



ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Working together for Equity of Access to Education for all Students who live in Rural and Remote Australia.

FEDERAL COUNCIL'S BRANCH BULLETIN Volume 13, Number 5: February 2016

Happy New Year! Welcome to the first Federal Branch Bulletin for 2016. Federal Council hopes you all had an enjoyable Christmas and time over the holidays with family and friends. In this edition, there is an important request from the Boarding Portfolio and the Federal Treasurer, an update on Youth Allowance, initial information on this year's Federal Conference and more.

Federal Council News

Federal Council has recommenced business for 2016, refreshed ready to progress our lobbies on the issues affecting rural and remote children. Over the break Federal Council made 2 submissions (2016-2017 Pre Budget Submission and Submission to the Senate Committee on the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Bill 2015). Also, Judy Sinclair-Newton, Immediate Past President has replaced Trish McKenzie as ICPA representative within National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA). We thank Trish for her time and commitment during her time in this position.

Launch of ICPA (Aust) Campaign for an Increase to AIC Boarding Allowance

ICPA (Aust) has launched a comprehensive campaign to seek that educational costs for our rural and remote families are addressed urgently with a significant increase in the Assistance for Isolated Children Basic Boarding Allowance. For many children living in rural and remote regions of Australia, accessing appropriate compulsory schooling requires relocating great distances to attend boarding school. Attending these boarding schools comes with the additional high tuition fee attached to the school and is an added out-of-pocket cost to rural families. The media release can be read [here](#).

Boarding School Survey

ICPA (Aust) needs your help to action change!

There is a growing concern from members throughout Australia that the costs of secondary education is becoming unsustainable for those who cannot access face to face schooling from their home on a daily basis.

For many years we have been challenged by the affordability of educating our children. The gap is widening between the costs of education and the support rural and remote families receive.

If you have children attending boarding school or hostel, we strongly encourage you to take a few minutes to participate in this survey and contribute to the momentum that ICPA Aust is creating to action the change that is desperately needed!

Please complete the survey that will support our lobby for increases to boarding allowances. [Access Survey Here](#) **The survey will close on March 6, 2016**

Boarding Standards Research

Late in 2015, the Australian Parents Council (APC) presented a research report *Parent and Family Engagement in Boarding School Contexts* which aimed to examine understanding of parent/family engagement in the boarding context and providing the Australian Government with preliminary advice on additional educational support boarding schools might need to assist them to meet engagement requirements of the *Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences*. This report is available on the APC website [here](#).

Treasurer's Note: 2016 Membership Year

A friendly reminder to everyone that the 2016 memberships fell due on **January 1**. Your membership is important to our organisation and when lobbying government for change, numbers count! Many thanks to the branch treasurers who have sent in their branch's membership renewals to state and federal, much appreciated and for those who have yet to send them in, please do so.

Many state conferences will be held over the next few months and to be eligible to attend your state conference as a voting delegate, you must be a paid up member of ICPA at all three levels (branch, state and federal). It is also important for members thinking of standing for Council to have paid your membership fees for 2016.

Reminder to keep your email address up to date with Federal Council. Go to the website, [log in](#) and update any details.

Any questions, please contact Anita Dennis, [Federal Treasurer](#).

Facebook and Twitter

Did you know ICPA Aust is on Facebook and Twitter? We regularly update this page with current topics and articles affecting rural and remote education.

Facebook - Find & like us [here](#)

Twitter - Find us at [@ICPAFed](#) and follow us.

2016 Federal Conference

This year's Federal Conference will be held in Perth, Western Australia on Wednesday August 10 and Thursday August 11, 2016.

- **Federal Conference Motions**

Agenda Motions are to be in the hands of the Federal Secretary by **midnight June 14, 2016**. A reminder that motions do not need to be presented at your state conference in order to be accepted onto the federal conference agenda. Only federal related issues should be presented at the federal conference. Explanations are very important - please remember to include them when you send your motion.

Supplementary Motions are to be with the Federal Secretary by **midnight August 2, 2016**. Supplementary motions are designed to address an issue that has arisen since the agenda motion cut-off date so supplementary motions which do not fall into this category will not be accepted.

Floor Motions generally come about as a result of discussion and debate during conference. Occasionally they cover issues that have arisen since the closing date for supplementary motions. Floor motions can only be accepted for debate with the consent of delegates, after the motion has been read to the conference by the Chair.

Please contact Jane Morton, [Federal Secretary](#) for more information.

- **Conference Procedures Workshop**

This workshop has replaced the 'First Time Delegates' workshop and we invite all conference attendees who feel they would benefit from a refresher on the processes we

use, whether they are first time delegates or not, to attend. Workshop presenters will run through a variety of scenarios that arise during conference including but not limited to, motion amendments, word changes and withdrawing motions.

Upcoming State Conferences

ICPA NSW - Griffith, March 16 & 17, 2016

ICPA WA - Perth, March 18, 2016

ICPA SA - Roxby Downs, March 22, 2016

ICPA Northern Territory – Katherine, April 7, 2016

ICPA Federal - Perth, August 10 & 11, 2016

For more information on the conferences, please visit <http://www.icpa.com.au/events>

Youth Allowance

The new dependent Youth Allowance (YA) rules were implemented on January 1, 2016.

Claiming:

- Register for a myGov online account - the claimant will need to visit their nearest service centre with their identification documents, ensuring one piece of identity includes photo ID. More information about confirmation of identity [here](#).
- When lodging your claim, make sure supporting documentation is ready including tax file number and parental income.
- The preferred method is online application to avoid delays in payment. The paper-based Youth Allowance form SY001 is no longer available online – if you are unable to fill your application online or encounter any problems, phone **132490** for assistance. Currently there is often a lengthy delay with this line, but it is the only way you can request a paper-based form or to get assistance filling in the form off-line.
- For information on Youth Allowance visit [Human Services Youth Allowance Website](#)
- Other useful websites
[Student Update - Facebook](#) 'Like' this Facebook page and you will receive updates and reminders about student payments
[Study Assist](#) Information for students about government assistance for financing tertiary study

Student Start-up Loan

From January 1, 2016 the Student Start-up Scholarship was replaced with the Student Start-up Loan for new student recipients of Youth Allowance. You will continue to receive the Student Start-up Scholarship if you received it prior to January 1, 2016 and have not had a break in payment. A break in payment occurs when you stop studying for a semester, reduce your study load to less than fulltime or have greater than 6 consecutive fortnights of not receiving a student payment due to earnings or overseas travel. Click [here](#) for more information on Student Start-up Loan.

University Survival Guide for Rural and Regional Students

The University Survival Guide 2016 for rural and remote students heading off to university is available from Country Education Foundation of Australia. The guide has tips, advice, web links, information and resources for rural and remote students and parents. It can be downloaded [here](#).



HECS-HELP BENEFIT

Did you graduate in the area of maths, science, education (including early childhood) or nursing? You may be eligible for the HECS-HELP Benefit which is initiated by the student via the ATO. It is not a cash payment. If you are eligible it may reduce your compulsory HELP repayment resulting in a reduction in your accumulated HELP debt or if you do not have a compulsory HELP repayment it will reduce your accumulated HELP debt directly. For forms and to find out more, visit [ATO - HECS-HELP Benefit](#) You must be able to answer YES to all questions in the checklist and fit the time frame for application.

Drought Education Fund - Briefing Paper

The Isolated Children's Parent's Association of Australia, is calling on the Federal Government to introduce a Drought Education Fund to address the grave concerns of the many families in drought stricken areas who simply cannot afford to educate their children. Geographically isolated children should not be disadvantaged or unable to complete their studies at boarding school due to ongoing long term droughts. Educational expenses are an investment for the future prosperity of all our rural and remote communities and ICPA (Aust) urges the Federal Government to assist rural families in educating their children in these tough times. Download and read [ICPA's Drought Education Fund Briefing Paper](#).

'No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.'

Robin Williams