

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



2023 FEDERAL CONFERENCE RURAL SCHOOLS PORTFOLIO MOTIONS

A32. Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government for funding to be sought to further incentivise experienced teachers to take up contracts and long term rural, regional and remote positions.”

Explanation:

Students from rural, regional, and remote areas are facing, at times constant, disruptions to their education in the form of teacher shortages. Teacher retention in rural areas can be problematic and even in those schools where teachers are committed long term their ability to access vital professional development days, long service leave and even sick days is limited due to the lack of relief teachers and/or support staff available in these areas. It is not uncommon for small schools to have only two classroom teachers across all year levels and minimal funding for additional support staff such as EAs or Library Technicians. Additionally, the mental health of teachers is becoming increasingly worrisome due to their burdensome workload.

The states all have varying incentives to encourage teachers to take up positions in rural schools however it has been our experience that these incentives are not always well advertised and experienced teachers often think these are graduate positions only when they are actually open to all teachers. As well as federal funding we suggest the Federal Government run an advertising campaign to get teachers into the bush pitched at experienced teachers and their families. The Federal Government recently rolled out The Rural Health Outreach Fund (RHOF) and it is our opinion that a similar campaign and federal funds could be set up to assist the states in making education in rural areas fairer for bush kids.

A federally administered fund could offer extra incentives to teachers and schools such as:

- Financial incentives for short term or contract work in the regions.
- Increased childcare rebates for teachers with young families wanting to take up rural positions.
- Clear potential for permanency/job security for eligible teachers.
- Increased potential for permanency/job security in the city after completing a set amount of time in a rural, regional or remote school.
- Make extra funds available for support/relief staff to rural, remote and regional schools with small student numbers. Decrease the student to teacher ratio and/or ensure teachers aren't asked to teach across too many different year levels.