest of the class learning. These students often find learning difficult and already require support so to then have them responsible for making up lessons is often a stretch too far. Trying to make up lesson time without support often further puts these students at more of a disadvantage. For rural and remote student’s, they are also operating without the support network of their families thus putting further strain and responsibility on them. If an alternative, pro-rata weighting system was to exist for identified students being that if they are at normal subject time for 80% then the scoring system was pro-rated at 80% this would be a fairer reflection on these students in attaining a successful QCE.

### Carried/Lost

## S 18. Winton Branch

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld Inc. thanks the Minister for Education, Grace Grace, and Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, for the \$2.9 million-dollar funding boost to the Longreach State High School’s hospitality training centre, which includes the Big Red Truck that Winton High School students are fortunate enough to use. We ask that ICPA Qld Inc. ensure an appropriate portion of the funds are dedicated to the full upgrade, registration and ongoing maintenance of the Big Red Truck for the benefit of the Winton, Longreach, Aramac and Blackall State Schools and communities. “**

### Carried/Lost

## S 19. Blackall Branch

### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld Inc thanks Minister Grace Grace, Minister for Education and the Department of Education for the \$2.9million of funding provided to the Longreach State High School for renovation of the school’s kitchen and refurbishment of the Big Red Truck. While this has been a very welcome announcement, it is critical the breakdown of funds is made transparent to ensure the priority for money is spent with the Outback College of Hospitality Trade Training Centre – commonly known as the Big Red Truck (BRT).”**

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### Diamond Sponsors



**Explanation:**

The Big Red Truck was started in 2011 as a Federal Government Grant to the 5 schools in the Central West Cluster to provide hospitality training for students from Winton, Barcaldine, Aramac, Blackall and Longreach – which is the administrative base. The BRT provides a Cert II in Kitchen Operations and travels to each centre providing training in an industrial standard workplace. After extensive lobbying from the BRT for a much-needed refurbishment and its ongoing operational costs (upkeep and servicing of the truck itself), Longreach State High school received the grant of \$2.9m into the school soon after the May 4<sup>th</sup> announcement.

This money was originally to be solely allocated to the Outback College of Hospitality Trade Training Centre. It would have been enough to renovate the truck and provide ongoing support for the next 10 years of operation. Somehow the grant has now been divided between the BRT as well as the renovation of the Longreach High School kitchen. Each school would love to have their kitchen renovated but they all understand the versatility and importance of the BRT and we feel this should be covered and made an absolute priority before the LSHS kitchen is even considered.

All the functions of a commercial kitchen already are and continue to be carried out in the BRT, which travels between the cluster towns for the training of students in hospitality as well as offering the practical application of catering opportunities at community events. It was envisaged with this grant that each school could be fitted out with espresso coffee and non-alcoholic beverages hubs. These hubs would then serve a dual purpose; on short visits to these school's practical skills could be observed and then when the truck is elsewhere, the skills could be put into practice as well as a source of fundraising over the course of the school year.

**Carried /Lost**

## Miscellaneous

### S 20. Blackall Branch

**Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld Inc requests the Federal body, through State Council, to review the online membership payment process to enable branches to access up-to-date membership details, online, at any time.”**

**Carried/Lost**

### S 21. Blackall Branch

**Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld Inc request that both State and Federal ICPA lobby to have the BLUE CARD as a national scheme, and not state by state as is presently the case. “**

**Carried/Lost**