

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



2019 Federal Conference Rural Schools/School Travel Portfolio Motions

A54. Moree Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

"That ICPA (Aust) supports the states in their lobby to implement the following recommendation made by Professor Dr John Halsey in the 'Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE) – Final Report' to "reduce the impact of administration on workloads to create more time for teaching and leading learning" (Halsey, 2018, p.37)" with urgency."

Explanation:

In our small schools we have witnessed our teaching principals being bombarded with training and administration duties, taking them away from the classroom and the important task of teaching our students. Professor Doctor John Halsey noted that "in a small school in particular where principals have a large teaching load, there is little time left for focussing on leading learning. Scaling back of the administration workload needs to happen to create more time for leading learning to be done and done well." (Halsey, 2018, p.35)

Small school students require stability and continuity of learning just like their larger school counterparts and though we do not doubt our small school teaching principals are doing their upmost to ensure this occurs the amount of time out of the classroom is noticeable and disruptive. Time out of the classroom includes but is not limited to professional development, training and also the challenges that only a small school principal experiences such as co-ordinating trades people conducting maintenance, technical difficulties with information and communication technologies, break downs in equipment such as water pumps and important phone calls that require immediate attention. All of these responsibilities that are usually shared by many in a large school are only shared by two in a one teacher school. Planning, teaching and assessing students is a fulltime job! How does one person realistically do all of that as well as the added workload of a teaching principal? Teaching should be the main focus and administration tasks should be minimal and easy to achieve.

References

Halsey, Prof. Dr. J, *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education – Final Report*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2018.

A87. St George Branch (Qld)

CARRIED

"That ICPA Federal Council lobbies the Australian Government to continue funding the Chaplaincy Program in schools."

Explanation:

Students face a myriad of challenges in their day-to-day life that can impact on their education. School chaplains play an important role in the school communities assisting students who are struggling with issues of self-doubt, bullying, peer pressure, anxiety, family breakdown, impacts of family drug and alcohol use and more.

Due to the tyranny of distance, Guidance Officers are not as easily accessible for rural and remote schools and this is where the Chaplaincy Program is incredibly valuable.

School Chaplains assist students through programs such as:

- Rock and Water (focusing on managing emotions and reactions)
- Love Bites (focusing on building healthy relationships)
- Bella Girls program (teaching girls about their value, beauty and purpose)
- Strength (teaching boys about resilience and their purpose)
- Lunchtime activities
- Individual support and mentoring.

A55. Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to support efforts for an affordable ‘Student Concessional Fare’ for students attending educational institutions within Australia who need to travel between their home residence and the educational establishment they attend.”

Explanation:

This includes, bus, train and aircraft providers. Members whose children board away from home are often in the predicament of paying well above the standard ticket price when selecting airfares. While it is easy for airfare providers to tell families to book children’s flights twelve months ahead because they know the school term dates, this is often not a reality and can end up costing families more in the long run when they need to change flight details / dates.

The Northern Territory has limited boarding options which necessarily means our isolated students will often attend boarding school interstate. Airfares to and from Northern Territory airports are typically expensive, more so because students travel during school holiday fare periods, when the fares are almost always more expensive again. Student Travel Concessions are a State Government responsibility, but in the case of airfares, travel is across jurisdictions, meaning State Government concessions don’t apply. The Northern Territory is not unique in this respect. A National Student Concessional Fare would help all isolated students who travel across jurisdiction for education purposes.

A member’s child who boards in Adelaide recently lost his uncle and the family had to fly him home to Alice Springs a week before the school term ended. They were faced with a \$360 increase to their ticket price, for booking at last minute, of a one-way flight.

For example, using real flight booking information offered by QANTAS on 16th May 2019: booking a one-way flight in advance from Adelaide to Alice Springs you can purchase tickets for \$324 on Friday 2nd August. If at last minute, travel plans change, the family would have to pay the increased price of a ticket. At the time of writing this explanation the same airfare ticket, in 2 days’ time, would cost \$1023 on Friday 17th May. That is an increase of \$699 for a One-way airfare – Adelaide to Alice Springs.

For many families, having to pay these increased airfares is a reality. So, we are asking that when booking tickets for students travelling to and from school, they are exempt from the huge increases to tickets when purchased close to the time of travel. Having access to the airfare prices if you booked in advance for the 12-month calendar, would be a huge financial relief for many rural and remote families who rely on these services each year.

A56. Pilbara Branch (WA)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests QANTAS Airways to continue their Residents Fares Scheme to regional areas as well as including students who rely on air services to travel home when accessing education.”

Explanation:

QANTAS has now introduced a Residents Fares Scheme in Western Australia which allows passengers from certain regional towns to access up to a 30% discount on their return airfares to Perth. At present, these return discounted fares are not available from Perth to these regional town airports so therefore regional children attending schools in Perth are unable to access these cheaper flights home.

Pilbara Branch would like QANTAS to review this scheme so that regional children who are attending school in Perth have access to cheaper flights when they return home for school breaks.

A57. Western Australia State Council (WA)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that QANTAS Airways review the criteria for their Residents Fares scheme to include special conditions for students travelling home for boarders’ weekends and end of term breaks.”

Explanation:

QANTAS introduced a Residents Fares scheme two years ago, that included a 12-month trial period with 4 return trips per year. The scheme has now been extended and entitles passengers who qualify, to 12 return trips per year. There have been instances for ICPA members unable to book using the Residents Fares due to their originating departing point not being from their registered home airport. We have seen some members needing to book their children’s travel home to Broome having to pay up to \$1100.00 return due to the increased demand for fares from tourist travellers.

ICPA (WA) would like to see QANTAS review its criteria and make allowances for students who are travelling home during compulsory Boarders weekends and end of term holidays to be able to depart from ‘place of study airport’ i.e. Perth - return and still qualify for the 30% discount.