

**Madam President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Travel Portfolio Report for 2023.**

State Council travelled to Sydney for their annual deputation in June last year and those we had meetings with regarding travel issues were;

- Minister for Regional Transport and Roads
- Minister for Regional NSW
- Shadow Minister for Roads
- Shadow Minister Regional Transport and Roads
- Transport for NSW
- Bus NSW

It was 2016 when we first requested the Minister for Transport to include University students in the PVC / SDS, or to give them some sort of travel assistance to get to their place of study other than the Fares Allowance. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of January this year Sam Faraway, the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, announced that “The NSW Government is boosting the budgets of regional apprentices and university students with a new \$250 travel card to help with the cost of the commute to work, training, or university. Apprentices will be the first to access the card under the two-year trial which will open to applications from February with Uni students to follow in April”.

More details about eligibility can be found at,

[www.service.nsw.gov.au/regionalapprentice-and-university-student-travel-card](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au/regionalapprentice-and-university-student-travel-card)

We have been working with TfNSW and Lord Howe Island members to set up a Flight Booking Trial for parents whose children travel to the mainland for their secondary education.

The trial will run for 12 months beginning for 2023 School year.

Parent to book flights through any avenue available to them

Parent then pays for the flight to secure booking

Parent then sends through paid invoice to TfNSW for reimbursement of flight costs

TfNSW processes reimbursement of funds to parents. Was there a time frame for the reimbursement?

Preschool Drive Subsidy pilot trial has been extended and will be run again for the 2023 school year 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.

### **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.

**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.

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.

### **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).

**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 Train Link 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 Train Link 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**  
**Travel Portfolio Convenor**

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