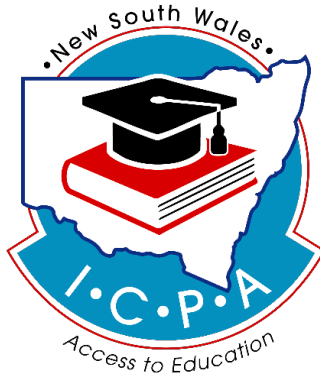


**ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC**



***51st Annual Conference
Moree – 2023***

Agenda, Supplementary and Floor

Motions

**THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF NEW SOUTH WALES INCORPORATED**

ALLOWANCES

A1. Walgett

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to include Walgett Community College (WCC) on the list for the “Limited Schools Program” for Years 7 -12 commencing 2023.”

Moved by Cath Deshon, Walgett Branch. Seconded by Karen Ricardo, Walgett Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Walgett Community College is the only high school in Walgett. The issues at the Walgett Community College have been well documented in the GIPA/Freedom of Information records and My School records over many years. There is no denying that the truancy, vandalism of school property, physical and emotional abuse and high staff and principal turnover are directly contributing to mental health issues and poor educational outcomes.

The Conventional Rights of a Child stipulate that every child has the “right to an education” and the “right to be treated fairly”. Whilst most children are already eligible, those in town or just out of town are not. Denying eligibility to all children in Walgett access to this subsidy and a chance at a quality education is discriminatory and unfair. These children are no less deserving of an education than their peers who are already eligible for the AIC subsidy. They deserve equal access to AIC and nothing less. Allowing all children in Walgett regardless of where they live within the Walgett School catchment to be eligible for AIC payments will allow a fairer and more equitable access to an education in a safe and nurturing environment in which Walgett Community College cannot provide. These children deserve better. Whilst we acknowledge that Walgett has complex, wider community issues that can’t be resolved by the Education Department, they can very easily address this issue.

A2. Walgett

“That ICPA-NSW and the NSW Department of Education work collaboratively on a new Statement of Support for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) subsidy, that has a fairer, more factually based set of criteria and objective assessment procedure.”

Moved by Cath Deshon, Walgett Branch. Seconded by Karen Ricardo, Walgett Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Currently approval of these applications sits with the relevant Executive Director and Director of Educational Leadership. Applications go through a process of approvals and are not solely based on objective facts and data. The current Statement of Support fails to provide parents with a way

of proving their child will be educationally disadvantaged if they attend the local school, despite having clear evidence through publicly available data that it is not a suitable school for their child and can't meet their needs. Freedom of information requests show principal and staff turnover, violence towards staff and peers, use of weapons and illicit drugs. Data from the My School website show school's attendance, Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICEA) score, and completion rates of VET courses. Independent Educational Studies, such as Educate Australia Fair, show educational disadvantage in remote and very remote towns. However, even with all this evidence these applications are being denied time after time.

Is the Executive Director who is responsible for your school's performance, safety, range of subjects and modified curriculums, realistically going to be able assess the application with complete objectivity? Is this not admitting to the short comings of the school? Would this not be like writing a bad review on your own business?

The application should be simplified and streamlined so it is based on objective data such as: -

- Your location and where you live on the Accessibility Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) map. Being awarded additional points if you live in a "Remote" or "Very remote" location
- What is your local schools Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) Score.
- The local school's performance such as NAPLAN, ATAR results and attendance rates.

Using actual facts and data is an easy and non-biased way of determining one's eligibility to apply for the AIC subsidy, not relying on one or more people's subjective opinion before being granted approval so that more isolated and disadvantaged children in remote and very remote locations have a fair chance at being eligible for assistance.

A3. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW request that Service NSW adjust their criteria for accessing the Creative Kids Vouchers, to allow for equity of use for all students across the state.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Nielsen, Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

In late 2021 Services NSW changed the process in which a Creative Kids Voucher could be spent for school age children. Previously you could use your voucher for either a creative class in person (music lesson, art lesson etc.) or you could use the voucher to purchase specific art resource packs or purchase online pre-recorded lessons to do at your own pleasure at home.

A4. Balranald

“That ICPA -NSW ask Service NSW to re-evaluate their restructure of the Creative Kids voucher program.”

Moved by Kirsty Wilson, Balranald Branch that Motion A4 be deemed covered by Motion A3. Seconded by Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Geographically isolated children were not considered in the restructure of the Creative Kids voucher program and are now possibly going to miss out on using this financially and educationally viable resource. The restructure of the Creative Kids voucher program introduced from the 1st, January 2022, is refocusing on encouraging real-time (live) activities. Art kit programs, pre-recorded video lessons and online programs that are not delivered in real-time are no longer eligible.

The fact that the programs, craft/art kits can only be received along with online live lessons has some complications attached to these as some families have limited/varied internet access that at times can be nonexistent making the access to these lessons difficult. If children were to travel to a physical lesson this includes the numerous amounts of kilometres families would have to travel to access these programs. Not all towns have access/provide these lessons meaning distances are extended creating a financial burden to families and time constraints.

In previous years the art/craft kits that were available through the Creative Kids voucher program from registered businesses were very useful, especially as resources for home school learning programs and during the learning from home times faced by teachers, students, and their parents during the pandemic. The Balranald branch ask that children from rural and remote areas have some consideration included in the Creative Kids voucher program and the delivery of the suggested art/creative lessons and how families can utilise these vouchers.

COMMUNICATIONS

A5. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW request that the Telstra Corporation ensure that there are reliable and continuous telecommunications services available to rural and remote students and their families.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Rural and remote families need reliable access to telecommunications in order to access essential services and education. Telstra, as the corporation responsible for providing telecommunication services to rural and remote Australia, has a duty to ensure services are upheld to a functional status. Multiple service area dropouts from within the Bourke and Louth ICPA Branch members areas have been reported. This has interrupted access to schools, resources, healthcare, and the normal duties and activities of daily lives. These drops in service for short and extended periods of time are directly restricting access to and indirectly negatively impacting the education of rural and remote children in NSW.

Comments:

Josh Fullwood, Telstra. Telstra acknowledges that locations within the Bourke LGA have experienced network outages. Subsequent investigations into many of these faults indicate that there are AC mains power liability issues. Telstra continues to upgrade the battery reserves across our mobile facilities but battery and generator redundancy is not a silver bullet. I would also like to point out that no single entity is responsible for regional and rural connectivity as a whole and requires many parties to play a role including other service providers, governments both state and federal, satellite operators and even mains power suppliers, to play a critical role in continued investment and power resilience.

A6. Namoi

“That ICPA-NSW request the relevant Ministers to provide a rebate for rural and remote customers who will need to upgrade equipment (aerials and boosters) to change from 3G to 4G.”

Moved by Nicole Piper, Namoi Branch. Seconded by Virginia Parkel-Thomas, Collarenebri/Mungindi Branch.

Carried**Explanation:**

We feel that with the changing over from 3G to 4G that the cost should not be a further burden on rural and remote customers. In some areas in the Northwest there are large gaps or distances between towers and some towers have been upgraded to 4G and others are still 3G. If you have old aerials and devices, they do not work on the 4G system. This is not a cheap exercise and, in some cases, we are doing this just to get some service – not even a great service.

Comments:

Josh Fullwood, Telstra. Network extension devices repeat the existing signal and extend within the local area providing additional useable coverage. If a location requires a network extension device today through 3G utilisation it will likely require one for 4G. One approach for customer upgrades for existing extension devices could be via government subsidies such as a current pilot programme underway through the South Australian government that supports the purchase of extension devices for people living and/or owning a business within certain areas. Extending the coverage of existing mobile facilities via a network extension device remains the most cost-

effective means of maximizing coverage within sparse populations and Telstra continues to advocate for subsidies for network extension devices be included in government co-investment initiatives.

Libby McPhee, State Council. Thanks, Josh, for those comments and that you are still working on it and I just wanted to say that this motion has come back again and it is something we have been working on quite hard all year. I also just wanted to point out here, and I think it will help out cause as well, that recently, in the last three months, you would have got a 3G's issues form and I really implore you to fill that out for us because that is going to tell us where there are areas out there that are really lacking at the moment whilst you still have 3G. We only have fifteen months to get this up and running. The survey on your table today is also going to provide some extra information for us and I think these things are really there to help us if we can help Telstra and NBN and our other providers. With being a member of the Regional Communications Committee with Telstra, we've been trying to identify these areas out there and I'm not here to stand up and support but what I'm trying to say is that we are helping everyone with this whole issue because Telstra can't say they know exactly where they all are so they are looking to us to help them with that information as well. So, if you identify an area that you didn't previously have problems with you should put it on that 3G issues form for us or just send me an email and I can send it through to the committee and to those who need to know that information. The other thing we are trying to do is, as Josh mentioned, the date of devices. If they are particularly old, they are probably not going to work and at some point, we have got to try to help you upgrade to something that is going to work for you.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

A7. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW urges the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning to implement an initiative to ensure practical access to high schooling for geographically isolated Stage Four students, using the existing primary school facilities in remote and very remote areas.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

The NSW Department of Education does not provide practical high schooling options for some isolated high school students. These students are often kept back in primary school to do a nominal Year 7. The students this motion refers to are those who are unable to successfully assimilate into a boarding school environment because of a variety of reasons. The only practical pathway left to access high school therefore, is by distance education in which they enroll usually about Easter. It is unreasonable to expect a student having any success completing the distance education high school curriculum without a literate adult to support them and an appropriate environment to learn in.

Many students who this motion addresses are living within sight of a NSW Department of Education primary school which are resourced to meet their needs. This situation has led to parents arranging for their children to repeat Year Six because effectively, that ‘buys’ them one more year of school. We would like to see a situation where a successful time in high school is as accessible and the attendance obligation to do so is as rigorous as it is in the primary school. Louth ICPA recognises the complexities with enrolments in dual schools however we ask the Minister and their department to work with ICPA-NSW to find a solution which allows access to the existing primary school facilities, including a supervisor, immediately.

A8. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education to include genuine consultation with home sites and Distance Education schools prior to any continued roll out of technology.”

Moved by Sally Nevill, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

There is no denying that the recent prolonged rollout of new technology to distance education home sites has been nothing short of disastrous, causing an enormous amount of unnecessary frustration and wasted time and money. The NSW Department of Education need to accept full responsibility and make the necessary adjustments to ensure this does not happen again. Initial consultation and advice from ICPA-NSW was completely ignored, the offer to visit a home site refused and the principal of the largest school for geographically isolated students kept completely in the dark. Before any further investment is made in hardware such as laptops, and dare we say, a colour printer that actually scans, we ask that the NSW Department of Education to engage in meaningful consultation and visit home sites and Broken Hill School of the Air to ensure they understand how this form of education works and what equipment is actually needed to make it work effectively. This is imperative for distance education students to receive an equitable education.

Comments:

Bernadette Maxwell, Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch. I think Nerida has said it all in her explanation and we fully support this motion and we live this out every single day in our distance education classrooms. The decisions that are made in an office plays out in our remote classrooms every day.

Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch. We fully support this motion also.

Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. We fully support this motion. My other son has started school this year in kindergarten through Bourke/Walgett Distance Education. We started our enrolment procedure in August 2022 and we are yet to receive our installation and have not had any communication from the Department of Education to when that will be. Thank you.

Laura Stalley, State Council. I have a few documents here and we have been liaising with the Department of Education for quite some time about the technology rollout. We have requested things like laptops, and WiFi in our school room. They are looking into it but we don't know when that will happen but they definitely are moving towards that way. There are a couple of motions in here about the technology so I'll just read out what I have and that will cover a couple of motions. After our last conference this was our reply in terms to the technology. There are currently 123 distance education families and ninety of them are on the existing Optus satellite service run by the department. Thirty-two are new to distance education and one family has migrated from Optus to NBN SkyMuster Plus service. Due to families being located in very remote locations the department has focused on planning and preparation to ensure an effective roll out installation and delivery of service. The department continues to seek and clarify information from families so that the installation team can confirm and ensure the roll out of the new NBN SkyMuster Plus service is delivered to the correct locations with equipment that will work on that site. The rate at which installations can occur can increase as the information from families is refined. The department acknowledges the delays incurred in the roll out of the upgrade and it is actively seeking alternative approaches to accelerate the installation of NBN SkyMuster Plus service and, wherever possible, the installation of the service to new families will be prioritised. Progress regarding this motion is currently being monitored and updates will be provided by the RRREP unit at our regular scheduled meetings and I know we have a meeting last week or the week before where we did have a talk about the positives of distance education and we did mention that there were still quite a lot of families that haven't received the department so I did a little survey with School of the Air Broken Hill which showed of forty-nine families there were 47% who had NBN and the department computers had been installed. 10% are still waiting for NBN to be installed into their school room. 14% have their own NBN but are still waiting on a department computer. 27% of NBN have been set up and are waiting for department computers. We also have three families who have NBN and computers installed but their internet is not connected. We have passed that information on to the Department of Education and we are looking into it and we are continuing to liaise about the programme. While members tell of their issues, please be assured that we are taking them to the department as they come up. I just wanted to assure the members that we are working with the department and we are passing on your issues. So, please contact the school help desk and if you feel like you aren't getting anywhere, please come to us.

A9. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW asks the Minister for Education and Early Learning to ensure Distance Education and Remote and very Remote Schools mandate intensive block swimming lessons as a compulsory part of their sporting program.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

As rural and remote children are exposed to many water ways, Louth Branch believes that it is vitally essential that all rural children are taught lifesaving swimming skills. Block swimming programs need to be provided to ensure that the skills are taught and reinforced. This type of program delivery is effective and reduces the travel requirements and costs for parents on a weekly basis to obtain these such services at great cost to themselves.

Comments:

Laura Stalley, State Council. I just have a question for the department. I know that most schools have a requirement to do life saving as a part of their curriculum and wonder if you could clarify if this is correct?

Ben Ballard, Executive Director, Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy Unit. I'll just have to take that one on notice and will get back to you.

Anna McCorkle, Bourke Branch, Observer. Just a comment please madam chair. I just would like to say that we wouldn't have programmes like the Bush to the Beach programmes and things like Lifesavers NSW set up if swimming wasn't a necessary skill for all of our students no matter where they live.

A10. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education progress Stage II of the Distance Education technology roll out to home sites in a timely manner with meaningful consultation so that students can access Wi-Fi, portable devices and a printer that is fit for purpose.”

Moved by Sally Nevill, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

Portable devices are a necessity for continuity of learning in a Distance Education setting. The current Minister for Education and Early Learning knows this as she came to Broken Hill and spoke face to face with parents and staff. For portable devices to be an effective educational tool, home sites also need access to Wi-Fi. If the NSW Department of Education engage in meaningful consultation, they will also realise that a printer that scans, has Wi-Fi capability, and can print colour is a necessity for geographically isolated Distance Education primary students. The current printer that families have received in Stage I of the rollout is a monotone printer that fails to scan and cannot connect to Wi-Fi.

A11. Tibooburra/Milparinka

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to provide one connected portable device per student and one colour printer per home school site, for preschool to Year 12 students studying via Distance Education due to geographical isolation.”

Moved by Bernadette Maxwell, Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch. Seconded by Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch on behalf of Tibooburra/Milparinka.

Carried

Explanation:

Access to a portable connected device, either fixed or via Wi-Fi is an essential tool for full time geographically isolated distance education students. Currently many families are going to extraordinary lengths and expense so their children can access basic technology and the internet because what is provided is completely inadequate. Use of a connected device as a geographically isolated distance education student is not optional, it is indeed the only way to access public education. Students should have access to a colour printer to be able to print out resources sent via email from their school that are in colour on the screen. Often teachers are sending colour documents to distinguish what work each student needs to complete. Another thing that is required to be printed in colour is a term planner and satellite timetables if these documents change during the year. Black and white printers hinder the ability for these things to occur.

A12. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education to progress with urgency, the promised upgrade to satellite studios at Broken Hill School of the Air.”

Moved by Sally Nevill, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

We are all fully aware of the complete breakdown of the previous technology system. Kinder students have not been able to participate in proper phonics lessons for three years now. How this has gone on for so long is disgraceful. There is no point rolling out new technology at the home site if we do not upgrade the school site to allow improved lessons to take place. The NSW Department of Education again must engage in meaningful consultation with the staff at Broken Hill School of the Air to ensure studios are able to operate in a way that allows for the successful delivery of lessons.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

A13. Tibooburra/ Milparinka Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to investigate a pathway for funding accommodation or offer rent subsidies, to teachers and educators in Early Childhood Centres that are located in remote and very remote locations.”

Moved by Bernadette Maxwell, Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch. Seconded by Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch on behalf of Tibooburra/Milparinka.

Carried.

Explanation:

The first 5 years of a child’s life are vitally important for development in all areas, including cognitive, physical and social. While the State and Federal Governments have worked hard to establish and sustain early childhood education services in remote and very remote locations, it is very hard to attract teachers and educators to these areas. Accommodation is scarce and what is available is expensive. If services could offer rent subsidies or free accommodation it would make it easier to attract staff to remote areas. This situation in a very remote community like Tibooburra is even more acutely felt. There is one public school and one not for profit early childhood education facility, directly across the road from each other. A person who wants to live and work with children in Tibooburra is much more likely to choose the job that comes with subsidised housing, which is the public school. Which then, in turn, adds another layer to the recruitment and retention of staff for the early childhood education facility across the road, as they can't access the subsidised teacher housing. We believe there is scope for both public and other providers of early education facilities in remote and very remote to work together on this issue.

Comments:

Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch. I am also president of the facility at Tibooburra and we lost our director there nearly eighteen months ago when the school required the teacher housing back and we have not been able to fill that position ever since. We currently pay a director from Broken Hill to stay there and we pay a nightly fee at a motel and that has eaten into our budget and prevented us to be able to provide other services to our kids because we are now spending so much money on a nightly fee to send a director up from Broken Hill because we don’t have access to the housing any longer.

Prue Ritchie, Bourke Branch. I speak in support of the motion. I know that in Bourke, not having access to adequate housing really affects our ability to be able to recruit and attract people and retain them in the longer term in these early childhood positions. We have a number of staff who live in an unstable housing situation and they are already amongst the most poorly paid workforce in the care industry and it just adds to those staffing shortages.

A14. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister for Education and Early Learning and the NSW Department of Education to provide administrative learning and support for volunteer led community preschools.”

Moved by Sally Nevill, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

It is completely unrealistic to expect parent volunteers to be able to adequately administrate community preschools. The responsibility and expectation placed on these volunteers without training and support is beyond what can be considered reasonable. Community preschools are often in small regional and rural communities where there exists a significant challenge to attract paid and qualified staff. Also, there is significant volunteer fatigue which has been raised with the NSW government via various channels for several years. Some of the requirements placed on the volunteers include reporting to ECCMS (Department of Education funding body), meeting ACECQA requirements and EYLF/QIP, staff management disputes etc. It is a massive workload and the time required to effectively get up to date with this required information is completely overwhelming.

A15. Bourke

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning to implement better governance models for Early Childhood Services in Western NSW.”

Moved by Vallie Sheridan, Bourke Branch. Seconded by Prue Ritchie, Bourke Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

In rural and remote areas of NSW, most early childhood services are provided by community managed not-for-profit organisations, or Local Government. The significant weight of personal and financial responsibility placed on the volunteer management committees means that many potential candidates will not volunteer for such a role. There is limited capacity for volunteers to undertake rigorous training, and indeed early childhood services have extremely limited resources to be able to deliver training in governance and financial management.

A16. Bourke

“That ICPA-NSW requests the relevant State Ministers for funding to be sought to address Early Childhood Teacher pay parity.”

Moved by Vallie Sheridan, Bourke Branch. Seconded by Prue Ritchie, Bourke Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Pay parity of early childhood teachers is a significant issue. An early childhood teacher completes a four-year degree course as a primary school teacher. If they elect to work in the public school system in a rural and remote location, the additional benefits they would get compared to working as an early childhood teacher would include:

- Additional seven weeks of annual leave (approx. \$10,000pa)
- Significantly shorter contact hours per week
- Approx \$20,000-\$30,000 additional salary
- Professional mentoring by other teachers
- Structured professional development programs (\$10,000 pa)
- Access to teacher housing (at a 70% discount on market rates in Bourke) (\$10,000pa)

In Bourke, a Connected Communities school, a deputy principal eligible for a salary package valued at up to \$210,000 per annum. An equivalent early childhood teacher who is directing the preschool with similar responsibilities is eligible for about \$72,000 under the children services award. This is a significant gap of \$138,000 per year and contributes to staffing shortages faced by early childhood services in rural and remote areas. Early Childhood Services are significantly limited in their budgets and it is important to find long term solutions to address pay parity of early childhood teachers in rural and remote locations.

Comments:

Deborah Nielsen, State Council. I'll just read the government's response to this from last year's motion. "The New south Government's role in early childhood education involves regulating services." Well, I won't read it all out but will shorten it. Minister Mitchell has announced early childhood incentives as per our report if you read that, and is also exploring ways to provide additional resources to support employers and service providers in rural and remote New south Wales. The department recognises that many regional and remote communities face a range of barriers to attracting and retaining high quality staff and are exploring collaborative, place-based solutions that may help to address some of these challenges. The recommendation is that the motion is noted and the department will continue to partner with you to work towards solutions where possible.

Julia Broad, Vice President, ICPA (Aust) Federal Council.

I just wanted to let everyone know that from the similar motions that were brought to federal conference last year, letters went to the Minister for Employment and no response has been received at this point but we will continue to pursue that and please bring this to federal conference again

A17. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW and ICPA (Aust) requests the relevant State and Federal Ministers to amend the lack of salary parity between four-year trained early childhood teachers and four-year trained primary and high school teachers.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch that Motion A17 be deemed as covered by Motion A16.

Carried.

Explanation:

Currently, the pay gap is so significant it is impossible to recruit and retain teachers in Early Childhood Centres and new recruits often use early childhood jobs as a steppingstone into the primary school sector.

A18. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister for Education and Early Learning review pay rates and incentives for Early Childhood and Preschool employees in rural and remote locations.”

Moved by Sally Nevill, Wentworth Branch that Motion A18 be deemed as covered by Motion A16.
Seconded by Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

For many years the NSW Department of Education have been aware of the need to provide pay and incentives to attract and keep teaching staff in rural and remote locations. We now need the same attention paid to attracting and retaining staff in the Early Childhood Sector. At our newly opened Long Day Care Centre at the Wentworth Preschool, the staff member in the long day care room is entitled to higher pay than the preschool teacher. That same preschool teacher, currently studying to gain university qualifications, has received several written offers from Victoria promising a \$15,000 scholarship to work in Victoria. This is making it near impossible for border communities to attract qualified preschool teachers. In very remote areas, access to housing or subsidised housing can mean the difference between having an operational Centre or not. Rural and remote areas need assistance to attract educators because our children deserve a ‘good start’ too.

A19. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests that the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning continues to establish Distance Education/School of The Air pre-schools in small, isolated schools where there is no other access to pre-school for four-year olds.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch that Motion A19 be withdrawn. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

As many as ten remote schools were identified by ICPA-NSW in 2014, as servicing areas without practical access to preschooling. The NSW Department of Education has since identified other sites. Several remote preschools have since been established. The fact that, to date, all remote communities which have been identified as needing practical access to preschool have not had a simple distance education preschool model offered at their school, can only be attributed to inefficiency and we ask that such be affected immediately.

A20. Balranald

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to strongly promote and emphasize the benefits of early transition programs into rural and remote schools throughout NSW where there is no distance education model being used in the school.”

Moved by Kirsty Wilson, Balranald Branch. Seconded by Sally Nevill, Wentworth Branch on behalf of Balranald Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

In 2019 Clare Public School introduced the early transition program for the four preschool aged children in the community. Children in this area would otherwise have had no other access to an early education due to the huge distances involved, for some a trip of 180kms one way. The early transition program introduced at Clare Public School allowed these children to access the program in mid-2019 instead of late in the year. This early transition program allowed the children to have access to education resources and was received positively by the children, who showed great advancement in their school readiness. The universal 600 hours of preschool recommended by the Federal Government is difficult to achieve. Many children from rural and isolated areas barely, if at all, receive the recommended hours of preschool education because of the limitations in their community. By encouraging more rural and remote schools to introduce the early transition program the NSW Department of Education would be allowing children to have some preschool education before attending primary school.

HEALTH and WELLBEING

A21 Bourke

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Rural & Remote Health for travel and accommodation assistance to be made available for rural and remote families travelling to access in person specialist Allied Health services not covered by Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS) for geographically isolated and ‘at risk’ children.”

Moved by Vallie Sheridan, Bourke Branch. Seconded by Prue Ritchie, Bourke Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

Children with specific education needs and developmental delays require access to appropriate specialist Allied Health services which often require in person consultations. Adequate and uniform assistance should be available to assist geographically isolated, vulnerable, and at-risk children accessing in person specialist sessions with expenses such as travel and accommodation when extensive travel is required to attend these consultations. In NSW there are only a couple of services in Metropolitan Sydney that can be claimed for and are inaccessible for the majority of rural and remote families.

Comments:

Myfi Kellahan, State Council. I would like to pass comment that this motion has been presented by Bourke Branch in 2021 and 2022. It has been raised with the relevant ministers and departments and I think we also need to look at some education about IPTAAS and what it can actually provide as well because a lot of services don't know anything about the scheme. It is an ongoing issue and hopefully we will get some resolution soon.

A22. Rankins Springs

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning ensures that rural and remote schools have access to in person counselling sessions for students.”

Moved by Deborah Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Kerrie Johnston, Rankins Springs Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

There are students requiring counselling in person in rural and remote schools, however, due to the lack of services being available locally, they don't have access to an appropriate face to face counselling service. Our local TP1 School, Naradhan Public School, has not had access to a regular school counselling service for over three years. The school has a significant need for regular face to face counselling to support students academically and emotionally and are being

disadvantaged by not having this support. This year, a school counsellor has been allocated half a day per fortnight to the school (the same day is shared with another school in the district), however, in this time the counsellor needs to travel to the school and does not allow sufficient time for cognitive assessments to be administered in the school counsellor time allocations, nor does it allow for discussion with the staff about the next steps needed to be addressed for each of the students requiring any other services that may or may not be provided for through the Department of Education. The school is required to pay for OT visits from its own budget and with this limited funding, it is not sufficient to employ an SLSO (Student Learning Support Officer) to assist students. Schools are obligated to fund services for students needs outside of Department of Education services due to wait times and lack of facilities in the area. The teaching staff are also feeling the absence of a regular school counsellor, who had previously provided support with classroom management strategies and learning adjustments to ensure every student was supported.

Comments:

Myfi Kellahan, State Council. Rankins Springs has presented this motion in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Some progression has been made. The Department of Education did comment on this motion last year advising that they will work with Health and Regional New South Wales to improve the allied health services to regional areas.

Nat Walker, President, NSW P&C Federation. Just in regards to the counselling services in schools, just letting you know that P&C Federation, like you, advocate for school counsellors in our schools and in the last few years we have actually been working with the department and involved quite heavily in the merit selection process of psychologists and counsellors in our schools. But, alas, some of the issues are getting people to actually apply for some of these jobs in our rural and remote communities. So, we do hear what you are saying and agree but also want to let you know that the department has been working to try and alleviate this issue within our regional, rural and remote schools but we need people to apply for these jobs. One of the things I always say is that if your child is interested in health get them to do a career in psychology because, at the moment, there are definitely jobs available. Also, I want to let people know that there is a thing called SCATTERS but I can't remember what it stands for, School Counselling and Telehealth something – can the department help me out here? It is a really remote access for counselling sessions so please touch base with your principal because that should be accessible specifically for your rural and remote schools in New South Wales. So, if there isn't the in-person counselling service, which I know we really trying to get, that definitely should be available. We also have heard some very positive feedback about that from students and families as well.

Jenny Stevenson, Royal Far West. We obviously offer those services and we have a proposal in with the department at the moment to expand our services out through about forty-five schools. We have met with the ICPA about this so, hopefully we can do something further.

A23. Broken Hill

‘That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education ensure a more accessible school-based platform for assessment and diagnosis of any learning and well-being support requirements of children living in rural and remote NSW. This enables early identification and timely interventions without the need to access consultation outside the school.’

Moved by Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch. Seconded by David Shrimpton, Broken Hill Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

The NSW Department of Education schools have psychologists allocated to their schools through the school counselling service however they are unable to formally diagnose conditions such as ADHD, autism, mental health conditions and specific learning disorders, for example, dyslexia. In rural and remote areas there is often very limited access to health professionals or specialist services. These are generally also highly transient positions making it extremely difficult for patients to develop any rapport with that professional - one of the most important factors of childhood diagnostics. Accessibility of services should run absolutely parallel between young people in rural and remote areas and their metropolitan counterparts. Specialised support can be extremely difficult to access by families who are already vulnerable and disadvantaged due to isolation. Taking into consideration the additional needs or complexities is paramount especially because multidisciplinary assessments are often required further delaying diagnosis. The follow-on effect delays support and early intervention and impedes a child’s ability to grow and thrive. We are not asking for additional learning support allocation and fully understand the shortage of specialised services within rural and remote areas. Utilising the current psychological health and wellbeing resources available within the NSW Department of Education would provide timelier and streamlined assessment and therefore earlier intervention processes within the schools. Growing up in a rural or remote area should never be seen as a disadvantage. There should be no barrier for accessing services especially those that can change the trajectory of a life.

Comments:

Gillian Bale, Assistant Principal, NSW Centre for Effective Reading. I just wanted to make sure that everyone was aware of the service we offer and we offer multidisciplinary assessments to students of primary age in rural and remote New South Wales by our referral system from schools, the department and non-government schools. Within that multidisciplinary assessment we have education psychology and speech assessment which is free usually at one of our hubs or even remotely. If in that referral process the child has co-morbidities and they need to attend they can come to us in the city and access the Child Development Unit where they can get that diagnosis for ADHD and autism and the support. After that they have twelve months support within their school. We provide everything and all the school needs to do is provide the tutor. So, I just wanted to make sure that you all were aware of that service. My colleague, Lynne Young-Dwarte, and myself are here for the duration of the conference and we have a display table out there for anyone who would like to know more about the service that the Department of Education provides.

A 24. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW asks the Minister for Education and Early Learning and the Minister for Health to provide funding or subsidies for rural and remote Distance Education children that require allied health support.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Currently remote students requiring allied health professional support are required to pay for services out of pocket as the distance education centres are not providing the necessary support or the online allied health service linked with the school has large waiting lists. We ask that subsidies are provided so that parents of remote children are able to use private allied health professionals so that local providers can be accessed if available and to avoid wait lists to ensure that the appropriate support is provided in a timely manner. Allied health support for children who are not classified as disabled cannot access funding through NDIS therefore paying for it out of their own pocket.

MISCELLANEOUS

A 25. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW contact Sport and Recreation to ensure that DE students are contacted about sporting workshops in their communities.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, Louth Branch.

LOST.

Explanation:

There are a lot of sporting associations and organisations. Many rural, remote, and very remote children are unable to access weekly team sports due to large distances having to be travelled. Louth ICPA would like to see funding be allocated to community groups for example, collective ICPA branches etc., who would be responsible for organising and delivering the programs that provide sporting workshops and opportunities to these children. We would welcome sporting associations for example, Netball Australia and NRL, linking their tours to rural towns/schools to include remote communities so that these children have equitable access to sport workshops.

Comments:

Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch. I wish to speak against the motion. I have a few issues with this motion in that initially the motion is asking to ensure that distance education students are contacted about the workshops but then the explanation is seeking funding to be provided to groups which doesn't necessarily match the initial request. I understand possibly where Louth is coming from but I think it might be better handled at a local government area. I also have concerns that if this motion passes then state council is forced to pursue this but without any clear idea of what it is that they are actually pursuing. You have a motion that asks for distance education students to be contacted about a workshop but how would we do that? Is it an email list that you are asking for? I think it is too unclear and I think if it needs to proceed it needs to be revised and then presented again at a later date.

Nathan Kitto, State Council. I would agree with everything that has just been said. The motion is a little bit broad and I do have concerns that as to how such a thing could be administered. We've just heard through the Allowances Report that we don't administer allowances and I think we need to be very careful about going down paths where we start administering funds. It is a little bit outside our remit and probably goes back to the question of sustainability of our organisation and taking on things that we can actually manage and to do the things that we are good at so I would be very cautious about going down paths that require us to administer programmes and funding.

Laura Stalley, State Council. I just wanted to let Louth Branch know that I have the contact details for NSW Sport and Recreation. Mark Horton is the Regional Coordinator for the far west and he flicks emails really, really regularly so I would be happy to give you his details for you to get in contact with him. He is very approachable and if you have suggestions for him as a branch I think he would take it onboard. So, yes, I'm happy to pass on his details to Louth Branch.

A26. Bourke

“That ICPA-NSW requests all relevant Ministers and Government Departments use a more accurate mapping method to determine how a particular area is assessed for eligibility for funding such as drought or exceptional circumstances.”

Moved by Vallie Sheridan, Bourke Branch. Seconded by Prue Ritchie, Bourke Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Inaccuracy of boundaries or lines on a map causes disparity such as when the Bourke area was assessed at the lowest rate of drought impact in 2019. As most people would be aware, this was indeed far from being the case. An example of the effects of this was that the funding payments anticipated for the Bourke and District Children’s Services (Preschool, Mobile & Childcare) for the three licenses were a third of what was received due to assessment determined by the Combined Drought Indicator (CDI). This could have allowed the Services to install water saving measures such as irrigation and tanks and replace plantings so that we could provide quality learning environments during a drought. The use of the CDI mapping also meant that children in our area were not eligible for the Drought Break program run by the Office of Sport, as the map indicated that Bourke, along with Cobar and Wilcannia, were not severely drought affected despite them being so affected for a much longer period than other areas on the map. The children and families in these areas were ineligible as a result of this map. However, those communities were some of the hardest hit at the time.

Comments:

Lindy Kitto, NSW/Vic Lone Members. While I can appreciate where the thought is behind this motion, I feel it does not have anything to do with education. I think it is something that we could perhaps leave to National Farmers Federation or those bodies that are able to deal with the relevant authorities regarding drought and drought relief.

Claire Butler, State Council. Just a comment. This has passed before at a conference and has been advocated for around 2019 and 2020. Just because that drought indicator map is used by a number of organisations and I know the CWA was using it at one point as well because they didn’t have any other maps to go by. There is a national drought map as well that is being worked on and I just wanted the conference to know the transparency that this has been advocated before preciously by State Council.

Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch. I’d just like to give an example on how it did actually effect the education of the kids. In that the preschool funding was allocated to preschools based on this indicator and you can imagine Broken Hill School of the Air where all the kids are remote and suffering drought and was completely ineligible yet the kids who actually reside in Broken Hill received \$30,000 for their preschool. In Wentworth Branch the funding that Wentworth was actually given was used to transport the kids to the preschool so had they not had that drought funding those parents who were under significant financial stress never would have brought their kids to that service. The preschool would have been missed for a year. We had one member in our

branch who was adamant that, had Wentworth not received that preschool funding she would not have been able to afford to bring her child to preschool. So, it did impact the education of the kids.

Prue Ritchie, Bourke Branch. Just to reinforce that point it was a measure of funding that the Department of Education used that to allocate funding to early childhood services so it directly impacted the children in our community and, obviously, the Department of Sport and Recreation in those sport and recreation programmes were also allocating funding that was around about how children engage with sport and the ability to attend camps. So, it was an impact on their educational outcomes for children in our area. I guess the frustrating point for us was that those places like Dubbo, which had gone into drought three years after we had, were getting funding at a much higher rate and we had been suffering some very long-term consequences on our services as a result of drought, and we didn't get the funding.

Claire Butler, State Council. Just another comment that combined drought indicator map actually comes with a disclaimer that says that it should not be used for forms of funding. It was meant to be used for farmers to just have a look at what the ground cover was, what the drought indicators were, so the danger with it is that it was actually clearly used as funding even though it came with the disclaimer. Just a comment there.

David Butler, State Council. I'm not too sure about what other maps we can use and I know how much trouble we had with that Aria mapping with the preschool drive subsidy. Whether we have just got to start a whole new mapping system I'm not too sure but I don't now what other maps are out there but we know that Aria mapping doesn't work for us.

RURAL SCHOOLS

A 27. State Council

“That ICPA-NSW State Council thank the Rural Regional Remote Education Policy unit within the Department of Education for facilitating the fortnightly meetings with ICPA-NSW.”

Moved by Laura Stalley, State Council. Seconded by Bree Wakefield, State Council.

Carried by acclamation.

Explanation:

ICPA-NSW have found these meetings to be very useful and a great opportunity for the organisation to learn more about government department procedures and announcements. It also enables State Council to bring issues and provide feedback to the Department. It means we have been able to take long standing motions directly to the source and with setting agendas, taking minutes, and actioning the follow up we are already seeing a shift in outcomes.

A28. Louth

“That an ICPA-NSW representative meets annually with each Director, Educational Leadership overseeing rural and remote schools and that ICPA be invited to annual meetings which suit the DELs’ calendar.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Louth ICPA understand that our representatives have been invited to ask for meetings with remote DELs annually. We believe however that annual meetings would be more likely to happen if the Director, Educational Leadership’s calendar had ICPA-NSW as an invitee to a NSW Department of Education forum which is constant.

Comments:

Neridah Healy, Wentworth Branch. Just a question for Louth Branch. Have you requested a meeting in the last twelve months and has that not been able to happen?

Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch. Annabel may correct me but we have requested a meeting a long time ago but as their staff changes it may not be the same people who are the DEL’s now or the department representatives. They have agreed that it is a good idea it just hasn’t happened and we believe that it is more likely to happen if we were a constant invitee to their forum when they meet annually. To answer your question specifically, we haven’t heard anything in the last twelve months.

Helen Parker, Director, Partnerships and Engagement. Department of Education. I just wanted to clarify for Neridah who has raised the question, that in September of last year at one of the regular Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy meetings between the ICPA and the Department, four DEL’s who represent geographic regions covered by your membership base, were present and all four indicated that they would be happy to meet with ICPA representatives and contact details for those DEL’s have been provided to the ICPA. Representatives of the ICPA are welcome to reach out to the DEL’s and schedule a meeting.

Claire Butler, State Council. I’ll just make a comment. Thank you, Helen. We did have a good meeting with you about that and we did write to all of the DEL’s after that meeting and requested meetings but we haven’t heard back.

A29. Bourke

“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education ensure that Connected Communities Directors of Educational Leadership are included in regular meetings held between ICPA-NSW and Department of Education representatives.”

Moved by Vallie Sheridan, Bourke Branch. Seconded by Prue Ritchie, Bourke Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Many of our rural and remote areas have Connected Communities Schools but as a body Connected Communities are not present to hear the issues and concerns discussed at conference or in deputations. It would be beneficial to have a representative from Connected Communities leadership attend as part of the regular meetings between Department of Education and ICPA-NSW.

A30. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request the NSW Department of Education ensure the “Tell Them From Me” parent and student feedback surveys are offered in all NSW small schools, with responses collected and actioned by the office of Director, Educational Leadership to ensure anonymity is maintained.”

Moved by Sally Nevill, Branch. Seconded by Neridah Healy, Wentworth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

We thank the NSW Department of Education for the work already completed to ensure more rural schools and their families have the opportunity to participate in the “Tell Them from Me” surveys. However there remains a disconnect between many remote small schools and the Director, Educational Leadership and many parents feel they have no avenue to report what is happening in a school and community. Directors, Educational Leadership visit remote locations infrequently and check in with principals, though rarely seek the feedback from families or communities. In a small school, the interaction between the school and the community is vital and families should have an appropriate avenue to report their educational experiences and expectations. We understand the need for anonymity and therefore in a small school setting responses should go direct to the Director Educational Leadership’s office. They could then share across all small schools what is working well and what could be improved.

Comments:

Nat Walker, President, NSW P&C Federation. Just a comment in relation to this. I know that with the P&C Federation, and I know that Tanya has been working with the SPFx Directorate,

(Student Parent Experience, Directive) , and this might be something that might be good to take to them with regards to the concerns especially when we know in rural school communities, they are close knit communities, and sometimes some feedback may not be taken in the right way and families may feel a little concerned in regards to consequences of providing feedback into some schools, particularly small schools. Just in regards to that comment to take to the SPFx Directorate, (Student Parent Experience, Directive) team.

A31. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW urges the NSW Department of Education to make school staff aware of ICPA as an information source for understanding isolated education processes and difficulties that may be incurred due to remoteness.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Louth ICPA welcomes sharing knowledge with professional staff and believes that all communities need to discuss issues with the aim of working collaboratively towards solutions. We would like NSW Department of Education to have a definite policy which informs remote staff of ICPA’s role in remote areas.

Comments:

James Armitage, NSW/Vic Lone Members. I would just also suggest that there are two bodies that would be really good avenues regarding the dissemination of that information within the Department of Education. The PPA (Primary Principals Association) and the SPC (Secondary Schools Principals Council) are probably two bodies that I would suggest in engagement in trying to pass on that information would be really valuable.

Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch. Just a comment and a suggestion as well that maybe it is up to each individual ICPA branch could actively seek to meet with the new staff members at a school through something like the P&C meeting so that they can inform their local staff of ways that ICPA may be able to assist and what offerings they may be able to assist the families with as well.

Deborah Neilsen, State Council. Thank you for those suggestions. This motion was formed in the experience that we have had where staff come to a remote community and ICPA is, perhaps, thought to be a critical of the department and they may not feel that they are able to be a part of ICPA while being employed by the Department of Education. We thought it would be good coming from the Department of Education that they would say that there is this organisation that you can work with out in remote places.

A32. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW urges the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning, to ensure that there is always a ‘handover’ between principals in remote and very remote small (TP1) schools.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

We realise the improbability of teachers being able to psychically meet before the end of the previous year, however, if the outgoing principal could provide the following for the new incoming principal, it would alleviate issues in small schools with only a teaching principal (TP1).

Often the incoming principal has not been in this role previously.

The proposed handover would be: -

A first term program would allow the teaching principal to

- settle into the huge administrative load knowing that the students are starting their schooling in the first week.
- become familiar with the multistage classroom environment, which is often the major hurdle.
- assess the students’ academic progress and levels before having to set their own program.
- check what resources are available at the school before purchasing new ones.
- know the students and their families which, in a small community is integral to roles in which leadership is required.

- It is vital a discussion is had between the incoming and outgoing principals to ensure the new principal has an insight into the school and the community.

- Principal contracts should commence on the 1st of January, allowing the principal to familiarize themselves with information applicable to the new school prior to the first day of term.

- If a face-to-face handover cannot be achieved, surely a zoom could be organised in order for the two principals to connect and for the outgoing principal be able to answer any questions from the incoming principal.

A33. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to provide single accommodation at all remote schools.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

There is not any affordable accommodation in either Louth or Wanaaring in which we have members, therefore, when a casual teacher or visiting consultant needs to overnight it is not feasible for them to do so. The Wanaaring teacher last year paid \$1,000 dollars a fortnight for a small flat as the teacher's house was still occupied by the relief head mistress. There is no additional funding which allows for this extra expense. This is yet another disincentive for principals as they cannot leave their position for any amount of time as the school would be without a teacher.

Comments:

Annabel Strachan, State Council. I just have a response from the Department of Education and it says that, "the teacher housing authority manages the department residence at Louth and Wanaaring and the local hotel provides short term accommodation. The teacher housing has no current plans to provide additional housing in Louth and it is not on the current department policy list." Their recommendation is, "that the Rural and Remote Education Unit will work with relevant partners, directorate and the teacher housing authority on this issue."

A34. Louth

"That ICPA-NSW requests the Executive Director of Public Schools NSW ensures that the Director, Educational Leadership physically attend the rural, remote and very remote TP1 schools at least twice a year to check the school program."

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

The Director, Education Leadership needs to review the teaching principals' program, register of work which has been taught and the students completed work which aligns to that program. This level of support is necessary for the teaching principal who is working in professional peer isolation (despite having access to online mentoring) and the communities they are serving whom deserve the best education possible for their children.

Comments:

Meghanne Wellard, Executive Director, Rural North School Performance. Department of Education. Thank you for your motion. I'd be very concerned if that wasn't the case in any of our schools and I'm very keen for us to support that motion fully. Presently the Director, Education Leadership, certainly Rural North for whom I can speak, are visiting schools and we are working on strong lines of sight over curriculum, particularly the implementation of our new curriculum, which you would know is rolling out across the state. So, I just wanted to speak in support of this and also comment that I will also take this to my colleague Executive Director, Dean White, who would be the Executive Director for the rest of Western New South Wales.

Deborah Neilsen, State Council. I would like to thank you very much for your comments. We have met with some DEL's and it is not just us presuming, it is the case that the programmes are not assessed with that that we have just outlined.

Anabel Strachan, State Council. When we had our meeting with the DEL's at the RRRA meeting he just suggested that he doesn't actually check the programme because it is up to the principal as she is more in charge of that type of thing so that was a big concern.

A35. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Executive Director of Public Schools NSW ensures that the Director, Educational Leadership physically attend the rural, remote and very remote TP1 schools at least twice a year to meet with the school community.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

We believe that the Director's physical presence will engender friendships and networking which will allow the Director to understand issues between teaching principals and their communities before problems arise.

Comments:

Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch. Just from experience with a few of the small schools in our area, I understand completely what Louth are asking for but I feel like it is a very tricky environment for families to express their concerns maybe, or things like that in that sort of environment. Hence, why we had the motion regarding the anonymous survey. This is just a comment that I completely understand what you are trying to get at but I just think it is a really difficulty environment in a small school, small community to have the DEL, the principal, maybe the teaching staff and community all trying to meet and express their feelings in that environment.

A36. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests that the Director, Educational Leadership responsible for isolated schools, monitor their principals' professional development directly benefits their current school.” (sic)

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Currently the principals in TP1 schools are able to access a series of training opportunities for themselves even though they are intending to transfer from their current school. If the training is not beneficial to the current school valuable resources are misspent.

A37. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests that the Chief Executive of the NSW Land and Housing Corporation ensure that agencies responsible for the maintenance of remote teacher housing do so efficiently.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Currently we have many examples of inefficiency and negligence in the maintenance of teacher housing. Those agencies responsible conduct six monthly checks. Before a teacher begins an appointment, all residences must be watertight, cracks and gaps filled, paint work done etc.

Some examples are:

- A new rainwater tank has been installed at a school residence, the old tank has not been taken away and the new tank has not had the guttering installed (100mm of rain has fallen at this residence since the new tank has been installed and not one drop has gone into the new tank).
- At another remote school there are two residences but only one carport.
- A second teacher’s house has an extension cord running into the main residence for electricity.
- Blinds have been taken from a western verandah and never been replaced.
- Even in cases where maintenance has actually been completed there has been no one to check quality assurance or even that it has been done.

A38. Rankins Springs

“That ICPA-NSW urges the NSW Department of Education to ensure that the Hub and Spoke Program position in rural communities is retained for TP1 and TP2 schools so that relief teaching staff can be accessed when needed.”

Moved by Deborah Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Kerrie Johnston, Rankins Springs Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

Our local schools currently have access to a Hub and Spoke Program teacher when covering teaching staff on leave or who are attending professional development. School principals are continually fighting for the positions to continue as casual teacher availability is extremely low in rural areas. These positions are vital in ensuring schools remain operational in the event of an unexpected illness or leave. TP1 and TP2 schools have a low number of staff and do not have the ability to split classes in the event of an unexpected absence. Another issue is that this Hub and Spoke Program position is shared with three small schools in the area whilst the teacher is based at a central school in the district. Whilst principals and teachers are accessing professional learning at the same time, each school can't access the relief teacher through the Hub and Spoke Program on the same day so accessing a very small bank of relief teachers is still an ongoing issue in rural areas. At conference last year, Julia Mitchell from the Department of Education responded to this motion indicating that a teacher had been engaged in our district for three years. We acknowledge that these positions are three- or five-year contracts, however, it is very rare that staff stay in this position for much longer than one or two years, therefore it is necessary to ensure that this position is retained for TP1 and TP2 schools.

A39. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to include an appropriate vehicle in the incentive package for Rural Schools Principals whose School is on an unsealed road. “

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Without a vehicle attached to the school, these very remote schools are at a disadvantage in attracting staff. An arrangement for a school car to be used as a part private vehicle such as there is for some other local government staff, for example, local shires. In small schools an added attraction is that students can be transported to school-based activities. Vast distances and unsealed roads in these isolated communities coupled with the fact that there are no essential services (for example health, emergency services and tele communications) means that the school and students are even more isolated without an appropriate vehicle.

Comments:

Claire Butler, State Council. Many years ago I remember being with you, Deborah, in a meeting with the Education Department and getting a car for Clare Public School. So, I support this motion. There was a recent bushfire out at Clare and that car would have had capacity to take children if they need to in the opposite direction. So, I fully support this motion.

A40. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning that when incentivizing remote teacher packages, they ensure that those incentives are authentic as to the teachers’ contract.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Currently remote teacher housing is subsidised considerably. However, this rental subsidy needs to be in addition, to the remote teacher incentive. We feel that therefore the remote teacher incentive really is not an incentive at all.

Comments:

Anna McCorkle, Bourke Branch. Just to clarify what the explanation has got there for you. What happened in this situation is that teachers receive an incentive payment to be in remote areas dependent on being a 6.8-point school in New South Wales. But at the moment you receive a rental subsidy, in some areas that’s 70% reduction in the rent you pay. It’s 90% for the police force in those areas. But, that reduction in your rental comes out of your incentive payment so the incentive payment then is really for those who invest in that community and perhaps buy a house. So, there can be some wins and losses but just to take it further because it can be very confusing from the outside. Is that an actual incentive if you are reducing another incentive you promised of it. They actually advertised it on the Department of Education Working in New South Wales site that way and have only just, in the last few months, clarified it. It is an issue that Federation won’t touch because it is controversial and big and it deals with a lot of people and they fear that a few people will lose it. So, Federation and stuff won’t touch it either. So, just to clarify.

Deborah Neilsen, Louth Branch. Thank you, Anna that’s brilliantly put, and we are, of course, talking about small schools and, yes. It would be right if you could work in the teacher’s favour and they could buy some real estate but that’s not possible in Louth or Wanaaring or other little villages. So, the incentive they go out with to where ever is then eaten away by the fact that it is taken away.

A41. Rankins Springs

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Minister for Education and Early Learning and the Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy Unit to ensure that regional, rural and remote schools facilitate and provide letters of reference, letters of support and/or letters of recommendation for students to their families who wish to apply for secondary school scholarships, bursaries and/or funding from private, public or independent schools and/or community organisations that provide financial support for secondary education.”

Moved by Deborah Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Kerrie Johnston, Rankins Springs Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

A family recently asked our local rural primary school for a reference from a class teacher to add to a portfolio for their child to apply for boarding scholarships in 2023. The request was refused on the grounds that public schools do not liaise with private schools or other schools according to the Department of Education’s policies. The family were also told over the phone that staff are too busy to write references at the end of the year and a school report should suffice. The concern was heightened as references have always been given upon request from the local primary school, even last year under the current principal. The parent body is concerned that if simple requests like these are refused from regional and rural schools, isolated families, who already have hard decisions to make when it comes to the secondary education of their children, that families will be further impacted and, more importantly, students will also be impacted if they cannot access scholarships, bursaries and financial support from secondary schools and other community organisations. The family has not yet determined which schools they will be enrolling their children in, although depending on the school, the application process for scholarships is extensive and time consuming. Moving forward, Rankins Springs Branch would like to see a stronger partnership formed between isolated families and small regional and rural schools. We would like to see such simple requests honoured. The well-being and educational goals of isolated rural students should be promoted and encouraged first and foremost.

Comments:

Robin Beckwith, State Council. As has just been said, there are many decisions to make when choosing secondary education for your children and some of them can be heart wrenching. It is worth noting, I think, that at Yanco, Farrah and Hurlstone, if you are applying for a scholarship there, you are required to have a letter of reference containing any details of your child’s performance during their schooling, whether they were school captains, in sport teams, what their attendance record is and such like. If the public system is asking for that detail for their own scholarships, I think that the letter would be the same letter so I see no issue there. One comment I would like to make is that we have very passionate people here and many obviously support the public system. We have passionate people in the independent school system. Independent schools often get tagged as elite schools which is usually a media beat-up and I think that permeates into different people’s thoughts on education. For where we all live and where our kids go to school

we have to always remember that these schools are not elite schools they are just an essential service to our kids and we have got to stop thinking about the independent schools and the public schools like this. They are all providing services that all of our kids need the ability to access.

A42. Rankins Springs

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister of Education and Early Childhood to allow TP1 & TP2 Principals more autonomy on how Routine Planned Maintenance funding is spent.”

Moved by Deborah Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Kerrie Johnston, Rankins Springs Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

Currently the Assets Management Unit identify what projects will be funded with the Routine Planned Maintenance funds whilst the Principals of TP1 & TP2 schools don't have any say in where the money will be spent in their school. Often the money could be better spent in other areas that would be of immediate benefit to the students and staff. Funds associated with Routine Planned Maintenance are for carpets, painting, adjusting doors and windows, cupboards and boundary fencing. A school where students of some of our members attend wanted to fix some old blinds in the staff room and place ceiling fans in some of the rooms. However, they could not use the money they had available to them in Routine Planned Maintenance fund as the items requested were classified as new fittings and fixtures. Improvements need to be included. ICPA-NSW State Council has completed a submission for the review into the Planning and Delivery of School Infrastructure in NSW where it is hoped that this issue will be addressed.

Comments:

Annabel Strachan, State Council. This is the response from the department. “This motion is being investigated by the department and updates will be provided by the Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy via our scheduled meetings. The motion is noted and the department will continue to partner with you to work towards solutions where possible.”

James Armitage, NSW/Vic Lone Member. I can assure you that it is not just a TP1 and TP2 school issue. It is across the system.

TERTIARY

A43. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests University Administration Centre (UAC) to look at the way credits and advance learnings could be transferred from one academic transcript with recognition of prior learning when students move from one university to another.”

Moved by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch. Seconded by Deborah Neilsen, State Council on behalf of Louth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Louth ICPA asks for this because we believe the circumstance is unfair when a university degree course unit has been completed and passed, that a student is required to re-do and pay again for that same unit. When degree courses are certified by NSW Department of Education, we feel the lack of unit acknowledgment is an inequitable deterrent for students’ success in achieving qualifications; requiring more time to complete (increased accommodation costs) plus having to pay twice for the unit.

TRAVEL

A44. Nyngan

“That ICPA-NSW formally thanks the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, for the initiation of the Regional Apprentice and University Student Travel Card trial programme.

Moved by Lachlan Ross, Nyngan Branch. Seconded by David Butler, State Council on behalf of Nyngan Branch.

Carried by acclamation.

Explanation:

The current inadequacies of affordable and available transport for apprentices and university students to attend TAFE and university presents a major barrier to the access of tertiary studies for rural and remote students and their families. The students we represent may be required to travel hundreds of kilometres to attend university, or regularly scheduled TAFE classes for their apprenticeships. The proposed \$250 travel card included in the recently announced Dubbo trial is welcomed with enthusiasm, as it will help ease the cost of travel for education and training. It is hoped that it is implemented across rural and regional NSW.

A45. Walgett

“That ICPA-NSW Department of Education, Transport for NSW, Bus NSW to implement a state funding program that would help ensure that no young children are left on school, preschool or childcare buses by installing sensor devices that sense sound and movement, to detect and alert drivers if young children have been left in the vehicle.”

Moved by Cath Deshon, Walgett Branch. Seconded by Karen Ricardo, Walgett Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Despite numerous incidences occurring over the years of children being left on childcare/school buses this continues to be a major issue. The incidences occur on a far more regular basis than reported to the public. These incidences have caused distress, heat exhaustion but have also caused major physical injury and death. Whilst thoughtful policies and procedures are continually put in place in schools and childcare centres, there needs to be a procedure implemented to counteract unfortunate human error. A sensor device that monitors sound and movement just like a home monitoring device could be set during the hours that the bus wouldn't ordinarily be transporting children. Alerts could be made to the bus drivers and centres or schools by mobile phones should the sensor detect anything. Human error is inevitable. We urge the NSW Government act on implementing movement monitors as a matter of urgency on all childcare centre and school buses.

A46. Rankins Springs

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and Transport for NSW to lower the number of students required to start a non-commercial bus run as a matter of urgency.”

Moved by Deborah Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Kerrie Johnston, Rankins Springs Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Although a bus run may be maintained with eight students, 15 students are required to start a new bus run. This requirement means that an operator needs to purchase a Category II, which is a 14 - 24 Authorised Adult Seating Capacity bus (AASC – excluding the driver), to service the run. This would mean for example a Toyota coaster or similar bus. If the required number to commence the run was brought back to eight then a Category I, which is an 8-seater, or a 13AASC bus, is all that would be required, a Toyota commuter bus or similar. We understand that the larger bus allows for a significant growth of student numbers but would argue that the lower number of eight is hard enough to attain in most rural and remote communities so that much room for growth is not necessary. Consideration of applications for commencement numbers lower than the requisite 15

on a case-by-case basis would be welcome and appreciated. All communities are different, and consideration of this should be taken into account. Perhaps it is time that Transport for NSW again looked at community owned bus runs where feasible, which would be less expensive to support.

Comments:

Lindy Kitto, NSW/Vic Lone Member. I would like to point out to conference that this motion has been on the books for around twenty-five years which is not funny. It would be interesting to find out from Transport for NSW how many applications for new rural and regional bus runs are made each year and if it is none then they definitely need to look at their criteria for applications so I am in support of this motion.

Nat Walker, President, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of NSW. Again, I think like Lindy said and the time that I have been coming here, that this motion been on the floor for quite a number of years and I think it would be great to see Transport for NSW really look at supporting children in regional and remote schools and accessing our public schools. It shouldn't matter whether it's one, two, three or fifteen students. We want to make sure that our children access to be able to get to their school and it shouldn't be basically placed on the parents at all. I think this is something that is a service that we should have in our regional, rural and remote communities. So, I support that motion.

A47. Namoi

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads to provide extra funding to Local Councils for school bus routes roads to be maintained, repaired and upgraded.”

Moved by Nicole Piper, Namoi Branch. Seconded by Virginia Parkel-Thomas, Collarenebri/Mungindi Branch on behalf of Namoi Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Potholes, rough gravel roads, deterioration of tar road edges and overgrown (tall) grass edges all make it more dangerous for school buses to travel on.

A48. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW continue to work with Transport for NSW to evaluate bus runs on a case-by-case basis rather than set numbers in remote areas.”

Moved by Sally Nevill, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

One size does not fit all. Bus runs and routes need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis so that the people making the decision are fully aware of the alternate and consequences that come with that decision. The understanding that this decision in remote areas means children will either attend a small school, who would welcome the numbers, or School of the Air, is important when assessing a bus run. It is also important to consider the long-term numbers for a desired bus run.

A49. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request Transport for NSW to increase the number of trips for South Australian Term Boarders to accurately reflect the compulsory number of trips they are required to travel home.”

Moved by Sally Nevill, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

Many of Wentworth Branch’s members have children who board in South Australia. This is mostly a logistical decision, as although they all reside in New South Wales, Adelaide has their closest boarding options. Unlike boarding schools in New South Wales and Victoria who have one exeat weekend per term, those in South Australia have two exeat weekends per term. Some boarding houses fully close on these weekends requiring all boarders to return home or find alternate accommodation. Some boarding houses may remain open but with most boarders going home, it can be a very lonely place to be. Exeat weekends are a great opportunity for students to return home to be with family. It is our understanding that Transport for NSW base their nine trips per year for term boarders on fixed New South Wales school terms, eight compulsory trips, plus one extra (which may be needed for sickness etc.) to maintain a consistent approach for all families. We would like to see Transport for NSW allow at least thirteen trips per year for South Australian term boarders, based on fixed South Australian school terms. This would cover the twelve compulsory trips home per year plus one extra (which may be needed for sickness etc.). The addition of just a few trips per year for South Australian term boarders would mean they are assisted for all compulsory trips home, the same as those families who have students boarding in New South Wales and other states.

A50. Tibooburra/Milparinka

“That ICPA-NSW ask Transport for NSW to review the current School Drive Subsidy classification for boarders to include more options to meet current needs.”

Moved by Bernadette Maxwell, Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch. Seconded by Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch on behalf of Tibooburra/Milparinka.

Carried

Explanation:

Currently there are only two classifications for boarding students for SDS, Term and Weekly. At the current time we find that the term boarder classification is not meeting the number of trips required by the boarding students.

A51. Broken Hill

“That ICPA-NSW lobbies Transport for NSW to increase their allowable trips for term boarders.”

Moved by Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch. Seconded by David Shrimpton, Broken Hill Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Currently term boarders are allowed five trips per semester nine trips per year. This does not cover all the trips that students are traveling to and from each semester. Many boarding schools have two leave weekends per term and four each semester. This then does not allow trips to be claimed for beginning and end of term and any other trips that require a student to return home, for example, being unwell.

A52. Broken Hill

“That ICPA-NSW urges Transport NSW improve their School Drive Subsidy Program by providing a direct telephone help line between liaison officers, schools and families.”

Moved by Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch. Seconded by David Shrimpton, Broken Hill Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

The current system is time consuming, frustrating, and ineffective. We feel it could be streamlined and simplified to ensure accessibility for everyone. Many families are experiencing significant and reoccurring issues. A more direct communication line between a liaison officer, schools and families would make the program much more accessible and effective.

Comments:

Bree Wakefield, State Council. I just wanted to make a comment and I speak for the motion. A lot of my time on State Council has been helping families to get onto school drive subsidies or help them with the issues that they are having and then liaising with our fantastic contacts that we have at Transport for NSW, David who is in the room today and we thank him for all his assistance. I'm a volunteer so I really feel that Transport for NSW could (a) give me a job or (b)

put someone else in that position and then I could focus my time on other areas of need in ICPA.

Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch. I know I am now going to close debate on this motion but I just also like to say a huge thank you to Bree who spends a lot of time out of her personal time helping so many families. *(Thanks, by acclamation)*

A53. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request Transport for NSW to add a “Rural & Remote” option to their School Drive Subsidy feedback form.”

Moved by Sally Nevill, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

It is fantastic that Transport for NSW have now assigned two staff members for the School Drive Subsidy to ensure queries through the feedback form are processed effectively and accurately. We acknowledge that this has been a recommendation by ICPA-NSW and we thank Transport for NSW for instating them. Although it is great to now have a pathway for where to direct issues when they arise, we feel that if there was a “rural and remote” option, these enquiries would be addressed more quickly by the two assigned Transport for NSW staff members and resolved sooner.

Comments:

Lewis Clark, Executive Director, Customer Systems and Operations, Transport for NSW. Thank you in general for all the feedback that ICPA gives us on behalf of your communities for the School Drive Subsidy. Paul Toole and the service we deliver is something that is valuable for us and we are committed and trying to make that better. For this one, especially, we will try and have that fixed in the next two or three weeks. Thank you. *(Thanks, by acclamation)*

A54. Broken Hill

“That ICPA- NSW urges Transport NSW to improve their School Drive Subsidy program parent portal for rural and remote families.”

Moved by Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch. Seconded by David Shrimpton, Broken Hill Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

The current system is time consuming, frustrating, and ineffective. Past issues have not been resolved and it could be streamlined and simplified to ensure accessibility and equality for everyone. Due to the poor functioning of the parent portal, many families are experiencing significant and reoccurring issues. Improvements to the parent portal would greatly assist families resolving these issues.

A55. Balranald

“That ICPA-NSW request Transport for NSW to extend the Preschool Drive Subsidy following the Pilot Program and provide greater transparency for families to navigate the eligibility and application process.”

Moved by Kirsty Wilson, Balranald Branch. Seconded by Sally Nevill, Wentworth Branch on behalf of Balranald Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

After the implementation of the pilot program for Preschool Drive Subsidy in 2022, it has been difficult for both families and services to access information regarding eligibility and the application processes. The Pilot Program eligibility criteria has only included students and services in remote and very remote locations. The distances travelled to services to be eligible are nominal (1.6km in a straight line) yet the maximum distance claimable per trip is 50km. By the very nature of remote and very remote areas, some families are travelling distances well beyond the capped distance. Further to this point, many families living in outer regional locations have to travel well in excess of the 1.6km distance to attend early childhood services yet are ineligible for the subsidy as they do not meet the criteria due to being in an outer regional location. Several families enrolled at the Wakool Preschool travel more than 30km one way to attend the service. Bus travel is permitted at the discretion of the bus service. It is ICPA Balranald Branch’s understanding that this is not supported by Transport for NSW due to safety concerns including inadequate harnesses for under five-year-olds, lack of supervision and concerns over child protection issues. Many early childhood services agree with these concerns. The NSW Department of Education has recognised the high value placed on early education with its introduction of the Early Years Commitment, with fully funded preschool for the year prior to commencing school to be extended to five days per week. Therefore, it stands to reason that an extension of the Preschool Drive Subsidy would reduce some barriers for accessing early childhood education for children in very remote, remote and outer regional areas in NSW.

A56. Rankins Springs

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Minister for Transport to allow preschool children to travel on rural and remote bus runs in the year prior to commencing school enabling them to be included in the Preschool Drive Subsidy and the School Students Transport Scheme for that year.”

Moved by Deborah Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Kerrie Johnston, Rankins Springs Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

The costs relating to getting preschool children to the services’ front gate are a significant barrier for many rural and remote families. If the preschool children were included in the contract between the bus operator and Transport for NSW this would result in certainty of numbers and financial remuneration for the bus operator, as well as a definite seat for the child. For those families who do not have the option of putting their preschool child on the local school bus, the ability to receive the School Drive Subsidy to transport their child from home to preschool would be of great benefit. This would alleviate some of the costs relating to driving their own vehicle to transport the child to the preschool’s front gate.

SUPPLEMENTARY MOTIONS

S1. Wentworth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister for Education and Early Childhood to introduce boarding facilities for rural and remote students at one of the seven designated NSW Public Sports High Schools – Australian Olympic Pathway Schools.”

Moved by Neridah Healy, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch on behalf of Wentworth Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

We congratulate the Minister for Education and Early Childhood for the announcement that seven public Sports High Schools have become Australian Olympic Pathway High Schools. This is a fantastic initiative open to metropolitan students in New South Wales. Unfortunately, the same opportunity will not be available to anyone residing in regional, rural, or remote New South Wales and the only sports focused high schools open to these students are independent schools. Like the agricultural public boarding schools, we would like to see one of these high school become a boarding school so that our very talented rural New South Wales students can have the same opportunities afforded to those in metropolitan New South Wales.

S2. Wentworth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister of Education and Early Childhood supply a headphone set to each student as a part of the Distance Education technology roll out, as a matter of urgency.”

Moved by Neridah Healy, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch on behalf of Wentworth Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

Parents of distance education students have advised that they are not being given headphone sets with each new computer and that at any one location, no more than one headset is given. With each student now able to attend lessons on their own computer at the same time as their siblings it is vitally important that headphones be provided to ensure that lesson can be delivered effectively and that the student can hear their lesson without disruption.

Comments.

Bernadette Maxwell, Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch. We fully support this motion. From a personal point of view, I have three children in the same class room and providing one headset is not appropriate.

S3. Central West Plains Branch

“That Central West Plains Branch offers to convene the 2024 ICPA -NSW State Conference to be hosted in Dubbo on 6th & 7th March, 2024.”

Moved by Laura Stalley, State Council on behalf of Central West Plains Branch. Seconded by Bree Wakefield, State Council on behalf of Central West Plains Branch.

Carried by acclamation.

Tanya Mitchell, President, ICPA-NSW. I would like to say a special thank you to the Central West Plains Branch for coming on board and taking on that huge role that is organising a state conference.

S4. Louth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW urges the Minister of Education and Early Childhood to increase salaries for teaching principals in remote schools when they are overseeing distance education students’ schooling in their school”.

Deborah Neilsen, Louth Branch. I ask conference permission for a word change. Permission granted.

Motion S4. Now reads: -

“That ICPA-NSW urges the Minister of Education and Early Learning to recognise teaching principals’ contributions in remote schools when they are overseeing distance education students’ schooling in their school”.

Tanya Mitchell, President, ICPA-NSW. I just want to clarify, Deborah, that you were asking for an increase in salary and now we are recognising principals’ contributions. I’m concerned that that changes the intent of the motion.

Laura Stalley, State Council. I was wondering the same thing but then it says, “to recognise” and that recognition might be a salary increase. It might be something on top of their wage. It’s not necessarily saying that they do get a salary increase but recognise it in some way. It could be similar. Is that what you were thinking Deborah?

Tanya Mitchell, President, ICPA-NSW. Conference permission for the word change granted. Deborah could you please read the new motion?

S4. Louth Branch

“That ICPA-NSW urges the Minister of Education and Early Learning to recognise teaching principals’ contribution in remote schools when they are overseeing distance education students’ schooling in their school”.

Moved by Deborah Neilsen, Louth Branch. Seconded by Tegan Barton, Louth Branch

LOST

Explanation:

Louth Branch looks forward to a time when preschool and secondary school are able to be delivered at remote primary schools for distance education students. In order for that to be possible the qualified teacher on the premises has to oversee their School Learning Support Officer (SLSO) and support that person. Industrially that necessitates extra work and time, they therefore deserve to be compensated in some way.

Comments.

Nerida Healy, Wentworth Branch. I feel that this might be opening a can of worms. I think many principals take on additional responsibilities at various times. You could have a student enrolled who has extremely high needs and then you get an additional staff member. Do we remunerate that principal? We have schools like Clare and Pooncarie who welcome in their preschoolers for their entire fourth term. Do we remunerate that principal for doing that? We have schools across Victoria and in the far west who accept our distance education students one day a week. Do we remunerate that teacher and principal? I feel like that we might opening a can of worms if we try and pick out one specific reason to remunerate.

Libby McPhee, State Council. I certainly understand where Louth is coming from but I'm going down the path that Nerida is talking about. I'm just concerned that when you say "recognised" because what are we going to ask them for? Do you want them to get a certificate or an increase in their pay, whatever, how do you work out who gets it? I think we are going to have trouble with that.

Deborah Neilsen, Louth Branch. It may be too early for this motion. It probably does need to go back to the branch to be looked at again. The rationale behind it is that in setting up the remote preschools there has been concern with the existing principals about the extra work that they will have in terms of supervision and line of sight because they have to be able to see the SLSO with the preschoolers so they are being asked to accommodate preschoolers in their schools and some of them are doing it but I have heard of others who are unwilling to do it and see that their priority is to K to Six, which indeed it is, and therefore are not actively seeking out their four year olds to come into their preschool. So, that is the rationale behind it and we may well get to a point where they will need to be supported in some way. I'm glad we have taken the word, "remuneration" out of it because I agree with Nerida that to be paid extra won't work. So, I think this is something for further conversation.

S5. Brewarrina Branch

"That ICPA-NSW thanks Calrossy for their eCalrossy programme which is offered to distance education students from years five to nine as an alternative pathway to current practices."

Moved by Bree Wakefield, State Council on behalf of Brewarrina Branch. Seconded by Laura Stalley, State Council on behalf of Brewarrina Branch.

Carried by acclamation.

Explanation:

All course work and learning are delivered via video conferencing software during a school day from 8.40 am to 1.20 pm.

Comment:

Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch. I'd like to thank Brewarrina Branch for this motion because, as myself and many other families within my branch, are lucky enough to have the opportunity of eCalrossy to have our children home for a couple more years and to receive a quality high school education. So, thank you.

FLOOR MOTIONS

Tanya Mitchell, President, ICPA-NSW.

I ask conference's permission for the motion to be read. All in favour.

F 1. Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests Transport for NSW to investigate solutions for enrolled day students at remote schools who require transport to a large centre to participate in school activities and educational opportunities.”

Moved by Bernadette Maxwell, Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch. Seconded by Suzannah Palmer, Broken Hill Branch on behalf of Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

Most students enrolled in Tibooburra Outback Public School have no need to access the School Drive subsidy on a daily basis. The school has always been included in the wider Broken Hill School of the Air community as well as other remote schools in the area. Educational opportunities such as annual athletics and swimming carnivals in Broken Hill inclusion in stage two and three excursions to places like Canberra and science focus days at White Cliffs and Tibooburra. These students need to be transported most often to Broken Hill which is 330 kilometers away to attend these educational opportunities. Currently these students do not meet any criteria to access the School Drive Subsidy to support them attending such important educational opportunities.

Tanya Mitchell, President, ICPA-NSW.

I ask conference's permission for the motion to be read. All in favour.

F 2. ICPA-NSW State Council

“That ICPA-NSW is to investigate processes and procedures to ensure sustainability in moving forward for State Council as a volunteer organisation.”

Moved by Laura Stalley, State Council. Seconded by Bree Wakefield, State Council.

Carried

Explanation:

ICPA-NSW has grown significantly since its inception fifty-one years ago. The issues we fight for have continued to evolve and grow and we accept and welcome the growth. We also acknowledge that with this growth comes challenges. The expectation and obligations placed upon our organisation by our external stakeholders continue to increase. This places pressures on our organisation and our people. Our people are our greatest asset. Their passion and drive are the envy of many who look to us. It is therefore critical that we continue to evaluate and investigate our processes and procedures and make the necessary changes as required to ensure that we not only look after our valuable people but also the sustainability of our amazing organisation for generations to come.

Comments:

Prue Ritchie, Bourke Branch. I would like to throw my support behind this motion. I see what a massive job state councillors do and I think it is really important that you do investigate ways to make it sustainable for all of you to keep doing the amazing work you do. So, thank you on behalf of Bourke Branch.

Claire Butler, State Council. Just a really quick comment. We have had a Life Member, Federal State and Branch Life Member, Rory Treweeke, conduct a review and one of his recommendations was that we look into our governance and also streamline the way that we do things. This has been the background of this motion and there has been some discussion around this continually for the last year.

Tanya Mitchell, President, ICPA-NSW.

I ask conference's permission for the motion to be read. All in favour.

F. 3 Rankins Springs Branch

“That ICPA-NSW requests that the Minister for Education and Early Learning hold Directors, Educational Leadership of rural and remote schools, accountable when a complaint has been made about a teacher or school by a parent or parent body.”

Moved by Deborah Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Kerrie Johnston, Rankins Springs Branch.

Carried

Explanation:

Rankins Branch would like a clear and transparent outcome or resolution to any complaint that has been made regarding teaching staff in a rural and remote school and, indeed, any school. There seems to be a culture in some schools that sees students and their families discriminated against for standing up for what they feel is right for their child or their children. School families and community members feel that there should be a written explanation or policy that parents can access to follow up complaints that have been made where there has been no clear resolution to that complaint. Some schools and teachers and principals seem to have a problem communicating with parents about their children and about what is happening in their school. Parents are finding it extremely difficult to access face to face interviews with some teachers regarding the progress of

their child or children due to the teacher or teachers not being resident in that community. Appointments are difficult to obtain and some parents are feeling excluded. It is crucial that parents feel that they can contact their child or children's teacher or the school principal whenever they need to. The principal of our TP2 school has endeavored to recently dismiss the current School Council which will then reduce the opportunities for parents and community to voice concerns through the governance of the school.

Deborah Neilsen, Louth Branch. I would very much like to on behalf of Louth Branch support this motion. We have had a similar incident happen in 2017 and the reverberations and relationships that were disconnected and made dysfunctional as a result of how the complaint was handled are still being felt today. So, I think it is very, very urgent. Thank you.

Claire Butler, State Council. I think this speaks to the importance of the relationships that are formed between the parents and school community and the teaching principal. We all recognise that it is a really difficult space for a parent to be able to go to the school teacher or principal if you have an issue because they are the only person at that school and they are mindful of that teaching principal and the pressure it is going to put on them if you go and make a complaint about them. It is a difficult space for people to be in so I think it is really important that we take the advice of the P&C Federation president yesterday and broker that relationship between the student/parents' team within the Department of Education. I just wanted to make that comment that it is a really difficult space to be in and Rankins Springs, you are not alone because it is a common theme that we do see across many of the small schools that just have that one teaching principal.

Tanya Mitchell, President, ICPA-NSW.

I ask conference's permission for the motion to be read. All in favour.

F4. ICPA-NSW State Council

"That ICPA-NSW supports the Royal Far West in their advocacy for the early childhood proposal, Better Learning. Better Lives."

Moved by Laura Stalley, State Council. Seconded by Bree Wakefield, State Council.

Carried

Explanation:

Can we please ask the Chair for permission to ask Royal Far West to give a description of Better Learning. Better Lives.?

Tanya Mitchell, President, ICPA-NSW.

Yes, permission is granted.

Jenny Stevenson, Royal Far West. Royal Far West for those who don't know is a not-for-profit provider of allied health and mental health services pretty much to country kids. We are one hundred in two years' time so we have been around for a long time. The Better Learning. Better Lives proposal is a proposal that we have put into the Department of Education in July of last year. It is a five-year funding proposal that aims to assist five identified rural, remote communities in

New South Wales and out through around thirty schools and preschools. It's a flexible programme but the aim is to include services such as early intervention and screening; allied health therapy; wellbeing mental health services; capacity building for parents and teachers; and community navigation and service coordination for families so that they can find services more easily. As part of that Royal Far West would visit the schools twice a year and services like mental health, speech, OT, would be provided out through telehealth. It aims to support kids and families that have been identified as most in need and I guess what we have found over the last three to five years is the significant increase in the need for allied health and mental health services and a lot of rural and remote communities just don't have access due to their location or they have long waiting lists and that is where we can help So, we are trying to get that block funding out of the NSW Government and we would really appreciate ICPA's support.

Tanya Mitchell, President, ICPA-NSW.

That is the end of all our motions so I want to thank all participants and all the delegates who brought those motions to the floor.

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