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## **Travel Report**

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**Madam President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Travel Portfolio Report for 2022.**

State Council were unable to go to Sydney for their annual deputation in October due to the Covid restrictions but were able to hold zoom meetings and those we had meetings with regarding travel issues were,

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

Transport for NSW (TfNSW)

Bus NSW

Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Regional NSW, and Western NSW.

Transport for NSW and the Department of Education have been working together to develop and run a Preschool Drive Subsidy pilot trial. The trial will test the potential expansion of the current School Drive Subsidy to children three years and older accessing early childhood education services in rural and remote areas.

Early childhood education services that have an ARIA classification of either remote or very remote and School of the Air Broken Hill, have be invited to opt into the trial. Services located in outer regional areas that cater to families who live in remote and very remote areas will also be invited to join the trial.

The trial will run for the full school year of 2022 and will be capped to two days per week (86 days per annum) and the families will be reimbursed for up to 50kms of their travel.

At present consideration may only be given to establishing a new non-commercial school bus service where at least 15 school age students reside 3.2 kilometres or more by the shortest most practical route to their school or the local route bus service and the majority live beyond eight kilometres from the school. ICPA-NSW will continue to ask the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and Transport for NSW to lower the number of students required to start a bus run from 15 to 12, (the seating capacity of a category 1 bus).

The installation of seat belts on school buses in rural and remote areas commenced in 2013, and on the 10 March this year, seatbelts had been installed in every dedicated school bus in rural and regional NSW. The program is now completed.

### **Subsidies and free travel available to students.**

The School Drive Subsidy (SDS) is administered by TfNSW and is available to NSW residents. The subsidy is for driving school students to school or to the nearest transport pick up point and is only intended to partly offset the cost of using a private vehicle.

**Students from Kindergarten-Year 6** are eligible if:

- they are a resident of NSW, or an overseas student eligible for free government education
- aged 4 Years 6 months, or older
- from their home address:
  - The distance to school exceeds 1.6 km (straight line distance) or is at least 2.3 km walking distance, **and** the distance to the nearest transport pick up point (where available) exceeds 1.6 km (straight line distance) or is at least 2.3 km walking distance.

**Secondary school students from Years 7-12** are eligible if:

- they are a resident of NSW or an overseas student who is eligible for free government education
- from their home address:
  - The distance to school exceeds 2 km (straight line distance) or 2.9 km walking distance, **and**
  - The distance to the nearest transport pick up point (where available) exceeds 2 km (straight line distance) or is at least 2.9 km walking distance.

**TAFE students** are eligible if:

- they are a resident of NSW or an overseas student eligible for free government education
- they are under 18 years of age at 1 January of the year of application
- they are enrolled in a full-time TAFE course for a minimum of 16 hours per week
- they are not employed
- from their home address:
  - The walking distance from home to TAFE exceeds 3.2 km, **and**
  - The distance to the nearest transport pick up point (where available) exceeds 2 km (straight line distance) or is at least 2.9 km walking distance.
- they attend the closest TAFE where enrolment is available.

**Boarding school students and weekday boarders attending day school:**

Students who board away from home to attend school may be eligible for the SDS.

If no public transport is available, boarding school students are eligible for subsidised travel between the family home and school at weekends and school holidays.

- Students that are weekly boarders are entitled up to 22 trips per semester
- Students that are term boarders are entitled up to 9 trips per year

Students who board in town and attend a day school during term may also be eligible for subsidised travel between the family home and the place of boarding at weekends and school holidays.

There is no subsidy cap on the distance travelled.

## **Distance Education students attending mini-schools**

The NSW Department of Education (DoE) operates a number of face to face mini-schools to compliment the distance education program. Distance Education students who are full-time and geographically isolated are eligible for the SDS. To be considered for the SDS, students are required to be enrolled in accordance with section 2.2 of the Distance Education Enrolment Procedures set out by the NSW DoE. There is no limit to the number of trips that can be claimed to attend mini-schools during term time (subject to school attendance records being checked).

At present, university students they may be eligible for Fares Allowance which covers the cost of the least expensive and most available form of public transport in Australia between your permanent home and your place of tertiary study. Where it is not practical to use public transport, you can travel by private transport if you need to move belongings that exceed strict luggage limits or are difficult to move around. To get Fares Allowance you must be a tertiary student living away from home to study and you must also receive one of these payments:

- Youth Allowance as a full-time student,
- Austudy as a full time or part time student or
- Pensioner Education Supplement as a full time or part time student and you must also be one of these:
  - dependent and get a higher rate of Youth Allowance when living away from home,
  - independent and living away from your partner to study,
  - a parent living away from your dependent children to study,
  - were dependent and living away from home in the last study year and you are now independent due to:
    - turning 22 or
    - supporting yourself through work, or
- are studying a distance or online course and need to do compulsory travel to your institution.

Secondary students and Australian Apprentices cannot get Fares Allowance.

The School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS) provides eligible school students with free or subsidised travel from home to school.

The scheme includes:

- Free travel to and from home and school on approved train, bus, ferry, and light rail services during school term.
- Discounted travel on buses between home and school with a School Term Bus Pass.
- Free travel on NSW TrainLink Regional services and long-distance coach services for boarding school students

**Students from Kindergarten-Year 2** are eligible if:

- They are a resident of NSW, or an overseas student eligible for free government education.
- Aged 4 Years 6 months, or older.

No minimum walking distance criteria applies to these students.

**Primary school students from Years 3-6** are eligible if:

- They are a resident of NSW, or an overseas student eligible for free government education.
- The straight-line distance from their home address to school is more than 1.6 km.
- The walking distance from home to school is 2.3 km or further.

Primary school students who live too close to the school to be eligible for free travel may qualify for a School Term Bus Pass which provides bus travel at a discounted price for the whole school term.

**Secondary school students from Years 7-12** are eligible if:

- They are a resident of NSW or an overseas student who is eligible for free government education,
- The straight-line distance from their home address to school is more than 2 km, or
- The walking distance from home to school is 2.9 km or further.

Secondary school students who live too close to the school to be eligible for free travel may qualify for a School Term Bus Pass which provides bus travel at a discounted price for the whole school term.

**TAFE students** are eligible if:

- They are a resident of NSW or an overseas student eligible for free government education.
- They are under 18 years of age at 1 January of the year of application.
- They are enrolled in a full-time TAFE course for a minimum of 16 hours per week.
- They are not employed.
- The walking distance from home to TAFE is 3.2 km or further.
- They attend the closest TAFE where enrolment is available.

Tertiary students studying at TAFE may be eligible for concession travel on public transport.

**Boarding school students:**

Eligible boarding school students can apply for a free school travel pass for either:

- daily travel to and from school if they reside away from home but do not reside at the school, or
- weekend/vacation travel on NSW TrainLink train and coach services.

Students are not able to apply for both.

**The Department of Education Assisted School Travel Program:**

This program provides specialised transport assistance for eligible students with disability to travel to and from school. The Program provides travel support services primarily between a student's permanent place of residence and school. The program is targeted towards supporting

eligible students who are unable to travel independently and need transport assistance to attend school.

**Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS):**

This is a NSW Government initiative providing financial assistance towards travel and accommodation cost when a patient needs to travel long distances to specialised allied health clinics. Speech Pathology is an example.

Thank you to my fellow Councillors for their support during the past year.

David Butler