

## DISTANCE EDUCATION

### S 1. MT ISA BRANCH OF THE AIR

#### Motion

**"That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to fund an Early Childhood position at each of the Schools of Distance Education (SDE) where a significant portion of their students are classed as geographically isolated (GI) in order to increase face to face contact and interaction."**

#### Explanation:

The current eKindy programme is offered by Brisbane SDE for GI young students who, because of distance, cannot attend kindergarten face to face. Whilst two other SDE's currently have an EC trained teacher providing eKindy, a significant portion of students are in remote regions not aligned with either of these and so Brisbane remains the only option. As a result of this, and the logistics/cost of travel associated with facilitating face to face visits, interaction with their teacher and fellow kindy students is infrequent and irregular. According to ACARA, some of the prime purposes of kindergarten are to:

- develop and improve social and cooperation skills
- build identity through connections with teachers, peers and community

These are most effectively done face to face through explicit teaching and opportunities for interaction, observation and listening to peers and teachers. To do so requires regular interaction which realistically and effectively cannot be undertaken from Brisbane. By decentralising eKindy, the opportunity for engagement with teachers and fellow students markedly increases as does the location where interaction can occur. This in turn leads to improved skills, attitudes as well as mental, emotional and social development in readiness for formal schooling.

**CARRIED/LOST/WITHDRAWN/DEEMED COVERED**

## SCHOOLS

### S 2. JULIA CREEK BRANCH

#### Motion

**"That ICPA Qld lobbies the Minister for Education to employ the Principal in a full-time Principal position, not also a class teacher role, when a graduate Teacher is employed as a classroom teacher."**

#### Explanation:

Julia Creek State School participates in the Remote Area Incentive Scheme, where a graduate teacher is employed every two-three years into either the P-2 or the 3-6 classroom. This requires a large amount of support from the School Principal and fellow colleagues. Due to the heavy support required by a graduate teacher, professional development all teachers are required to attend, teacher absences being covered,

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Principal business meetings and general Principal roles in the daily running of a school, it is not feasible for the Principal to fill the role of a full-time teacher, also.

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**S 3. WESTMAR INGLESTONE BRANCH**

**Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to ensure that teaching Principals in small schools are given full-time administrative support to ensure that the current role and title of ‘Administration Officer’ is extended to be a ‘Principal Assistant’ to ensure that Principal administrative tasks can be delegated to this role, to minimise the time taken from teaching and planning in the classroom.”**

**Explanation:**

With the increasing administrative responsibilities of schools, this task is exacerbated in small schools due to limited days of administrative staffing. On days when there is no administrative support, the time and responsibility for these tasks rest with the teaching principal. There is an expectation and responsibility for telephones to be answered, data to be entered into systems, support staff to be co-ordinated and organised, logistical shuffling of staff, schooling, facilities, learning, extra-curricular and the day-to-day running of a school. With an expansion of the Administration Officer role to also be a Principal Assistant, some workload could be delegated to relieve the teaching Principal in some of these duties.

**CARRIED/LOST/WITHDRAWN/DEEMED COVERED**

**S 4. FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND BRANCH**

**Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education (DoE) to ensure that continued disruptions within Schools of Distance Education and rural and remote schools are minimised due to issues with Acting Principal Positions.”**

**Explanation:**

Acting positions within Schools of Distance Education and rural and remote schools is not an isolated problem. The increased instability Acting or temporary appointments, particularly in executive positions, bring to these schools grows increasingly worse as the tenure of these roles is extended, sometimes for years.

As outlined in the Case Study below, an extended Acting Principal position brings instability to the school, its community and the person undertaking this Acting role and undermines confidence in the role, the leadership of the school and the Department.

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## Case study

Cairns School of Distance Education's (SDE) Principal position has been filled by an Acting Principal for the last two and a half years/30 months. For the first eighteen months, the existing Deputy Principal has stepped into the Acting Principal position. Every six months he had to reapply for the temporary position. His rapport and care for the school and the need for stability in the position is evidenced through his continued willingness to repeatedly apply for the role, knowing that he would have to reapply again in six months.

When the previous permanent Principal as Cairns SDE successfully applied for a full time position elsewhere, our Acting Principal went through the Department of Education's processes to apply for the permanent Principal role, the Department acknowledged his application and agreed that he met the suitability requirements but, at that time, the position had not been deemed vacant and therefore, despite meeting all necessary requirements, his application was denied.

At the end of the first eighteen months, when he once again reapplied for the Acting Principal role, his was not successful and given only a week's notice before a new Acting Principal was to assume the role. Not only did this cause distress to the person involved as he had acted in this role successfully for the previous eighteen months and been part of the school community for over a decade including in the Deputy Principal role, but it also took away leadership continuity from the school community as well as causing distress to the school community at the perceived treatment of this long serving staff member.

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### S 5. MITCHELL-TOMOO/DUNKELD BRANCH

#### Motion

**"That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education (DoE) to relocate Principals on leave of 12 months or more to an equivalent Principal level within their region rather than to a school within 50 minutes from their home base when enforcing the unattachment policy."**

#### Explanation:

When teachers and principals are relocated due to the unattachment policy they are transferred to a school within 50 minutes of their home base. Unfortunately, for Principals that are employed at rural and remote schools there is often not a school of equivalent band level within this commutable time frame, making it difficult for the department to enforce the policy. As a result, small schools often have an Acting Principal that is often on a term-by-term contract, that leaves both the school community and the principal in limbo and it is difficult for the school to then forward plan to improve outcomes for the students.

Principals on leave are entitled to continue living in DoE provided housing. In many rural and remote towns, there is minimal housing, often being substandard or not suitable for families which further impacts recruiting Principals to small schools. Residing in DoE housing, may also be an indication that the principal does not consider their school location to be their home base, and therefore transferring outside

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of the 50 minutes of their home base, but within the region would be appropriate.

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**S 6. TALWOOD BRANCH**

**Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to include Kindergarten children in Day 8 numbers in small schools which provide State Delivered Kindergarten.”**

**Explanation:**

Currently Kindergarten children in SDK schools are not eligible to be included in Day 8 enrolment figures. Although these students attend the school only 5 days a fortnight, their presence has definite impacts on the infrastructure and administration of these schools.

At Talwood State School, structural changes were made to accommodate these younger students and extra resources and staff have been required. Teachers are now required to undertake extra planning and complete different documentation to meet the guidelines which govern Kindergarten aged students.

As everyone is aware, the number of enrolments recorded at Day 8 each year affects the teacher allocation at your school. On Day 8 of 2024, Talwood SS had 20 students, one less than the required 21 to be allocated additional teacher time. With this enrolment figure, Talwood SS would have dropped back to having one large multi-age classroom of K-6 students, and a second teacher only part-time. There was obvious concern around the impact of such a large and varied class on all involved, and fortunately the Principal was able to negotiate discretionary funds to ensure a full-time second teacher remained. Whilst this was a positive outcome for Talwood SS, this may not always be the case of other schools.

Recognition of the role our small schools and staff are playing in the provision of SDK must be given, and the best way to do this is through acknowledgement of kindergarten children’s enrolment on Day 8 each year.

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**S 7. SPRINGSURE ROLLESTON BRANCH**

**Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld continues advocating to the relevant State Education Ministers for the inclusion of Year 10 as part of the bypass school program for P-10 schools.”**

**Explanation:**

The Queensland education system underwent significant restructuring with the incorporation of Year 7 into High School. This restructuring resulted in the establishment of Middle School (Year 7 – 9) and

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Senior School (Year 10 -12). While the government has implemented strategies to support Year 10 students in transitioning to the senior years, such as providing electives to establish a solid foundation for senior syllabuses, students in P-10 schools are disadvantaged due to a limited range of subjects offered, primarily constrained by enrolment numbers and available funding. Including Year 10 in the bypass school program may represent the next logical step in this restructuring process.

Following a successful motion brought to the state conference in 2023, the State Council has raised the issue of Year 10 inclusion in the bypass program with the Department of Education. The Department advised seeking further community clarification on the viability of Year 10 as a bypass year. Community response overwhelmingly supported the inclusion of Year 10 in the bypass program, emphasizing the interconnectedness of Years 10, 11, and 12 and the minimal adverse impact on schools, given that most students seeking further education have typically transitioned out of the school environment by Year 10. Current enrolment figures for the school stand at 8 Year 8 students, 15 Year 9 students, and 7 Year 10 students.

Recognition is extended to the State Council for their dedication and feedback, which have facilitated the progression of this motion.

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## **S 8. RICHMOND BRANCH**

### **Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to ensure rural and remote students are not disadvantaged by any proposed changes resulting from the Queensland School Sports (QSS) Program review into Regional School Sport boundaries.”**

### **Explanation:**

Exposure to all kinds of extracurricular activities is essential to the development of a well-rounded student. Exposure to sport offered through the regional competition for all rural students allows for students, to participate and explore their raw talent.

There is considerable angst within regional communities regarding the proposed changes to the Queensland School Sports boundaries. Although this review could still be on pause the current proposed options would significantly inhibit youth sports particularly in regions such as North West which could be split up to come in line with the Education Department areas. Under initially proposed amendment some of these students would have to travel in excess of 14 hours to participate which is simply unfair, unaffordable and unreasonable.

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## TEACHER EDUCATION

### S 9. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies universities to tailor explicit units within Initial Teacher Education to equip graduates with research-based support strategies for neurodivergent learners and diverse disabilities present in an inclusive classroom setting.”**

#### Explanation:

There are approximately 30,000 autistic students within Queensland State Schools. Behavioural management and meeting the needs of neurodivergent learners and diverse disabilities in an inclusive classroom setting is becoming increasingly more complex for teachers. ICPA Qld members have raised concerns around the fact that classrooms are under resourced in terms of staffing ratios to meet the needs of the students and the capability of teachers to support neurodiverse learners and diverse disabilities. This is particularly difficult in small rural schools where there is very little support on the ground.

ICPA Qld is calling upon universities to broaden Initial Teacher Education courses to include current evidence-based units in disability specific areas. Whilst Post Graduate courses are available, it is essential to keep abreast of current research and tailor Initial Teacher Education units accordingly. Capacity needs to be built for teaching graduates to be equipped with the necessary skills to support the diverse needs of students within an inclusive classroom. Graduates require a strong foundation and understanding of inclusive practice and need to be supported with the appropriate practicum to gain classroom experience.

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## TERTIARY, TRADE AND TRAINING

### S 10. CAPRICORNIA BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education (DoE) to subsidise CHC30121 *Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care* and CHC30221 *Certificate III in School Based Education Support* for VETiS students pursuing a pathway to teaching.”**

#### Explanation:

Given there is a national teacher skills shortage, a \$5,185 and \$4,095 Fee for Service charge to complete either of these qualifications is prohibitive for student who is wishing to undertake these courses as a

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VETiS pathway to gaining teaching qualifications. This 'Fee for Service' charge places additional financial burden on families whose children are attending boarding school due to Geographic Isolation and are already paying tuition and boarding fees. Both of these courses are currently on the 'Free TAFE' list; however, within VETiS both courses are listed as being 'Non Subsidised'.

<http://www.cqu.edu.au/study/entry-pathways/start-tafe-now/course-options>

This pathway would greatly assist students looking to undertake Certificate Courses to gain qualifications in either area prior to leaving school to increase 'Job Readiness' and employability within Early Childcare and Teacher Aide settings. Additionally, these courses could be advantageous for any student wishing to gain the desirable skillset to be a Nanny or teaching Governess/Home Tutor within a distance education home school room.

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## S 11. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL

### Motion

**"That ICPA Qld lobbies Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) who deliver Teacher Aide qualification courses to review and develop explicit research-based units to include how to support neurodivergent learners and diverse disabilities present in an inclusive classroom setting."**

### Explanation:

There are approximately 30,000 autistic students in Queensland State Schools. In rural and remote areas, where face to face visits of allied health are infrequent due to vast distances of travel, it is imperative that all staff supporting students have a thorough understanding and variety of skills suited to adequately support neurodiverse learners and diverse disabilities. Therefore, certificate courses for Teacher Aides will continue to require explicit, current, evidence-based course content.

This content needs to have a child centred focus and build the capacity of Teacher Aides to assist the classroom teacher with small group tasks and adequately support neurodiverse learners and diverse disabilities within an inclusive classroom setting. Additionally, Teacher Aides need professional development to ensure a deeper understanding of the Disability Discrimination Act and Disability Standards for Education.

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## MISCELLANEOUS

### S 12. MT ISA BRANCH OF THE AIR

#### Motion

**"That ICPA Qld requests the Qld Government create a category within the FairPlay voucher programme, for Geographically Isolated (GI) children, which waives the requirement for a Services Australia Healthcare Card or Pensioner Concession card to be eligible, in recognition of the cost imposts those children face to access registered sporting activities/organisations."**

#### Explanation:

Currently children participating in approved sporting programs by registered Activity Providers can access a \$150 voucher annually towards the cost of membership, registration, or participation fees if that family has a current Services Australia Card. For GI families the travel associated with committing to regular club/sports participation is significant. GI families can be anywhere from 50km to 300km one way from their nearest local sporting club. In order to get the most out of a sport participation in training, games or competitions many 100's of km's are travelled at the family's personal expense. GI families should have the requirement to be a concession card holder removed and the FairPlay Voucher program made available to these families.

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### S 13. ST GEORGE BRANCH

#### Motion

**"That the St George, Bollon and Dirranbandi Branches co-host the 54<sup>th</sup> ICPA Qld Inc State Conference in St George in 2025."**

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