

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



2020 Federal Conference Rural Schools/School Travel Portfolio Motions

A14. St George Branch (Qld)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies all relevant Australian Government Departments to continue the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) past 2022.”

Explanation:

The School Chaplaincy Program has been a major success and the continuation of this program is important for some students to succeed in school. The chaplains provide support and comfort for students in a safe zone as well as running programs such as “Rock and Water” for at risk students, “Safe Sisters” to provide practical advice on positive relationships and choices for girls; and “Which Way, This Way” for adolescent boys.

A15. Northern Territory State Council (NT)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) appeals to the Minister for Education, the Minister for Regional Education and the Minister for Families and Social Services for geographically isolated students who receive Assistance for Isolated Children to have access to corporate travel airfare program discounts, in the same way ABSTUDY student flights are booked by the Australian Government.”

Explanation:

Geographically isolated students may travel a long way to attend boarding school, which necessarily means air travel. The cost of travel to and from boarding school can be prohibitive, even when there is competition in service providers. In many regional airports, there are not many choices and airfares are usually always expensive.

ICPA NT understands ABSTUDY Fares Allowance provides a booking service, and in our meetings with Qantas and Virgin in 2018/2019, we became aware that these bookings were made under an Australian Government corporate program, attracting a corporate rate and levelling out price spikes (i.e. school holiday peak periods).

Not only does the ABSTUDY Fares Allowance pay for the cost of reasonable travel, it also provides for additional travel related costs during the trip, such as transport terminal transfers, excess baggage, overnight accommodation and meals. While NT State Council understands ABSTUDY Boarding and AIC are intended for different demographics, we note the cost of travel and related expenses are recognised for ABSTUDY Boarding students accessing education, but not AIC Boarding students accessing education.

This motion requests access to a group booking scheme, attached to a Centrelink CRN number, for AIC students, to assist in levelling out price spikes when isolated students travel to access education.

A16. South Australia State Council (SA)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that the relevant ministers increase the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) for students travel to Canberra to enhance their learning in civics and citizenship education.”

Explanation:

The PACER grant to schools is provided to partially offset the cost of travel and accommodation for school students to visit Canberra. To qualify, schools must be located at least 150 kilometres from Canberra. Rebates are paid on a sliding scale with more money paid to schools further away from Canberra.

Distance from Canberra	Funds allocated per student #
150–499 kilometres	\$20
500–999 kilometres	\$30
1,000–1,499 kilometres	\$60
1,500–1,999 kilometres	\$100
2,000–2,499 kilometres	\$150
2,500–2,999 kilometres*	\$200
3,000–3,999 kilometres	\$310
4,000 kilometres and over	\$340

The table above shows the current rebate. Our students living in rural and remote South Australia fall within the \$60 - \$150 rebate. This is an unrealistic contribution given the costs involved for the students to get to Adelaide, let alone Canberra. A trip to Canberra for the older primary students provides them with a dynamic learning opportunity before going on to secondary school. The cost involved in providing such an opportunity for students lies entirely on the parents so further support through the PACER program would be well received.