

Isolated Children's Parents' Association
of Australia Incorporated



Minutes

of the

48th Annual Conference

Sustain our Future Invest in our Children

31st July and 1st August 2019

Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, SA

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held at the

Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, SA

Hosted and convened
by
ICPA SA State Council

Convenor:
Mrs Katrina Morris

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BOARDING SCHOOLS/SCHOOL TERM HOSTELS

M13(A7), M14(A8), M15(S7), M47(A1), M48(A2), M49(A3),
M50(A4), M68(A5), M69(A9), M70(A10), M72(A6),
M73(A88), M74(A11), M75(A12), M76(A13), M77(S1),
M78(S2), M79(S3), M80(S8), M97(F1), M98(F2)

COMMUNICATIONS

M4(A28), M5(A29), M6(A30), M7(A31), M8(A32), M9(A33),
M10(A34), M11(A14), M12(A15), M16(A16), M17(A17),
M18(A18), M19(A19), M20(A20), M21(A21), M22(A22),
M23(A23), M24(A24), M25(A25), M26(A26), M27(A27)

CURRICULUM

M45(A36), M46(A37), M81(A35)

DISTANCE EDUCATION

M1(A38), M2(A39), M3(A40)

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Early Learning M28(A41), M29(A42), M30(A43), M31(A44), M32(A45),
M33(A46)

Child Care

M55(A47), M56(A48), M57(S4), M58(S5)

Mobile Early Childhood Services

M59(A49), M60(A50)

Other

M61(A51), M62(A52), M63(A53)

RURAL SCHOOLS/SCHOOL TRAVEL

M51(A54), M52(A55), M53(A56), M54(A57), M71(A87)

SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS

64(A58)

TERTIARY EDUCATION

Access Allowance

M65(A59), M66(A60), M67(A61)

Youth Allowance

M82(A62), M83(A63), M84(A64), M85(A65), M86(A66),
M87(A67), M88(A68), M89(69), M90(A70), M91(S6)

Other

M92(A71), M93(A72), M94(A73), M95(A74)

TRAINING

M96(A75)

MISCELLANEOUS

M44(A76)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

M34(A77), M35(A78), M36(A79), M37(A80), M39(A82),
M40(A83), M41(A84), M42(A85), M43(A86)

ICPA Federal Council 2018 - 2019

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Mrs Wendy Hick
Camooweal QLD

Vice President

Mrs Sally Sullivan
Mataranka NT

Secretary

Mrs Suzanne Wilson
Darwin NT

Assistant Secretary

Mrs Jane Morton
Clifton QLD

Treasurer

Mrs Lisa Slade
Blinman SA

Publicity Officer

Mrs Nikki Macqueen
Millmerran QLD

Imm. Past President

Ms Judy Sinclair-Newton
Dubbo NSW

Committee

Mrs Kristen Coggan
Condamine QLD

Committee

Mrs Di Skene
Brookstead QLD

Committee

Mrs Kate Thompson
York Plains TAS

Committee

Mrs Jane O'Brien
Walgett NSW

Committee

Mrs Caroline Robinson
Bourke NSW

Committee

Mrs Alana Moller
Clermont QLD

Committee

Mrs Christie Goddard
Bollon QLD

PEDALS Editor

Mrs Raelene Hall
Meekatharra WA

Federal Webmaster

Mrs Nikki Macqueen
Millmerran QLD

ICPA Website Manager

Mrs Sue Shotton
Winnellie NT

ICPA Federal Council 2019 - 2020

President

Mrs Alana Moller
Clermont QLD

Vice President

Mrs Sally Sullivan
Mataranka NT

Secretary

Mrs Suzanne Wilson
Darwin NT

Assistant Secretary

Mrs Kate Thompson
York Plains TAS

Treasurer

Mrs Lisa Slade
Blinman SA

Publicity Officer

Mr Hamish Griffin
Cloncurry QLD

Imm. Past President

Mrs Wendy Hick
Camooweal QLD

Committee

Mrs Di Skene
Brookstead QLD

Committee

Mrs Kristen Coggan
Condamine QLD

Committee

Mrs Nikki Macqueen
Millmerran QLD

Committee

Mrs Jane O'Brien
Walgett NSW

Committee

Mrs Briony Sinclair
Western Downs QLD

Committee

Mrs Jane Morton
Clifton QLD

Committee

Mrs Christie Goddard
Bollon QLD

Committee

Mrs Jo Camilleri
Kimberley WA

PEDALS Editor

Mrs Raelene Hall
Meekatharra WA

Federal Webmaster

Mrs Nikki Macqueen
Millmerran QLD

ICPA Website Manager

Mrs Sue Shotton
Winnellie NT

Sustain our Future Invest in our Children

Conference Program Day 1 – Wednesday 31 July 2019

8.30am	<p>National Anthem Welcome Conference Convenor Introduction of Guests and Delegates Confirmation of 2018 Canberra Conference Minutes</p> <p>Official Opening of Conference Presentation – Minister for Education Video</p> <p>Federal ICPA President’s Report Memorial – Mrs Marion Ward South Australia ICPA President’s Report</p> <p>Distance Education Portfolio Presentation Distance Education Agenda Motions</p>	<p>Ms Madison Morris Mrs Wendy Hick Mrs Katrina Morris Mrs Suzanne Wilson Mrs Sally Sullivan</p> <p>Mrs Julia Materne The Hon Dan Tehan MP</p> <p>Mrs Wendy Hick Ms Judy Sinclair-Newton Mrs Jill Greenfield</p> <p>Mrs Alana Moller</p>
10.30am	<p>Morning tea</p> <p>Queensland ICPA President’s Report</p> <p>Communications Portfolio Presentation Presentation – Telstra Regional and Retail Australia – Executive Communications Agenda Motions – Telephone, Mobile</p> <p>Presentation – “Exploration into the Well-being of Australian Boarders Dean of Boarding, The Southport School, Ascot, QLD</p> <p>Rural Hardship Education Fund Presentation</p> <p>Boarding Schools /School Term Hostels Agenda Motions</p>	<p>Mrs Tammie Irons</p> <p>Mrs Kristen Coggan Mrs Janet Barnes</p> <p>Mr Tony Watt</p> <p>Mrs Wendy Hick</p>
12.30pm	<p>Lunch</p> <p>Keynote Speaker Olympic Track Cyclist</p> <p>Presentation – nbn™ Update General Manager, nbn™ Local</p> <p><i>Communications Agenda Motions – Internet</i></p> <p>Presentation – “Why ICPA is as necessary as ever after 48 Years”</p>	<p>Ms Anna Meares OAM</p> <p>Ms Rachael McIntyre</p> <p>Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM</p>
3.00pm	<p>Afternoon tea</p> <p><i>Communications Agenda Motions – Internet cont’d</i></p> <p>Western Australia ICPA President’s Report</p> <p>Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Presentation Early Childhood Education and Care Agenda Motions</p> <p>Introduction of candidates for Federal Council Conference arrangements</p>	<p>Mrs Tash Johns</p> <p>Mrs Jane Morton</p> <p>Mrs Katrina Morris</p>
5.30pm	<p>Close of Business Day</p>	

48th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Conference Program Day 2 – Thursday 1 August 2019

8.30am	Annual General Meeting	
9.30am	Conference resumes Conference arrangements	Mrs Katrina Morris
	Miscellaneous Agenda Motion	
	Presentation – “A National Approach to Food and Fibre Education” CEO, Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA)	Mr Ben Stockwin
	Curriculum Agenda Motions	
	Northern Territory ICPA President’s Report	Mrs Sarah Cook
10.30am	Morning tea	
	New South Wales ICPA President’s Report	Mrs Claire Butler
	Presentation – “Communicating with a Teenager” Director of Boarding, Seymour College, Adelaide, SA	Ms Hayley Hall
	Boarding Schools/School Term Hostels Agenda Motions	
	Rural Schools/School Travel Portfolio Presentation Rural Schools/School Travel Agenda Motions	Mrs Di Skene
	Presentation - The Wealth Academy - Director	Mr Ken Swan
	Conference arrangements	Mrs Katrina Morris
12.30pm	Lunch	
	Specific Education Needs Agenda Motions	
	Tertiary Portfolio Presentation <i>Tertiary Agenda Motions</i> <i>Training Agenda Motions</i>	Mrs Kate Thompson
	Presentation – Connellan Airways Trust – Executive Officer	Ms Jessica Hackett
	Guest Speaker - “Improving the health and wellbeing of rural Australians: the role of education” Behavioural Scientist and Clinical Psychologist	Dr Kate Gunn
	Conference arrangements	Mrs Katrina Morris
3.30pm	Afternoon tea	
	Conference Motions cont’d	
	Presentation to retiring councillors	
5.30pm	Close of Conference	

DAY ONE Wednesday 31st July 2019

8:30am Conference commences

National Anthem

Sung by Miss Madison Morris, student of Seymour College

Welcome by Federal ICPA President

Mrs Wendy Hick

Conference Convenor

Mrs Katrina Morris

Welcome and overview of conference arrangements

Introduction of Guests

Introduction of Delegates and issuing voting cards

Mrs Suzanne Wilson

Confirmation of the 2018 Minutes, Canberra Conference

“That the 2018 Federal Conference Minutes be accepted.”

Moved: Sally Sullivan Federal Council

Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

Business arising from the 2018 minutes: NIL

Official Opening of Conference

Federal Life Member

Mrs Julia Materne

Video Presentation

Minister for Education

The Hon Dan Tehan MP

Federal ICPA President’s Report

Mrs Wendy Hick

Memorial – Mrs Marion Ward

Mrs Judy Sinclair-Newton

South Australia ICPA President’s Report

Mrs Jill Greenfield

Distance Education Portfolio Report

Mrs Alana Moller

Distance Education Agenda Motions

M1 (A38) Conjoined Motion presented by:

Alice Springs Branch (NT), Western Australia State Council (WA), Katherine Branch (NT), Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA), Pilbara Branch (WA), Northern Territory State Council (NT), Kimberley Air Branch (WA) and Flinders Ranges Branch (SA).

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Families and Social Services and the Minister for Education to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role the home tutor plays in educating students via distance education.”

Moved: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

Seconded: Tallaya Wood Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation (Alice Springs Branch):

An introduction of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA), as financial recognition of the essential work a supervisor/tutor who is often the mother, performs in Distance Education classrooms would help alleviate the pressure placed on remote families whose only option is to home-school their

children via Distance Education. In many cases the mother is unable to be a member of the workforce on the property, community or out station where they live due to the need for them to stay at home and teach their children. This in turns strips the family of a second income and places further financial pressure on those families who educate their children via distance education. If in the event the family employs a Home Tutor to deliver the distance education lessons to the children, they are effectively paying award wages for a child to receive a public education. This can amount to a family paying a Home Tutor between \$25,000 to \$35,000 depending on salary / wage agreements. On top of the wage a Home Tutor is paid, in many cases, home tutors are living with the family and have all food, board and other sundry expenses such as internet provided by the family.

Explanation (Western Australia State Council):

WA State Council would like to thank Federal Council for its continued efforts in lobbying the Federal Government in establishing a tutor allowance and for highlighting the hard work that Home Tutors throughout Australia undertake daily to provide a suitable education for their students. It is important that ICPA (Aust) continues to highlight the importance of the introduction of this allowance, especially with the increased budget pressures the five WA Schools of the Air continue to fall under, it is now even more important that home tutors receive this allowance due to increased responsibilities placed on the home tutor due to less support received from their schools.

Explanation (Katherine Branch):

Katherine Branch thanks ICPA (Aust) for its continuing pursuit of this motion and considers the Distance Education Resource Video to be a great resource illustrating the commitment of home tutors to education and the challenges faced by families on distance education. For many young people living in remote regions, their only access to education is to study by distance education. It is clear that distance education provision is provided on the assumption that all children have ready access to a person able to deliver the program in the geographically isolated classroom. This person is the distance education tutor who must be available and able to provide the practical, day-to-day supervision and support required for the effective delivery of a distance education program. With the responsibility of the distance education tutor position often falling on the mother, fulfilling this position further compounds her workload. This can place increased pressure on other family members and may necessitate the employment of additional staff.

Explanation (Goldfields Eyre Branch):

The service provided by Home Tutors in the delivering of education to students in rural and remote Australia who have no choice but to be educated via the distance education mode of delivery needs be acknowledged. Home Tutors provide what the government simply cannot cost effectively supply and as such should be recognised and remunerated fairly.

Explanation (Pilbara Branch):

The implementation of the education of rural and remote students resides with the families living in these areas, mainly the mother. During this time the mother's ability to multitask snowballs, still remaining an important business partner, farm help and importantly a mother but also undertaking a very important role of delivering the education to the children. The establishment of a home tutor allowance would enable some families to employ or subsidise a paid educator within the home for the purpose of assisting mothers educate their children within the demands of multi-age classrooms, employment outside the home and running their own business. While an incentive exists to claim mileage to attend the nearest school, or to live in the closest town and gain financial assistance for a second home, there remains no financial assistance to stay at the primary family home, as a family unit, for the purpose of children's education. Some families do take on the financial burden and employ someone to assist with the education but not all families are in the financial position to do this.

A home tutor allowance would enable women to continue or gain employment outside the home, continue with study or assist some of the cost associated with distance education and ensure family inseparability and enhance the education outcomes for their children engaged in a rigorous curriculum.

Explanation (Northern Territory State Council):

A Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA), as financial recognition of the essential work a supervisor/tutor performs in Distance Education classrooms, would help alleviate the pressure placed on remote families whose only option is to home-school their children via Distance Education.

In many cases the mother is the home tutor and due to the need for them to stay at home and teach their children, is unable to join the workforce on the property, community or outstation where they live. This in turn strips the family of a second income or necessitates the employment of other staff and places further financial pressure on those families who educate their children via distance education.

If the family employs a Home Tutor to deliver the distance education lessons to the children, they are effectively paying award wages for a child to receive a public education: between \$25,000 and \$35,000 plus food, board and other sundry expenses (such as rent, travel, telephone & internet) because on top of wages, a Home Tutor is in most cases, living with the family.

Explanation (Kimberley Air Branch):

It is time that the government acknowledges the service provided by Home Tutors in the delivering of education to the students in rural and remote Australia who have no choice but to be educated via the distance education mode of delivery. Home Tutors provide what the government simply cannot and as such should be recognised and remunerated for it. The acknowledgement and support of this important role links directly with government interests in regional development across the country, particularly Northern Australia, and will deliver both social and economic benefits to these regions. The support of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance will encourage young families to live remotely and embrace all the challenges that come with it for the long-term, including the provision of education in a remote setting. This encouragement of people to lay down roots in regional areas rather than the current situation that relies on transient workers, will contribute to flourishing regions. If we want regions to thrive, we need educational support, particularly in remote situations where this relies on distance education models.

Explanation (Flinders Ranges Branch):

Flinders Ranges Branch thank Federal Council for its continuing efforts in lobbying the Federal Government for an allowance to recognise the role of the home tutor and remunerate isolated families for costs associated with the supervision of their children's schooling.

Much of rural Australia has been suffering hardship in recent times and the mental health of isolated families is at the forefront of our minds when asking for the establishment of a DETA. Some families who would normally employ a Home Tutor are unable to afford employees in times of hardship, which forces the mother to take on the Home Tutor role. This is a burden for most, but for some it causes significant mental health concerns. Having an established DETA would give families more choice about managing their children's education.

M2 (A39) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Education and other relevant ministers to ensure Schools of the Air and Schools of Distance Education remain in their respective regions, regardless of enrolment numbers."

Moved: Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs Branch (NT)
Seconded: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

In 2017, the Western Australian Government announced a decision to close regional Schools of the Air and to instead provide a single service from a central Perth (metropolitan) facility. This decision was later retracted, and WA Schools of the Air will remain in their regions, however it highlighted a lack of broader understanding and appreciation for why Schools of the Air are so important to rural and remote communities, causing isolated families to ask ‘could this happen to us.’ Members will take comfort knowing ICPA are advocating for the benefits of Schools of the Air in the course of our business.

M3 (A40) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates for the Federal Government to recognise the unique needs of geographically isolated students by categorising them separately under the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance using existing geographic isolation eligibility criteria.”

Moved: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Kelly Ostwald Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Let us be reminded of the first major achievement of ICPA as an organisation:

‘After intense lobbying by the newly formed ICPA, the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme was introduced by the Commonwealth Government in January 1973. Its purpose was to provide financial assistance for schooling children who, because of the geographic isolation of their homes, did not have reasonable daily access to government schools offering courses at appropriate levels.’

Guidelines for the Assistance for Isolated Children allowance outline the allowance ‘is available for families of primary, secondary and certain tertiary students who cannot attend an appropriate state school on a daily basis because of geographical isolation.’

In recent years, guidelines for the AIC have been expanded beyond geographical isolation and now include students with a disability or students with special health needs. Whilst ICPA QLD would never begrudge the freedom of choice for families to choose the most appropriate method of schooling for their children, there is concern that the original intent of the AIC, is being compromised.

ICPA QLD believes geographically isolated (GI) students should be categorised separately under the AIC to ensure that adequate and appropriate assistance continues to be provided to students who do not have daily access to face to face appropriate schooling due to distance as per the original intent of the scheme. The needs of GI students, in regard to remoteness, lack of services and related expenses, differ considerably to other categories, which are now included in the scheme.

ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate on behalf of geographically isolated students, however it is becoming increasingly difficult to seek much needed financial increases for these families when the number of recipients does not truly reflect and identify GI students. Let us get back to basics.

Queensland ICPA President’s Report

Mrs Tammie Irons

Federal President mentions there is no Tasmania ICPA report.

Conference members are reminded to hand in nomination forms for Federal Council.

Federal Council “Join the Team” video clip played

10:23am Morning Tea

11:02am Conference resumes

Communications Portfolio Report

Mrs Kristen Coggan

Presentation – Telstra Regional and Retail Australia

Ms Janet Barnes

Communications – Telephone – Agenda Motions

M4 (A28) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby Telstra to ensure priority is given to phone line installations and repairs in rural and remote areas when the purpose is education delivery.”

Moved: Kelly Ostwald Queensland State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The digital curriculum has seen a dramatic increase in the direct teaching of lessons by the Centre teacher to the School of Distance Education (SDE) student in their homes. For many regional distance education schools and students, the landline is a compulsory piece of equipment that enables access to these daily lessons. In Queensland for example, in order to fulfil daily timetabling requirements, at least two phone lines are required for multi-age home schoolrooms. The installation and repair times for phone lines in rural and remote areas can be lengthy, at least six weeks in some cases. It is imperative Telstra prioritise these services in geographically isolated locations where it is used for access to education.

M5 (A29) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to work with the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts and the relevant Telecommunications Providers to ensure that all rural and remote students have consistent access to continuous and reliable telephone communications through regular maintenance of existing telephone infrastructure and they are:

- 1) prioritised for repair
- 2) a temporary satellite phone be provided to any rural or remote family where a phone fault is not rectified within three working days.”

Moved: Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs Branch (NT)

Seconded: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

It is highly important for our children learning via distance education, to have access to their teachers via phone as well as internet. Often Private Lesson Times (PLTs) are carried out on the phone while other children in the schoolroom are using the computer to access their lessons. When phone networks are not working due to any range of issues, we would like to ensure that the access our children have to their class teachers via the telephone network is placed at a high priority. We would like to ask that telecommunication providers are able to place a temporary mobile satellite phone at any site where phone faults are not rectified within 3 Working Days.

Despite best intentions from one of the major telephone providers and this issue being discussed at conference over several years, members are still facing long periods of time with a substandard phone connection. One member has been waiting for nearly 12 months to have their phone fault rectified.

Despite several on-site visits by technicians, the phone fault could not be identified let alone fixed. This has had caused great distress and disruption to not only the school room and accessibility the student has to their teacher but also for the family conducting their business and jeopardising connection with the Royal Flying Doctor Service for the children, staff and any other travellers passing through the area. They have been told on several occasions that no fault could be identified and at one point the fault was removed from the telecommunication server list. After over 7 months of reporting the phone fault, they were offered an interim phone service and 2 out of the 3 options required mobile coverage (This family lives 400km from the nearest town). The 3 option was to have a satellite interim with the side note that when experiencing a long period of overcast weather, the interim service will only provide 15min of calls per day. The interim service was offered on the 2nd May and the family accepted the offer on the 3rd May. At the time of writing this explanation on the 16th May, they are yet to receive the interim service and the phone fault remains unresolved.

We have heard that there is Round 4 and 5 of the mobile black spot coverage on the table. We would like Telstra to consider families with ongoing telephone issues and not limit the roll out of mobile towers to remote communities. Since this family has moved from the old ADSL tower to the USO connection they have experienced over 14 years of consistent substandard phone connectivity. Since the update to the USO service about 12 months ago, this family has reported an ongoing fault that continues to worsen. They have been told, “next week”, “we are working on it”, “your service can’t be faulted by our system”, etc. While the people in the call centres receiving the faults are sympathetic to the issue, there is a huge gap when looking at rectifying the issue.

M6 (A30) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts to ensure the retention and maintenance of landline services in rural and remote areas, until another means of reliable, affordable and appropriate voice service is available.”

Moved: Tash Johns WA State Council (WA)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

ICPA (WA) acknowledge and thank ICPA (Aust) for its advocacy in explaining that families living in rural and remote parts of Australia, due to the nature of where they live, require two separate forms of communications i.e. phone/voice and internet/data as separate services, not relying on the same mode of delivery thus ensuring if one service fails, the other is still available. The Universal Service Obligation (USO) should remain on landline telephony services for those living outside of mobile coverage areas and that these landline services are maintained and upgraded as necessary.

M7 (A31) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts to direct Telstra and other suppliers to provide backup battery power to at least one Wireless Local Link (WLL) service when a site is converted from another technology to WLL.”

Moved: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Kelly Ostwald QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Telstra has committed to migrating 350 services from old technology to WLL (Fixed phone via Mobile technology). Existing radio services have up to 3 days of battery reserve that will likely be lost in the conversion to WLL. It was directed by the Minister that customers fed by nbn™ optic fibre in large built up areas (normally with good mobile coverage and availability of services) would receive a battery

backup unit if they chose. This backup gives 5 hours battery reserve to keep the fixed phone operational.

As a minimum, any WLL backup should be at least 5 hours, but preferably 24 hours. Additional backup units should be available for purchase for more than one service e.g. Distance Education home schoolroom requires uninterrupted service.

M8 (A32) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts to provide guidelines on telecommunications options should fixed lines fail but nbn™ internet is available.”

Moved: Kelly Ostwald QLD State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

While VoIP over satellite is not a recommended option for distance education and general telephone use, if the normal telephone (Fixed and Mobile) is not available and the nbn™ satellite is working, a guideline on how to access these services would be appreciated. Voice services that use the available data services, such as VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) voice service, Voice over Wi-Fi, Viber, and other VoIP type apps, will provide some security until normal service is restored. Members have been experiencing extended outages and is extremely disruptive in the Distance Education classroom.

M9 (A33) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies Telstra to expand the Remote Area Sales and Service Centres to include Rural and Remote Small Business Customers.”

Moved: Kelly Ostwald QLD State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently the Remote Area Sales and Service Centres in Adelaide and Townsville only cater for Residential Customers more than 100km from a Telstra store. As a large number of distance education home classrooms are located on sites classed as Small Business, these locations are at a significant disadvantage. They use the same technology and have the same issues as Residential Customers in the same area but do not receive the required support.

Communications – Mobile Coverage/Service – Agenda Motions

M10 (A34) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies Telstra to advise future 4GX upgrade plans for the remaining 3G remote area mobile bases (including increased bandwidth capacity if necessary) to enable the full benefits to be realised.”

Moved: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Kelly Ostwald QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

There are still 3G mobile sites that have not been upgraded to 4GX. These sites often also have a very limited bandwidth back to the network that restricts the usability for distance education. There are also reports of some sites being upgraded to 4GX, without an increase in the bandwidth to that site. This limits the capability of these sites.

Presentation – nbn™ Update

General Manager nbn™ Local

Ms Rachael McIntyre

Communications – Internet Access – Agenda Motions

M11 (A14) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, National Broadband Network Company and Internet Service Providers to ensure that geographically isolated students have equity of internet access which is adequate with regard to speed, quality, capabilities, download limits and cost to meet their educational needs.”

Moved: Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs Branch (NT)

Seconded: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Some Distance Education Students enrolled at Alice Springs School of the Air (ASSOA) have had internet supplied to them via in-house satellite, modem and internet connections, other families supply their own internet connection for students at their own cost. The internet service provided by the NT Department of Education, is managed, monitored and fixed by the Internet Technicians at ASSOA. Alice Springs School of the Air is in the process of having tests carried out on families own internet connections gathering data to ensure when the school internet network is changed over to each families own internet connection, the children will still have enough reliable internet access to ensure speed, quality, capabilities, download limits and cost meet their daily schooling needs.

We would like to ensure there are no limits placed on download limits, speed, and capabilities of internet connections that are used for education for isolated students regardless of the service being provided by the school or a private connection provided by the family.

M12 (A15) Katherine Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to request the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts to ensure all Australian students have adequate internet access with regard to speed, quality, capabilities and cost of the service.”

Moved: Kerrie Scott Katherine Branch (NT)

Requested A15 be deemed covered by A14.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

DEEMED COVERED BY M11 (A14)

Explanation:

We acknowledge and thank ICPA (Aust) and the Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia for their continuous and effective lobbying of the Federal Government, Telstra, nbn™ and other providers on internet issues in the bush. In particular, the negotiations with nbn™ to provide dedicated ports for education an important breakthrough. The prioritisation of installations required for education is paramount. Many students, however, such as tertiary and training students, students of small rural schools and boarding students’ home on “holidays”. These families are required to use their business/family internet for education. Also, the NT is in flux with regard to internet provision for distance education and so some families are also using their own internet for that.

While expected data speeds, plan sizes and service reliability are continually improving, our members have concerns about the data allocations in plans being heavily loaded towards unreasonable off-peak times. The Mb/\$ continues to fall extremely short of those available to our urban counterparts, thus ensuring maintenance of the internet divide between regional and urban areas.

Presentation “Exploration into the Well-being of Australian Boarders”
Dean of Boarding, The Southport School, Ascot, QLD

Mr Tony Watt

Rural Hardship Education Fund Presentation
Boarding Schools/School Term Hostels – Drought - Agenda Motions

Mrs Wendy Hick

M13 (A7) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates with Government and other relevant parties for the establishment of a permanent ‘Rural Hardship Education Fund’ to assist families meet education costs in times of difficulty.”

Moved: Sancia Fegan Mount Isa BOTA (QLD)
Seconded: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

At present there continues to be large areas of rural Australia suffering greatly through one of the worst droughts in memory. Earlier this year, families in North West Queensland were battered by a catastrophic monsoon event which has seen many lose nearly everything in a matter of days - livestock, fencing and infrastructure, their homes and schoolrooms. Drought and other unforeseen disasters such as fires, floods and industry events which are out of producers control (i.e. The Live Export Ban, Dairy Crises etc.) all impact suddenly on rural families' income and their ability to pay the out of pocket costs necessary for their children to access education. This lack of income does not only affect families living on rural properties but also carries over into small town businesses and the other industries such as freight, mustering/shearing contractors, etc which also rely on primary production.

When disaster strikes in a metropolitan area, as devastating as it may be, once the disaster has passed and things cleaned up or re-established, children's schooling continues unchanged. This is not so for families in geographically isolated areas who often still need to find the means to pay for the gap in the costs of their children's education fees even though they have little to no income during these periods and the recovery periods afterwards. In past droughts, Exceptional Circumstances could be applied for and a top up was added to the Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance, but at present no such scheme exists. Families in NW QLD were grateful for the \$1,000 increase to the AIC they received after the monsoon devastation, however this was a one-time assistance which has not met the gap in the cost of education, and due to the monsoon event, families have lost their income for several years to come with no further educational assistance mentioned. During these past few years of drought some families have had to decide whether or not their children can remain in schooling or to choose between their children, deciding who can go away to school and which ones won't receive a further education. It is anticipated that this will also now be the case for families affected by the monsoon catastrophe. Families at small rural schools have also faced difficulty in not being able to raise funds for school excursions and other activities for their students.

It is essential that a Rural Hardship Education Fund be established and put permanently in place to assist rural families that need financial help to ensure that their children can remain in schooling during tough times.

M14 (A8) New South Wales State Council (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government to provide resources for mental health programs in boarding schools with drought affected students, to help children navigate through times of hardship.”

Moved: Deb Castle NSW State Council (NSW)
Seconded: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Even though children are living away from home at boarding school and therefore not on the coalface of the drought on a daily basis during the school terms, they continue to worry about home, their parents, younger siblings, livestock, and the added pressure of the continuing affordability of them remaining at boarding school.

In school holidays these children are coming home to work alongside their families as equal team members and even though this is normal for our children, they are still trying to process many adult issues with a child's mind. Worrying about what their education is costing their families heightened by the unprecedented drought and the long and difficult recovery is an ongoing issue for our bush kids.

Even though kids are going to face ups and downs throughout life, we need to be giving them the support and the coping tools that are crucial when they are growing into young adults without the support of their families. Beyond all, these families in many instances are hundreds of kilometres away. With many of us battling mentally, as adults supporting our children, it is vital through these difficult times that these unbelievable kids are supported. They are after all our next generation. For most of us we could not do what we do without our amazing kids by our sides. All we ask is for more mental health skills to be put in their toolbox, so that they can cope with whatever life throws at them.

M15 (S7) Richmond Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA Richmond Branch thanks ICPA (Aust) for its advocacy for rural and remote families following the NW Queensland floods, including the ‘Issue Paper – NW QLD Flood Impact on Education’, which has served to shine a light on the needs of rural and remote students in the aftermath of this natural disaster.”

Moved: Kim Hughes Richmond Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Louise Martin Tambo Branch (QLD)

CARRIED WITH ACCLAMATION

Explanation:

We were extremely appreciative of the representation by Federal and Queensland State Councils, who represented the needs of students and families during this unprecedented natural disaster.

This included the advocacy to the Hon Shane Stone, CEO of North QLD Livestock Industry Recovery Agency, which has resulted in significant assistance by the Federal Government with educational costs for rural and remote flood affected families, including boarding school fee assistance.

Video Presentation

“What I want to be when I grow up”

12:39pm Lunch

1:29pm Conference resumes

Correction to delegates list announced

Presentation – North Queensland Livestock Industry Agency

The Hon Shane Stone

Keynote Speaker – Olympic Track Cyclist

Ms Anna Meares OAM

Communications – Internet Access – Agenda Motions (cont.)

M16 (A16) Kimberley Air Branch (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government and other relevant stakeholders to ensure fair and equitable access to Sky Muster for those with genuine need for the service, and access which reflects the residential and educational needs of rural and regional Australia.”

Moved: Constance Wood Kimberley Air Branch (WA)
Seconded: Jo Camilleri Kimberley Air Branch (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

With the heavy reliance on internet access to support distance education and plans to have all Australian government services available online by 2025, it is more important than ever that there is No Australian Left Offline. The current No Australian Left Offline policy focuses on equitable access for low income families and while this is important, we want to ensure that our remote families are secure in knowing NBN satellite installations costs will be met and more affordable access to internet is also available where it is needed most. Whilst it is appreciated that Sky Muster continues to be available for our remote families, the suggestion that there will be no assistance with installation costs from 2020 is of most concern. These costs escalate greatly in providing relevant technicians to our most isolated locations and would limit who can and cannot access the Sky Muster facility into the future.

M17 (A17) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies nbn™ Co that all students enrolled via distance education schools have access to the Sky Muster Education Port.”

Moved: Tash Johns WA State Council (WA)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

In WA, only students studying via distance education and enrolled through Schools of the Air (SOTA) or School of Isolated Distance Education (SIDE) qualify for the Sky Muster Education Port, which the WA Education Department funds. There have been instances where students studying via Distance Education through private campuses have been told they do not qualify for the Education Port from nbn™ Co and referred on to the State Education Department. ICPA (WA) would like to see access to the Education Port for all students studying via distance education, with the option to fund their access themselves if enrolled in a non-government school.

Presentation “Why ICPA is as necessary as ever after 48 Years”

Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM

Presentation of ICPA Federal Life Membership to Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM

3:05pm Afternoon Tea

Conference Members reminded that nominations for Federal Council close at the end of the break.

3:35pm Conference resumes

Communications – Internet Access – Agenda Motions (cont.)

M18 (A18) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to relevant Federal Government Departments and Ministers to ensure families residing in geographically isolated regions who cannot have ‘unlimited’ data plans, be eligible to activate Education Port/s for each enrolled student.”

WORD CHANGE

Sarah Cook, NT State Council requested conference permission for a word change, remove the words *who cannot have, be eligible to activate* and replace with *to have, for the*

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to relevant Federal Government Departments and Ministers to ensure families residing in geographically isolated regions to have ‘unlimited’ data plans, for the Education Port/s for each enrolled student.”

Moved: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)
Seconded: Rebecca Cadzow NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

President questioned change in motion intent. President asked conference permission to accept motion with word change in lieu of intent changing to suit explanation.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

Explanation:

Students in rural and remote areas, whether enrolled in Schools of the Air, distance education, or a small school require significant data and reliable internet to receive their education. Children in geographically isolated areas have very limited exposure to extracurricular interests such as music, drama and social interaction. Good, affordable internet is key to providing these students with some of the opportunities their urban counterparts can easily access.

Some states, such as the Northern Territory, do not presently use the Education Port for School of the Air or distance education. Access to the Education Port should be granted to all geographically isolated students who have no option for unlimited data plans, to reduce financial stress and help towards equity in access to educational opportunities.

M19 (A19) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) urges nbn™ to ensure education ports on Sky Muster services have multicast capability.”

Moved: Rebecca Cadzow NT State Council (NT)
Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Wikipedia explains multicast as *‘a group communication where data transmission is addressed to a group of destination computers simultaneously. Multicast can be one-to-many or many-to-many distribution ... making it possible for the source to efficiently send to the group in a single transmission.’*

Multicast functionality is an extremely efficient means of data transmission. Northern Territory Schools of the Air (SOTA) have been successfully delivering Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) lessons to their students using REACT, a multicast product, for over 13 years. The stability, reliability and functionality of REACT has often been envied by other distance education communities across Australia. The NSW Department of Education is also using REACT to deliver distance education. Currently however, Sky Muster Education Ports cannot support multicast transmission. As many families with students do or probably will require the education port for distance education,

families, especially in NT and NSW, would appreciate nbn™ ensuring multicast functionality for education ports.

M20 (A20) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby nbn™ Co to ensure that video streaming for educational use is included in future Sky Muster Plus plans for students studying via distance education.”

WORD CHANGE

Tash Johns, WA State Council (WA) requested conferences permission for a word change. Remove the words *continues to lobby* and replace with *lobbies*.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies nbn™Co to ensure that video streaming for educational use is included in future Sky Muster Plus plans for students studying via distance education.”

Moved: Tash Johns WA State Council (WA)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

With the prospect of the Sky Muster Education Port being discontinued due to the introduction of Sky Muster Plus, it is imperative that video streaming, including YouTube, that is actively used, be included in the delivery of education programs for rural and remote students studying via distance education.

M21 (A21) Westmar-Inglestone Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, Minister for Regional Services, Local Government and Decentralisation and the National Broadband Network Company to extend the current Sky Muster Education Port to include Tertiary students studying online from rural and remote locations.”

Moved: Jen McCormack Westmar-Inglestone Branch (QLD)
Moved: Fiona Hill Westmar-Inglestone Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Many rural and remote tertiary students are choosing to study by external or online methods as this allows them to continue to work and live in rural and remote communities. Currently the Education Port only allows access by primary and secondary students studying via distance education.

Online learning requires tertiary students to log in to streamed, live (and recorded) tutorials /lectures many times each week. Current download data quotas are inadequate, and students are unable to attend necessary online sessions. The Education Port needs to be made available to tertiary students studying from rural and remote locations.

M22 (A22) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) investigates the possibility of nbn™Co continuing the installation of Sky Muster and its hardware at no cost to rural and remote student households to ensure affordable access for rural and remote students.”

Moved: Tash Johns WA State Council (WA)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

With the likelihood of the Sky Muster free installation and hardware costs ceasing beyond 2020, there is great concern as to what nbn™ will have in place in regard to geographically isolated students accessing education through distance education at an affordable cost to parents.

M23 (A23) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the relevant minister for the subsidisation of Sky Muster installations to continue past 2020.”

Moved: Rebecca Cadzow NT State Council (NT)
Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The value of the hardware for Sky Muster installations is reportedly \$6,000-\$7,000. The hardware and the cost of installations are currently fully subsidised by the Commonwealth government for a standard installation. While families in some states use their Sky Muster service and education ports for education, other states such as NSW and NT are still negotiating nbn™ satellite services for the delivery of distance education. These negotiations are likely to continue into 2020 and further installations of new services are likely to be required past 2020 in order for current and future distance education students to access education.

Further, internet is now a necessity and is required to attract families to live, work and therefore deliver education in rural and remote Australia. New installations will always be required to cater for new families or new residences in these areas and if the costs become prohibitive, regions already suffering from a diminishing workforce will further suffer.

M24 (A24) Pilbara Branch (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies nbn™ Co to ensure the Sky Muster installation and hardware with nbn™ Co remains affordable for rural and remote students.”

Moved: Abbra Slocombe Pilbara Branch (WA)
Seconded: Sandie McCombie WA Lone Branch (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Isolated students accessing education via distance education could be financially disadvantaged due to the Sky Muster free installation and hardware costs possibly ceasing after 2020.

M25 (A25) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies nbn™ Co to investigate the possibility of remotely identifying Sky Muster sites that are not performing in an optimum manner.”

Moved: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Kelly Ostwald QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

It has become apparent that some Sky Muster sites are having issues with the performance of their remote site installations. There are increasing reports of dropouts and low fade margins that cause sites to fail while those around them continue to operate. Remote identification of problematic sites would enable issues to be resolved before they have a major impact on distance education students.

M26 (A26) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies nbn™ Co and Dept of Communications to provide a more viable alternative than Sky Muster for small towns in the nbn™ Satellite footprint that does not disadvantage access to education for existing ADSL users.”

Moved: Kelly Ostwald QLD State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently many rural and remote towns who are in the nbn™ satellite footprint have access to ADSL 1 or 2 for internet connectivity. ADSL provides a superior service compared to satellite and many residents are on unlimited data plans. The reliability and quality of service to schools, hospitals and other hubs of the community is highly valued.

Given that nbn™ is now Australia’s primary internet carrier, it is probable that ADSL will eventually be retired. For towns in the nbn™ satellite footprint, this will mean Sky Muster Satellite, which will be a significant downgrade from the existing service.

Many of these towns have existing fibre optic cable running past them. Some are owned by nbn™, and some are owned by other provider networks. It is imperative that nbn™ consider utilising other provider networks fibre optic cable to push broadband through the existing exchange, in order to provide equitable broadband services for residents. Co-investment by the Federal Government, State Government, nbn™ and local Councils is crucial. Initiatives such as Fibre to the Node or Fibre to the Curb should be explored.

Providing alternative connectivity solutions for towns in the satellite footprint will ease traffic on the Sky Muster Satellite, thereby relieving congestion issues and enabling a more adequate service (increased data allowances) for customers who have no other choice than Sky Muster, particularly for educational access e.g. Distance Education.

It is imperative rural and remote communities have access to an equitable broadband service for their education, business and health purposes in order for them to remain viable and sustainable into the future. Australia has seen great population decline in rural towns over the last two decades. A downgrade of internet connectivity of this scale will be another death knoll for rural and remote Australia, one that can simply not be sustained.

M27 (A27) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies nbn™ Co and retail service providers to advise rural and remote customers with details of suppliers who can provide battery backup units for purchase for mains powered nbn™ equipment plus mains powered retail provider equipment.”

Moved: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Kelly Ostwald QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The majority of equipment from both nbn™, and other Retail Service Providers that is required to provide service from the nbn™ network is mains powered. The major disadvantage is that any disruption to mains power, however short, will cause the service to fail and then the equipment has to reboot and settle down before it is usable. As well as disrupting any distance education lessons in progress, it may cause the loss of phone service at the most inconvenient time.

A UPS (Uninterruptable Power Supply) will keep the equipment going for a short period. As most of the equipment is actually powered from a battery eliminator that supplies 12 volts, the provision of a battery backup system that can stay operational for a number of hours becomes very useful. The use of a battery will also protect the equipment from power variations that could cause issues with the reliability of the service. This will also allow sites with non-continuous power to maintain communications when the generator is off.

Western Australia ICPA President's Report

Mrs Tash Johns

Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Report

Mrs Jane Morton

Early Childhood Education and Care – Early learning – Agenda Motions

M28 (A41) CONJOINED MOTION presented by:

Western Australia State Council (WA), Katherine Branch (NT), South Australia State Council (SA) and Goldfields Eyre Branch WA).

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government for all pre-compulsory school students enrolled in a registered distance education program to receive the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education Allowance.”

Moved: Tash Johns

WA State Council (WA)

Seconded: Tallaya Wood

Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation (Western Australia State Council):

Currently, students studying via distance education enrolled in a pre-compulsory program are ineligible to receive the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education component. Most early learning programs require significantly more learning materials than that of older students studying at primary levels, with families having to provide learning resources for these students. If families received this allowance, it would alleviate the cost of suitable learning resources. The majority of children who are enrolled in a pre-compulsory program are found to have better educational outcomes in later years, by forming these important foundations early on.

Explanation (Katherine Branch):

The Federal Government is committed to ensuring that every child has access to a quality early childhood education program. From the website <https://www.education.gov.au/universal-access-early-childhood-education>, “The Australian Government is providing funding certainty for preschool, having committed \$453.1 million in the 2019-20 Budget to extend the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education until the end of 2020. This funding ensures that every child will continue to have access to a quality preschool program for 600 hours (15 hours a week) in the year before school. Universal Access [has] a focus on participation by Indigenous children, vulnerable and disadvantaged children in a range of settings in order to meet the needs of working families, and will be accessible to all Australian children, regardless of their location.” If that was actually what was happening in rural and remote areas, this motion would be unnecessary!

Setting up the classroom for distance education delivery for Preschoolers costs the same, if not more, as for the first year of compulsory schooling. The number of children accessing this pre-compulsory year by distance education is not huge. For example: Katherine School of the Air (KSA) has had a structured Preschool Program in place for over 20 years and currently (Sem 1 2019) has 12 enrolments. On average KSA enrolments have been around 20-25 each year. The NT Government already recognises this cohort of students by making available half of the “NT Correspondence Site Allowance – Preschool” to assist all four-year-old children that are enrolled in pre-school with the Alice Springs

and Katherine Schools of the Air.

Extending the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) distance education allowance to include these students will ensure greater and more equitable participation in Early Childhood Education by rural and remote students. Distance education students could benefit enormously from a minute portion of the billions of dollars allocated to early childhood education and care, including the funding intended to ensure the system is more accessible, affordable and fairer for families.

Explanation (South Australia State Council):

The Federal Government is committed to ensuring that every child has access to a quality early childhood education program and that children who attend a quality preschool program are more likely to do well at school. With increasing discussion among government of funding the expansion of preschool to 3-year olds, extending the AIC to preschool students in the year prior to formal schooling, would ensure the system is more accessible, affordable and fair for families supervising their own children via distance education, or employing a staff member to do so. For preschool families that have to cover the cost of setting up learning environments for all aspects of their child's early development, it would alleviate this cost and lead to better education outcomes in later years, as well as greater equity with their peers.

Explanation (Goldfields Eyre Branch):

Under the current guidelines, part-time distance education students are ineligible for the Distance Education (DE) component of the AIC allowance, which means families enrolled in the 4-year-old program must bear the costs of maintaining and setting up the classroom in that first year of schooling. Our research has shown that this is a costly impost on families.

The AIC DE allowance is designed to assist families to set up and maintain the schoolroom. The schoolroom must be set up and maintained the day the child begins their education. Full-time or part time, the child needs a schoolroom.

Early Childhood Education and Care – Child Care – Agenda Motions

M29 (A42) Capricornia Branch of the Air (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the appropriate minister that the current transitional provisions using remoteness criteria for In Home Care (IHC) families, be modified to meet the needs of Geographically Isolated families where no other child care is available.”

Moved: Tammie Irons QLD SC on behalf of Capricornia Branch of the Air (QLD)
Seconded: Kelly Ostwald QLD State Council

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently, IHC recipients need to meet the ‘Remoteness ARIA index’ criteria in order to qualify for the rural and remote transitional provisions available until January 2020. This is quite different to the Assistance for Isolated Children Geographically Isolated criteria.

For example:

A family lives more than 80kms from their nearest child care service in Rockhampton and further than 55kms from the nearest community of Marlborough. They do not qualify under the Remoteness ARIA index, some other families living many kms away from child care would also not qualify. By contrast a family living within the town of Marlborough with access to amenities and the local school there, would qualify according to the ARIA index. By using this ARIA index, Geographically Isolated (GI) families (designated as GI under the criteria for Allowance for Isolated Children, AIC) requiring child care in any form cannot access it. IHC is not currently meeting the requirement needs for these families.

M30 (A43) Capricornia Branch of the Air (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) requests the appropriate minister that the qualification requirements for in Home Care (IHC) educators be expanded so that educators caring for school-aged children may have a minimum of school-aged child care qualifications according to each state, and not ECEC Cert III minimum unless caring specifically for under school-aged children."

Moved: Kelly Ostwald QLD SC on behalf of Capricornia Branch of the Air (QLD)
Seconded: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED**Explanation:**

IHC provision is for all children aged 0–13 years, and yet the eligibility criteria for educators is targeted only at 0-5 year olds. Where the provision of care is for school-aged children an appropriate equivalent qualification should be eligible. It is almost impossible to find Educators for remote families for many compounding reasons (to name a few: remote location and loneliness, criteria for qualifications, transport limitations, communication/IT limitations, suitability to environment). This inappropriate qualification criteria makes it nearly impossible to find the 'right' person to care for older children.

M31 (A44) Belyando/Mt Coolon Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Education for the In Home Care Scheme to include the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)'s list of "Approved qualifications for educators working with over preschool age children" as acceptable qualifications (or working towards) for educators employed for "outside school hours care" services."

Moved: Christy Moller Clermont Branch (QLD) for Belyando/Mt Coolon Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Kasie Scott Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED**Explanation:**

Currently the In home care National Guidelines say, a Certificate III, a diploma or a degree in Early Childhood Education or equivalent qualifications that have a major focus on Early Childhood Education are acceptable qualifications. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), maintains a current list of qualifications approved under the NQF on its website, with these qualifications being deemed acceptable qualifications for IHC educators.

Although due to the unique situation of child care requirements and lack of access for rural and remote families IHC educators are not simply employed for Early Childhood Care Services. Many families have school aged children and require IHC educators for "Outside School Hours Care" service. These educators may have qualifications or be working towards qualifications of particular interest to them in the area of Education and Care (e.g. Teacher Aide, Speech, Learning Support, etc) within "over preschool aged children", however they do not comply with the IHC requirements of "Early Childhood Education" and therefore are not suitable candidates for employment.

ACECQA also maintains a list of "Approved qualifications for educators working with over preschool age children" (e.g. outside school hours care). We would see it beneficial for both families and educators if the IHC national guidelines included this list as acceptable qualifications for IHC educators being employed as "Outside School Hours Care" educators. These families would have broader employee candidates and educators are able to study their area of interest not forced "Early Childhood Care".

M32 (A45) New South Wales State Council (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) requests that the Minister for Education change the age criteria of In home care from 0–12 years in primary school, to 0–15 into secondary school."

Moved: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW)
Seconded: Deb Castle NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

As a result of the continuing drought and thereafter years of recovery families have had to make the decision to keep their children home to complete the beginning of their high school years via Distance Education instead of going off to Boarding school, as the economic conditions rapidly deteriorate for many of our rural and remote families.

Due to both parents being required out in the paddock at all sorts of times or working off farm to earn extra income, the continuance of In home care to enable the children to have the supervision and support of an Educator in an otherwise isolated location is vital.

Children aged between 12 and 15 still require some supervision, especially if at home alone in a remote location. The extension of In home care to this age group would enable parents to continue working out on the farm or off farm without neglecting their child's wellbeing.

M33 (A46) Belyando/Mt Coolon Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister of Education for the In Home Care Scheme to allow educators who are actively studying Early Childhood Education qualifications to complete a heavily weighted percentage of their compulsory practical placement hours in their current position as an Early Child Care Educator at their place of employment."

Moved: Christy Moller Clermont Branch (QLD) for Belyando/Mt Coolon Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Kasie Scott Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The "In Home Care National Guidelines" state that IHC educators are required to have a minimum Certificate III level qualification or be working towards a Certificate III qualification. For those educators actively studying an Early Childhood Education qualification they are required to complete several practical placement hours in an Early Childhood Service as part of the qualification process.

Given that, Rural and Remote families have no alternative Child Care services available, what does the family do for child care while their current educator is away attending practical placement hours? Especially when the practicum period is being extended from 120 hours to 160 hours, of which only 40 hours can be completed in the IHC workplace. With the increase to 160 hours, this 40 hour IHC workplace allowance still does not minimise the disturbance and stress to the family's child care requirements and/or the need for substitute/relief Child Care educators during that time the educator is away, as they still have to complete the original 120 hours (3 or more weeks) outside of their place of employment.

Introduction of Candidates for Federal Council

Farewell to Federal Councillor Mrs Caroline Robinson

Mrs Christie Goddard

Conference Arrangements

Mrs Katrina Morris

5:31pm Close of Business Day 1

DAY TWO Thursday 1st August 2019

AGM

AGM declared open at 8:29am

Introduction of Delegates and Branch Observers

Check is made to ensure everyone has their voting cards

Mrs Suzanne Wilson

Annual General Meeting

Treasurer's Report

Mrs Lisa Slade

AGM Motions

Introduction School Corporate Membership

M34 A77. ICPA Federal Council

"That ICPA (Aust) introduces a school corporate membership category to facilitate the membership needs of some school organisations."

Moved: Suzanne Wilson

Federal Council

Seconded: Christie Goddard

Federal Council

CARRIED

Explanation:

ICPA (Aust) welcomes school interest in the issues and concerns of our members and supports schools becoming members of ICPA. Since the establishment of Federal Corporate Membership, a few schools have requested to join ICPA at the corporate level. Corporate Membership was originally introduced to offer a means of membership to national organisations/bodies who wish to receive publications from all states in order to keep abreast of issues for our members across the various states. Some schools have students from several states and also wish to receive material from all states. ICPA (Aust) offers School Corporate Membership (SCM) as a means of meeting the needs of those schools who wish to receive publications from all states while retaining membership of their State Lone member Branch.

Schools are not obligated to be a School Corporate Member (SCM). Schools can join/continue as members of ICPA as ordinary members or members of a Lone Branch. In states that have a "Friends of ICPA" category, a school can continue to be a Friend of ICPA if they prefer. The School Corporate Membership category would allow those schools wishing to have a corporate membership and receive all state and federal publications the type of membership they are requesting while allowing other schools to continue their membership unaffected.

Schools are valuable members of a number of the ICPA Lone and other Branches and the offering of School Corporate Membership will not lessen this important involvement. As it is proposed, School Corporate Members would be noted as School Corporate Members, receive all state and federal publications, and in addition, they will also remain/become members of the Lone Branch (or another Branch if they request) in the state in which they are located. States would gain/keep a member in their Lone (or other Branch) with each School Corporate Member. The three tier membership will be distributed to Federal Council and the relevant State Council/Branch for any school that becomes a School Corporate Member, along with respective publication fees paid to each state to cover the cost of publications for School Corporate Members.

Schools can choose annually which category of membership they wish to renew for the upcoming membership year.

The School Corporate Membership fee, reviewed annually, will be set at an amount that covers the Lone Branch membership fee to be paid to each state and the cost of the state and federal publications being received.

Constitution and By-Laws Change Motions

M35 (A78) ICPA Federal Council

“That the amended sections of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution updated May 2019, as circulated, be adopted.”

Moved: Suzanne Wilson Federal Council
Seconded: Christie Goddard Federal Council

CARRIED

Explanation:

Amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution include several small edits and the introduction of School Corporate Membership.

M36 (A79) ICPA Federal Council

“That the amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) By-Laws updated 22 May 2019, as circulated, be ratified along with an additional amendment made to By-Law 8 School Corporate Membership which reads:

‘Rule 6. A school may be an ordinary member of a Branch or Lone Branch and is not required to be a School Corporate Member.’”

Moved: Suzanne Wilson Federal Council
Seconded: Christie Goddard Federal Council

CARRIED

Explanation:

Federal Council has adopted a number of changes and added several new By-Laws in order to assist with administrative and purposeful procedures essential to the effective running of the organisation.

Federal Council now presents the following changes for ratification.

The following By-Laws have been updated:

- By-Law 4 (Use of the ICPA logo)
- By-Law 5 (Branch Dissolutions, Recess and Closures)
- By-Law 6 (Payment of Subscriptions for Branch and State Life Members) and
- By-Law 7 (Federal Corporate Membership)

New By-Laws include:

- By-Law 8 (School Corporate Membership) with noted addition:
6. A school may be an ordinary member of a Branch or Lone Branch and is not required to be a School Corporate Member.

Setting of the 2020 Membership Fees

M37 (A80) ICPA Federal Council

“That the Federal membership fee remains at \$22.00 per member family.”

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council
Seconded: Christie Goddard Federal Council

CARRIED

M38 (A81) ICPA Federal Council

“That Federal Corporate Membership be set at \$275.00 per organisation.”

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council
Seconded: Christie Goddard Federal Council

CARRIED

M39 (A82) ICPA Federal Council

“That School Corporate Membership be set at \$275.00 per school member.”

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council
Seconded: Christie Goddard Federal Council

CARRIED

Appointment of Auditor

M40 (A83) ICPA Federal Council

“That D G Murdock, as consultant for RJC Evans and Co. Adelaide, be appointed as auditor for the 2019 – 2020 financial year.”

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council
Seconded: Christie Goddard Federal Council

CARRIED

Adoption of Financial Statements

M41 (A84) ICPA Federal Council

“That the 2018-2019 Audited Report and the 2018-2019 Regional Student Engagement Strategy 2016 – 2019 Grant Acquittal Audited Report be received and accepted.”

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council
Seconded: Christie Goddard Federal Council

CARRIED

Election of Federal Council 2019 - 2020

All positions declared vacant and the Returning Officer Mrs Roxanne Morrissey, ICPA Federal Life Member, took the chair.

President	Alana Moller Nominated: Lisa Slade Seconded: Suzanne Wilson	Flinders Ranges Branch SA NT Lone Branch NT DULY ELECTED
Vice President	Sally Sullivan Nominated: Lisa Slade Seconded: Alana Moller	Flinders Ranges Branch SA Clermont Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
Secretary	Suzanne Wilson Nominated: Alana Moller Seconded: Jane O’Brien	Clermont Branch QLD Walgett Branch NSW DULY ELECTED
Assistant Secretary	Kate Thompson Nominated: Jane O’Brien Seconded: Diane Skene	Walgett Branch NSW Kindon Branch QLD DULY ELECTED

48th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Treasurer	Lisa Slade Nominated: Alana Moller Seconded: Suzanne Wilson	Clermont Branch QLD NT Lone Branch NT DULY ELECTED
Publicity Officer	Hamish Griffin Nominated: Nikki Macqueen Seconded: Jane O'Brien	Kindon Branch QLD Walgett Branch NSW DULY ELECTED
Ex-Officio Immediate Past President	Wendy Hick	
COMMITTEE	Jane O'Brien Nominated: Wendy Hick Seconded: Judy Sinclair-Newton	Mt Isa BOTA QLD Walgett Branch NSW DULY ELECTED
	Jane Morton Nominated: Kate Thompson Seconded: Suzanne Wilson	Midlands Branch TAS NT Lone Branch NT DULY ELECTED
	Nikki Macqueen Nominated: Diane Skene Seconded: Kristen Coggan	Kindon Branch QLD Western Downs QLD DULY ELECTED
	Christie Goddard Nominated: Nikki Macqueen Seconded: Alana Moller	Kindon Branch QLD Clermont Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
	Di Skene Nominated: Kate Thompson Seconded: Nikki Macqueen	Midlands Branch TAS Kindon Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
	Kristen Coggan Nominated: Nikki Macqueen Seconded: Diane Skene	Kindon Branch QLD Kindon Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
	Briony Sinclair Nominated: Miranda Ronnfeldt Seconded: Kristen Coggan	Western Downs QLD Western Downs QLD DULY ELECTED
	Jo Camilleri Nominated: Constance Wood Seconded: Nikki Macqueen	Kimberley Air Branch WA Kindon Branch QLD DULY ELECTED

Pinning of Councillor badges – Alana Moller, Kate Thompson, Hamish Griffin, Briony Sinclair, Jo Camilleri

Vote of thanks to Roxanne Morrissey as returning Officer

Video Presentation – Highlighting the sights of Tasmania

AGM Motions – continued

Conference Venue Motions

M42 (A85) ICPA Federal Council

“That ICPA (Aust) hosts the 2020 Federal Conference in Hobart, Tasmania on 5-6 August 2020.”

Moved: Suzanne Wilson Federal Council

Seconded: Christie Goddard Federal Council

CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

M43 (A86) Queensland State Council (Qld)

“That ICPA Queensland hosts the 2021 Federal Conference in Queensland.”

Moved: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Wendy Henning QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

ICPA Web Manager Report

Mrs Sue Shotton

Call for any other AGM Business. Nil

Vote of thanks to outgoing council and well wishes to new council

Mrs Wendy Hick

9:27am AGM Closes

9:32am Conference Commences

Welcome to Day Two by Elke Kerin, North Well Station SA

Conference Arrangements

Mrs Katrina Morris

Introduction of Guests

Mrs Suzanne Wilson

Miscellaneous Agenda Motion

M44 (A76) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That the location of Federal Conference be the decision of the hosting State in consultation with the ICPA (Aust) Federal Executive.”

Word Change Tammie Irons, QLD State Council, requested Conference permission for a word change, insert the words ‘proposed’ ‘joint’ ‘and’ ‘Council’ and remove the words ‘in consultation with’ ‘Executive’.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

“That the proposed location of Federal Conference be the joint decision of the hosting State and the ICPA (Aust) Federal Council.”

Moved: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Wendy Henning QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

There needs to be flexibility and understanding to allow each state to decide on the best location to host a Federal Conference and not be restricted to only being in a major city. More freedom in the

decision allows a more 'personalised feel' to Conferences and ensures the "I" in ICPA is at the forefront of attendees' minds whether they are a Member, Politician, School Representative or Departmental Guest and why don't we think of the 'A' as "adventure."

An example of this would be to host the 50th Annual Conference at a location that is at the heart and soul of ICPA at the beginning, now and into the future. We need to keep in our minds that Australia is a big country. Adelaide is a capital city; however, some members have still had to have 3 flights to get here. We need to be able to have the flexibility to of being able to go to the home of ICPA.

The hosting of a conference in a major centre does not always ensure the best cost effectiveness with venues, catering and accommodation nor does it guarantee attendance from invited guests.

Presentation – "A National Approach to Food and Fibre Education"
CEO, Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA)

Mr Ben Stockwin

Curriculum Agenda Motions

M45 (A36) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) reinforces the importance to the Minister for Education and other relevant ministers, to recognise and continue to support Food and Fibre being taught and integrated into the primary and secondary school curriculum."

Moved: Ley Fitzpatrick Alice Springs Branch (NT)
Seconded: Katherine Warby Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

As there are no strong agriculture programs being carried out in Northern Territory schools, it would be appealing to families to enrol their children in NT boarding schools if this was more on hand. There are many topics that fall under the Agriculture heading and members would like to ensure that a broad range of agricultural learnings are implemented when teachers cover Agriculture in their classes. e.g. livestock, cropping, sustainable land management, horticulture, conservation, preservation etc. Whilst Alice Springs School of the Air (ASSOA) and some primary schools include gardening, seed germination and vegetable gardens as a subject/project Agricultural Topics could be more intense, especially in senior years e.g. if Livestock, Aquaculture, Sustainable Land Management, Horticulture, and other Industries that fall under the Agriculture banner were recognised and were also on offer as part of the school curriculum; such as National Park Rangers and Landcare groups. This could possibly mean less families travelling interstate for boarding schools to meet certain children's interests and understanding of the link between education and agriculture / land management.

M46 (A37) Tambo Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers to ensure that all sectors of Agriculture Production are taught in classrooms."

Moved: Louise Martin Tambo Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Kim Hughes Richmond Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

For too long now the agriculture component in the curriculum has been focused on limited aspects of agriculture. Whilst it is important to teach students about the environment there is a much bigger picture at play. It is extremely worrying that our urban students are not being educated in the fields of animal husbandry, production and cropping for example. There are too many students who do not

know where eggs come from, milk etc. and how do you grow a carrot or a cotton crop. Rural and remote students are also disadvantaged as they only have the knowledge of what happens at home and nothing in a broader sense.

It is disappointing to see so many young people protesting, tying themselves to abattoirs, going on strike and causing great upset due to ignorance and being indoctrinated by the education system.

Northern Territory ICPA President's Report

Mrs Sarah Cook

10:38am Morning Tea

11:09am Conference Resumes

New South Wales ICPA President's Report

Mrs Claire Butler

Presentation – "Communicating with a Teenager"

Ms Hayley Hall

Director of Boarding, Seymour College, Adelaide SA

Boarding School/School Term Hostels Agenda Motions

M47 (A1) Pilbara Branch (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby both the Minister for Families and Social Services and the Minister for Education for a substantial increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance to take into account the ever-increasing gap between the allowance and the true cost of boarding."

Moved: Abbra Slocombe

Pilbara Branch (WA)

Seconded: Sandie McCombie

WA Lone Branch (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

When the AIC was initially introduced, it was to help alleviate the high costs associated with sending geographically isolated children to boarding school. Since then the gap between the allowance received by families and the true cost of boarding has drastically widened especially since the Western Australian Government is now decreasing the State Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) by 37% over five years from 2018. On average boarding facilities increase their fees by 4-8% per annum, which is supported by research undertaken by ICPA (Aust) into the costs of boarding. Our members feel very strongly about this issue and feel the Government has lost touch with the educational needs of rural and remote families.

M48 (A2) Western Australia State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby both the Minister for Families and Social Services and the Minister for Education for a vital increase to the Federal allowance; Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance, to help alleviate the financial pressure families are faced with due to increased fees by boarding schools and hostels."

Moved: Tash Johns

WA State Council (WA)

Seconded: Sally Brindal

WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

An increase in the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance would relieve some of the burden placed on families to pay for their children’s education. WA State Council would like to thank Federal Council for their continued work lobbying the Federal Government for an increase to the Basic Boarding Allowance. The Western Australian State Government announced last September that they would decrease the much relied upon state funded Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) over the next 5 years. This will now see the allowance fall from \$2105 in 2017, to \$1320 in 2022. This WA allowance has not increased since 2010, when the allowance was increased from \$1320 to \$2105. Many families will feel the impact of the reduction to the BAHA with increased financial pressure placed on families. While some states have seen an increase in their state allowances, WA has had a severe reduction and still other states offer no state assistance at all. Rural and remote families should have consistency and be assisted equally.

M49 (A3) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Families and Social Services and the Minister for Education for an increase in the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance to more closely reflect the increased cost to families with children who must board away from home to attend school.”

Moved: Katherine Warby Alice Springs Branch (NT)
Seconded: Ley Fitzpatrick Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Boarding fees are rising every year and the AIC is not keeping up with these rising fees. The AIC allowance needs to be updated constantly to reflect the increasing financial burden being placed on isolated families to educate their children. We are aware that the AIC allowance is indexed to the CPI, which allows for a small increase each year. However, this increase is nowhere near the actual increase of boarding school fees. This results in a gap between the allowance and the real costs of educating isolated students.

M50 (A4) Louth Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Families and Social Services and the Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management to substantially increase the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance for secondary students for the duration of the drought and the consequent recovery period.”

WORD CHANGE Gabie Le Lievre, Louth Branch NSW, requested Conferences permission for a word change, to remove the words “for secondary students”.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Families and Social Services and the Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management to substantially increase the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance for the duration of the drought and the consequent recovery period.”

Moved: Gabie Le Lievre Louth Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Bree Wakefield Wentworth Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Drought packages released by the Government should include an educational component to assist families affected by drought to maintain the current level of educating their children. For families living in drought affected areas, education costs for many, on top of the crippling costs associated with drought i.e. feeding stock/purchasing water, are causing additional financial hardships

and as a consequence of this many families have no choice than to keep their children home for Distance Education rather than sending them away to boarding school.

For those families managing to keep their children at boarding school they are doing so at great financial hardship.

An increase in the AIC needs to be implemented immediately as this would greatly assist those isolated families struggling to give their children equal access to education.

Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio Report

Mrs Di Skene

Rural Schools and School Travel Agenda Motions

M51 (A54) Moree Branch (NSW)

“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.”

Moved: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW) on behalf of Moree Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Ali Allison Broken Hill Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

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 utmost 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.

M52 (A55) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“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.”

Moved: Ley Fitzpatrick Alice Springs Branch (NT)
Seconded: Katherine Warby Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

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.

M53 (A56) Pilbara Branch (WA)

"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."

Moved: Abbra Slocombe Pilbara Branch (WA)
Seconded: Sandie McCombie WA Lone Branch (WA)

CARRIED

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.

M54 (A57) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“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.”

Moved: Tash Johns WA State Council (WA)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

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.

Presentation – The Wealth Academy

Mr Ken Swan

Conference Arrangements

Mrs Katrina Morris

12:40pm Lunch

1:20pm Conference Resumes

Early Childhood Education and Care – Child Care – Agenda Motions (cont.)

M55 (A47) Dirranbandi Branch (Qld)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Minister for Education to acknowledge and respond to the significant barriers to provision of, and access to early childhood services, specifically long day care and Kindergarten, in rural and remote areas.”

Moved: Kate Bradshaw Winton Branch (QLD) on behalf of Dirranbandi Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Louise Martin Tambo Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

These barriers have been identified by families, early childhood providers, and professionals: the difficulty of obtaining qualified staff, viability of services where numbers are low, cost of long day care to disadvantaged families and low attendance because of lack of transport.

ICPA would seek to address these barriers through:

- Waiving the high level of qualifications required for long day care service managers where the numbers are small
- Providing financial incentives and support for people living in rural and remote areas to obtain qualifications, including support for accommodation and travel for practical work and residential training
- Accepting a flexible approach to achieving the required qualifications including a longer timeline for this

- Providing a more flexible approach to the application of ratios, for example through allowing mixed age groups in a variety of ways, to enhance viability for providers
- Subsidisation for providers who are willing to set up services in rural and remote areas to meet the needs of isolated families through a Remote Area Allowance
- Subsidisation of fees for disadvantaged families in rural and remote areas, through increased Child Care Subsidy payments, as these are the children who are most likely to gain long term benefits from such a program and these are the communities where economic and social outcomes will be achieved.
- Develop ways that providers in rural and remote areas can encourage and support attendance at long day care centres through the provision of local transport.

M56 (A48) Hillston Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Australian Government to reassess the funding to Long Day Care Centres in rural and remote communities that act as the only access to preschool programs for 3-5-year-olds.”

Moved: Laura Stalley Hillston Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

In rural towns where a preschool is not viable, we have Long Day Care Centres. These centres must follow the same Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) as the preschools and are struggling to both stay afloat and find qualified staff.

As with all small communities, child care is a major factor with young families who are looking to live or relocate into rural areas. Birth rates fluctuate and, during dry times, as we are currently experiencing, utilisation rates decrease. During these times when centres are running at a loss, they need to turn to the community to support them through fundraising but the amount of fundraising possible is limited in small communities.

In Hillston, we struggle to find quality trained staff, especially early childhood teachers, as most qualified teachers prefer to go to schools as they are employed for school hours at a higher rate. Long Day Care Centres already struggling to stay afloat are unable to pay the same rate or are only able to employ teachers for the minimum number of hours.

In rural and remote areas there are often great distances for the children to travel to access the Long Day Care Centres. As preschool children are not allowed to travel on School buses, it means that some children are not able to access preschool programs or are only able to attend the centre one day a week due to the extra travelling costs involved. This in turn affects the utilisation rates of the centres. Reassessment of funding to Long Day Care Centres in rural and remote communities is necessary to allow all children in these areas to access this service. If these centres are lost to the communities the children will suffer!!

M57 (S4) Clermont Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Education for an extension to the transitional provisions for In Home Care Educators in rural and remote areas to address the lack of qualified Early Childhood Educators available in those areas in line with the recent extensions approved for Early Childhood Teachers.”

Moved: Kasie Scott Clermont Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Christy Moller Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The recent announcement that some of the transitional provisions would be extended for rural and remote child care teachers is an acknowledgement of the difficulties with finding suitably qualified staff in these areas and this should be extended to the IHC Educator requirements.

Finding suitable Educators to employ for remote families is becoming increasingly difficult. The unique environment in which both employee and employer live and work, is not always an easy one to adjust to for someone relocating to the outback. From 2 July 2018, rural and remote families have been given two transitional concessions to help them access IHC educators until Jan 2020; however, after that educators need to be working towards or have a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). With the new guidelines for qualifications in place, it is and will become even more difficult for those in remote areas to find suitable educators for their families.

M58 (S5) Clermont Branch (Qld)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Education to consider a grace period for In Home Care Educators working in remote areas before they are required to undertake the qualification requirements currently to be implemented in January 2020.”

Moved: Kasie Scott Clermont Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Christy Moller Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Finding suitable educators to employ for rural and remote families is becoming increasingly difficult all the time. The unique environment in which both the employee and employer live and work, is not always an easy one to adjust to for someone relocating to the outback. Quite often, taking on a job as an In Home Educator is not the ‘Sea Change’ that some girls are looking for even though they may initially think it is. In many instances there are issues with educators only realising their unsuitability to this environment after they have arrived and wasted quite a lot of time enrolling in the relevant courses. These ‘false’ starts are stressful for the children involved and the entire family; they also have ramifications for the educator. If there was a grace period, in which the educator could work for the family before having to undertake any study requirements to ensure they are suited to the position, this would avoid some of these false starts.

Early Childhood Education and Care – Mobile Early Childhood Services – Agenda Motions

M59 (A49) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates for funding both in the expansion of new Mobile Early Childhood Services and the continuation of these services for all geographically isolated children.”

Moved: Rebecca Cadzow NT State Council (NT)
Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Early childhood development is increasingly recognised as a key predictor of future outcomes for children. Research has shown that investing time, effort and resources in the early years of a child’s life has significant impacts on their behaviour, learning, health and wellbeing, as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

Mobile playgroups are equipped to service isolated children, however isolated children in some states have no access to early childhood services at all. For example, in the NT there are two mobile playgroups. Both service the top end, neither reach the lower half of the Territory. In the lower half

of the Territory, remote Aboriginal communities receive playgroup services but isolated children outside of these communities have no access to a mobile playgroup service at all.

In the Northern Territory, in our discussions with the Territory Government, we have not been able to identify state government funding for such services. We understand the existing services are funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services or Prime Minister and Cabinet. We appeal to all governments to fund early childhood programs that reach all isolated children.

M60 (A50) Katherine Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate for sufficient funding for the continuation of rural and remote mobile Early Childhood Services under new funding models.”

Moved: Kerrie Scott Katherine Branch (NT)
Seconded: Amanda Murphy Katherine Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The Katherine Isolated Children’s Services (KICS) has been operating since 1988 and is a highly regarded provider of supported playgroups for children who are socially or geographically isolated, employing a mix of Early Childhood Teachers and experienced staff and covering 760,000 sq km of the Katherine Region, NT. In 2018, KICS transitioned to being funded through the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC) Office through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) funding stream. Funding has become uncertain and inadequate with the contracts due for renewal in December 2019.

Organisations such as KICS must be able to continue to operate and to be funded at levels commensurate with their needs.

Early Childhood Education and Care – Other – Agenda Motions

M61 (A51) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Minister for Education to create a standalone Rural and Remote Early Childhood Branch that encompasses all areas of child care and child care funding.”

Moved: Tammie Irons QLD State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Wendy Henning QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Presently, Playgroups, Mobile Playgroups, In Home Care, Preschool and Day Care are all administered and funded by different Departments within the Government creating confusion and time delays. Having a standalone Rural and Remote Early Childhood Branch would create greater access to information, funding and care for providers and families.

M62 (A52) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government, and supports each State ICPA organisation with their lobbying, to implement a nationally recognised and administered Working with Children Check (WWCC).”

Moved: Tash Johns WA State Council (WA)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

WA State Council fully support the implementation of a nationally administered police clearance, specifically for children and thank Federal Council for their continued lobbying on this issue. Currently a person who wishes to obtain a WWCC for work purposes, are checked nationally, then it is administered at a state level. Employees that move interstate and who already hold a WWCC from the previous state they were working in, are expected to reapply for a WWCC in the new state they are applying for employment in. This process causes lengthy delays in employing staff of up to eight weeks, causing disruptions to students and families.

M63 (A53) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, and the Minister of Education to continue working with other states and territories to speed up implementation of a nationally consistent approach to Working with Children Checks (WWCC) including mutual recognition across the board.”

Moved: Ley Fitzpatrick Alice Springs Branch (NT)

Seconded: Katherine Warby Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

It is reported that a backlog of Ochre Card applications at the beginning of 2019 is causing problems throughout the NT schools, including the Alice Springs School of the Air (ASSOA). This backlog has been confirmed with SAFE NT, who says that one of the factors for the backlog is implementation of the National scheme, which is causing teething issues and more work in the short term. However, they say, once it is implemented properly it will save time and streamline the process. Anything to streamline and reduce the complexity of WWCCs will be helpful. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse’s “Working with Children Checks Report” 2015 (WWCC Report) states: “A national approach to WWCCs would help to facilitate compliance with WWCC laws by streamlining and reducing the complexity of the current schemes” (p.50).

A nationally consistent approach will be better at protecting children. “We are of the view that the level of protection children receive from WWCCs will be equalised and enhanced across all jurisdictions if these benefits are realised and a nationally consistent approach is achieved” (WWCC Report, p.48) Staff of ASSOA also work across state and territory borders, so mutual recognition of WWCCs across borders would be helpful. Additionally, across the territory, when teachers, governesses and other staff who work with children are recruited from interstate it would be helpful for them not to have to apply for an Ochre Card if they have a nationally recognised WWCC from another state or territory. This would allow them to commence work in the Territory without unnecessary delay upon arrival. This has been confirmed by SAFE NT, who state that once the national scheme is completed, interstate recruits would not have to apply for an Ochre Card immediately, but only once their current card expired.

The WWCC Report also states:

“We are of the view that implementing a combination of the models outlined above is needed to achieve an adequate national approach to WWCCs. This will harmonise the WWCC schemes, better integrate the eight schemes, improve information sharing, improve portability and enhance continuous monitoring. To achieve this national model, we have recommended that state and territory governments amend their schemes to include consistent standards across key aspects of the schemes and allow WWCCs to be portable. Further, we have recommended that the Commonwealth Government facilitate and manage a national model for WWCCs by establishing and operating a centralised database; streamlining the recording of WWCC decisions, ensuring they are visible and

accessible to all jurisdictions; and improving the continuous monitoring of WWCC cardholders' national criminal history." (p.55)

Reference:

https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_working_with_children_checks_report.pdf

Specific Education Needs Agenda Motions

M64 (A58) Kindon Branch (QLD) CARRIED

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Health and Federal Treasurer to extend the Medicare rebate to include patients wishing to access speech pathology and paediatrician appointments through telehealth deliveries."

Moved: Daryl Martin Kindon Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Mandy Martin Kindon Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently Medicare rebates for telehealth are available for patients accessing a variety of specialist appointments when they live in rural and remote Australia. These include mental health services, psychologists, occupational therapy and social workers. Unfortunately, speech pathologists and paediatricians are not included on this list and we believe that these are vital services that many rural and remote students access via telehealth and a Medicare rebate should be allocated. Making these appointments more accessible through a telehealth option keeps families in their home town and children in school instead of incurring the costs of travel and accommodation to attend sessions.

Research has proven that speech pathology is just as effective via telehealth as one on one sessions. The government would do well to remember a dollar spent now on early intervention for children with specific education needs could well save thousands of dollars in health care in later years. Firstly, because education is the greatest predictor of health, but also because lesser education will affect employability.

CASE STUDY

We live in a rural area, a 1.5 hour-drive from Toowoomba, 3 hour-drive from Brisbane. Three of our four children have special needs.

Our 5-year-old son requires speech therapy which I would like to access through an online service. Medicare does not cover online speech therapy at the moment. We've applied for an NDIS plan which could fund these therapies. However, this process has taken months and is still not finalized. Furthermore, my understanding is that to be eligible for an NDIS plan, the child must have multiple needs/delays. Therefore, if my son were to just need speech therapy, he would not be able to access NDIS funding for this therapy online. Neither NDIS nor patient travel schemes will cover travel and accommodation for specific education needs either. So, we are caught between a rock and a hard place.

Our 10-year-old daughter is seeing a Developmental Paediatrician, in Brisbane - the closest city that offers this service. We just made an appointment to have a follow up "teleconference appointment" with the paediatrician for next week. The paediatrician's office told me that there would be a \$57 charge for the telehealth appointment that would not be covered by Medicare.

Our 5-month-old daughter, diagnosed with Down syndrome, has an approved NDIS plan and has a need for occupational therapy, speech (for feeding issues) and physiotherapy. Very few therapists are able to come out to our home. Therefore, we are traveling to Toowoomba for the various therapies. The travel costs for the various "NDIS-funded therapies" are not covered by NDIS nor Medicare. These are NDIS-funded therapies and it's our travel costs (not the therapist's) that are not covered by NDIS nor Medicare. We hope to eventually be able to access some of these therapies via Telehealth, however in-person therapy is more suitable at this young age. Again, Medicare rebates for appropriate telehealth consultations would be very helpful for our family.

Tertiary and Training Portfolio Report

Mrs Kate Thompson

Tertiary and Training – Access Allowance – Agenda Motions

M65 (A59) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Families and Social Services for the introduction of a Tertiary Access Allowance (TAA) to enable rural and remote students to attend a tertiary institution of their choosing and have the financial ability to successfully complete their studies.”

Moved: Tash Johns WA State Council (WA)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

WA State Council acknowledges and thanks Federal Council for its continued lobbying for the establishment of a Tertiary Access Allowance and their efforts at aligning this with the Relocation Scholarship which is primarily targeted towards dependent students on the basis that they are relocating temporarily away from home, and their parents assist with support while living away from the parental home. Tertiary education should be available and accessed by all students throughout Australia. As well as living away from the family home, the added costs such as relocation, travel, accommodation and living costs incurred on rural and remote students to access their chosen course, severely reduces the equality of opportunity compared to metropolitan students. Having access to this allowance would give a student financial assistance independently of their parents' income and would help increase rural student numbers that are currently grossly under-represented.

M66 (A60) Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Education and Minister for Families and Social Services to introduce a tertiary equity allowance for those students who need to live away from the family home to access tertiary education and who are not eligible for the Relocation Scholarship.”

Moved: Claire Butler NSW State Council on behalf of Moree Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Deb Castle NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently only recipients of dependent Youth Allowance are eligible for the Relocation Scholarship although some independent Youth Allowance recipients with special circumstances are also eligible. This is inequitable as all students who need to move away from home to access tertiary education incur the same costs. The government cannot simply say that just because a student has worked hard to qualify for independent Youth Allowance, they are deemed to have already moved out of the family home and cannot therefore relocate. It is very simple to find the family home address of an independent Youth Allowance recipient. It has to be recorded on the Youth Allowance application to prove that the address is in an inner regional, outer regional, remote or very remote area and to prove

that the student lives more than 90 minutes away by public transport from the tertiary institution of their choice.

M67 (A61) Bourke Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) urges relevant Federal Ministers to change the criteria of the Relocation Scholarship so that students from remote and rural areas, who are not eligible to receive other student allowances, still receive the Relocation Scholarship if they are leaving home to study the year after completing Year 12.”

Moved: Tanya Mitchell Bourke Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Prue Ritchie Bourke Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The meaning of relocate is “to move or to establish in a new place”. Regardless of whether a student is eligible to receive certain student allowances, they are still relocating. This scholarship was established to ensure students who had to undergo a process of relocation would not have the unfair financial burden of a move compared to those who are able to live and study from their family home. It would actually appear less just as they are not only unable to access Youth Allowance but are also ineligible for the Relocation Scholarship.

Boarding School/School Term Hostels Agenda Motions

M68 (A5) New South Wales/Victoria Lone Members (NSW/VIC)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Families and Social Services and the Minister for Education for an increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Second Home Allowance to more closely reflect the rising costs of living associated with educating isolated students in a second home.”

Moved: Heather Whigham-Reid NSW/VIC Lone Branch (NSW/VIC)
Seconded: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Some geographically isolated families find it necessary to establish a second home to access schooling for their children. Educating children in a second home means two of almost everything for each child AND the second home parent. Living costs continue to rise. Incomes for geographically isolated families are comparatively low and some farming families are facing years of negative income as a result of drought. We call for ongoing increases in the Second Home AIC Allowance to allow rural and remote families to continue to access education for our children.

M69 (A9) New South Wales/Victoria Lone Members (NSW/VIC)

“That ICPA (Aust) works with the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) and other relevant organisations to ensure that the tuition component of school fees charged to rural, remote and isolated students are affordable for all of their families.”

Moved: Heather Whigham-Reid NSW/VIC Lone Branch (NSW/VIC)
Seconded: Deb Castle NSW State Council (NSW)

LOST

Explanation:

In NSW, over the past six years, fees at private schools have gone up by more than 25 per cent. The CPI has risen 9.1% in that time. At the same time, we are battling floods and drought and reduced incomes with the very resilience that our children bring and use to contribute to their school activities, making them valued members of those school communities.

A solution would include ABSA working with the ICPA to develop guidelines for school policies for bursaries and scholarships and their implementation. The policy for awarding bursaries and scholarships should be applied fairly and equitably to all rural and remote families across all non-government schools. They should be clearly stated in an easy to read form, which is comparable across schools. We ask that ABSA encourage its member schools to consider the hardships that rural, remote and isolated families are facing.

M70 (A10) New South Wales State Council (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Education to address the funding recommendations of the Socio-Economic Status Score Methodology proposed by the National School Resourcing Board Review, to ensure the ongoing viability of independent schools with a regional cohort.”

Moved: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW)
Seconded: Deb Castle NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Every child should be able to access the best possible education regardless of where they live and regardless of family income.

Independent boarding schools in Australia have a high percentage of rural and remote students and many of the regional boarding schools offer families an opportunity to board in areas geographically closer to home (this still might be 500 kilometres or more from home).

The National School Resourcing Review found that a direct measure of parental income is currently the most fit for purpose approach towards calculating a funding formula for independent schools. This will require data linkage of parental names and addresses with personal income tax data. The Government has agreed with these recommendations and plans to phase in arrangements for a direct measure over three years from 2020. By 2023 it is proposed that all schools will have funding calculated using the new direct measure.

The National School Resourcing Board proposes that the median household income of school families be used as a way of measuring parents “capacity to contribute” to the cost of education at independent schools. The Federal Government has accepted all 6 recommendations of the board, with a transition to implementation in 2020. ICPA-NSW has serious concerns about the viability of regional independent schools, because if the ‘working group’ decides to use gross income as a measure, it will reduce the funding to these schools.

For example, take into consideration a farming family that may have a six-figure gross income, yet because of the expenses of production, or drought, have little (or negative) net income. If the Gross income of families is taken into consideration it will show a highly inaccurate, inflated income average for parents at these schools and therefore funding will be negatively affected for many independent schools with a high regional rural and remote cohort of students.

Regional boarding schools already operate in the face of financial disadvantage imposed by distance. Reliable modelling is indicating that some regional independent schools would be forced to close under this regime, with consequent effects on regional employment and development. Underlying this is the fact that to compensate for the reduced funding and to avoid closure, some schools have indicated they will have to increase their fees by 20% per child.

The cost to an isolated family of boarding fees, transport, uniforms, books and extra-curricular activities can double the cost of educating a student at a non-government school. The need to provide

for boarding therefore clearly reduces a family's 'capacity to contribute'. The median gross household income model does not take into consideration that there may be multiple children from the one family boarding away. It is inequitable. ICPA-NSW believes that the scores will not accurately reflect the socio-economic status of the school community.

The funding formula needs to recognise the unique needs of rural remote and regional students whom have limited choice but to board away for secondary education.

ICPA-NSW believes that the Minister for Education should consider inviting ICPA (Aust) to be part of the working group so that rural boarding families and their unique situations are taken into account when finalising the formula.

Presentation – Connellan Airways Trust
Executive Officer

Ms Jessica Hackett

Guest Speaker – “Improving the health and wellbeing of rural Australians: the role of education”
Behavioral Scientist and Clinical Psychologist

Dr Kate Gunn

Conference reminded that floor motions are due

Rural Schools and School Travel Agenda Motions

M71 (A87) St George Branch (Qld)

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

Moved: Kate Twist Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch (QLD) on behalf of St George Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Sally Campbell Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

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.

Conference Arrangements

Mrs Katrina Morris

3:33pm Afternoon Tea

4:04pm Conference Resumes

Boarding School/School Term Hostels Agenda Motions

M72 (A6) Kindon Branch (Qld)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to have the distance requirements for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) eligibility to not be increased if reviewed in the future.”

Moved: Daryl Martin Kindon Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Mandy Martin Kindon Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Concern has been raised that if the AIC were reviewed the current criteria may change and we ask ICPA to strongly advocate for the current minimum distance criteria to not be increased.

M73 (A88) St George Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA Federal Council lobbies the Australian Government to upgrade the technology used for processing AIC to allow for completion of forms online to alleviate the problems faced each year with processing of payments and sending out of cancellation letters.”

Moved: Sally Campbell Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch (QLD) on behalf of St George Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Kate Twist Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch QLD

CARRIED

Explanation:

Each year there seems to be a continual problem with delay in payments or double payments to recipients, cancellation letters sent out automatically then families are then ringing in to check that their forms have been received and their payments are not being stopped. This not only adds extra stress to the families involved but must put an extra workload on to the staff in the AIC Office who have to deal with the deluge of phone calls from concerned and stressed families.

M74 (A11) North West Slopes Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to Government for equal boarding opportunities for rural and remote students.”

Moved: Geraldine Clark NW Slopes Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Juliana Orman NW Slopes Branch (NSW)

LOST

Explanation:

In the 21st Century, many from Rural and Remote areas of Australia are still missing out on the opportunity of a better education. This is for many reasons, but amongst those is the financial cost; and also access to a Government-run Boarding school within regional Australia. Research into Government (Agricultural) Boarding Schools/Facilities do not amount to very much, Australia wide. For instance, in NSW, we have Hurlstone (in South Sydney) and Yanco at Yanco (in the South of the state) which offer boarding to both boys and girls and in the North West there is Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School (MAHS), which offers day and boarding for boys, only. This is the extent of boarding options for our state, at a government school. There are a lot of Selective state high schools, however, that does not help families who do not live in the built-up, or major centres throughout Australia.

A lot of families are unable to get access to the AIC scheme Boarding allowance, and this can often be the difference between enabling a young student to get the opportunity of a better education, than a minimal one. With our changing times in Agriculture and many other industries, we need, as a country

to be more open to the fact that some of our best business minds are country kids and they are now heading up some major industries. To be able to give these young students with aspirations of a life on the land and beyond, the confidence to run such businesses is a gift that our government should not overlook, and something that we should pursue.

M75 (A12) Westmar-Inglestone Branch (Qld)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant minister to support employers wishing to assist with education expenses of children of employees who reside in geographically isolated areas, those eligible for current Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) funding, by removing the Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) on this assistance.”

Moved: Jen McCormack Westmar-Inglestone Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Fiona Hill Westmar-Inglestone Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Many employers/employees in remote, rural and regional areas find the secondary schooling of employee’s children financially challenging. Many families decide to leave their place of employment to educate their children, causing upheaval for both the employer and the employee. Many employers would like to assist with some of the costs associated with secondary schooling but are hit with the double whammy of the cost of the assistance as well as the burden of FBT. If this FBT burden was removed it would provide a greater incentive for employers to assist with schooling costs.

Rural and remote living is not for everyone. It is for the minority. The families that do so should be supported not penalised. Rural families help make up the communities in the bush and you will find no better evidence of community than in rural and remote Queensland. The removal of FBT would help sustain our small rural communities.

M76 (A13) Kimberley Air Branch (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to provide for boarding fees to be a tax-deductible expense for geographically isolated Australian families that are eligible for Assistance for Isolated Children.”

WORD CHANGE Constance Wood, Kimberly Air Branch requested Conference permission for a word change. Remove the word ‘remote’ and add ‘geographically isolated.’

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to provide for boarding fees to be a tax-deductible expense for geographically isolated Australian families that are eligible for Assistance for Isolated Children.”

Moved: Constance Wood Kimberley Air Branch (WA)
Seconded: Jo Camilleri Kimberley Air Branch (WA)

LOST

Explanation:

There is no argument that our remote families are in desperate need for further financial assistance in educating our children. Providing tax-deductible education zones in remote Australia would have very minimal effect on the Federal budget overall yet create significant assistance to our already struggling remote families. With the current push to provide for a tax free special economic zone in the North of Australia, we believe the timing is right to re-ignite the tax reform debate and provide for direct assistance to remote Australian businesses in meeting the hefty cost of in educating our children in boarding schools. It is time for our government to come to recognise that for many of our families, sending our children to boarding schools is the only option, not a luxury and assistance and support is

needed if we are to continue to keep and attract families to invest in and remain living in remote Australia.

M77 (S1) Hay Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to provide low interest loans to drought affected families for the purpose of paying the gap between the allowances and boarding school education fees.”

WORD CHANGE Sandra Ireson, Hay Branch requested Conference permission for a word change. Remove the word ‘for secondary’ and add the words ‘the gap between allowances and’

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to provide low interest loans to drought affected families for the purpose of paying the gap between allowances and boarding school education fees.”

Moved: Sandra Ireson Hay Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Michelle Spence Hay Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

For many families in rural and remote Australia the ongoing drought has placed enormous pressure on their ability to finance the secondary boarding education of their children. As cashflows are reduced, the cost of accessing secondary education remains one of the single biggest line items in many farming budgets. The financial pressure to keep children at boarding school or indeed to start children at boarding school is causing immense mental health stress for both parents and children. It is also placing significant pressure on boarding schools who have seen a decline in boarding numbers, particularly for those students from remote areas.

A low interest government loan would allow parents to access secondary education at boarding schools with certainty. It would reduce the number of students who either have to leave boarding school or not start boarding school because of a lack of cash flow caused by drought. This would also assist boarding schools to be able to plan with a greater certainty of students accessing their services.

Anecdotally, we are aware that there was a 28% across the board drop in rural and remote boarding students into Year 7 in Sydney boarding schools in 2019. For many families they do not have a choice. Boarding school is their only secondary school option and therefore they take on the financial burden while suffering through the drought with no certainty as to how they will maintain their children at their schools.

A low interest loan designated for educational purposes would also allow farming businesses to utilise cashflow to reinvest into their businesses and therefore the local economies. This will ensure that farming businesses, who are also educating children at boarding schools have the ability to recover from a drought by ensuring cash flows towards farm expenses rather than education. We propose that the facility be available to all eligible AIC families, enabling those without a large asset base to access the low interest loan.

The low interest loan also means that the government would have a return on their investment, not just monetary, but in the further education of remote and rural communities.

M78 (S2) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the relevant Ministers for the expansion of Federal Government criteria for the bypassing of schools to enable eligibility for Assistance for Isolated Children (Boarding, Second Home Allowance).”

Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT) sought conferences permission to withdraw motion

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

WITHDRAWN

Explanation:

The Federal Government has numerous criteria for eligibility for Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) in the “Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme Guidelines” (Department of Social Services). The socio-educational or socio-economic status of a town is not one of them. Nor is whether some students in that town can receive ABSTUDY to attend a boarding school.

[In Tennant Creek] ... over the past few years the rising number of child rape, alcohol abuse, domestic violence and family disputes between locals despite such a small population has been raised by numerous media sources and identified as a region of legitimate concern in comparison to other states and isolated townships (Wikipedia, accessed 20 July 2019). Tennant Creek High School currently has 232 students of whom about 85% are Indigenous. From the Myschool website <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50007>, in 2018 69% of students were from families in the bottom quarter of community socio-educational advantage and average NAPLAN scores for Years 7 and 9 were ‘substantially below’ those of ‘similar schools’.

Governments at all levels are piloting and implementing an array of tactics to address the problems in Tennant Creek. For example, the whole township has been classified so Aboriginal children from Tennant Creek are eligible for ABSTUDY to attend boarding schools elsewhere. This approach is completely understandable given the unsafe home life of some of these children and infers children are better off living and being educated somewhere else. Aboriginal families earning over the qualifying means-test and non-indigenous families in Tennant Creek cannot access ABSTUDY or any other schemes to assist with the costs of educating their children elsewhere. The social dysfunction which has led to Indigenous families being able to access ABSTUDY affects all residents.

Part of dealing with the problems of Tennant Creek must be the attraction and retention of service providers in the town such as doctors, nurses, social workers, police, teachers and so on. Many of these families will also have secondary-school age children. For many reasons, these families may wish to school their children elsewhere. It is highly probable professionals are being lost when their children hit high school. NT ICPA is aware of health professionals from Tennant Creek making enquiries about assistance for their children to attend an NT boarding school. Think of a single parent doing shiftwork. High schools or boarding schools in bigger centres inarguably provide access to more educational opportunities through curriculum choices, extra-curricular activities, diversity and larger cohorts of students.

Tennant Creek High School should be a ‘limited program school’ because students in Senior Years aspiring to go to university are likely to be studying subjects such as higher-level maths or sciences through the NT School of Distance Education. NT ICPA understands the bypassing of limited program schools for the purposes of AIC eligibility is a state decision, however believe the serious issues in some towns (Walgett NSW is another example) warrant a broader approach to allowing for some schools to be bypassed and urge the Federal Government to develop further AIC eligibility criteria to take these issues into account. Every student has the right to maximise their potential; it is unfair and inequitable to expect families to keep their children at school in a town where they may not.

Eligibility for AIC for families ineligible for ABSTUDY would incentivise living in Tennant Creek or similar towns, contribute to resolving dysfunctional towns’ problems and remedy the inequitable access to an appropriate education for their children.

M79 (S3) Walgett Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) supports boarding organisations and boarding institutions in seeking the removal of the Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) on essential boarding staff “

Moved: Karen Ricardo Walgett Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Elizabeth Powell Walgett Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Educational expenses are considerably high for families who must send their children to boarding school due to geographical location. Unfair taxes are adding to the high costs of educating students from rural and remote areas. The Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) that is applied to essential boarding staff in large cities is one example of the taxes that are impacting affordability and accessibility to an equitable education.

It is obvious that boarding schools must charge fees that cover costs incurred to them. Staff wages is a clear example of expenses that must be factored into boarding school fees. However, if some of the taxes that are currently applied to boarding schools were removed, the fees charged to families could also be lessened. The removal of the Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) on residential accommodation for essential supervisory staff could significantly reduce the costs incurred by some boarding schools. The Australian Boarding Schools' Association (ABSA) estimates that the FBT on the residential accommodation for the boarding schools in large cities adds an average of approximately \$1500 per child. Staff accommodation is a fundamental necessity of a boarding school. Boarding school staff must live on site to supervise the boarders in their care.

Boarding associations and boarding schools have been lobbying for the Fringe Benefits Tax on essential boarding school staff to be removed. ICPA (Aust) supporting this advocacy and assisting in raising awareness of this concern where possible would lend a greater voice to this issue on behalf of rural and remote students.

M80 (S8) Blackall Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers to include a remoteness index to be applied for students who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) but still live remotely.”

WORD CHANGE Susie Milson, Blackall Branch requested Conferences permission for a word change. Add ‘in addition to the current AIC eligibility’

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers to include a remoteness index to be applied for students who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) but still live remotely, in addition to the current AIC eligibility.”

Moved: Susie Milson Blackall Branch (Qld)
Seconded: James Milson Blackall Branch (Qld)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Families that live in rural and remote areas, that do not qualify for the AIC, face more educational disadvantages as they do not have access to the same opportunities as those who reside in the AIC qualifying region.

Current AIC eligibility criteria includes meeting an isolation condition, where isolation conditions are:

- Geographically isolated (from a school)

- Have a special education need
- No reasonable access to a school
- Meet a continuity condition.

If a remoteness index defined isolation, then those students in and around very remote towns who do not meet the distance criteria from the local school, could consider alternative education by gaining financial support in the form of a revised AIC.

Quite often instead of sending the oldest child away to boarding school, the family decides to move all the children and thus reducing, not only the number of children at the school but also the number of people in the district. If people move the businesses suffer, often these people are business owners and therefore the services in these towns decrease and it causes a flow on effect that is very difficult to reverse.

VIDEOS OF KIDS

Curriculum Agenda Motions

M81 (A35) Moree Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers to place urgency on streamlining the overcrowded national curriculum, particularly in the primary school years, restructuring it so there is a stronger emphasis on deeper understanding of core subjects such as Maths and English.”

Moved: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW) on behalf of Moree Branch (NSW)

Seconded: Deborah Castle NSW State Council (NSW)

LOST

Explanation:

Since the national curriculum was introduced to our schools, teachers and students have been overwhelmed and stressed with the enormity of what is needed to be taught and learnt. The foundation years should have a stronger emphasis on literacy and numeracy, our Kindergarten students should not be inundated with such a wide range of content instead focusing on the basics. The enormity of what they are required to learn in a short period of time is unrealistic. In a review of the national curriculum in 2014 the authors stated that experts in early years learning recommended that Foundation to Year 2 should focus on literacy and numeracy alone (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014). They also wrote that it was pointed out by several different entities that the content expected to be taught by primary school teachers was too large.

Considering this review was undertaken in 2014 the Australian Government response included an admission that “we already knew that many stakeholders had been critical of the overcrowding of the Australian Curriculum and the content being excessive” (Australian Government, 2014) and then went on to include a recommendation for ACARA to “revise the structure of the Australian Curriculum to reduce the amount of content to a narrow core required to be taught, especially in the primary years. Foundation to Year 2 should focus on literacy and numeracy” (Australian Government, 2014) we strongly believe that urgency in getting this process started is required.

References

Donnelly & Wiltshire, *Review of the Australian Curriculum: Final Report*, 2014.

Australian Government, *Review of the Australian Curriculum: Initial Australian Government Response*, 2014.

Tertiary – Youth Allowance – Agenda Motions

M82 (A62) Tambo Branch (Qld)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Families and Social Services that geographically isolated students currently receiving Youth Allowance are able to receive rent assistance during tertiary placements throughout the duration of their course.”

Louise Martin Tambo Branch (Qld) requested Conferences permission to withdraw the motion.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

WITHDRAWN

Explanation:

Where tertiary students are undertaking a course, for example physiotherapy that has a significant placement component in various locations, which requires regular moving that the minister recognises the need for rent assistance. These placements are full-time unpaid work, therefore no capacity for supplementing their income to cover their costs.

M83 (A63) Katherine Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates for the removal of the parental threshold from the Independent Youth Allowance for students applying under rural and remote work criteria.”

Moved: Amanda Murphy Katherine Branch (NT)

Seconded: Kerrie Scott Katherine Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Rural and remote students can be eligible for Independent Youth Allowance before they turn 22 if (i) their parental home is in an inner regional, outer regional, remote or very remote area (ii) they need to move away from your parental home to study and (iii) they have worked since leaving secondary school. Students also need to have either: earned 75% or more of the National Training Wage Schedule rate in any 14-month period or worked at least 15 hours a week for at least 2 years.

Katherine Branch thanks ICPA (Aust) for its advocacy and the Minister for Families and Social Services for raising the parental threshold from \$150,000 to \$160,000 from 1 January 2019 and taking into account other dependent siblings. However, these rural and remote students who qualify for Independent Youth Allowance under the above conditions must surely be considered Independent full stop. Parental income should not enter into consideration at all. Rural incomes are so fickle, even being given three financial years of parental income to choose from cannot always give these students a fair assessment of the ability of this family to support a tertiary or training student. These students clearly demonstrate independence through working for a least a year and leaving home to study. They take a gap year because they need to be financially independent but that can also place them at risk of being one of the statistics: students who take gap years are less likely to continue to further education. Any hurdles to these rural and remote students qualifying for Independent youth allowance, such as Parental income thresholds, threatens their tertiary education.

M84 (A64) Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) urges the Minister for Families and Social Services to change the criteria for receiving independent Youth Allowance so that those rural and remote students who are not eligible for dependent Youth Allowance, and who have to live away from their family address to access tertiary studies, are eligible for the Youth Allowance as an independent at the higher rate as soon as they commence the tertiary course of their choice.”

Moved: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW)

Seconded: Deborah Castle NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Students from rural and remote areas have no choice except to move away from home to access Tertiary studies. Once these students move away, they, of necessity, become independent of their parents as home can often be hundreds of kilometres away. Families struggle and find it very difficult to cope with the financial costs of supporting their children while they study and work to gain independence. The eligibility requirements to gain independent Youth Allowance place significant obstacles in the way of students and their families, particularly the required parental income limit of \$160,000 plus \$10,000 for each eligible sibling. Rural and remote students who live more than 90 minutes by public transport, if such a thing even exists, from the tertiary institution of their choice should be able to access Youth Allowance as an independent at the higher rate from the time they leave secondary school.

M85 (A65) Bourke Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) urges the Federal Government to change the criteria for gaining independent Youth Allowance so that all rural and remote students who have to leave home to study at tertiary level are eligible for independent Youth Allowance once enrolled.”

WORD CHANGE Tanya Mitchell, Bourke Branch requested Conferences permission for a word change. Insert ‘are ineligible for Dependent Youth Allowance and’ and delete ‘once enrolled’

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

“That ICPA (Aust) urges the Federal Government to change the criteria for gaining independent Youth Allowance so that all rural and remote students who are ineligible for dependent Youth Allowance and who have to leave home to study at tertiary level are eligible for independent Youth Allowance.”

Moved: Tanya Mitchell Bourke Branch (NSW)

Seconded: Prue Ritchie Bourke Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Students who are unable to access Youth Allowance due to the Parental Means Test are having to support themselves until they prove they are independent. The Parental Means Test is not indicative of what income is available to support the family. Commodity prices and sale of stock due to drought can exaggerate figures. Consideration needs to be given to the fact that most income goes back into the running of the farm or into Farm Management Deposits for restocking and/or taxation reasons because of the forced sale of stock. We are not wanting to include students moving out of home because they feel like moving. The students we represent have to move hundreds of kilometres to major regional centres or cities and pay inflated rent and utilities for accommodation near their university.

Having to move so far away from the family home and set up a second home is a fair indication that these students are the very ones that should be eligible for independent Youth Allowance. These students should be focusing on studying their chosen degree. It is great if they find part time employment however finding a job in a new environment and supporting themselves is a major concern. It leads to high dropout rates and increased stress and anxiety on individuals.

M86 (A66) Springsure/Rolleston Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) urges the Minister for Families and Social Services to review the Liquid Assets Waiting Period to address the penalisation of students, particularly rural and remote students who have fulfilled the self-supporting criteria for Youth Allowance as an independent, by the liquid assets waiting period.”

Moved: Louise Martin Tambo Branch (QLD) on behalf of Springsure/Rolleston Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Vicki Olds Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Many students whose parents may appear asset rich, are actually money poor, and these students must work to make themselves eligible for government assistance. Currently the Liquid Asset Waiting Period means that if an applicant has more than \$5,500 in liquid assets, payment will be delayed by a week for every \$500 over \$5,500 limit. We feel that this discourages rural and remote students from taking initiative, planning ahead and doing all they can independently to set themselves up for the expenses they will incur during their future years of study, particularly the high cost of relocation which needs to be paid upfront.

M87 (A67) New South Wales State Council (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Families and Social Services and the Department to allow students to upload a signed copy of a student’s identification, witnessed by a Justice of the Peace (JP), rather than having to travel huge kilometres to identify themselves at a crucial point in their application for the Youth Allowance.”

Moved: Deb Castle NSW State Council (NSW)
Seconded: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The cost of travelling for these students just to identify themselves is excessive. In many cases it is hundreds of kilometres of travel, and often at a time when there are lots of public holidays or skeleton staff, for example in the December/January period. In country areas during holiday periods, these centres are not open all the time and generally operate with skeleton staff and reduced office hours. It is therefore difficult to ensure if you drive these kilometres you will get the assistance you need. If students were able to get local JPs to verify their identification document, they will actually be using Services from local people. We are always looking at how we can use our local services to the fullest.

It is important that the Minister recognises that these students cannot move forward with their online application until this identification has been done. Some students start at University in January and this identification process can be prohibitive to their application.

M88 (A68) Kindon Branch (Qld)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government to ensure well trained staff are employed in the Centrelink Call Centre to answer questions and assist recipients who are enquiring about Youth Allowance.”

Moved: Daryl Martin Kindon Branch (Qld)
Seconded: Mandy Martin Kindon Branch (Qld)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We are grateful that there is a dedicated Youth Allowance hotline (132 490) available for students who are seeking financial assistance while undertaking tertiary study.

However, ICPA (Aust) is aware of members who have had difficulty while trying to access and clarify information to do with their rural and remote application. This has caused a great amount of stress and we do know of families who have given up while applying for Youth Allowance due to it being “too hard”.

CASE STUDY

Our eldest daughter was due to apply for Youth Allowance, so I thoroughly studied the information for independent, rural and remote applicant in the January 2019 Pedals. It proved to be invaluable. I was extremely well-informed heading into the application process. Our daughter graduated in November 2017 and worked 4 jobs from December 2017 until current. She quickly earned the required 75% of Wage level A of the national training wage scheme (\$25,704 in 2018) making her eligible as an Independent, rural and remote customer.

We submitted her application on 12th February 2019 online. It was rejected on 7 April 2019. I called Centrelink on 12 April to see why. I was told that it was because she hadn't worked continuously for an 18-month period. I know that this meant she had not been assessed as a rural and remote applicant and told them our home address and that she was applying as a rural student. He then asked me to submit all of her payslips, showing she had earned the required 75% of Wage Level A. We had already done this, uploading the payslips up to the required amount, however I agreed that I would now submit every single payslip she had to date. I uploaded the payslips, gave it 2 days and called Centrelink. I could not reach them on the 132490 (youth allowance) or 136150 (Centrelink) number, both numbers giving a user busy signal. I call the Centrelink complaints number and they were eventually able to transfer me to Youth allowance. I was then told the payslips were not received and I also had to complete a Form A2115, Parent/Guardians additional details. There was no mention of this form before now. I was also told that our parental income details HAD to be for the 2017/18 financial year. I knew that as a rural and remote student we could use one of three years, either the tax year that ended before the students 14-month self-supporting period (PRE_GAP) (which we chose to use), or the next year (BASE YEAR), or the current tax year (POST_BASE). I read this information to the consultant from the Pedals magazine. She advised me that she was a supervisor and knew that it HAD to be the 2017/18 year only, not 2016/17. By this point I was quite upset and frustrated at being given the incorrect information. She put me on hold to check the legislation. She returned to humbly say that I was correct.

We then went on to complete the required A2115 Parent additional details form. Question 7 was very unclear. I had contacted ICPA (Aust) previously with details of our troubles so I contacted again for help and they were quick to clarify this question for me. I had also contacted our local Community support centre who has direct contact with Centrelink and I was given the wrong information from them again. I then went on to complete the A2115 form and uploaded it to Centrelink along with payslips. I gave it a few days and tried to call Centrelink to ensure it had been received and to ask that it be re-assessed. Once again, I could not get through via the 132490 (youth allowance) or 136150 (Centrelink) number. I once again called the complaints number to be put through. The consultant looked at the application and I was once again told that there were gaps in our daughter's payslips, and she had not worked consecutively for 18 months. This once again told me that she was still not being assessed as rural and remote. I was also once again told that I had provided parental income for the incorrect year, that it had to be the current year. I asked to be put through to someone who specialised in rural and remote applicants. I was told she was a supervisor. I asked her to check the legislation. She did and confirmed that I was correct in that I could use the pre-gap year for parental income. I left the call with her saying she would get someone from Rural and remote to contact me. Two hours later I received a call to say that her application had been approved. This whole process was extremely frustrating to say the least and I could easily see how applicants less informed would simply give up due to the difficulty as it is truly upsetting. I was fortunate enough to have support from ICPA and to be well informed, with absolute certainty that our daughter was eligible, otherwise I do not think I would be able to successfully complete the application.

M89 (A69) Blackall Branch (Qld)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Families and Social Services to train Centrelink staff in Youth Allowance for students and apprentices.”

Susie Milson, Blackall Branch (Qld) requested Conferences permission to deem motion covered by M88 (A68)

**CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED
DEEMED COVERED BY M88 (A68)**

Explanation:

Youth Allowance helpline appears to be understaffed and unable to deal with the volume of calls. Wait times to speak to YA helpline for students and families can exceed 1 hour. This adds extra stress and worry to students when their time is precious given the climatic circumstances of many areas in Australia. Allowing Centrelink officers to have training in Youth Allowance for students and apprentices would be of major benefit to these students and families and would free up the YA helpline for those students that aren't able to access a Centrelink Office.

M90 (A70) Bourke Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) urges the Federal Government to find a solution to unreasonable waiting times to make contact with Centrelink staff when making or needing information regarding allowance applications.”

Moved: Tanya Mitchell Bourke Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Prue Ritchie Bourke Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Students and families have found themselves waiting ridiculously long periods on the telephone to speak to staff at Centrelink to enquire, chase up and submit information. The majority of these families live hundreds of kilometres from Centrelink Offices. One parent from our branch waited 50 minutes, 40 minutes and then 71 minutes before she was finally able to speak to a staff member. The parent advised that although she had tried to submit information online, the site did not accept the exception for rural and remote students. The local Centrelink office does not have expertise/not permitted to answer Youth Allowance questions, hence the need for confirmation by telephone. We also have several instances where staff have not been able to liaise with applicants as they are friends of the family in the local community.

M91 (S6) Yaraka-Isisford Branch (Qld)

CARRIED

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Department of Human Services to put in place a call back service for Centrelink related Call Lines such as Assistance for Isolated Children and Youth Allowance, so that callers can hold their place in the queue and receive a call back when they reach the top of the queue.”

Moved: Louise Martin Tambo Branch (Qld) on behalf of Yaraka-Isisford Branch (Qld)
Seconded: Kim Hughes Richmond Branch (Qld)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Everyone has or knows of a case where rural Centrelink customers have endured lengthy wait times on hold when telephoning Centrelink. Sometimes customers can be left waiting on the phone for more than an hour at a time. Centrelink does not currently offer the option to hold your place in the queue by giving your contact details so that the next available operator can call you back once you reach the top of the queue. Wait/hold times could be reduced/avoided if the option to leave contact details and receive a call back when an operator was available. Many large businesses now offer this function

successfully as it reduces the amount of time (and frustration) people spend on the phone and still gives customers piece of mind that their enquiry will be responded to.

Tertiary – Other - Agenda Motions

M92 (A71) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) urges the Minister for Education to remove the eligibility criteria ‘the Scholarship Applicant must not have already commenced their Eligible Course of Study’ for Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships.”

Moved: Rebecca Cadzow NT State Council (NT)
Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

NT State Council would like to thank the Minister for Education for the November 2018 announcement of an expansion of the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarship Program to provide more places and to include health and agriculture.

One grateful scholarship recipient in an ICPA family said, “How would I have even known about these scholarships if it weren’t for ICPA?” That same student is very worried about some of her rural post-grad medical program cohort dropping out solely because of financial pressures. They did not know about the scholarships when they began their course; a demanding course incompatible with part-time work.

The scholarship program was introduced to ‘improve access to educational opportunities for regional students. Initially, support for access to tertiary education for rural and remote students is very important, but equally important is support for retention of students. Reasons for students not applying for the scholarship prior to the commencement of their course could range from not knowing about it to changing circumstances related to drought or other natural disasters and rural economies, family situations, accommodation options or....

Removal of the eligibility criteria ‘the Scholarship Applicant must not have already commenced their Eligible Course of Study’ would support retention of financially struggling regional tertiary and training students.

M93 (A72) North West Branch (SA)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to ensure that recipients of the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarship are paid their scholarship money in a timely manner."

Moved: Candice Brown North West Branch (SA)
Seconded: Jessica Barry North West Branch (SA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We welcome the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships Program which improves access to and assists recipients to complete their tertiary education courses by providing financial assistance in the form of a scholarship up to the value of \$18,000 over 4 years. Successful applicants are required to enter into a legally binding Scholarship Agreement with QTAC and once completed the QTAC website states that “QTAC will make the first study assistance payment no less than four weeks after the Scholarship Recipient commences study.”

Members are requesting a definitive timeframe of payment. Payments in both 2018 and 2019 seem to be made in a very ad hoc manner, with recipients unsure of when their payment will be received. There needs to be a clear guideline of when the payments will be made, as this a scholarship for young adults who are for the first time financially independent.

Due to the lack of a clear payment date, a current student in receipt of this scholarship is now experiencing financial hardship and has no idea when the first payment will be made. This causes strain on the student emotionally and financially and also the family unit, which is especially difficult when they are trying to live independently.

M94 (A73) Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers to reintroduce incentives for the up-front payment of university fees and for the early repayment of debt in the Higher Education Contribution Scheme – Higher Education Loan Program (HECS-HELP).”

Moved: Deborah Castle NSW State Council (NSW) on behalf of Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)

Seconded: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW)

LOST

Explanation:

Up until 1 January 2017, the Federal Government offered incentives for students to pay their university fees up front and for graduates to repay their HECS-HELP debt early. Currently, there are no incentives for either of the above, so students and graduates will not make payments or repayments any faster than they are required to. If the government is serious about recovering HELP debt from graduates, then providing incentives to encourage early repayment must be considered.

M95 (A74) Moree Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers to ensure that universities providing teacher training include a standalone mandatory unit on Autistic Spectrum Disorders in their curriculum.”

Moved: Deborah Castle NSW State Council (NSW) on behalf of Moree Branch (NSW)

Seconded: Claire Butler NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

With the alarming rate of increase in the diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) the chance of a newly graduated teacher having a student with ASD in their class is significant, therefore knowing how to manage this condition with an appropriate level of skills and knowledge in behaviour management strategies for ASD would provide beneficial outcomes for all students in the class.

This early training could also lead to a reduction in the high level of early ‘burnout’ with between 40% - 50% of teachers leaving in their first five years of teaching, because they feel that they do not have the skills to deal with the challenges of having children on the Autism Spectrum in their class.

Educating teachers at the undergraduate level would be more cost effective than having to provide post graduate training during the first few years of teaching. This could also reduce the amount of time teachers need to take out of the classroom for Professional Development. In some rural areas, teachers are simply unable to take time out for such training because there is a lack of relief teachers available to allow for this, or they are required to travel considerable distance to attend training workshops which is often not an option for them.

Very little learning happens when children are not engaged. Teachers need the training to recognise when a student's coping skills are not working. They need to recognise the signs and be able to avoid the melt-down before it happens. They need to be proactive so that they won't have to be reactive. Dealing in a reactive way when a student has lost the ability to cope creates a stressful situation for everyone. But with adequate training a teacher learns to create the environment that will reduce the likelihood of a melt-down.

A teacher can learn these things the hard way over many years, but by then, coupled with the complex curriculum and extra curricula activities expected of them, they are looking for the door. The cost of the four-year degree is wasted, not to mention the toll on the teacher's health. But the biggest cost is in the damage that is done to the students, not only those with an ASD, but to every child whose education was impeded by a teacher, through no fault of their own, who did not have the necessary skills and support to teach the wide variety of students who are now in every classroom.

Training - Agenda Motions

M96 (A75) Moree Branch (NSW) CARRIED

"That ICPA (Aust) supports the states in their efforts to stop the impending closure of Agricultural Colleges such as the Queensland Agricultural Training College (QATC) campuses in Longreach and Emerald."

Moved: Deborah Castle

NSW State Council (NSW)

Seconded: Vicki Olds

Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

"Ensuring ready access to quality education and skills development provides important career paths for young people at a time when efforts are being made to encourage them to remain in regional areas, decreasing population drift and ensuring sustainability." (Media release, ICPA QLD)

"Farmers Feed the World," and with the ever-increasing population and ever shrinking viable farming land area it is vital that young farmers are trained with the right skills to manage the land and sustain the environment at a time when land and water management are crucial to our future food security.

Many young people who are passionate about agriculture struggle to focus and learn in a conventional school environment and schools often do not have the facilities or the opportunities to offer these students the ability to follow their passion, learn and become productive, contributing members of society; which makes Agricultural Colleges in regional areas a vital part of these students' educational opportunities.

Once these colleges are closed the valuable land associated with them will be sold and the ability to purchase the same area of land in a populated area, close to facilities, required for farming skills to be taught in the future, could be unattainable for the government, we cannot afford to lose this valuable land and training facilities because they cannot be replaced.

Floor Motions

M97 (F1) WA State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobby the Federal Government to review the AIC policy and guidelines to allow rural and remote students who are accepted into specialised programs not offered at their local school, and who need to board away from home, be eligible for the AIC."

CONFERENCE AGREED TO ACCEPT MOTION

Moved: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)
Seconded: Tash Johns WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation

There are examples where rural and remote students need to board away from home to access gifted and talented programs. These students do not qualify for AIC due to the proximity of a government high school that do not offer these specialised programs.

M98 (F2) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the relevant ministers for the expansion of the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) (Boarding Allowance and Second Home Allowance) to include consideration of the socio-economic and Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of a school.”

CONFERENCE AGREED TO ACCEPT MOTION

Moved: Rebecca Cadzow NT State Council (NT)
Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The Federal Government has numerous criteria for eligibility for Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) in the “Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme Guidelines” (Department of Social Services). The socio-educational or socio-economic status of a town is not one of them. Nor is whether some students in that town can receive ABSTUDY to attend a boarding school.

[In Tennant Creek] ... over the past few years the rising number of child rape, alcohol abuse, domestic violence and family disputes between locals despite such a small population has been raised by numerous media sources and identified as a region of legitimate concern in comparison to other states and isolated townships (Wikipedia, accessed 20 July 2019). Tennant Creek High School currently has 232 students of whom about 85% are Indigenous. From the Myschool website <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50007>, in 2018 69% of students were from families in the bottom quarter of community socio-educational advantage and average NAPLAN scores for Years 7 and 9 were ‘substantially below’ those of ‘similar schools’.

Governments at all levels are piloting and implementing an array of tactics to address the problems in Tennant Creek. For example, the whole township has been classified so Aboriginal children from Tennant Creek are eligible for ABSTUDY to attend boarding schools elsewhere. This approach is completely understandable given the unsafe home life of some of these children and infers children are better off living and being educated somewhere else. Aboriginal families earning over the qualifying means-test and non-indigenous families in Tennant Creek cannot access ABSTUDY or any other schemes to assist with the costs of educating their children elsewhere. The social dysfunction which has led to Indigenous families being able to access ABSTUDY affects all residents.

Part of dealing with the problems of Tennant Creek must be the attraction and retention of service providers in the town such as doctors, nurses, social workers, police, teachers and so on. Many of these families will also have secondary-school age children. For many reasons, these families may wish to school their children elsewhere. It is highly probable professionals are being lost when their children hit high school. NT ICPA is aware of health professionals from Tennant Creek making enquiries about assistance for their children to attend an NT boarding school. Think of a single parent doing shiftwork. High schools or boarding schools in bigger centres inarguably provide access to more educational opportunities through curriculum choices, extra-curricular activities, diversity and larger cohorts of students.

Tennant Creek High School should be a 'limited program school' because students in Senior Years aspiring to go to university are likely to be studying subjects such as higher-level maths or sciences through the NT School of Distance Education. NT ICPA understands the bypassing of limited program schools for the purposes of AIC eligibility is a state decision, however believe the serious issues in some towns (Walgett NSW is another example) warrant a broader approach to allowing for some schools to be bypassed and urge the Federal Government to develop further AIC eligibility criteria to take these issues into account. Every student has the right to maximise their potential; it is unfair and inequitable to expect families to keep their children at school in a town where they may not.

Eligibility for AIC for families ineligible for ABSTUDY would incentivise living in Tennant Creek or similar towns, contribute to resolving dysfunctional towns' problems and remedy the inequitable access to an appropriate education for their children.

Vote of Thanks – Jane Gloster moved a vote of thanks to Wendy Hick.

Carried with Acclamation

Presentation to retiring Councillors

Alana Moller presented Nikki Macqueen with a thank you gift for her four-year term as Federal Publicity Officer.

Carried with Acclamation

Kate Thompson presented Judy Sinclair-Newton with a thank you gift for her 10 years' service on Federal Council.

Carried with Acclamation

Nikki Macqueen presented Wendy Hick with a thank you gift for her time as Federal President.

Carried with Acclamation

Kids Video

Judy Sinclair-Newton thanks the convenors.

Carried with Acclamation

Katrina Morris spoke on behalf of the convenors and thanked sponsors.

Carried with Acclamation

6:60pm Close of Conference

CONFERENCE REPORTS

FEDERAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Wendy Hick

Federal Life Members Mrs. Julia Materne, Mrs. Jane Gloster and Mrs. Roxanne Morissey, fellow ICPA members and guests, it's my pleasure to update you on the work of your ICPA Federal Council with my final report as your Federal President.

2019 saw a very tough start for many of our rural and remote families with the continuation of this relentless drought and ironically, the rain event bringing devastation for some areas of northern Queensland. Federal Council's thoughts have been with all of our ICPA families as they struggle through these challenges and we continue to stand together with our State Councils and Branches to try to help families in any way we can in these difficult times. We appreciate those of you who have been able to attend our Conference and dedicate some of your time and energy to ICPA despite the challenges at home.

In the lead up to the recent Federal Election, Federal Council worked extensively to get our ICPA message out as far and wide as we could.

We had quite a bit of interest from media around rural education issues during the election and we were given several opportunities to comment on ICPA's "wish list" for the election. While we weren't able to achieve any specific commitments in the campaign promises, a number of positive steps were initiated prior to the election announcement and with the Federal Election now over, Federal Council is busy taking things up from where things left off and also building relationships with those newly elected to Parliament.

The drought and monsoon event have also held media focus and this has given ICPA an inroad to raise the issue of the necessity for the establishment of a Rural Hardship Education Fund. Never has the need for this fund been so obviously acute. ICPA's proposal is that a Rural Hardship Education Fund must be put permanently in place to assist rural families with essential costs of education. This message is being raised at every opportunity in Canberra as well as with other organisations who support this call.

At the end of last year, ICPA met and consulted with UNICEF to discuss the impact that the long term drought is having on children in rural areas. UNICEF Australia released a Drought Report on 18 February, 2019 which put the spotlight on the effect of drought on children's wellbeing, as well as the impact on their education.

ICPA has concerns for the mental wellbeing of our rural and remote children when facing these types of situations continuously and we have been advocating for the creation of mental health resources specific to rural and remote students and the unique challenges they face because of where they live.

Conference 2018

After the 2018 Federal Conference, Council set to work actioning the 89 motions that were carried. In October we had our face-to-face meeting in Canberra and embarked on a delegation to Parliament House where we took those motions to 35 separate meetings with politicians. We always tell new councillors to wear comfortable shoes in Parliament House, and I think they found out we weren't joking. Style goes out the window when you only have one day and a lot of kilometres to cover. We actually tracked our distance that day and most of our delegation groups did over 8k walking (and sometimes running) through the halls of Parliament House to get to all of the meetings, with one group just nudging over the 10k mark (you can probably guess whose group that was).

Meetings with the Departments of Education, Human Services and Social Services followed the next day. These meetings are always beneficial because the Department personnel we meet with are in positions to make changes to the process for Youth Allowance applications or AIC for example, or to take direct feedback on the ability (or inability) of rural/remote families to access In Home Care.

Submissions

Submissions continue to be one of the preferred methods for the government to receive comment and Federal Council started this year with a bang, lodging four submissions in January alone; adding to a total of 13 submissions being lodged in the last 12 months.

ICPA representatives have also made appearances at many public hearings all over the nation and further information has been sought from panels on several occasions; a true indication we are being heard. Last year, Professor John Halsey commented when he was conducting the Independent Review into Regional Rural and Remote Education that wherever there was a public hearing, there was ICPA and some of the other Inquiries have had a similar experience this year.

Meetings

Federal ICPA is on a number of committees, advisory groups and coalitions and works closely with many organisations with whom we share interest. Some of these include ACARA, the Rural Regional and Remote Communications Coalition, the National Rural Health Alliance, nbn Roundtable, the Outback Alliance and the Virtual Work Experience Program Advisory Group.

This year the Joint Councils meeting of ICPA state and federal representatives was held during February in Melbourne. Federal Council continues to work closely with states on many issues and appreciates the efforts of state representatives in getting to the meeting and contributing so freely. This meeting helps to improve consistency across our messages and assists us with working as a unified organisation.

Touching quickly on some of the focus areas Federal Council has been working on-

Boarding Away from Home for Schooling

Federal Council continues to raise the need for a significant increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance (AIC). With the severe drought continuing in many areas of Australia, (and now the additional challenge of a flood event for some) the ever-widening gap between the AIC and the cost to families for boarding is even more pronounced. ICPA requests that the Federal Government undertake a review of AIC, and Federal Council raised this at our delegations in October.

We have also spoken extensively on the need for a permanent program to be in place to help rural and remote families with education costs in times of rural hardship, whether this is through fire, flood, cyclone, industry impacts or drought. In my role as Federal President, I have been attending meetings with the Joint Agency Drought Taskforce and raising the urgent need for the implementation of a Rural Hardship Education Fund (RHEF) as well as highlighting the excessive educational costs faced by our rural families in accessing schooling for their children.

It can often be difficult to talk about our situations, especially when things are tough, but if there are families willing to share their stories about the difficulties they are facing in trying to pay for school fees or educate their children, it really helps us get the message across to the people we speak with in government. Our Councils are here to listen and help where we can. Your stories and the real life that you and your children live are very powerful messages. The people we talk with remember the stories, and because of those stories, they remember our families. Federal Council are always appreciate receiving your examples and you are welcome to phone or email us.

Mental wellbeing, particularly for students who live away from home for schooling, has also been a focus in our boarding discussions and Federal Council has been involved in several conversations with various organisations interested in the creation of resources designed specifically for rural and remote students and their families which will help address the unique challenges they face whether they are boarding away from home, in a small rural school setting or distance education classroom.

Communications

Kristen Coggan will elaborate on communications in her report. However, we continue to work with Telstra and nbnTM to resolve issues affecting our members and we welcome members' feedback and contact when there's a problem.

We were excited to be part of the nbnTM Sky Muster Plus announcement. Hopefully these new plans will assist students who have been unable to access an education port, including tertiary students and those at small rural schools.

We continue to advocate with stakeholders for mobile expansion into areas with a rural school, receiving support from government and Telstra. Telstra has also unmetered a number of sites used for education.

With regards to the Universal Service Obligation which is moving to the Universal Service Guarantee, Federal Council was reassured once again during our delegations at the end of October that landlines will remain in place for rural and remote customers until a more appropriate, reliable and affordable service was available to meet their needs.

Early Childhood Education and Care

The last year has been very busy in the area of Early Childhood Education and Care. Federal Councillor, Jane Morton has attended consultations and provided significant feedback around the new In Home Care program that replaced the previous In Home Care and the Nanny Pilot Program from 2 July 2018. Jane will be talking more about the new program and its guidelines in her Early Childhood Education Care Report.

Rural Schools and School Travel

Di Skene will be presenting her update on travel later in the conference, but I would like to mention that shortly after last year's Federal Conference, Greyhound Australia announced that it would no longer carry children under the age of 15 without a chaperone. Greyhound cited safety of children at stops, especially rural destinations, as their reason for the change. The decision by Greyhound, taken without any consultation, impacted about 250 boarding students from rural areas nationally.

The Senate Inquiry into the Regional Air Travel Report was handed down in June. ICPA (Aust) and several state councils put submissions into this enquiry and attended public hearings. Ideally, we would like to see outcomes such as student concessional fares, or travel allowances for rural and remote students included in the AIC. Federal Council has recently had encouraging conversation with QANTAS and we have been able to offer feedback on their Regional Residents fares.

Specific Education Needs

At the last federal conference two motions asked for rural, regional and remote families to access travel and accommodation assistance to attend appointments with qualified professionals in order to diagnose and manage specific learning needs. This is an ongoing issue and ideas of how to further this appeal are encouraged. These children fall into a large crack between education and health systems

in regional areas across all states and territories. Federal Council recently placed a submission into the Medicare Benefits Schedule Taskforce Review to add further comment on this issue.

Tertiary and Training

In the area of Tertiary and Training, rural and remote students have had another win. As of January 1, 2019, the parental income cut-off for regional, rural and remote students applying for Youth Allowance under the *Independent through work students* criteria, increased from \$150 000 to \$160 000, plus \$10 000 for each eligible additional child in the family. There is also greater flexibility in the choice of financial year used for parental income. Kate Thompson will provide some further information on the happenings in Tertiary and training in her report but it's good to see some runs on the board there.

The ways in which ICPA gets information and our messages out to members has evolved quite a bit over the past few years. Federal Council thanks our Publicity Officer over the past four years, Nikki Macqueen, for exploring many different avenues to keep ICPA out there in the media and information flowing to members via the latest modes of communication. She's done a tremendous job and her passion and enthusiasm is empowering. We may sometimes doubt that we can tackle certain tasks or interviews, but Nikki always reminds us that yes, we can. Thank you Nikki.

ICPA is an incredibly supportive organisation. As my time as your Federal President closes, I would like to thank all of our members, branches and councils for being so tremendously supportive. One of the things that I have enjoyed the most in my role has been the opportunity to meet with so many members from across the country, learn about where they live, and hear about their children and their schooling. I have also really enjoyed working so closely with our councils, you are all amazing, dedicated people and so many great things are being achieved.

When the suggestion came up four years ago that perhaps I should nominate for the President's role, I had some doubts. In fact, I had a lot of doubts. Like many new President's I wasn't sure I had the experience or skill to do the job. A very wise mum from up our way (a mum who had taught 4 children in her Distance Ed classroom and was a long-time ICPA member) said to me, "As long as you remember where you are from, who you represent, stick to what you know; speak from that, and you will do fine." This didn't just help me through my time, but I think it is also part of why ICPA has always been so effective over its 48 years-

We speak from the heart

We get our facts straight

And we remember who we are and where we come from.

As members from diverse areas, different situations and varying ways of educating our children, we must stand together as we face the same challenges; speak from our hearts and do the best we can to try to bring about better access to education for geographically isolated students. Keep up the great work and as I step down as President, I know that ICPA will be in good hands.

In closing, as we begin our discussions on the education needs of our rural and remote children, I'd like you to consider this quote from Marian Wright Edelman "The question is not if we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to."

We ask that you help us to "Sustain our Future and Invest in Our Children"

FEDERAL TREASURER'S REPORT

Lisa Slade

I am delighted to be presenting to you my second annual Treasurer's Report and the corresponding audited financial statements for the 2018 – 2019 financial year.

We have had yet another busy year on Federal Council. To many of us it seems a blur, but I've handpicked a few of the most memorable moments for you. Hot off the heels of Conference, Wendy and Kristen attended the Australian Communication Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) Conference in Sydney in August. Kate and Nikki attended the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) Conference in October (thank you to ABSA for generously covering our costs), and not long after that, twelve of our fourteen Councillors travelled to Canberra for delegation. In February of the New Year, Wendy and Suzanne met with State Council representatives in Melbourne and then came the flurry of State Conferences, which were all attended by Federal Councillors in person with the exception of the South Australian State Conference which was web based in lieu of hosting this year's Federal Conference. With the Federal Election in May, we took a wide berth of Canberra and instead decided to travel to Toowoomba for our face-to-face meeting. The decision to meet in Toowoomba was made easily due to a number of Councillors living within driving distance. We were spoiled by the generosity of those local Councillors, some of whom offered up their homes to accommodate a number of us while we were there, and also in helping to secure an incredible meeting venue at no cost to us. Thank you again to Toowoomba Anglican School who made us feel like royalty. Ultimately this provided us with a most welcomed cost savings.

The Department of Education continue to support us financially through the Regional Student Engagement Strategy grant funding. These funds enable us to provide feedback and information to the Australian Government, reporting on education related issues facing our children in rural and remote communities. From securing venues for Federal Conference each year to getting Councillors out to the states to meet with members directly to find out what is happening across Australia, these funds are vital in enabling us to be the conduit between members and the Australian Government. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department sincerely for helping to ensure the correct information is getting directly to the decision makers. You will find copies of the audited grant acquittal attached to the Financial Statements for your attention.

Thank you to Telstra for your generous sponsorship of the 2019 Federal Conference. Telstra have been sponsors of ICPA for many years now and I take this opportunity to not only thank them for their sponsorship funds, but to say how much we value and appreciate the close working relationship we have built with them across Australia.

I am not telling you anything new when I tell you that times are tough in rural and remote Australia, having said this I am continually amazed at the generosity of our branches. While donations to Federal Council by branches are down by fifty per cent this year as compared to last year, we still received \$9200 in hard earned funds. What is also heartening is hearing stories from across the country of branches and State Councils supporting other branches to attend State or Federal Conferences. There is a lot to be said for the Australian spirit and stories like these make me really proud to be an ICPA member. A sincere thank you to the following branches for their generous donations during the 2018-2019 financial year: Alpha branch, Belyando-Mt Coolon branch, Clermont branch, Lakes District branch, Louth branch, Mid West branch, Namoi branch, Westmar/Inglestone branch and Winton branch.

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of the 2018-2019 financial year, we had 2412 financial members and four corporate members. This is a decline in membership of 236 members compared to the same time last year. While we cannot pinpoint the exact reason for the decline, we are certain the persistent and unrelenting drought across much of rural and remote Australia has played a significant role. At the end of last year East Coast branch in Tasmania came out of recess, followed by the Tasmanian State Council. Sadly, Tasmanian State Council was not able to fill their positions at their AGM in March and therefore could not form a Constitutional Council. The Bullarah branch and Moree branch in NSW

amalgamated and we were pleased to receive advice that the Hillston branch in NSW were able to reform and it is great to see they have a delegate representing them at this year's Conference.

The online membership payment system has continued to work well, during the course of the 2018-2019 financial year with 1225 members completing their membership by this method. The success of the online membership process can be attributed largely to Federal Membership Officer, Jane O'Brien, who works tirelessly with all treasurers across Australia to ensure memberships are processed efficiently, ensuring a smooth data flow across all three membership tiers. NSW, followed by Queensland State Councils have appointed Membership Officers, following the Federal model (under Jane's guidance) of appointing a separate Membership Officer to deal with memberships thereby alleviating the workload of the Treasurer position. We are a member-based organisation and a person dedicated to memberships is working well.

Again, I am so grateful to be working with Jane O'Brien, she is the Yin to my Yang. Her dedication to the role of Membership Officer often goes unnoticed, particularly as she prefers to fly under the radar. Thank you, Jane!

Since the introduction of the Corporate Membership category, we have received interest from a number of schools wanting to become Corporate Members. As the intention of the Corporate Membership was not created with schools in mind, we are seeking members' approval to introduce a new School Corporate Membership category. Information regarding this has been forwarded to all members following due process and will be expanded upon when Motion A77 is presented following my report.

FINANCES

At the 2018 Federal Conference a motion was carried to appoint RJC Evans and Co. as auditors to for the 2018-2019 financial year. This was technically incorrect and should have listed the auditor as 'D G Murdock, as consultant for RJC Evans and Co. Adelaide', and if you have been meticulously scanning the financials you will see that D G Murdock has signed off on them. I humbly apologise for this error. This year you will note that our income is just over \$50,000 less than last year. This can be attributed to a number of factors, but mainly due to three things. The amount of profit remitted to Federal Council by the 2018 Convening Committee was lower than the previous year, but still a stellar effort by that Committee. A profit from Federal Conference is not mandatory or expected, and anything left in the kitty at the end is warmly received. As mentioned before, branch donations and memberships are also down this year. A couple of items that are pleasingly bucking the trend are 'interest received' and 'sponsorship income', this is due to better management of our term deposits and business saving accounts and Telstra increasing their sponsorship for the 2018 Federal Conference. Sundry income includes purchases of ICPA merchandise by councillors, repayment of an incorrect debit card charge and recouping of additional email costs by the NSW State Council.

You will notice in the Profit and Loss that we continue to manage Tasmania's online memberships on their behalf.

While our income as a whole is following a downward trend, so too are our expenses. Expenditure is down by \$20,000 this year leaving us with a profit of \$14,144.06. Delegation expenses were down due to only having one delegation in November. Each year we set aside funds for the Convening Committee to secure conference venues and accommodation, prior to sponsorship and registration income. This year, the South Australian Convening Committee secured sponsorship income early and so the full amount we set aside to them was not paid in full until June, following the reporting period. State Conference expenses have increased this year. This can fluctuate from year to year depending on the location of State Conferences and also when claims and expenses are incurred. They can cross financial years which is the case here. We have had no online membership website costs this financial

year, but with the Federal Conference website in addition to our website we see an increase in the general website costs this reporting period. Sundry expenses include an incorrect debit card charge, negating the respective sundry income above, and flowers purchased for the families of retired Federal Councillors who we have sadly lost this year. The Repairs, Replacement and Maintenance expense is a laptop purchased for Sue Shotton to use at Federal Conference to assist with the technical aspects of our backdrop.

Coming back to the closing profit. Federal Council this year decided that due to the current rural economic climate, we would offer financial assistance to branches experiencing difficulty in covering delegates' expenses to attend the 2019 Federal Conference. Branches applied for this assistance and we are very happy to say that we were able to help four branches send seven delegates in total. With the profit still in mind, we also see no need to request an increase in federal membership fees for 2019-2020 membership year.

When the East Coast branch of Tasmania went into recess, Federal Council agreed to hold their funds in trust until such time as a branch executive was elected. This is shown on the balance sheet as both an asset and a corresponding liability.

Should I be fortunate enough to be elected again into the role of Federal Treasurer, I look forward to the opportunity to work alongside a truly inspiring group of humans. In closing, I would like to leave you with one of my favourite Winnie the Pooh quotes which reminds me of so many of our members: 'You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.'

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jill Greenfield

Madame President, Federal councillors, ICPA members and guests, it gives me great pleasure to present my first President's report for South Australia ICPA.

On the 22nd of March, State Council held a productive Online Conference from the studio at Port Augusta School of the Air. The idea of hosting an online conference, via Web Ex, came about when trying to come up with ways to reduce both the cost and burden of planning and organising conferences for our hardworking volunteers.

Through email updates and The Pipeline, State Council requested feedback from our branch members in 2017 and as this was mostly positive, we presented a motion which was passed at last year's state conference. The Online Conference had its challenges, but we succeeded by being able to get the core business completed with motions presented and the AGM held. Thank you to those that could 'log on' or attend in Port Augusta and for providing much appreciated feedback.

While we can see the benefits of this format, State Council have decided to hold an online conference on a needs basis as everyone agrees that coming together face to face is always going to be more effective at keeping our community connected and sharing our passion for rural and remote education.

The theme of our conference "Swipe Right for Education", might sound like a reference to the Tinder app, but in this context, it was asking our members and friends to consider how they can Swipe Right for Education, and take positive action to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for rural and remote children. In keeping with our theme, we asked branches to submit slides that celebrate achievements and showcase how they "Swiped Right" for Education.

Times have been particularly tough for many of our families and communities, with some areas experiencing the worst 'dry time' on record. It is through the tough times that feeling part of a supportive community is even more crucial. ICPA plays an important role in not only advocating for our children, but giving families a voice, providing opportunities for friendship and the strong sense of community gained by sharing common struggles.

Fourteen Motions were passed at conference from a variety of portfolio areas including:

- Financial assistance for families from drought affected areas with boarding fees
- Wellbeing of boarding students in times of hardship
- CaFHS nurse reinstatement with Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise (RICE)
- RICE kindy teacher position
- Investigating School of the Air (SOTA) being a stand-a-lone school
- Refilling vacated teaching positions within Distance Education
- Relief teachers trained in the delivery of Distance Education

We welcomed the State Council executive Vice President, Kate Greenfield; Immediate Past President, Kerry Williams; Secretary, Edwina Bowie; Assistant Secretary, Joanna Gibson; Treasurer, Michelle Hilder; Publicity Officer, Petie Rankin.

Appointed positions for 2019 were Pipeline Editors, Lynly Kerin and Mija Reynolds; State Webmaster, Lisa Hunt and Mailchimp Editor, Penny Rasheed; REVISE rep, Jodie Keogh; OACGC rep, Petie Rankin; Lone Member officer, Helen Williams.

The full state council was completed with Lisa McIntosh, Paulaine Vermeulen, Roslyn Breeding, Jess Barry, Katrina Morris, Di Thomas, Sondra Kessell and Lisa Slade. Thank you to all that have continued on State Council and a very warm welcome to the new State Councillors, your time and energy is greatly appreciated.

We farewelled the following State Councillors Belinda Hatcher, Kirsty Williams, Sonya Fels, Leisa Breeding and Lynly Kerin. A sincere thank you to these state councillors for their commitment and passion to ICPA.

Delegation was held on June 3rd and 4th. It was a whirlwind two days with emotions running high as topics were brought to the table from the heart. Thanks to everyone for standing by me on my first delegation as President. The purpose of our meetings was to raise awareness and discuss ways schools may be equipped to better support the unique circumstances faced by our children and to follow up on issues brought to conference by our members.

These issues included the investigation into School of the Air becoming a standalone school, the recruitment and retaining of teaching staff at SOTA including refilling vacated teaching positions and relief teachers within Distance Education, the RICE kindy teacher position, drought and ongoing support to remote families and how Boarding Schools can assist. We held eight meetings over the two days and really stressed the issues that our members are wanting action on.

State Council have had the opportunity to work with the Senior Drought Advisor, Jennifer Barrwick from Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) to explore ideas of where funding could be best utilised to support families and communities that are continuing to do it tough in many regions of South Australia.

State councillors have been working with TAFE SA, Livestock SA and local employers to develop a new training course for pastoral workers. This followed on from a motion presented to our 2018 conference. The course commenced in February this year with units being held at TAFE SA venues or on local properties. Students work towards a Certificate 3 in Rural Operations.

After many years of discussion recipients of the State Education Allowance (SEA) have received their forms for 2019 electronically. The State Education Allowance is available to geographically isolated parents with children at secondary level who board away from home to attend school. The allowance assists with travel, boarding and other expenses associated with the education of their children. This has streamlined the process for families with continuing students. We are grateful to Karen Humphries from Transport Services who has undertaken this at our request.

State Councillors have also attended various meetings and conferences including the Telstra Regional Roundtable, the Literacy Guarantee conference, NBN Roundtable, stakeholder and portfolio meetings. Thank you to everyone who has participated in these events.

Submissions completed over the last year have included a Department of Education review into how vocational education and training (VET) is delivered to South Australian secondary school students. Issues highlighted were: that VET is often seen as a lesser pathway in secondary schooling, schools need to support students so that they can be released for VET study and placements, for boarding students; travel to and from some of the course locations can be cost prohibitive and issues with internet connections and usage when completing a VET course from home.

There was also a SA government review into School Bus Services earlier this year. ICPA SA expressed our concerns that should the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) take over control of the bus services they need to ensure the service continues to best meet the needs of its own school community by allowing schools to maintain autonomy and control of the service. It also ensures that the bus service is seen as an extension of the school community and that child safety and staff connections are maintained within the school. This is particularly the case in smaller rural communities that often only have one or two schools available in the district.

SA ICPA continues to produce two editions of our printed state newsletter, the Pipeline, per year. These are compiled post state and federal conferences, which provides our Editor more ease sourcing content and the ability to produce a newsletter of greater substance. This keeps members informed and engaged, sharing news from across the branches. Thanks to Editor Lynly Kerin and Mija Reynolds, who have been doing a wonderful job with the Newsletter. These publications are supplemented by regular Mailchimp emails as another avenue of keeping members up to date.

SA State Conference will be hosted by the North East Branch, in Port Augusta. We look forward to having a face to face conference in March 2020.

As a grassroots, member-driven organisation, SA ICPA would not exist without the support of branch members throughout rural and remote SA, who generously volunteer their time to keep their local branches going and to organise local events, fundraising and get-togethers. Thank you to everyone who has taken positive action to support our organisation and our communities over the past year. Finally, we are grateful for the help and support of Federal Council over the past twelve months and for helping our new council as they find their feet.

Thank you to the convening committee, expertly led by Katrina Morris. You would have to agree that the views are amazing as it has helped me stumble through my report! Enjoy your time in Adelaide. Safe travels to all and let's hope that the remainder of 2019 is kinder to our ICPA Pastoral and Farming families.

TASMANIAN REPORT

Kate Thompson

ICPA Tas has been on a roller-coaster ride over the last 12 months and been relatively inactive since the 2018 AGM.

After the 2018 AGM, where 4 councillors resigned and only 6 members nominated for council, ICPA Tas State Council went into a period of recess. This situation was compounded when one of our branches went into recess as well and consequently, the Tasmanian ICPA State Council became unconstitutional, as at the time, three branches were required in a state for a state council to exist.

ICPA Tas is appreciative of the constitutional change that now allows for an already formed State Council to remain viable if the state has a minimum of 15 financial members in the occurrence that the state has only three branches and a branch goes into recess or closes. Currently the feeling is that Tasmania would benefit from having three branches, but this constitutional change secures a state council.

Fortunately, there were members from the branch in recess who were keen to keep the branch open and, on the 8th October 2018, the branch went out of recess. This led to ICPA Tas being constitutional again and allowed for the reformation of ICPA Tas State Council. On 21st December 2018, an interim State Council was elected.

On 27th March 2019 at the AGM, while there were nominations for councillors, all the executive positions were not filled, and a constitutional State Council was not formed. The current councillors have all been on council for many years and are wanting to step back. Those active in the Tasmanian branches and those interested in being a part of the Tasmanian ICPA State Council continue to work with Federal Council to move forward and secure a council for Tasmanian members.

At present, there are interim plans to host a few events around Tasmania to bolster support for ICPA Tas and help new members gain an understanding of the organisation and the vital work they do as well as assist interested members in feeling confident in taking on roles on the State Council.

The 2020 Federal Conference is scheduled to be held in Tasmania and ICPA Tas is looking forward to welcoming everyone to our island state. ICPA Tas and the three branches are looking forward to assisting Federal Council host the conference.

ICPA Tas believes that ICPA remains an important organisation in Tasmania and there is real value in having representation at the state level for the rural and remote students of Tasmania. There have been achievements that can be attributed to the hard work of the State Council and the branches of ICPA Tas and every effort to continue is imperative.

Thanks, must go to Federal Council for their support and assistance throughout this difficult 12 months.

QUEENSLAND PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Tammie Irons

Good morning Madam President Mrs Wendy Hick, Federal Life Members, Distinguished guests, the convening committee, fellow ICPA members, ladies and gentlemen... it gives me great pleasure to present this report to you in the beautiful city of Adelaide and at such an iconic venue!

Queensland held its 48th State Conference in the historic Charters Towers in the north at the beginning of June. Nobody could have suspected how chilly the weather would be whilst we were there – by the second day I had garnered a new jacket, slippers and a lap rug for my chair on the stage! The committee were, as always, enthusiastic and always on hand to ensure that the conference ran smoothly. Chairing my first conference was certainly daunting, however the team behind me are amazingly talented and I almost got through the entire two days before someone went to a foreshadowed, foreshadowed amendment! A huge thank you must go to Mr Tim Fairfax AC and Mrs Gina Fairfax – their amazing donation allowed State Council to offer all our branch delegates free registration and meals, as well as subsidise their accommodation and travel. With the ongoing drought across the state and the flood disaster in February it meant the world to us that we could make this happen for our members this year. We were also delighted to be able to present Mrs Beryl Neilsen and the Winchester Foundation with a Certificate of Appreciation – these amazing women continue to do so much for those in rural and remote areas and we applaud their commitment and their support of ICPA Qld.

I have to say that the absolute highlight of conference from all reports was the ICPA Q&A Panel – For Us, For Them. Thanks to the generosity of Drought Angels we were able to bring together six expert panellists from all walks of life, and with the emcee skills of ABC's Charlie McKillop, the whole room spent 90 minutes focused on themselves – as mums and dads, as community members and most importantly as human beings who need to take some time out every now and then to look after themselves!

Conference saw several changes for our State Council. Our State Secretary, Mrs Gillian Semple, and State Treasurer, Mrs Anna Appleton stepped down and have been ably replaced by Mrs Kelly Ostwald and Mrs Amanda Clark respectively. We also said goodbye to State Councillor Mrs Susi Bellingham and our Immediate Past President, Mrs Kim Hughes. I am sure all are enjoying some semblance of normality returning to their lives, and we thank them for the commitment to ICPA Qld. We have collected two new State Councillors in Mrs Sonia Spurdle and Mrs Kasie Scott who have stepped up to the plate and are ready to hit some home runs when we venture to Brisbane for delegations in a couple of weeks.

Queensland's #iamicpa campaign moves another gear this year as we add our #iaminspired hashtag to the mix. We are looking for members to share what inspires them within their world and in the realm of our organisation. We are also incredibly excited to be launching our own podcast! 'Chinwag – the ICPA Qld Podcast' will provide stories from members, discussions around hot topics and other exciting segments which we envision will increase our connections within our worlds and broadcast the ICPA message to new and old! Please keep an eye, and an ear, out for the first exciting episode which will wrap up our conference and focus on our theme of taking care of yourself, so you can take care of others.

Since last year's Federal Conference Queensland State Council have been busy lobbying our government for an immediate increase in our Living Away from Home Allowance to assist with the ever-growing gap for tuition fees at boarding schools. Unfortunately, there was no joy for us in the state budget in June, however we continue to highlight the funding inequity across the sectors within

our state and we have received significant media support in our efforts to get the message through to our Minister for Education.

Disappointment continued with the announcement that the Queensland Agricultural Colleges at Emerald and Longreach would be closed at the end of this year as a direct result of the Coaldrake Review. We were heartened by the outpouring of support from our members, as well as members from other states, and although there will be no reversal of the decision we are working together with other stakeholders to ensure that rural and remote education in agriculture remains at the forefront of any future direction for the colleges.

Vice-President Louise Martin and I were fortunate to be able to attend the Federal-State Face-to-Face meeting in Melbourne earlier this year. Two days of discussing all things ICPA in all states and territories was not only interesting and inspiring, but also highlighted the inequities across our country. Almost all states and the territory had two representatives attend and it was great to meet and discuss those issues arising in each area. Some were familiar, and others were unique, however we were able to make suggestions and share ideas with each other and walk away feeling enthused about the direction ICPA is heading across the country. Thank you to Wendy Hick and Federal Council for such a valuable opportunity.

Where to next? Queensland State Council head to Brisbane in two weeks for delegations to the Department of Education, Department of Transport and meetings with the Minister for Education and the Leader of the Opposition. As already mentioned, we aim to highlight the inequity of funding across the education sectors in Queensland as well as action the many motions from conference. Our Schools of Distance Education enrolments are causing enormous angst for many of our parents at several of the schools in regard to teaching and learning spaces, and ICPA Qld intends to ensure that our government remains focused on those who are geographically isolated and for whom distance education is not a choice but a necessity.

On behalf of ICPA Qld I would like to extend a huge thank you to the convening committee here in Adelaide for a job well done! I know personally the effort it takes to ensure it looks like there has been no effort! Congratulations! I would also like to thank those members and their branches who have been able to make it here this year – we know that you leave families and businesses behind to spend time here as ICPA, and your commitment is greatly appreciated because it is your voice that really counts. ICPA Qld will continue to offer support wherever necessary to Federal Council in their endeavours at a national level and on behalf of my State Council I wish them all the best in the year ahead.

I would also like to take this opportunity as a member of ICPA Qld to thank Wendy for her commitment and passion toward ICPA over many years as she steps into the role of Immediate Past President. Having worked with Wendy as a Queensland State Councillor, I know firsthand the amount of time she puts into her work with ICPA, and although we all know it is an unpaid, volunteer role, Wendy could never be accused of seeing it as such. She has certainly devoted her life to ICPA in the last decade in particular, and I am confident that Lloyd and her boys will enjoy seeing her face at home slightly more often! Congratulations Wendy and thank you for all you have done for ICPA.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Tash Johns

Madam President, distinguished guests, ICPA members and friends, it is with great pleasure I present my final report as President on behalf of ICPA WA for the 2018/2019 year.

During the 2018/2019 year, the WA State Council have been working on garnering new memberships within the community. This year was the first time for many years, where State Council went out to all three major Field Days. The Mingenew Midwest Expo, Dowerin Field Days and the Newdegate Machinery Field Days are the three largest field days run in Western Australia.

With people from around the State attending these events, State Council decided to have a presence at all three, by the way of setting up an information stall.

State Councillors gave up their time for up to three days at a time to man the stalls, talk to local people in relation to issues within their area and to increase memberships.

Because of the online membership, Councillors were able to help and sign members up on the spot, with no waiting times as in the past with the old manual membership model.

My thanks go to Michelle Marshall, Sally Brindal, Amanda Nixon & the CWN Branch, Bianca James and Kym Ross for the organisation, planning and running of each of these stalls.

Due to the success from 2018, the WA State Council applied for the funding of equipment through the Federal Volunteers Grant and were successful in securing funds. This equipment will be used to set up each stall.

State Council will be out and about again this year and hope to catch up with WA members at these events.

WA State Council meet for three face to face meetings in Perth during the year and monthly via the online platform, ZOOM. Conducting these meetings online improves attendee participation, with the options to display documents and video cameras on screen.

I had great pleasure in attending the Joint Councils meeting in Melbourne with fellow WA Councillor, Sally Brindal.

During the two days of meetings I found it invaluable hearing the accomplishments and issues the other States face.

It also highlighted to me that WA are not alone when it comes to ICPA memberships dwindling.

We saw the Esperance Branch convene the 2019 State Conference, "School door closes, a new door opens" and the theme was post compulsory education and pathways.

The Indian Ocean backdrop was a welcome sight for most, especially those who don't have the privilege of living near the ocean.

We welcomed many members from around the State, members of both State and Federal Parliaments, Department of Education representatives and representatives from secondary and tertiary schools, both Government and non-government.

Motions presented by members were in relation to: -

- Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA), the reduction and how it is affecting families and asking for the Government to increase the allowance in line with the consumer price index (CPI).
- Government Residential Colleges and the inequitable fee structure for non-government school students. Geraldton Grammar students are currently charged an extra \$8692 and Nagle Catholic College students being charged an extra \$6500 on top of the standard accommodation fee of \$14,143 per year.

- Support Teacher of Learning (STL) and ensuring that the role and funding for the position in Schools of the Air (SOTA) continues past 2019.
- Professional Development training for Level Three Principals that have not had previous roles as a Deputy or Principal and that an Executive Principal be trialled in some schools.
- Telecommunications faults and repairs and the time taken to repair as per the Customer Service Guarantee (CSG) in rural & remote WA.
- The retention and maintenance of landline services in rural & remote areas.
- Increase to the Student Subsidised Travel, Conveyance Allowance for the purpose of travelling to pick up and drop off students at school.
- A full policy review of the orange bus service for rural students.

At the conference we said goodbye to a number of Councillors: Carol Ford, Elize Scheepers & Karina Walter. Thank you to these ladies for their contribution whilst on Council.

We were fortunate to welcome five new Councillors: Kym Byrns – Hyden Branch, Jane Hughes – Gascoyne Branch, Naomi Obst – Midwest Branch, Chandra Ridley – Meekatharra Air Branch and the return of past Councillor, Sandie McCombie – Pilbara Branch.

The Retired Educator Volunteers for Isolated Students Education (REVISE WA) chairperson position was taken up by Gascoyne Branch member, Mary Wake. This position is appointed by ICPA WA, with the candidate required to be a current ICPA member.

Our state publication, the Bits & Pieces has a new editor, someone you will all know, current Pedals editor, Raelene Hall. I would like to thank both Mary and Raelene for taking on these positions, this has eased the workload for our WA State Councillors.

My thanks also to Federal Vice President, Sally Sullivan and Federal Membership Officer, Jane O'Brien for attending on behalf of Federal Council and presenting the Federal Report on behalf of Wendy Hick.

The WA State Council met for their first face to face meeting since conference on 3rd and 4th July in Perth. During these two days some Councillors attended delegations to Parliament. For some, it was their first delegation and quite an insight for them.

We met with both the Education Minister, Hon. Sue Ellery and Shadow Education Minister, Hon. Donna Faragher to highlight the issues raised by our members at Conference.

During our meeting with Minister Ellery the issue was raised in relation to the review into the Government Residential College fees and in particular the Geraldton Residential College, with the Minister being very accommodating and organising for Department of Education representative, Alison Ramm to meet with us the next day to contribute to the review.

Historically, the differential fee arrangements at Geraldton Residential College were due to different Governments and the current Education Minister has said that she would like a review into this structure, with three options for consideration: -

1. Keep as is.
2. Set a standard fee for government & non-government students.
3. Same fee for all students.

During this meeting, ICPA WA put their position to the Department and said that we would like to see equal access for all students and would like to see option three put in place. Students should not be penalised for the school they attend, when all students use the same facilities. We asked that the Minister take this issue as a matter of urgency, due to some families already looking into relocating students to Perth, as the cost of boarding at Geraldton Residential College is the same fee as some of the top boarding schools in Perth.

The Department has advised that the Minister will take all matters raised into consideration and we should have a decision by the end of Term 3.

The Minister would not weigh in on the BAHA issue, saying that she may look at the structure, after the fifth year of the reduction of the BAHA. The Minister did not want to mislead families and could not promise, but it has been noted.

Membership continues to be of a concern in Western Australia, with our current membership numbers declining, down this year by 70. As was the feedback from the other States at the Joint Councils Meeting in Melbourne, we are certainly not alone.

State Treasurer, Bianca James continues to send out renewal notices to Branch Treasurers and directly to those members that have not renewed.

I would like to acknowledge the support ICPA WA receives from our generous sponsors, including Telstra, nbn Local and the various schools and businesses. Without this much relied upon support, we just couldn't continue in our capacity.

Also, thanks to the WA Department of Education, who through the support of a grant, support us in advocating for the equity of access to an appropriate education for rural & remote students.

Lastly, my thanks to the WA State Council. I continue to be amazed by the incredible people I have met who come on to Council, to volunteer their time and knowledge to such a worthy organisation that is so well-respected Australia wide. Without this commitment shown by these State Councillors, I am sure that ICPA would not continue.

And in closing, I would like to reiterate the importance of engaging our younger generations to ensure that their involvement helps to continue this wonderful organisation that has given me so much in return.

NORTHERN TERRITORY PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sarah Cook

Thank you for the opportunity to present a report on behalf of the Northern Territory State Council of ICPA. I have held the position of President for a just a few months, so it feels a bit premature for me to be standing here, but there certainly is a lot to talk about, nevertheless.

Before we move onto the business end of NT ICPA, I'd like to set the scene around education for Northern Territory geographically isolated families.

The Territory has a population of almost 246,000. About half live in our capital city, Darwin. We are young, almost half of us are between 25-50 years old and a quarter of us are younger than 17 years old.

A statistic I found really interesting and which makes me feel quite proud is about 10% of the national Aboriginal population live in the Territory; Aboriginal people make up over 30% of the Northern Territory's population.

Therefore, it follows geographically isolated families in the Northern Territory are mostly Aboriginal, living in the several hundred Communities, Outstations and Homelands spread across the Territory.

What these statistics mean, and the point I'm trying to make, is there are many 'levels of need' in equity in education in the Northern Territory; and ICPAs voice for our geographically isolated members is heard in the same space as the most extreme levels of disadvantage in rural and remote Northern Territory. Which is a difficult space to position our issues.

The second challenge we have is, due to our small population and large land area, Territory Government money is very hard to come by, and because we are a Territory not a State, many of the available money buckets come directly from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and are tied to reducing Indigenous disadvantage.

As a new President, I have been seeking advice and mentorship on how NT ICPA can pitch our issues in a space that often easily gets stuck on competing ideologies. While everybody, including NT ICPA, strongly agree Indigenous disadvantage is an absolute priority for us all – including the Northern Territory and Australian Governments, over 30 motions were carried at our State Conference in Katherine earlier this year, clearly demonstrating our members continue to seek equity in education and require ICPAs advocacy as much as ever.

Having said that, I want to thank ICPA Australia, together with every other State Council and Branch, for providing an ongoing platform of strength and professionalism which gives ICPA a foot in the door almost every time.

Onto business!

In Pedals and the State Newsletters I marvel at all the different models of sports and social development camps. NT ICPA is absolutely delighted that Hospitality NT once again gave us a significant donation which enables the Katherine and Alice Springs Branches to continue to build their respective sports and social development camps in their regions.

I'd like to acknowledge both Branch Presidents who are here at Conference today, Kerrie Scott representing Katherine and Amber Driver representing Alice Springs. Amber is also my President because I am a member of the Alice Springs branch. NT ICPA is very fortunate to be guided and supported by our Territory Branches under the leadership of Kerrie and Amber, who also sit on State Council.

While NT ICPA has many motions on its agenda this year, Early Childhood crosses over with Special Needs, Allowances and Miscellaneous motions, so Early Childhood is a big focus area for us at present. The excellent work done by our Early Childhood Leader Anna Weir has enabled NT ICPA to demonstrate to our Department of Education (DoE) that many rural and remote Territory children under 5 years old are missing out on early childhood services including playgroups, early detection and intervention. We hope what follows is both more funding and continuity of funding for mobile playgroups, early detection and intervention programs for those children who are presently falling through the cracks.

Also on Early Childhood is the challenge Territory families continue to face in accessing In Home Care. We were advised there are ample 'placements' available in the Northern Territory, so we are not sure why families are still struggling to access them. Anna continues to investigate this for our members.

NT ICPA is very pleased with the progress of our motions and a few highlights flowed from our recent delegations. Firstly, the Department of Education (DoE) agreed to facilitate a high-level meeting to consider our case to review the Northern Territory Student Assistance Scheme.

The Northern Territory Student Assistance Schemes provides some financial assistance towards the cost of educating children living in isolated areas. This scheme hasn't been reviewed for years, despite the policy work Sally Sullivan & I did at the end of 2017 to convince the DoE it was indeed time for a review.

The scheme itself is paper based, lacks systems to engage with end users at almost every point and importantly, we believe the scheme is both underutilised and over-utilised, indicating a review is not only necessary, but important to keep in step with the needs of rural and remote families.

Secondly, the DoE responded to a conference floor motion with a subsidy for families unable to connect to the NT Government owned Stars network and who pay for their own internet to do school. This subsidy follows policy work from our Distance Education Leaders Amanda Murphy and Kerrie Scott and is an interim arrangement of \$50 per family, per month towards the cost of nbn internet. NT ICPA understands most affected families are paying much more than \$50 per month, however it is a positive outcome that the department acknowledges our motion and the circumstances of our affected families in this way.

In the long term, we anticipate the NT Government will settle its negotiations with the nbn and all distance education (School of Air) families will transition off the Stars network and onto a multicast nbn service that facilitates the Remote Education And Conferencing Tool (REACT), which some of you might remember Michael and Suzanne Wilson presented at the Alice Springs Federal Conference two years ago.

Another big piece of news is the Northern Territory and Australian Governments will jointly fund a new 40-bed boarding facility, positioned alongside the Tennant Creek high school. While this announcement is welcome on many levels, and NT ICPA have agreed to provide support and feedback in the development of this project, we are not sure how many of our members will use it, being there are many reasons why families choose a boarding facility including family support, curriculum choice, single sex boarding and proximity to travel options.

The issue of educating school students about Australian Food and Fibre is talked about in many circles and several motions were carried at our State Conference this year as well. NT Farmers recently invited NT ICPA to participate in their initiative 'To support a coordinated approach in the Northern Territory to educating school students about Australian Food and Fibre production and the career opportunities available'. Our participation will be under the leadership of Sally Sullivan, Tertiary and Training Leader.

I will close by saying, and you will all appreciate this, what I've reported today is just a snapshot of what's going on in the Territory. Following conference, we are still trying to bed down State Council email issues, documents storage and the necessary systems to help us function effectively. There are 10 of us on Council but getting 10 in the same room is probably harder than herding cats.

State Conference is bang-on the start line of hectic mustering rounds, in-schools and camp drafts. Finding time to prepare and attend meetings, record and follow-up actions and hold our stakeholders and decision makers to account is a challenge for our volunteers, but I personally believe these are the things that create change. A few years ago, I asked a State President whom I admire greatly "how do you do it?" She replied simply "lead by example". And that's what I intend to do.

Tiani Cook is our Immediate Past President and Communications/Technology Portfolio Leader, Suzanne Wilson is our Vice President and Miscellaneous/Across the Border Leader. (Suzanne is also the Federal Secretary). Rebecca Cadzow is our Secretary and Curriculum Leader, Sarah Measey is our Treasurer and Rural and Remote Schools Leader, Amanda Murphy is our Publicity Officer and joint Distance Education Leader. Anna Weir is our Early Childhood Leader and Sally Sullivan is our Special Needs Leader (as well as the Federal Vice-President). I confess I convinced Amber Driver and Kerrie Scott that, as Branch Presidents, if they joined State Council I wouldn't give them a Portfolio! Nevertheless, they have both stepped up in the same way they contribute to their branch. This is our State Council and I am privileged to represent them here today. Thank you.

NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Claire Butler

It is with great pleasure that I give my very first President's report on behalf of ICPA NSW. I would like to thank Wendy Hick and her Federal team for being supportive mentors to all of the new Councillors for NSW. With both State and Federal elections this year, it has been a particularly busy four months, since coming onto State Council. With the exception of Immediate Past President Bruce Paynter and Vice Presidents Libby McPhee and David Butler, State Council has an entirely new executive team, and we have resolved to be kind to ourselves as we navigate our way through our first twelve months. There is a real sense of teamwork and comradery and as a team we are very hopeful about what we will achieve together for our members.

State Conference 2019

On the 6th and 7th March, Wentworth Branch hosted the NSW State Conference in Buronga. Motions were passionately delivered by over 20 branches and State Council has already taken many of these issues to Parliament and Stakeholders at the June Mini Deputation.

The conference, with the theme "Striving for the Best in the Far West" was held during International Women's Week and had a special focus on different aspects of women's lives. It was evident that the drought in NSW is having a huge impact on our members and is therefore impacting education on all levels. The supervisor's conference held the day prior had everyone engaged by guest speaker Andrew Fuller, Clinical Psychologist and Family Therapist. It was also fantastic to see a new branch attend conference – congratulations to Hillston on their recent formation.

Mini Deputation 2019

The mini deputation in Sydney on the 18th and 19th June saw encouraging outcomes from the meetings with key stakeholders. Transport for NSW will explore the expansion of the School Drive Subsidy to NSW children who travel in a private vehicle to access pre-school. Buoyed by these positive discussions with Transport, State Councillors then headed off to Parliament to meet with newly elected Ministers. (Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, **Minister for Education**, the Hon Adam Marshall, **Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW**, The Hon Paul Toole, **Minister for Regional Transport and Roads**, The Hon Bronnie Taylor, **Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women**). There were also meetings with officials from **Transport for NSW**, **Telstra** and **ACCAN** (Australia's peak body for consumer representation in Communications).

State Council looks forward to following up again on Main Deputation in October.

Moree is set to host the 2020 conference on 18th and 19th March and plans are already well underway.

An update of the portfolios:

Allowances

Through the guidance of Portfolio Lead Tanya Mitchell, State Council has revamped the Allowances information that is published in Top Wire magazine and is also available on our website. The recent Drought and Education Costs survey conducted by ICPA NSW indicated that of the 95% of respondents experiencing financial difficulty towards educating their children, 15% are seriously considering moving to a second home closer to town. Many respondents suggested that the AIC needs increasing and also suggested a hardship loan for education from the Government Youth Allowance for Tertiary students who must live away from home continues to be an issue.

Boarding Schools Agricultural High Schools and Hostels

ICPA NSW currently has 51-member schools and Portfolio Leader, Irene Lund has very effectively enhanced communications with those schools. State Council also appreciates the many schools who are offering understanding and helping families as they struggle through the drought. This was evident in the recent survey also.

Communications

It was very pleasing that the Federal Government announced that Naradhan and Clare Public Schools would receive a small cell mobile tower under round 4 of the mobile blackspot program. This is one example of how a conference motion can gain momentum and an outcome is made. Libby McPhee is the Communications Portfolio Lead and Libby reports that she has enjoyed the teleconference meetings with other State Communication Officers. State Council also represents our members on the NSW Regional Advisory Council and the NSW Regional Broadband Roundtable.

Distance Education

ICPA NSW is continuing to advocate for Teaching incentives for Governesses, and second year visas for Governesses to address the rural NSW shortfall. The recent Drought Education Costs Survey indicated that 17% of respondents have held off sending a child to boarding school in the commencement of secondary and for many of these families those children will be enrolled on Distance Education.

Distance Education support for Pre-schoolers, second computers in the DE Classroom are all matters still very high on the agenda and with the guidance of Skye Bragg as portfolio lead, ICPA NSW will continue to raise this so that we can get favourable outcomes for our most isolated students.

Early Childhood

With every child in Australia expected to complete 600 hours of pre-school in the year before school, our members have been concerned about how their children can achieve this benchmark. The School Drive Subsidy and access to bus travel would alleviate this issue for many members.

Portfolio Leaders Annabel Strachan and Skye Bragg continue to carry the torch for preschool programmes to be run, using the facilities in remote schools.

Rural Schools

ICPA NSW would like to see a handover policy between new and existing Principals and that new Principals are given adequate training and support before commencing employment at TP1 schools. Inadequate technology continues to bug many rural and remote schools. Concerns around casual teaching staff and Rural Area Relief teachers are still apparent and ICPA NSW will continue to raise this with Annabel Strachan as the portfolio leader.

Special Education

I have taken on board this portfolio. State Council has expressed our interest in being a part of the NSW Dept of Education's Disability Strategy group. This group will focus on four key areas:

- Strengthening and Supporting Teachers
- Increasing resources and flexibility
- Improving family experiences
- Tracking outcomes

The issue of a Mandatory Unit of Autism Spectrum training for University Students studying to be a teacher is still being raised with NESAs and other authorities.

Ongoing relationships with organisations such as Royal Far West and Palm Avenue School are valuable. Royal Far West has launched their telehealth service which will ensure mental health services reach all children.

Travel

As previously stated, there have been some very positive discussions with Transport for NSW around the concept of school drive subsidy being extended to pre-schoolers.

State Council is still advocating for a University Student Travel Allowance.

Transport for NSW has confirmed that they will look at case by case scenarios for reducing the number of students required to start a bus run.

Seat belts on buses – expected to be fully rolled out by 2023.

David Butler continues in his role as leader of the Travel Portfolio and has forged some great working relationships with Department officials.

Tertiary

The Country University Centres (CUC) continues to grow and it is very pleasing to see further funding announcements from the NSW Government. The CUC is based on a model which delivers supported learning to rural tertiary students, providing them with access to campus level technology, facilities, tutors and a network of support.

Many thanks to Tim Fletcher for leading this portfolio.

Boarding Schools Expo

May 17th and 18th – The face to face Council meeting in Dubbo was also an opportunity to attend the Boarding Schools Expo that same weekend. It was extremely insightful to experience all that boarding schools have to offer at this ‘one stop shop’ expo. Many thanks to Meg Bennett and her Boarding Schools Expo team for always including ICPA NSW in this very worthwhile experience and continuing to invite us to hold a stall. We have also just recently participated in the Tamworth Boarding Schools Expo.

Rural and Remote Conference 2019

The NSW Dept of Education Rural and Remote Conference is being held this week, 30 July, in Tamworth, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga and ICPA NSW has representatives on the organising committee. This is an opportunity for educators in the Public System to engage and to also understand the challenges.

With the assistance of Internet technology, State Council has also been able to attend meetings with the following:

- RREAG – Rural Remote Education Advisory Group
- Dept of Education Disability Strategy
- UNICEF – Drought Summit
- RAC – NSW Regional Advisory Council
- Regional Broadband Roundtable

I would like to finish by playing you a video that was produced by Wentworth Branch, for the 2019 State Conference - special mention to Vick Olds for re-writing the words and Clancy Griffiths for singing.

<https://www.facebook.com/987451024646037/videos/2310442102578804/>

ICPA WEBSITE MANAGER'S REPORT

Sue Shotton

Madam President, Distinguished Guests, ICPA Life Members, ICPA Members and guests, it gives me great pleasure to present this year's ICPA website report.

Technology advances at great speed and with that it is important that information our members need to access is delivered as quickly as possible, over a variety of technological means such as the ICPA websites, social media, emails and other related information means. These fantastic avenues of information exchange require a dedicated team of volunteers to ensure everything works correctly and is delivered efficiently.

This side of ICPA business has grown over the past few years to become very time consuming for our volunteers, so over the past twelve months our dedicated team has had a restructure, which hopefully will ease the workload and encourage more volunteers to put their hands up to learn a new skill and learn about technology delivery. All positions of the website team, except for the publicity officers, do not have to be part of a Federal or State Council and can be co-opted into the positions for a 12-month period.

So, what is involved in being part of the website team?

There are seven stand-a-lone websites with each State and Federal having their own website to work with. So, each State and Federal can have two people who can access the website and make changes to it. One of these people is the Webmaster (a co-opted position) who can change the content on all pages (if the State/Federal Council grants full access to these members), can upload documents, news media and events through the modules associated, as well as updating the State's branch pages. The other member is the publicity officer who can update news media, documents and event information through their State/Federal website instantly when this information becomes available. This information, through the modules, is what usually appears automatically on the home page of the website.

Another part of our restructure is the creation of a new co-opted position, the Assistant Web Manager. This person helps to train the Webmasters and publicity officers on how to use the different modules and gives assistance when assistance is needed. They will also keep an eye on the content of the websites to ensure that old information is removed and hopefully find where there might be broken links within the websites. Please if something doesn't work let one of the web committee know so it can be rectified.

Finally, the last co-opted position is the Website Manager. This person manages the front and back of house workings of the website, works with the developers when the need arises and deals with all the other associated technology that exists behind the scenes as well as training and giving assistance to Webmasters. Our web presence is not just the seven websites but also includes our database, which is embedded into the Federal Website and links to the online payment system and the Federal Mailchimp database. The ICPA email addresses are also managed by the Website Manager through a different host to the website.

ICPA has been informed by our developers and website host that the content editing back-of-house system, Breeze, is being retired soon and will no longer be supported by our website hosts due to this system being old and outdated which may impact on the website security. Our hosts are moving all their clients onto new platforms, which are more modern, user friendly and easier to maintain the security. Due to ICPA's complex website structure and the seven websites, the developers are still

trying to find the most suitable platform for us. Hopefully I might have some more information at conference regarding this but the important thing that needs to happen is to have all the websites “mapped” to ensure all the capabilities that we currently have move across to the new platform. Also, the cost of this is unknown at the time of writing but, unfortunately this will be something ICPA will need to do to ensure the websites are secure websites once our old platform is no longer supported.

The websites, in general, have been operating well but it takes all members to help with the continual improvement of the information being supplied. If you are visiting your State’s website or even the Federal website and see something that is outdated or think something should be displayed, please email your state/federal webmaster the suggestion so council can take your suggestions on board. Especially if something is not working or has “disappeared” so it can be corrected.

The online payment system has been working with no major issues reported by members. It is important to remember that to renew your membership if you are an existing member, simply log on and click renew membership. All your details as contained in the database will be displayed and you can correct anything that is wrong before renewing your membership. A common issue that does occur is you have changed your email address, but the database has not been updated. You go to log on and it says your email address is unknown, so you might click on join and then you create a second datafile. We have had less of these this year which is good, but my advice would be if you are an existing member and the system doesn’t recognise your email contact the Federal Membership Officer to have this corrected **before** attempting to renew your membership.

Finally, I would like to end on a topic that is common to all and not just to ICPA members. The dreaded fraud emails. Please be aware that these emails are becoming more and more authentic looking but always be suspicious if you receive an email that you aren’t expecting and remember to not automatically reply to a request. Hover your mouse over the send email address and check that it is from the person it says that sent it. Hit reply but don’t send and see where it will be sent. If not to who you expect it to be sent to delete it. If in doubt ring the person. A phone call might save you a loss of money. NEVER click on an attachment if you do not know what it is. Hover your mouse over the attachment link to see where it will go to. My advice – Be SUSPICIOUS of everything and hit the DELETE button if unsure. If it is important the sender can always ring you and can email it again. Just don’t take things at face value all the time. Unfortunately, this is a sign of the world we now live in.

If anyone would like to know more information on anything ICPA technology wise (website, email, online payment system or anything else) please come and say ‘hi’ and ask your question. If you are interested in maybe taking on one of the co-opted positions at some time, please also come and have a chat.

PEDALS REPORT

Raelene Hall

Madam President, Federal Councillors, ICPA Members and guests, it is my pleasure to present the 2019 Pedals report.

Pedals is the national magazine of ICPA and in January 2019 we celebrated our 150th edition with a very special issue. How wonderful it was to have email and phone conversations with so many of those who have been involved in it in the past, and some, from the very beginning.

When I think of the ease in which I can edit the magazine these days compared to those who came before me I realise how very fortunate we, as ICPA members, are that these wonderful people had the dedication, patience and passion to produce Pedals.

I have an advantage over every other reader of Pedals. I get to read all the articles first! In the latest edition, which hopefully most of you have received by now, I laughed until I cried at one article. It was the story of a mother and her introduction to teaching her own children. A job she thought, as a qualified teacher, would be a breeze until the universe started throwing curveballs at her family. That part wasn't funny, but this was, and I quote,

"Imagine me chasing Gus across the flat if you will, trying to get him back in the classroom and colour in a bloody platypus, any colour buddy or you can paint it?"

As a past Home Tutor, it brought back so many memories of my own frustrations of teaching my children. I'd like to reassure the writer she too, will laugh about it in the future.

This is what Pedals is about - telling your stories. The stories you think no one else wants to read, the stories that make up your everyday life, the stories that prove, just like the rest of us, you are human. These stories help our State and Federal Councils lobby for our cause.

As well as considering what you, or your branch can contribute to Pedals, reach out to others who you feel have a story worth telling. Sometimes all it takes is a little encouragement. They don't have to be ICPA members - although we would love it if they joined!

Tell me what other magazine can you pick up at the newsagent that has real human-interest stories like this? That aren't written by professional journalists (well the odd one is given the talent pool within ICPA members), that don't embellish the truth or create false rumours or aim to bring people down. Oh, and it doesn't cost members anything either. It's included as part of your ICPA membership. Now how's that for a bonus? Maybe we should be on the newsagent shelves! Move over New Idea, the new kid's in town!

Meanwhile, until we hit that shelf, let's use our magazine to spread the word about ICPA and our stories by not wasting our read magazines. When next in your local town or the city drop them into a caravan park, a Dr's surgery, the dentist, hairdresser, your local school or Shire or the boarding school lobby.

I'll expect your articles on Federal Conference in my inbox tomorrow morning!!

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

BOARDING SCHOOLS/SCHOOL TERM HOSTELS REPORT

Caroline Robinson

ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate and support members whose children must attend boarding school in order to access their compulsory education as they live too far away from a school to be able to attend daily. For many families who live in rural communities as well as on rural properties, boarding is the only practical option for their children's secondary education.

2018 Federal Conference Following the "Country Kids in Capitals" 2018 Federal Conference in Canberra, ICPA (Aust) wrote letters pertaining to Boarding School motions to the Prime Minister of Australia, Minister for Human Services and Minister for Families and Social Services with copies to the Minister for Education, Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources as well as shadow Ministers and Greens representatives outlining the concerns raised in the 2018 boarding schools/school term hostels motions. In response to our letters we received several replies, including from the Prime

Minister the Hon Scott Morrison MP acknowledging our request for the establishment of a Rural Hardship Education Fund and another from the Assistant Treasurer with regards to the complexities and difficulties associated with Fringe Benefit Tax issues.

Rural Hardship Education Fund Federal Council have spoken extensively on the need for a permanent program to assist rural and remote families with education costs in times of rural hardship, whether this is through fire, flood, industry impacts or drought.

ICPA (Aust) received a reply from The Hon Scott Morrison MP in response to the request for the establishment of a Rural Hardship Education Fund, outlining the outcomes from the National Drought Summit held on the 26 October 2018 and stating:

‘As a Federal Government, it’s our job to look after the families, individuals and communities to ensure that there is food on the table, kids can keep going to school and that the towns and regions can remain viable.’

ICPA (Aust) has also had representation at meetings with the Joint Agencies Drought Taskforce where we raised the urgent need for the implementation of a Rural Hardship Education Fund (RHEF) as well as highlighting the excessive educational costs faced by rural families in accessing schooling for their children.

Federal Council is gathering current case studies regarding flood and drought impacted families as they struggle to keep their children at boarding school. These provide credible insights to support our advocacy.

Following the catastrophic monsoon event in North Queensland the Federal Government via the Department of Human Services announced in March 2019 the *Flood Education Supplement* which provided a one-time payment of \$1,000 to eligible students as part of the North Queensland Flood Recovery Package. Families who are eligible to receive Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) or ABSTUDY living in flood affected Queensland shires received this supplement. ICPA (Aust) is grateful to the Federal Government for recognising the need for educational support after this horrendous event and appreciates the quick action in providing financial recognition to keep these geographically isolated children at school.

ICPA (Aust) is hopeful that while this funding was provided in a different platform than assistance for education being sought for drought affected families, that it might be seen as a precedence, and will possibly assist in bringing about realisation that educational assistance for drought impacted families is crucial as well.

Mental Health for Boarders Mental wellbeing, particularly for students who live away from home for schooling, has been a focus in our boarding discussions. Federal Council has been involved in several conversations with various organisations interested in the creation of resources designed specifically for rural and remote students and their families which will help address the unique challenges they face, whether they are boarding away from home, in a small rural school setting or distance education classroom.

A floor motion at last year’s conference requested that boarding school/hostel staff have Youth Mental Health First Aid training. Options are being explored to take this motion forward with boarding schools and boarding school associations.

ICPA (Aust) also assisted UNICEF in coordinating a trip to rural NSW areas to talk with children to assess the impact the drought is having on them and Federal Council welcomed their report which contained

very upfront comments, released on 18 February 2019. The report can be found at https://www.unicef.org.au/our-work/unicef-in-australia/the-drought-report?fbclid=IwAR1l_DzImmXE-7If0wOW4QQaG3OoFPNvckOQi69X2VhDSkTvRTB4Tg52ynA

Further to the UNICEF report, UNICEF is initiating a Youth Summit to bring together young people in rural drought affected areas. ICPA (Aust) has been assisting with connections for this summit and suggestions for the initial committee and hopes that a number of rural and remote students will be able to take part.

Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Motions requesting an increase to the AIC and adjustment to the different components of the allowance have been raised through letters written to government, delegations and meetings with the Departments of Education and Training, Human Services and Social Services. While a sympathetic ear is often afforded, ICPA (Aust) is still working on having these changes come to fruition.

At the 2018 Federal Conference, ICPA members supported a motion asking ICPA (Aust) to seek the undertaking of a review of the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) and Federal Council raised this at our delegations in November. Interest in an AIC review was expressed by a number of government representatives and Federal Council were encouraged to hear that one Minister planned to formally request such a review. Our request for a review of AIC was also included in our briefing papers as part of our federal election campaign. Federal Council are still waiting to hear of progress on the possibility of a review.

Over the Christmas break, Federal Council supported ICPA members who received AIC payment duplications and cancellation letters. Federal Council also held discussions with the Department of Human Services regarding solutions for these situations and the effect these multiple payments and cancellation letters have on families. These issues further strengthen ICPA (Aust)'s call for online renewal and processing. ICPA (Aust) will continue to pursue an AIC online renewal process as an option along with other concerns associated with the AIC application, approval and implementation process.

ICPA (Aust) has been assured that AIC payments in 2019 will be paid on the dates published on the ICPA website which will assist families with planning.

Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) ICPA (Aust) continues to raise in delegations with the Federal Government, the removal of the FBT incurred by employers who assist employees living in rural and remote locations with the huge out-of-pocket costs associated with boarding children away from home for their schooling. In October 2018, ICPA (Aust) also wrote to Federal Treasurer, the Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP expressing our members' concern of this issue. The Hon. Stuart Robert MP, Assistant Treasurer, replied to our request suggesting that ICPA (Aust) consider putting forth the information around this issue into a submission for the Productivity Commission Review into Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments. This submission was lodged in May 2018 and can be found at this link <https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1198/federal-submissions/remote-area-tax-concessions-and-payments-productivity-commission-review-2019.pdf>. ICPA (Aust) also attended a consultation with the Productivity Commission in the process of this review.

Bank Accounts and Boarding Students At the 2018 Conference, a motion was presented requesting that ICPA (Aust) raise awareness with banks regarding young students and their need to have access to bank accounts and cash withdrawal cards from an early age as a result of some students 11 years old and younger being away from home for schooling. This resulted in an article being published in the January 2019 edition of Pedals magazine. A resource document, available on the ICPA (Aust) website, was also created which offers boarding parents some suggestions for consideration when discussing their students' banking needs including possible questions to ask when seeking to open an

independent bank account for students. Follow this link to view the Banking and Boarding Students document on our website. <https://www.icpa.com.au/page/attachment/130/banking-doc-for-pedals-jan-19>

Boarding Interest from the Media During June 2019, The Australian Financial Review published a number of articles relating to boarding schools and the schooling option they offer to students. ICPA (Aust) was interviewed for the articles and have shared them on Facebook. Over the series there are comments on the benefits of boarding and effects of drought on boarding families. The articles make reference to ICPA and the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) which provided statistics, tables and figures around boarding that will be useful in future discussions with government.

ICPA Federal Council will continue to advocate strongly for geographically isolated families who must seek boarding schools to access their compulsory education and the many issues associated with this. We encourage all ICPA members to actively participate and share any concerns or issues that they feel Federal Council may assist with.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our dedicated and hardworking team of Federal councillors who have contributed to this portfolio: Kate Thompson, Alana Moller, Christie Goddard, Kristen Coggan and Nikki Macqueen and our President Mrs Wendy Hick.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Kristen Coggan

With 19 Communications motions presented at the 2018 ICPA Federal Conference, telecommunications issues continue to be one of the major areas of concern brought forward by ICPA members.

ICPA (Aust) works closely with the Federal Government, telecommunications companies and other like-minded stakeholders to seek the maintenance and development of adequate, affordable and reliable communications services for families in regional, rural and remote areas, particularly for the purpose of equitable educational outcomes.

The Regional Telecommunications Independent Review

The 2018 Regional Telecommunications Review is now complete and [the Committee](#) delivered its [report](#) to the Minister for Regional Services, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, on 30 September 2018. The review highlights many of our own communication concerns for education. The Australian Government delivered its [response to the review](#) on 20 March 2019. The report examines how people use telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia and makes a series of recommendations on how regional communities can maximise the economic opportunities of digital technologies and services. (*Full links contained at the end of the report).

INTERNET

NBN – Sky Muster

The introduction of the new Sky Muster Plus product will enhance rural, regional and remote communications and educational outcomes. Sky Muster Plus is planned for launch in August 2019. NBN has listened to Sky Muster users and taken their feedback on board to develop this new product which will maximise the use of satellite capacity with larger, sustainable wholesale plans for remote end users who are reliant on satellite. Managing bandwidth hungry applications will maintain a low congestion experience for customers. Currently no beams are congested at the wholesale level. Possible future additional features are wholesale plans for large public interest premises networks e.g. multicast for distance education. Traffic tagged as “Unmetered Data” would be excluded from

monthly data allowance and therefore can be excluded from speed reduction or “shaping” when metered data allowance is exceeded. “Metered data” traffic has a monthly data allowance limit that when exceeded is subject to “shaping”. Essentially this new product will offer the unmetering of essential services such as web-browsing, email and software updates. Metering will apply to streaming video and music, virtual private networks, file sharing and internet voice services.

ICPA (Aust) encourages members who are eligible and may be considering a Sky Muster service to have the Sky Muster hardware installed while there is no charge for the equipment or installation. This government funded incentive is only guaranteed until 2020. ICPA (Aust) urges members to take advantage of this while they can. Information on providers and plans can be found here. <https://birraus.com/satellite/satellite-providers/>

Nbn Sky Muster Education Service (Education Port)

ICPA (Aust) continues to strongly advocate for the nbn Sky Muster Education Port Service, which provides 50 GB of data with no peak or off peak regulation, to be available to all rural and remote students with a Sky Muster (nbn satellite internet) service at home, regardless of whether they study via distance education, at a small rural school, board away from home needing to use the service when home on school breaks for assignments, or study at the tertiary level. At this time, we have not had any progress in seeing the Education Port expansion come to fruition however, we are hopeful that the introduction of the new Sky Muster Plus product may assist members and their families with these issues.

Recently after concern had been raised that not every distance education student can access an education port, ICPA (Aust) had a meeting with NBN regarding this. Access and application for an Education Port does vary depending on whether or not a state provides internet to distance education students in their state. Currently if a student has a distance education student ID number, and they do not receive state provided internet service for their education needs, they can apply for an Education Port. This has been problematic for some students in NSW, NT and WA. NSW, NT and WA are classed as “decentralised”, meaning the state education departments supply an existing network for educational needs of distance ed students, e.g. STARS. However, if a student does not have a working service or access to the state provided service, they are eligible to apply for an education port. Affected families are encouraged to apply for a nbn Education Port to help reduce the cost of internet and provide their students with more data for education.

The process is as follows-

1. Contact a Sky Muster provider with student ID number and request an Education Port.
2. The provider will then apply to NBN for the service, NBN will investigate and ensure a state provided education internet service cannot be accessed for whatever reason.
3. NBN authorises the provider to supply the education port.

The Sky Muster Education Service is not a free service and families pay for each student’s education port, which is usually offered at a slightly better rate than standard Sky Muster plans. Families in some states must cover the cost of the education port themselves. In Queensland, an internet subsidy is provided by the state government to distance education families to help offset this cost. Recently, NT ICPA was successful in requesting similar assistance from the Northern Territory Government Department of Education which has agreed to an interim arrangement of subsidising \$50 per family, per month towards the cost of nbn internet. If eligible families are having difficulty ordering the Education Port, please contact the Communications portfolio leader and ICPA will raise it with nbn.

ICPA (Aust) will keep access to the Education Port in discussions wherever possible. Federal Council is hopeful that eventually the Sky Muster Education Service can be opened up to more students who have Sky Muster internet service at home to help them with their educational needs.

<https://birraus.com/2016/02/28/what-is-the-nbn-sky-muster-educational-port/>

Multicast Trial

ICPA (Aust) has recently been advised by NBN that multicast trials have been successfully completed.

TELEPHONE

Many motions this year were concerning the faults and restoration of telephone services. This was highlighted in the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC) Report. Members also raised concerns around the retention of landline services in rural and remote areas. Federal Council have been assured by the Minister for Communication's office that regional, rural and remote landlines are to remain in place and will not be replaced by VoIP services in their current form. Landline services will continue to be maintained until another means of reliable, affordable and appropriate voice service is available. New technology and devices are currently being investigated to replace existing aging services.

Telstra Country Wide has now been rebranded as Telstra Regional Australia and some initiatives are in place to assist regional, rural and remote customers.

Telstra Faults Contacts 24 hours a day on 132203

Telstra also has dedicated numbers for specialist items:

- 1800 696 495 (1800 MYNGWL) for customers using NGWL to report service difficulties or faults.
- 1800 772 346 (1800 RRADIO) for radio and satellite services to report service difficulties or faults. There is also a dedicated email address (rradio@team.telstra.com) for online fault reporting
- 1800 632 995 (Option 1) for Telstra Mobile Satellite
- For antenna installation and technical support call 1800 305 307 (select option 4).

Other questions / queries:

- **Call:** 132200
- **Visit:** If convenient, call in to the nearest store – all regional stores should be specially trained on Telstra regional products and services. Appointments can also be booked for a time that suits.
- **Online:** Visit the Telstra Regional Australia page on Telstra.com, <https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/telstra-regional-australia>

Additionally, if you need further assistance you can contact Telstra Regional Managers:

Telstra Regional Managers:

NSW/ACT

Northern New South Wales- Michael Maron - TelstraNthNSW@team.telstra.com Ph 0437 452 487

ACT & Southern New South Wales- Reg. General Manager (TBA) TelstraACTSth@team.telstra.com

Victoria / Tasmania

North West Victoria - Steve Tinker TelstraNWVic@team.telstra.com Ph 0428 538 695

Eastern Victoria- Loretta Willaton TelstraEastVic@team.telstra.com Ph 0428 368 041

Tasmania- Michael Patterson TelstraTas@team.telstra.com Ph 0428 973 100

QLD

Northern Queensland- Rachel Cliffe TelstraNorthernQld@team.telstra.com Ph 0448 636 560

Southern Queensland- May Boisen TelstraSthQld@team.telstra.com Ph 0427 740 144

NT/SA/WA

Northern Territory- Nic Danks TelstraNT@team.telstra.com Ph 0418 185 683

South Australia - Mark Bolton TelstraSA@team.telstra.com Ph 0419 835 041

Western Australia- Boyd Brown TelstraWA@team.telstra.com Ph 0418 748 197

Telstra has rolled out its regional call centre that it has created to specifically deal with rural, regional and remote customers. If a residential (not Business) customer calls 132 200 and their account is listed as an address 100+km from a Telstra Store they will be diverted to the Regional Call Centre team. Hours of operation are: 7.30am-9.00pm Monday-Friday, 7.30am-7.30pm Saturday, and 7.30am-5.00pm Sunday. If outside these hours or if all the team are on calls, the customer's phone call overflows to other teams to be answered.

NGWL Customer Service Guarantee

September 2018 saw the Customer Service Guarantee (CSG) applied to the Next G Wireless Link (NGWL) services. NGWL is used to provide fixed voice services to customers who do not have a fixed line connection to their premises. Historically, Telstra's NGWL customers opted for the service in place of a USO standard voice service on a fixed copper line. These customers made an informed choice to take up NGWL as an economic alternative to copper installation, where part of the cost for works such as trenching on private property would have been borne by the customer. The application of the CSG to the NGWL means that any faults on NGWL services will now be repaired within set timeframes or the customer will be compensated. For context, NGWL services represent a small proportion of our regional fixed voice customers, accounting for less than 1.5 per cent of fixed voice services in regional areas. Under its USO contract with the Government, Telstra is obliged to maintain copper connections to premises that were already in place on 1 July 2012. This means the change does not have much impact on the USO voice service technology mix in regional areas.

ICPA (Aust) continues to be a member of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC) and our members' issues are often discussed within the RRRCC forums. ICPA (Aust) also participates in the RRRCC delegations to speak with those in government and this affords opportunity to raise concerns in an additional capacity.

Faults and Universal Obligation

As already mentioned, there were a number of motions at the 2018 Federal Conference referring to faults and restoration times. Stakeholders are aware of these issues and there are actions coming into play to hopefully improve consumer's experiences. Acknowledgement was made by the Minister for Communication's office with a Regulation Impact Statement Update and Universal Service Obligation assurance. ICPA continues to advocate that these guidelines and services be adhered to, and for penalties to apply when breached. Federal Council placed a submission with the *Review into Consumer Safeguards – Part B Reliability of Services* which highlighted concerns raised by members.

https://www.minister.communications.gov.au/minister/bridget-mckenzie/news/landline-works-and-reliable?fbclid=IwAR0X-cMQ87RCZoy0Frs9KkKofrv908DVMv72rBj139ShCP_6eiCvvKa9k1Q

Mobile Black Spot Program

Round 4 of the Mobile Black Spot Program saw some schools that have been highlighted by ICPA branches benefit from the installation of small cells.

Afterlee

Enngonia

Macdonald Valley

Naradhan

Wattle Flat

Mistake Creek

Rossville

Laverton, Cosmo Newberry

Laverton, Mulga Queen

Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Kiwirrkurra

Wattle Flat

The Government has committed \$380 million to the Mobile Black Spot Program to invest in telecommunications infrastructure to improve mobile coverage and competition across Australia. This includes \$160 million in new funding for Rounds 5 and 6 of this highly successful program, announced on 20 March 2019 as part of the Government's response to the 2018 Regional Telecommunications Review. This Program is supported by co-contributions from state and local governments, mobile network operators (Optus, Telstra and Vodafone), businesses and local communities. The Guidelines for Round 5 were released on Grant Connect on 5 April 2019 and the Grant Opportunity (GO2529) was opened for applications. Up to \$80 million in funding has been allocated for Round 5. Like previous rounds of the Program, Round 5 encourages the mobile industry and state and local governments to work together to address mobile black spots across regional and remote Australia. Interested communities are encouraged to contact the mobile network operators and state and local government authorities to make their needs known. A number of schools have now been flagged to get help through an ICPA/Telstra initiative.

The Government has committed \$80 million for Round 6 of the Program. Round 6 is expected to commence after the Round 5 process is complete. More information can be found here <https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/mobile-services-and-coverage/mobile-black-spot-program/frequently-asked-questions-mobile-black-spot-program>

ICPA (Aust) has been well supported in our telecommunications issues by the State Councils, our Branches and members and we will continue to raise these concerns wherever it is possible to have them addressed. Thank you to my fellow Communications councillors: Wendy Hick, Caroline Robinson, Alana Moller and Jane Morton for their support and encouragement over this last year.

***Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee links**

<http://www.rtrc.gov.au/committee.html>

<https://www.communications.gov.au/publications/2018-regional-telecommunications-review-getting-it-right-out-there>

<https://www.communications.gov.au/publications/australian-government-response-2018-regional-telecommunications-independent-committee-report-2018>

CURRICULUM REPORT

Wendy Hick

At the 2018 Federal Conference one Curriculum motion was presented which requested that ICPA (Aust) lobby for Primary Production to be included as a compulsory component of the national curriculum. While “Agriculture” is currently included in the Australian Curriculum, specific reference to Primary Production is being sought by ICPA members as “Agriculture” has been open to interpretation as to how and what is taught by individual states, schools and teachers. Members wish to see the actual process of growing Australian food and fibre taught in schools to create an awareness of where food and fibre come from as well as the process required in providing it.

Federal Council have had discussions with the Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA) <https://www.piefa.edu.au/> to discuss their vision to create an understanding of and value for the primary industries sector in the Australian community. The discussions have focussed on how PIEFA initiatives, including their web portal “Primezone” which aims to provide teachers with single-point access to a range of primary industries educational supplies, may be used to achieve a more accurate and thorough primary production curriculum in schools across Australia. Federal Council has also raised and discussed with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) the need for the inclusion of specific Primary Production curriculum with it being acknowledged that Agriculture is not being effectively included in the current curriculum. However, while Agricultural materials have been a focus of improvement for ACARA over the past few years, it is up to the states how they offer certain subject units within the curriculum. Federal Council sees this as an area where State and Federal Councils can work together to try to initiate change within the respective systems.

ICPA (Aust) is encouraged to see where individual States have taken on board opportunities for Primary Production to feature accurately in their respective state curriculum. In April, the NSW Department of Education announced that beginning in 2020, an Agriculture and Food unit will be compulsory in public secondary schools alongside a range of other measures to increase agricultural education in their state. *Agriculture to Be a Mandatory Unit in New South Wales High Schools* – ABC 22 Nov 2018 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2018-11-22/agriculture-to-be-mandatory-unit-in-nsw-schools/10518776>

ICPA (Aust) is pleased to see the issue being raised in the media (*Push for Kids to Stay Close to Food Source*- the Australian 28-4-2019 https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/push-for-kids-to-stay-close-to-food-source/news-story/9a09b76730c0c012ec4801749cf2a1eb?fbclid=IwAR2ZKcwmPS7Wq71pv9GOsHW6lIcbdv_dVrcwAvjkjmxW9FdqWMkvfSvzho)

The issue of primary production being taught within curriculum has been a “hot topic” in several states and has also been raised at ICPA State Conferences. Federal Council will continue to work with State Councils and to support one another to advocate for the accurate portrayal of Primary Production in the Curriculum across the country and a focus on the importance of teaching where food and fibre comes from in an unbiased platform.

Throughout the past year, ICPA (Aust) has maintained its relationship with ACARA, now under the Leadership of new CEO David de Carvalho and continues to attend quarterly meetings in order to keep abreast of Australian Curriculum developments. Assistance has been sought from Federal Council for ACARA to assess their relationships with rural and remote students and schools along with investigating how they can improve engagement with rural, regional and remote stakeholders. ACARA is keen to reach out to new groups, identify new communication and engagement channels and show

greater diversity in curriculum materials and outgoing communications. The hope is to have better contact and information regarding rural and remote students/families and they are considering a regular update that could be shared with our members or state councils.

ACARA has also sought assistance to encourage parent participation and interaction with the organisation and requested that the Peak Parent Bodies Group, of which ICPA (Aust) is a part, share information with our members. ICPA (Aust) included links to the ACARA website <https://www.acara.edu.au/> for parents to access in the May Branch Bulletin, along with the NAPLAN website which provides information on NAPLAN testing to parents. More recently, ACARA has referred stakeholders to the Australian Curriculum website <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> as a useful resource for information on the National Curriculum.

Online NAPLAN continues to be discussed, with most schools seeming to be more comfortable with the transition. A glitch this year saw reports that arrangements had to be made for a number of students in several states to re-sit the exam when there was a problem with the online exams. Federal Council has not been contacted by any members or rural schools indicating that it was a problem for their students, but it is a space we continue to watch. Federal Council encourages members to explore the NAPLAN website <https://www.nap.edu.au/> to assist with understanding the NAPLAN model. We are also interested in hearing any concerns which may arise, especially as NAPLAN Online is rolled out.

A Media Release from the Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan, on 28 June 2018 stated “An independent review has been commissioned to identify the issues with NAPLAN online this year. Just over one million students sat NAPLAN online this year and while 97 per cent of online tests were unaffected it is not good enough that some students and schools were impacted. All education ministers agreed to extend the transition of NAPLAN to online by one year to 2021 pending the findings and recommendations of the independent review.”

In the same statement, the Minister also announced that the Federal Government will be designing a free and voluntary Year One Phonics Check to assist parents and teachers to better understand a child’s reading level early in their education. The suggestion of a Year One Phonics Screening Program has received somewhat divided comment; however, Year One Phonics Screening Checks have been reported as successful in the UK since the program began in 2012. The South Australia Department of Education ran a Year One Phonics Check Trial over 56 SA public schools in 2017 and in 2018, over 14,000 South Australian Year 1 students participated in the 2018 Phonics Screening Check. ICPA (Aust) was asked for input as to possible considerations for implementing Year One Phonics Screening for rural and remote students and we will watch this space to ensure that geographically isolated students are also able to adequately participate in beneficial programs.

DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT

Alana Moller

ICPA (Aust) is determined to ensure that recognition of the unique needs of geographically isolated distance education students, home tutors and their families are catered for and that resources and support are maintained or improved. At every opportunity we continue to represent and support our distance education members by emphasising wherever possible the distinctive nature of geographically isolated distance education and the major issues affecting its success.

2018 Federal Conference

With a focus on the value of Distance Education Home Tutors and of Schools of Distance Education and Schools of the Air being based in rural and remote locations, the 2018 Federal Conference saw two motions presented and passed in relation to Distance Education.

Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA)

A request for Federal Council to continue its lobby for a DETA was presented as a conjoined motion at Federal Conference. Following on from Federal Conference, ICPA (Aust) has continued to advocate for the establishment of a DETA. The topic was raised in a standalone motion letter, sent to the Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan and other relevant ministers and rural senators and members with an interest in rural and remote education and included links to the DE Resource video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFqc0StaORE&feature=youtu.be> and the ICPA's Distance Education Research for Geographically Isolated Families survey results <http://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1022/federal-icpa-portfolios/federal-distance-education-portfolio/deta-survey-results.pdf>. Notably, this year we also sent this letter to the Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP, Minister for Women, with the view that this matter is one which affects the wellbeing of women in geographically isolated communities. To date we have not received responses to this correspondence.

The call for a DETA to be established was also included in Federal Council Briefing Papers and raised at every opportunity during delegation meetings. In our Federal Election campaign strategy, the need for a DETA was listed on our election infographic as one of our top four priorities and included in briefing papers sent to politicians and candidates across the country.

To this end we cannot say we have made any progress on this issue, however we continue to include the topic within submissions, meetings, delegations and other avenues, attempting to raise the profile of the distance education tutor and the extensive and essential role they play in achieving distance education success.

Location of Schools of the Air/Schools of Distance Education

In 2017 the Western Australian Government made a decision to close regional Schools of the Air and to instead provide a single service from a central Perth (metropolitan) facility. Though later retracted, the proposal highlighted a lack of broader understanding and appreciation of why Schools of the Air and Schools of Distance Education are so important to rural and remote communities. On the back of this, a motion was presented at the 2018 Federal Conference requesting that ICPA (Aust) advocates the importance, value and critical need of Schools of the Air and Schools of Distance Education being based in and part of their respective rural and remote communities.

While decisions of this nature are principally state-based, Federal Council will support and advocate along with the States to ensure Schools of the Air and Schools of Distance Education remain in rural and remote communities. We are also prepared to promote awareness of the features of educating children via distance education in a geographically isolated situation, such as the opportunity to host Central Station blogs focussed entirely on School of the Air and Distance Education experiences.

Central Station Blogs

The Central Station Blog posts which ICPA (Aust) hosted, have been very well received. Circumstances which have eventuated in recent years, makes it clear that geographically isolated distance education is widely misunderstood and the opportunity to tell our stories to a global audience goes a long way to increasing the awareness in the general community of this unique educational experience. Sincere gratitude to all of those people who contributed to our two Central Station blog opportunities in 2018 and this year. We appreciate that you were able to take the time to tell your story.

Other Points of Interest

Assistance for Isolated Children – Distance Education Allowance (AIC – DE)

Although not included in the Distance Education motions in 2018, Federal Council has continued to work on issues associated with AIC. At meetings with the Department of Human Services, ICPA (Aust) raised issues with the AIC application, approval and implementation process, specifically requesting an online application process. Concerns around the application process for distance education students were raised at the 2017 Federal Conference and our advocacy has been around improving AIC processes for distance education, boarding and second home allowance. Federal Council has been assured that an online application process for the AIC is being investigated and developed, however its implementation seems to continue to be a long way off. Comment and suggestions provided by Federal Council on the AIC application process were well received by the Department of Human Services, however, no commitment has been made as to when changes may occur. ICPA (Aust), in a motion letter to the Hon Paul Fletcher, Minister for Families and Social Services, has also requested an increase of the AIC, in line with the costs associated with educating geographically isolated children.

Federal Council has also been in contact with the Departments of Human Services and Social Services requesting an indication of the proportion of geographically isolated students who receive AIC – DE allowance. Federal Council feel that having a clearer understanding of these numbers would assist when advocating for issues around Distance Education to ensure our lobbies are well-informed and up to date.

Aussie Helpers Volunteers for Isolated Student's Education (AHVISE)

After the demise of the former Volunteers for Isolated Student's Education (VISE) program and concerns raised by our members around this, ICPA (Aust) is pleased to report that AHVISE has successfully taken the place of the former program. The AHVISE program has established additional support mechanisms this year, including a virtual classroom, where volunteers who cannot travel can tutor bush kids online. We would once again like to congratulate Aussie Helpers for their determination and dedication to helping educate geographically isolated students.

Impact of Digital Technology on our Students

Federal Council has been in contact with the Australian Council on Children and the Media who are combining with the Australian Council of Educational Leaders to host the first ever *Digital Environments and Developing Minds* Conference. These organisations are aiming to promote a recognition that while the advantages of technology use for children are well documented, any risks to their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development are not necessarily considered or understood. ICPA (Aust) are aware that there are concerns being raised by our members across Australia around student technology use, especially when many of our students' study via a digital distance education curriculum, with extensive online learning required. We are therefore very interested in keeping abreast of these issues and will endeavor to collaborate with these organisations, as well as their Conference partners, to raise our members concerns and seek information which may be beneficial for members. Further information about this Conference can be found at

http://www.acef.org.au/ACEF/ACEFWEB/Events/2019/Children_and_The_Media/About.aspx

Sky Muster Education Service

Issues have been raised around some distance education students being unable to access the Education Service on nbn Sky Muster, with access/eligibility varying across states. ICPA (Aust) can confirm that distance education students with a student ID number from their respective State education department are eligible for an education port, provided that they do not already receive a state based internet service for their schooling. If distance education students do not currently have

a Sky Muster Education Port or access to a state provided service, ICPA (Aust) recommend contacting a Sky Muster provider to apply. This includes students in NSW, WA and NT that may not yet be receiving an internet service from their distance education school, perhaps due to a waiting period or some other reason. While the nbn Sky Muster Education Service (Ed Port) is not free, it is offered to eligible Distance Education families at a lower cost than similar regular service plans and can greatly assist families who do not have state provided internet with additional data for their schooling needs. Please do not hesitate to contact Federal Council if you have any queries or concerns around this issue.

Sky Muster Plus

The long-awaited Sky Muster Plus service is due to launch in mid-2019. This will give rural and remote satellite users greater data capacity, with essential internet services no longer contributing to monthly data usage by Sky Muster users. ICPA (Aust) are optimistic that educational sites may be included in the list of services to be unmetered.

Distance Education Multicast Trials

The REACT multicast technical trials with nbn Sky Muster in the Northern Territory were successful. Product trials will commence in the near future.

In Home Care (IHC)

Although not specifically dealt with in the Distance Education portfolio, the changes made to IHC as at 1 July 2018 have had a significant impact on distance education families and their ability to use IHC to assist them with their situations. ICPA (Aust) remains abreast of developments around IHC and have been supporting members to manage the many issues associated with IHC for geographically isolated families.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to advocate strongly for geographically isolated distance education students and their families. We encourage all ICPA members to actively highlight the valuable role of the geographically isolated distance education tutor and to participate in opportunities to raise the profile of the nature of geographically isolated distance education. If members have any concerns or issues which they feel Federal Council may assist with, please do not hesitate to request our assistance.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank my fellow distance education portfolio members Christie Goddard, Caroline Robinson, Wendy Hick and Lisa Slade.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC) REPORT

Jane Morton

ICPA (Aust) is working hard to ensure rural and remote families can and will access high quality, affordable early childhood learning and child care; whether this is through Preschool or Kindy, Mobile Early Childhood Services including Mobile Playgroups, Long Day Care Centres in small rural towns or In Home Care (IHC).

Early Learning

AIC Distance Education Allowance for Pre-Compulsory school students and Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

ICPA (Aust) will continue to promote both the extension of the AIC Distance Education allowance for those children who are studying an approved preschool/kindy program by distance education the year before formal schooling, and for improved access to preschool in rural and remote areas. The Federal Government has again provided funding, this time \$453.1 million to states and territories for preschool until the end of 2020 under the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education, see: <https://www.education.gov.au/universal-access-early-childhood-education>.

Parents with pre-compulsory school aged children attending a Preschool Program at a Long Day Care Service are eligible for the Child Care Subsidy even though they do not meet the activity test requirements and are entitled to 36 hours of subsidised care. This is a great incentive for families who need to travel many kilometres to town in order to access preschool and so it is rather disappointing that we cannot yet access assistance for our preschoolers studying by distance education. However, we will not give up!

Federal Council welcomed the recent news from the Education Council that Early Childhood Teachers have been given an extension of the transitional provisions in rural and remote areas to address the lack of qualified Early Childhood Teachers in Long Day Centres there. This is being worked out in the various states and territories, as from January 2020 where there are more than 60 children under school-age, a second Early Childhood Teacher 'or suitably qualified person' is required to care for those children. Federal Council is watching this with interest to see whether it will also mean an extension to the transitional provisions in In Home Care.

Mobile Early Childhood Services

The [Community Child Care Funding](#) (CCCF) Round 2 opened for Child Care Services including Mobile Early Childhood Services in disadvantaged communities earlier this year, with the aim of improving access to early learning opportunities for vulnerable children and families. ICPA (Aust) hoped that this extra funding would have helped some Mobile Early Childhood Services providing child care. This was also accessible to In Home Care Services. Unfortunately, Mobile Playgroups do not qualify for the CCCF, though some funding for them has been provided by the Department of Social Services. Mobile services such as the Katherine Isolated Children's Service (KICS) are also partially funded through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS). KICS needs a further \$40,000 to maintain their vital service to pastoral stations and communities in the Northern Territory by the end of the year. They would like to also increase their service to provide a mobile playgroup to properties and communities out of Alice Springs but unfortunately, at this stage, there is no funding available for new Mobile Early Childhood Playgroups in rural and remote areas.

In Home Care (IHC)

Federal Council has received many complaints and concerns from member families since the new In Home Care model was implemented on 2 July 2018. Numerous letters have been written to the Minister for Education, rural politicians and the Department of Education and we have followed up with this on delegations and whenever the opportunity arose. Hopefully the initial teething problems are now settling down.

ICPA (Aust) welcomed the announcement that the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for IHC families increased from \$25.48/hour/family from 2 July 2018 to \$32.00/hour/family and up to \$38.40/hour/family for Additional CCS from 1 January 2019 as per the later version of the IHC National Guidelines, see: https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/ihc_national_guidelines_-_december_2018.pdf. It has risen marginally again by the CPI at 1 July 2019. The Additional Child Care Subsidy is mainly used for children's wellbeing if they are at risk, for example. However, it can also be a temporary measure to help care for children in families experiencing financial hardship or disasters such as floods, cyclones and bushfires. Families are also encouraged to review their incomes to make sure they are receiving the correct percentage of CCS. Federal Council also welcomed the news that 200 more IHC places, an increase to the 3000 existing places, were made available, particularly for Queensland families.

The Department of Education informed IHC services in disadvantaged or vulnerable communities that they could apply for once-off Special Circumstances grants under the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) to address any current lack of viability or natural disaster issues such as drought, the North

West Queensland floods, Tasmanian bushfires etc. during the 2018-19 financial year. Funding to some IHC service providers was reduced in July 2018, the service providers then passed on the added costs as new levies to families. The CCCF Special Circumstances Funding and the CCS increase should have made IHC more affordable. ICPA has heard though that since 1 January, some IHC service providers have increased their fees and not removed the levies, whereas other services have reduced their fees.

IHC educators are required to have at the minimum, a Certificate III in ECEC or be working towards same from January 2020. There are two transitional provisions for IHC educators in remote areas prior to that:

- An IHC educator providing services in a remote or a very remote area will meet the qualification requirements for IHC educators if the IHC educator has access to, and utilises the expertise of, an educator with at least a Certificate III in early childhood education and care for at least 20 per cent of the time care is provided to a family. This may be by means of information and communications technology (ICT).
- An educator, who has been continuously working in a remote or very remote area for at least 15 years is exempt from the qualification requirements until 1 January 2020.

It was expected that these provisions would be available to all geographically isolated families but apparently the Remoteness ARIA index has been used as the isolated measure and so some families have been excluded.

ICPA (Aust) sought departmental clarification on the issue of IHC educators supervising distance education. The Department of Education pointed to Family Assistance Law; citing that only caring for children completing their homework in outside of school hours care, not supervising formal schooling, is permissible for the family to receive CCS for that care. ICPA (Aust) is seeking an exemption to this as distance education teachers are not physically present with their students during school hours, and as isolated children cannot access face-to-face teaching in a school like their peers due to the tyranny of distance, a supervisor has to be with them at all times. This is of particular concern with children under 13 years of age. The Department of Education has recommended that a private arrangement between a family and the IHC educator be made to ensure continued care during those 'formal schooling hours' but families will not be able to claim the CCS during that time.

Supervising children studying by distance education is counted as volunteering for the Child Care Subsidy Activity Test, but only for a maximum of 36 hours per fortnight and as long as the IHC educator is employed for out-of-school hours care for the children and/or caring for younger members of the family (and the other parent is working).

Skills IQ Cert III & Diploma ECEC Update of Training Packages

ICPA (Aust) provided feedback to Skills IQ earlier this year as they updated the Certificate III and Diploma for ECEC training packages. Note that students now have to gain their Cert III in ECEC before applying for Diploma training in ECEC and that work placements for Cert III in ECEC have been increased from 120 hours to 160 hours, of which 120 hours must be in a regulated ECEC service (only a maximum of 40 hours can be in the family workplace in IHC though). This means an IHC student educator in a rural/remote area would have to be released for at least 3 weeks to undertake work placement in a regulated ECEC service, often many kilometres away; a costly exercise for the student and a long period to leave the family without their IHC educator.

National Quality Framework (NQF) Review

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), held consultations in cities and regional centres in states and territories with stakeholders earlier this year to gather information for the National Quality Framework (NQF) Review which ICPA (Aust) attended. The NQF has not been

updated since 2014. ACECQA are also considering whether to include ex-Budget Based Funded (BBF) ECEC services, Mobile EC Services and IHC in the NQF, (these are not currently in the NQF) which could impact affordability for families in the bush and involve much more regulation of ECEC services. ICPA (Aust) was able to participate in a NQF survey that was also conducted. We emphasised that special considerations such as flexibility were required in ECEC for rural and remote families and that educators need the option of being employed whilst working towards their Cert III in ECEC from January 2020 instead of families only being able to accept qualified educators, which are very hard to find and retain in remote areas. Findings will be presented to the Education Council at the end of this year and further consultations will be held early next year with the Review completed in 2021-22.

Working with Children Check (WWCC)

ICPA (Aust) continues to work with the Federal Government in the implementation of a national WWCC certification. A national working party has started on this, but it will take some time to complete due to the different rules and regulations of states and territories. Unfortunately, we have received no further news regarding a national certification at this stage. An announcement is due and Federal Council will forward any information as it becomes available.

Working Holiday Maker Visas

The Minister for Home Affairs confirmed through his department, the Working Holiday Maker Visa news of 7 November last year. Several changes were made regarding employers being able to retain trained and experienced employees doing agricultural (plant and animal cultivation) work for up to 12 months, rather than the previous 6 months, with the additional provision of a third-year visa enabling working holiday makers to work for longer in regional Australia. The media release can be read at: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/news-media/archive/article?itemId=12>. Unfortunately, this does not apply to nannies and distance education tutors at this time, just seasonal workers, though the Minister has indicated that the government will see how these developments pan out before considering any more changes. ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate for nannies and distance education tutors on Working Holiday Maker Visas in rural and remote areas to be considered as doing 'agricultural work'.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to work with the Federal Government and other stakeholder groups to advance the needs of the ECEC in rural and remote Australia. We encourage members to be involved by forwarding any case studies to us and we will continue to share developments as they arise.

RURAL SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL TRAVEL REPORT

Di Skene

Before I begin, I would like to express my sincere thoughts to you all during the current hard times of drought and flood as things are tough, I know. I am very fortunate to be delivering you this report for the second year as the leader of the Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio in amazing Adelaide for 2019. The Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio has been very busy advocating for our families by forwarding submissions, sending letters, many a phone conversation and email communication on current issues and previous motions. If you wish to review the 2018 motion updates you can view this from the following link on the ICPA website.

<https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1192/federal-conference-motion-updates/federal-conference-motion-update-2018.pdf>

RURAL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS

Federal Council works across a number of portfolios when it comes to rural schools' issues, particularly around the communications and curriculum topics and members should refer to those portfolios for more information on those matters. There have been no recent motions presented at Federal

Conference regarding rural schools, however ICPA (Aust) continues to seek quality educational services be delivered to students in rural and remote schools.

Members schooling their children in remote schools may like to visit the **Schools Plus Website** <https://www.schoolsplus.org.au/> which offers eligible schools assistance with raising funds for programs that give students the best chance of success. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is used to determine if a school is disadvantaged – schools must have an ICSEA value below 1000 to be eligible for support through Schools Plus.

RURAL SCHOOL TRAVEL

Federal Council has taken forward members' request that rural and remote students should receive a Student Fare Allowance that reflects the actual costs involved to get students from their home, to their place of education within Australia. The inequity that exists across Australia is to the detriment of rural and remote students, particularly given the limited boarding options within some states.

The lack of consistent travel assistance for rural and remote students has been raised in the Operation, Regulation and Funding of Air Route Service Delivery to Rural, Regional and Remote communities ('Travel Inquiry') and through letters to Government and conversations with Ministers to alert them to the situation of different allowance schemes being offered in different states. This being so, the point was made that there is currently no Federal travel allowance under the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC), however there are fares allowances under both ABSTUDY and Youth Allowance which highlights a discrepancy in Commonwealth Allowances if they were tabled side-by-side. At the end of 2018, I was privileged to talk with various State Rural Schools and School Travel portfolio leaders to listen and learn about what states currently have, what is needed and how best to move forward.

BUS – GREYHOUND AUSTRALIA

After our last Federal Conference, I hit the ground running with Greyhound Australia's announcement to 'no longer take children aged 15 and under being 12-14 years of age without a chaperone.' We contacted Greyhound to ask for an explanation and how they saw families being able to use their services with these new protocols. With Greyhound services no longer catering for children's travel requirements to and from schools, families that live a considerable distance and rely on bus services will have to make other arrangements. Bus services are often a rural or remote student's only practical means of travel. Greyhound responded by voicing concern for the children's safety on board and at stops. These issues were at the forefront of their thoughts when changing the criteria. ICPA does support the safety concerns and through assistance from the Australian Boarding Schools Association, we found this decision by Greyhound resulted in affecting some 250 students, mostly in Queensland. Although Greyhound is a national company, other States have not seen the same impact, as Greyhound were not visiting a lot of areas or States make their own arrangements where they have dedicated buses for long distance school travel for this to cause the same detrimental effect that is currently happening in Queensland.

ROAD TRAVEL

Moving onto roads and having conference motions seeking our regional and remote roads network be maintained at a safe standard for all to travel has seen Federal Council talk with Federal Government and stakeholder groups. We did receive a reply from the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and regional Development, at the time, the Honourable Michael McCormack. The Minister expressed that the "strengths of our roads continue to be the Government's core focus and have a number of programs in place to provide funding to regional and remote communities to assist with ongoing road maintenance". The Minister also stated they have 'Roads to Recovery' funding that will be given to councils to choose which programs they will direct this funding to, according to priority of

course. He went on to say that his concern was with the National Road Toll and serious injuries and he believed the new programs have been a long time coming.

AIR TRAVEL

It has been very encouraging to note that some airlines serving regional areas have announced changes and increased assistance for air travellers in regional areas.

Qantas, in response to the Inquiry into the Operation, Regulation and Funding of Air Route Service Delivery to Rural, Regional and Remote Communities, has increased some Residents’ Fares locations. This has been detailed in Qantas’ response and re-iterated that ‘residents can book return leisure or personal flights from Cloncurry or Mt Isa airport to Brisbane or Townsville, or from Moranbah airport to Brisbane. All return travel is from eligible Western Australia ports are for leisure or personal travel to Perth only’. Qantas also went on to say that residents from surrounding councils and neighbouring regional, rural and remote communities can apply the discount as long as the residents are able to demonstrate that their nearest airport with Qantas service is one of the ten eligible ports in Queensland and Western Australia.

Qantas expressed to Federal Council in writing on the 31 March this year, that there will be direct flights from Darwin and Adelaide to Uluru. The Darwin to Alice Springs route will be upgraded to a Boeing 737 with Business class. Also, the introduction of discounted fares program for Alice Springs residents has been welcomed, though on the downside, some routes to Cairns will cease and also a reduction in flights to Perth. On the upside, Jetstar has increased flights between Cairns and Darwin during peak season. ICPA (Aust) has raised in discussions with Qantas that members have requested further expansion of the Resident’s Fares Program which we have seen some additions in recent times as seen below.

The following return trips qualify for Qantas’ discounted fares for residents:

Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloncurry (CNJ) - Townsville (TSV) - Cloncurry (CNJ) • Cloncurry (CNJ) - Brisbane (BNE) via Townsville - Cloncurry (CNJ) • Moranbah (MOV) - Brisbane (BNE) - Moranbah (MOV) • Mount Isa (ISA) - Brisbane (BNE) - Mount Isa (ISA) • Mount Isa (ISA) - Townsville (TSV) - Mount Isa (ISA) • Longreach (LRE) - Brisbane (BNE) - Longreach (LRE) • Barcaldine (BCI) - Brisbane (BNE) - Barcaldine (BCI) • Blackall (BKQ) - Brisbane (BNE) - Blackall (BKQ)
Western Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broome (BME) - Perth (PER) - Broome (BME) • Kalgoorlie (KGI) - Perth (PER) - Kalgoorlie (KGI) • Karratha (KTA) - Perth (PER) - Karratha (KTA) • Port Hedland (PHE) - Perth (PER) - Port Hedland (PHE) • Newman (ZNE) - Perth (PER) - Newman (ZNE) • Paraburdoo (PBO) - Perth (PER) - Paraburdoo (PBO)
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice Springs (ASP) - Darwin (DRW) - Alice Springs (ASP) • Ayers Rock (AYQ) - Darwin (DRW) - Ayers Rock (AYQ)

Qantas has also extended their discounted fare scheme to increase the number of flights that can be booked per year from four to twelve. The scheme has also been extended to Longreach, Blackall and Barcaldine residents for return travel to Brisbane, which keeping in mind does not incorporate Western Australia. Also, they have just recently stated that they are waiving the \$99.00 change fee

for bookings made through the Discounted Fares for Residents Scheme in the program portal on Qantas.com, this is to provide flexibility for residents when booking return trips. Members have been apprehensive about booking a return trip through the residential fares scheme at times as return dates can be uncertain, particularly for students who may have different exam dates and school activities such as sports or music camps/workshops at the end of term. Having the change fee waived should offer families the ability to book a return trip at the start of school terms and adjust the return travel as needed with no additional cost. Remember to take advantage of these discounts you must book through the Qantas.com portal.

Rex Airlines have been hugely supportive by committing a large amount of money to assist families in the North Queensland floods and offered students discounted fares to be able to return home for Easter. Regional airlines such as Rex continue to try and offer ways to help students travelling in regional remote areas for example pledging assistance for drought relief. Rex has also increased their Community Fare Scheme to include flights between Kangaroo Island and Adelaide, Narrandera-Leton and Sydney, Griffith and Sydney just to name a few.

ICPA (Aust) appreciates the announcements which may bring some benefits to members and our rural students, though we recognise the cost of air travel still significantly impacts families of students needing to travel by air to access educational opportunities.

INQUIRY INTO THE OPERATION, REGULATION AND FUNDING OF AIR ROUTE SERVICE DELIVERY TO RURAL, REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

<https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1118/federal-submissions/federal-submissions-2018/regional-air-fare-inquiry-submission-feb-2018.pdf>

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Rural_and_Regional_Affairs_and_Transport/RegionalAirRoutes/Report

As some of us have been apprehensive on the length of time it has taken for the Federal Government to release their final report, we can finally give this inquiry some light. The travel inquiry gave Federal Council the opportunity to raise previous and current motions. It is with appreciation we receive their findings and know that the Government has been made aware of the difficulties our members face with regards to air travel, but also disappointment that only 9 recommendations have been handed down. We welcome the recommendation to upgrade regional airports which we believe will improve access to areas that are not currently being serviced. Some of these upgrades are the Oodnadatta airport, Yorketown airport, Port Lincoln Airport and the Elliston airport. On the other side of the coin we may be looking at increased costs for some shires, for example Charleville, where the Council owns the airport. This may have huge impacts and as some media are already reporting the situation may become inviable if the shire had to pay the running costs which could possibly force closure of some regional air services. We understand the safety issues as the Senate inquiry found, though regional areas of Australia rely on these services to be able to function. The inquiry recommended the Government consider providing ongoing financial assistance to a number of airports that will be affected.

An example of the cost difference for regional travellers- for a child to get home from boarding school in Adelaide to Alice Springs would cost in the vicinity of over \$500 and if they were to fly to Brisbane then it will only be approximately \$180. A similar trip from Alice Springs to Perth is about \$850 and to Brisbane from Alice Springs is over \$1000. These costs are outside the average person's understanding and we will continue to advocate for decreased costs to be able to get our children an education that they deserve.

I note that within the Inquiry there was a recommendation to the Federal Government to direct the Inquiry to the Productivity Commission for them to investigate the costs; we can only hope that this will happen.

We strongly encourage branches to continue to send in their case studies to form the foundations of our ability to advocate for our children, improved services and equitable future with the Government at every opportunity.

SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS REPORT

Sally Sullivan

ICPA (Aust) has continued to work on specific education needs motions passed at the 2018 conference as well as motions from previous years. Specific education needs continue to be a space where it is difficult to make perceptible progress. Broadly, issues include early identification of learning difficulties, access to services and the cost of accessing services. These issues have been pursued by ICPA (Aust) in submissions to inquiries, delegation briefing papers and by correspondence with relevant Ministers during 2018/19. At the 2018 Federal ICPA Conference, three specific education needs motions related to:

- A need for travel and accommodation allowances for rural and isolated families travelling to access face-to-face allied health services,
- A need for equitable subsidies nationally for accommodation and travel for children with specific or special education needs to attend appointments with qualified specialists, and
- The establishment of mental health resources which specifically assist geographically isolated students and families, particularly around the issue of bullying.

Access to services for specific education needs

ICPA (Aust) has written to the Ministers for Health and Education to explain the national need for rural, regional and remote families to access travel and accommodation assistance to attend appointments with qualified professionals in order to diagnose and manage specific learning needs. ICPA (Aust) has also promoted this issue at meetings of the National Rural Health Alliance which has rural representation from a wide variety of health professionals' organisations.

Travel and accommodation costs to attend appointments for early identification and intervention for special needs and learning difficulties can be very costly for rural and remote families; costs not subsidised by NDIS, patient travel schemes or education systems. ICPA (Aust) urges state councils to also pursue this issue with state health and education departments, though it is clearly a nation-wide issue

Medicare rebate for speech pathology

Rural and remote students and young children with special education needs can benefit from access to appointments with Allied Health professionals. Families are grateful for advances in telehealth and the availability of Medicare rebates for occupational therapy and mental health consultations, for example. Still **no rebate** exists for Speech Language Pathology (SLP) via telehealth delivery despite demonstrated effectiveness. Parents can claim \$52 per session for 5 sessions a year for *face-to-face* consultations.

ICPA (Aust) has continued to pursue this 2017 motion through correspondence and meetings with relevant Ministers and the Treasurer, as well as through representation on the National Rural Health Alliance member council. In April this year, ICPA (Aust) submitted comments on the *Report of the Allied Health Reference Group: Review of the Allied Health Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items*. The report was recommending an MBS item number be allocated to speech pathology consultations

by telehealth for severe speech disorders. ICPA's position is *any* speech disorders affecting education and wellbeing should be eligible to be treated by telehealth, with an MBS Item number, as they would be covered if the child lived in a city and could access face-to-face consultations.

Mental health, bullying/cyber bullying

While mental health resources for parents and students, especially around cyberbullying, are being developed by many organisations and government, few target geographically isolated students or boarding students specifically. ICPA (Aust) has written to the Ministers for Health and Education to garner their support for the development of such resources. The government recently launched the [Student Wellbeing Hub](https://www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/) <https://www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/> which has resources for teachers, parents and students. Potentially, links to resources specifically for geographically isolated families might be on this site. ICPA (Aust) is exploring several lines of inquiry to find ways to develop the resources this motion is asking for.

Mt Isa School of the Air (MISOTA) has been working on a program starting with creating a "friends" program and sections on resilience. They had "[Eyes Open- Social Media Safety](https://www.eyesopensocialmedia.com.au/)" <https://www.eyesopensocialmedia.com.au/> attend their Home Tutor Week in May 2018 to discuss cyber bullying and found they tailored their presentation appropriately for their 'audience'. Eyes Open does school consultations and offers resources. MISOTA purchased access to the resources for every family in their school. In Term 4 2018, MISOTA launched "Tips for Transitioning" around moving from distance education to boarding. This was the next phase of their program and also has an emphasis on cyberbullying.

Another organisation working in this space is [Dolly's Dream Foundation](https://dollysdream.org.au/) <https://dollysdream.org.au/> In March this year, Dolly's Dream partnered with the Northern Territory Government and the Alannah & Madeline Foundation to deliver the Dolly's Dream eSmart program to 'give teachers, students and parents tools and support to implement cultural change around bullying and cyber-bullying'. The Dolly's Dream eSmart program includes: Delivery of the eSmart Digital Licence, an online safety tool for Grade 6 students, implementation of Dolly's Dream eSmart framework for 10 schools in high priority regions, two parent, teacher and student Dolly's Dream Connect workshops for 50 NT Government schools.

In March 2019, the Australian Government launched a national awareness campaign and developed resources to help keep children and young people safe online. The national campaign aims to raise awareness and to help parents, carers and teachers to 'Start the Chat' about online safety. Media activities will build on the awareness messages from the advertising campaign and direct people to where they can get more detailed information, including for Indigenous and NESB communities and people living in regional and remote Australia. For more details and resources go to esafety.gov.au/start-the-chat.

Drought and the Queensland floods have generated much concern about the mental health of children/students at home in rural and remote areas and in boarding schools. UNICEF's February 2019 Drought Report *In their own words: The hidden impact of prolonged drought on children and young people* highlighted the impact of drought on children and the need for psychological help. ICPA (Aust) networked with UNICEF in initial discussions for their report and we support calls for additional resources and mental health assistance for children, families and schools in rural and remote communities who are struggling through unprecedented challenges because of drought and other occurrences such as the monsoonal event that impacted North Queensland in early 2019.

Workshops for rural and remote parents of gifted students

Earlier in 2019, ICPA (Aust) obtained an indicative costing from the Gifted Education Research,

Resource and Information Centre (GERRIC) at the University of New South Wales of \$14,000 to run three two-hour interactive webinars for parents and educators of rural and remote gifted and talented students. The cost of running face-to-face seminars across a multitude of locations (as was done some 12 years ago) is now considered prohibitive. If ICPA (Aust) or another party can secure sufficient funding, GERRIC should be able to develop the workshop resources and deliver the webinars for rural and remote families. GERRIC regularly runs workshops for parents and students in Sydney. This proposal stems from a 2016 motion and funding options are being explored.

TERTIARY REPORT

Kate Thompson

The challenge to address the under-representation of rural and remote students in higher education remains a high priority. Multiple factors are responsible for this under-representation: financial challenges, social-economic status, school experiences, low aspiration, distance, ad hoc preparedness and loss of family and community support networks. All students who have the desire to pursue a university education at an institution of their choice, must be supported to achieve their goals and to succeed regardless of their socio-economic status or geographic location

Rural and remote tertiary students' issues continue to be heard through ICPA (Aust)'s persistence and continued lobbying. Federal Council have addressed the tertiary motions through correspondence to government and departments, delegation, submissions and meetings highlighting key issues and challenges faced by our rural and remote students. There have been some positive announcements, commencement of programs and outcomes over the last twelve months.

The Australian Government continues to invest in the rural and remote tertiary cohort. Post the Federal election in 2019, the Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Education said "Every Australian child, no matter where they live, should have access to the best educational opportunities. It is why continuing the work we have begun with higher education providers to lift Australia's attainment rate outside of our capital cities will remain a paramount priority."

Regional Education Package

On 12 November 2018, the Government announced a funding package over four years to provide students from rural and regional Australia with greater choice in and access to higher education. The measures included funding for expansion of the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarship Program, the Regional Study Hubs and the development of a National Regional, Rural and Remote Higher Education Strategy.

Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarship Program (RRESP)

The Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships Program (RRESP) supports students in rural, regional and remote areas with the costs of studying at university or at a vocational education and training institution. Successful students can receive up to \$18,000 depending on course length (minimum of six months full-time or up to eight years part-time) and type of study or training (on campus, or through online and distance education) and for qualifications from Certificate IV to PhD courses. A further \$500 is available to support an internship.

Visit <https://www.qtac.edu.au/scholarships/benefits> for more information. The Federal Government expanded the Program in November 2018 with the announcement of an additional 1,955 Scholarships. In April 2019, the third round of Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships opened and now includes all fields of study. While the uptake of scholarships has been encouraging and greatly appreciated by recipients, members have reported issues with the ad hoc timing of payment of the scholarship affecting their financial planning for the semester and causing angst.

Regional Study Hubs

On 12 November 2018, the Minister for Education announced the successful grant recipients of 16 community-owned Regional Study Hubs (in 22 locations). The regional study hubs will be supported and funded over four years to “provide infrastructure such as study spaces, video conferencing, computing facilities and internet access, as well as academic support for students studying via distance at partner universities”.

<https://www.education.gov.au/news/minister-education-announces-16-regional-study-hubs>

Regional Study Hubs support regional students to study courses locally, delivered by distance from any Australian university, by providing greater access to study, support and infrastructure; part of the Government’s strategy to support regional, rural and remote education.

National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy

ICPA (Aust) responded to the [National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy](#) highlighting the key issues and challenges raised by ICPA members concerning access to tertiary and training education for rural and remote students and regional communities.

<https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1186/federal-submissions/national-regional-rural-and-remote-education-strategy-submission-january-2019.pdf>. The development of a **National**

Regional, Rural and Remote Higher Education Strategy aims to increase participation in post-secondary education and address the ongoing education and training needs of regional communities and is in response to the recommendations from the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education. The final report is due for release in July after being provided to the Minister for Education at the end of June 2019. ICPA (Aust) looks forward to the outcomes and recommendations of this review.

Virtual Work Experience Program Advisory Group

ICPA (Aust) has been represented on the Virtual Work Experience Program (VWEP) Advisory Group, an initiative being delivered by Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) for the Department of Education. The twelve-month pilot program seeks to develop and test a work experience model providing an opportunity for students to undertake Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) projects in the virtual environment. The pilots have commenced, and the preliminary outcomes will be available for release at Federal Conference.

Tertiary Access Allowance (TAA)

The TAA remains one of our highest priorities and ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby as opportunities present for this allowance to be introduced. The TAA amount is aligned with the Relocation Scholarship amount: 1st year - \$4,553; 2nd or 3rd year - \$2,278; 4th or subsequent years - \$1,138. In a response from the Minister for Education, the TAA has been passed onto the Minister for Families and Social Services for future policy consideration.

There is continued disparity in the level of financial assistance provided to help with relocation costs for rural students who have qualified for independent Youth Allowance compared to dependent Youth Allowance assistance. ICPA (Aust) see the Relocation Scholarships as a way to alleviate the burden for rural students who relocate to pursue tertiary education regardless of which type of Youth Allowance they qualify for. Aligning the TAA with the Relocation Scholarship amounts will benefit the youth allowance students qualifying as an independent as well as students’ ineligible for Youth Allowance.

Youth Allowance (YA)

Since the 2018 Federal Conference, another legislative change to Youth Allowance (YA) benefited those rural and remote tertiary students applying for YA as an independent. As of 1 January 2019, the parental income cut-off for regional, rural and remote students applying for YA under the *Independent through work: Part-time work or earnings for rural and remote students’* criteria, increased from \$150,000 to \$160,000, plus \$10,000 for each eligible additional child in the family. There is also greater

flexibility in the choice of financial year used for parental income. This change has further resulted in YA being more accessible to rural and remote students.

Independence Criteria

ICPA (Aust) is adamant students who have to relocate from rural and remote areas to access their tertiary education **must** be recognised as a separate disadvantaged group and be considered financially independent of their parents for the purpose of qualifying for Independent Youth Allowance. ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government on this issue.

ICPA Federal Council has continued to address further aspects of Youth Allowance (YA) including: rural and remote students being classified as independent, relocation scholarships, raising the parental income limit for dependent YA, removing parental income from rural and remote Independent YA criteria, adjusting the qualifying amount for rural and remote students applying for YA under part time work/earnings criteria, rural and remote students who do not receive dependent YA but live away from home for tertiary education be eligible automatically for YA as an independent at commencement of their course, and reinstatement of the HECS-HELP upfront and HELP voluntary repayments. ICPA (Aust) has had no further commitment for change but will continue to pursue these issues.

Youth Allowance Overview 2019

An overview of Youth Allowance has been collated by ICPA (Aust) with advice from Department of Human Services. This guide, updated at the end of 2018, aims to complement the Youth Allowance website and can be viewed on the ICPA (Aust) website - [Youth Allowance Overview https://www.icpa.com.au/page/attachment/129/youth-allowance-overview-2019-for-website](https://www.icpa.com.au/page/attachment/129/youth-allowance-overview-2019-for-website). The document aims to interpret and summarise the lengthy Youth Allowance website information for rural and remote students planning to study full time and who intend to apply for Youth Allowance. It is also available in the January edition of Pedals each year. **It is a guide only**. For more information, advice, clarification and further assistance please phone **132490** (dedicated Youth Allowance phone number) or visit: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-allowance. Again ICPA (Aust) would like to thank the Department of Human Services and the Department of Social Services for their invaluable assistance with clarification of information for this document.

Centrelink

Unfortunately, members are still reporting issues when applying for YA: inconsistent information being given from different staff, staff being ill-informed about current criteria and long-wait-times on the 132490 support line. We continue to liaise with the Department of Human Services reporting issues from members as they arise. The Minister for Human Services, the Hon Michael Keenan, reported back to Federal Council that the 2017-2018 Budget had allocated resources to increase the number of Department's call centre operators and the 2018-2019 Budget allocated funds for the Department to target call wait times and improve service delivery. By December 2018, an additional 350 new operators had been allocated specifically to the Youth and Student enquiry line.

Applicants are encouraged to use the online *Claim Tracker*, a tool that provides graphic representation of the progress of a claim, notifications at points throughout the claim including electronic messaging to alert the applicant where tasks or actions remain outstanding and displays the estimated completed date of their claim.

University Course Website

Launched in late 2018, *Course Seeker* is the new national Higher Education information website. This website is a one stop shop allowing current and prospective students to easily research and compare higher education courses by course, study area, institution, admission criteria, state, delivery pathways, providers and application processes www.courseseekeer.edu.au.

By the end of 2019, the reform of the higher education admissions process will be complete and a transparent, consistent process will be available; standardised presentation of admissions information including study options, entry requirements and application processes, adoption of common admissions terminology, adoption by Tertiary Admission Centres of more consistent approaches, reporting and streamlining interstate application processes and the national website. Students, parents, teachers and career advisors will be able to more easily navigate higher education admissions policies and processes.

Tertiary and Training Website Document

The “*Useful Tertiary and Training Websites*” document collated by the Tertiary and Training portfolio provides useful websites and resources for students to assist in planning their future whether that be at university, VET course, apprenticeship or heading straight into the workforce. It is available on the ICPA website <https://www.icpa.com.au/page/attachment/123/useful-tertiary-and-training-websites-december-2018>. The document was the basis of a “Speed Session” presented by ICPA (Aust) at the Australian Boarding Schools Association International Conference in October 2018.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to raise our members’ issues, to achieve the changes and measures needed to ensure our rural and remote students have the opportunity to achieve a tertiary education commensurate with their aspirations and career plans.

I would like to thank the State Tertiary Portfolios and my fellow Tertiary and Training Portfolio members, Nikki Macqueen, Jane O’Brien, Kristen Coggan, Sally Sullivan and Suzanne Wilson for their continuing support.

TRAINING REPORT

Kate Thompson

All Australian students must be able to pursue courses and careers that best suit their interests and capabilities. Traineeships and apprenticeships play a vital role in many students’ career path. The Government continues to invest in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and apprenticeship sectors ensuring the sector is accessible, high quality and responsive to industry needs. Maintaining a high-quality skills and training system increases the number of available apprenticeships and traineeships with support for employers, students, job seekers, industry and the economy. There is recognition that the provision of readily accessible and affordable VET and apprenticeships in regional communities is vital in terms of sustainability and employment.

“The Liberal National Government is committed to ensuring that a Vocational education is seen as equal to a University education in terms of meeting the needs of our future workforce,” Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education.

2018 Training Conference Motions

There were two training motions at the 2018 conference. While the response from correspondence that went to the Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash reinforces the Government’s commitment to promoting, supporting and funding VET and apprenticeship career pathways, no commitment was made to the request for an immediate increase to the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) for trainees/apprentices and an annual CPI increase or the request for apprentices to be included in the Relocation Scholarship Scheme.

VET Review Submission

In November 2018, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison, MP commissioned the *Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System* to ensure Australians have the skills they need

to succeed in the changing labour market, and businesses have access to the skills they need to grow their business and support economic growth. ICPA (Aust) responded to the Review including issues for rural and remote students accessing VET and apprenticeships.

<https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1185/federal-submissions/vocational-education-and-training-review-january-2019.pdf> In April 2019, the final report *Strengthening Skills: Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System* was handed to government, endorsing a six point plan: Strengthening quality assurance, speeding up qualification development, simpler funding and skills matching, better careers information, clearer secondary school pathways, and greater access for disadvantaged Australians.

“Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow”

Responding to the VET review, the Government has committed to supporting the VET sector including those in rural and regional areas through the Skills Package, *Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow*. It ensures that the VET system can deliver the skills critical to the economy now and into the future, create stronger pathways for school students into quality training, apprenticeships and jobs in areas of skills shortage, create more opportunities for young people to access, develop and gain the skills they need to succeed in Australia's modern workplace, whilst providing employers with the skilled workers they require to run their businesses. It will deliver a VET system that is responsive, respected and flexible into the future through:

- Additional Identified Skills Shortage Payment – the introduction of an Additional Identified Skills Shortage Payment, available for both employers and apprentices. Additional support is provided by a streamlined employer incentives program targeting new apprentices particularly school leavers and young people in industries experiencing national skill shortages. These payments are additional to any payments the apprentice or employer may be eligible for under existing Australian Government programs (including Trade Support Loans, which provides income-contingent loans of up to \$21,000 for eligible apprentices to assist with everyday costs including equipment purchases. There is a bonus of a 20% discount on the amount repayable if an apprentice successfully completes their apprenticeship. The Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program provides incentives of up to \$4,000 over the life of an apprenticeship to eligible employers. The apprenticeship incentive program will also be simplified, with 31 payment categories consolidated to just 14).
- Foundational skills - New programs and additional support for youth and those with low foundational skills, will ensure they can gain the skills they need to participate in current and future workforces. This will include four pilots providing tailored services in remote communities.
- Training Hubs - Ten Training Hubs will be established across Australia to support industry pathways in areas of high youth unemployment in regional areas and local skills shortages. Hubs will be developed in partnership with industry and state and territory governments.
- National Careers Institute and Careers Ambassador - The National Careers Institute will work with industry, governments, schools, employers and tertiary providers to develop a national VET Information Strategy. This is designed to reform careers guidance for individuals across their education, training and employment, ensuring information and guidance is high-quality, stream-lined, evidence-based, and accessible by providing a one-stop-shop career portal, overseeing partnership grants and raising the profile of VET nationally. The Institute will be headed by a National Careers Ambassador.
- The Skilling Australians Fund (SAF) – The SAF is a major commitment between the Government and states and territories from 2017 – 2022, working together to create an additional 300,000 apprenticeships and traineeships throughout Australia and prioritising projects which support apprenticeship and traineeships in high demand occupations.
- Commonwealth Training Scholarships for Young Australians will be available to young Australians in regions experiencing high youth unemployment and will target occupations identified in projected growth industries and occupations identified as in demand.

- National Skills Commission and Skills Organisations - The National Skills Commission will provide consistent national leadership and be responsible for the implementation of priorities for the VET sector and oversee the reforms identified including working with states and territories to develop a national approach to the funding of VET qualifications and the identification of future skills needed to ensure the VET system addresses national labour market priorities. Skills Organisations will trial new, industry-led methods of qualification development and assessment and develop standards for industry to accredit Registered Training Organisations and ensure training meets industry needs.

Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships Program (RRESP)

The Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships Program (RRESP) is available for rural, regional and remote students commencing study at a vocational education and training institution or at a university. The scholarships are valued at up to \$18,000 depending on course length (minimum of six months full-time or up to eight years part-time) and type of study or training (on campus, or through online and distance education) and for qualifications from Certificate IV to PhD courses. A further \$500 is available to support an internship.

Visit <https://www.qtac.edu.au/scholarships/benefits> for more information. The Federal Government has expanded the Program and in April 2019, the third round of Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships opened and now includes all fields of study. Unfortunately, scholarship uptake for training students has been low.

Virtual Work Experience Program Advisory Group

ICPA (Aust) has been represented on the Virtual Work Experience Program (VWEP) Advisory Group, an initiative being delivered by Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) for the Department of Education. The Virtual Work Experience Program (VWEP) is a twelve month pilot program which aims to increase access to work experience opportunities across Australia in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related work in the virtual environment. The pilots have commenced, and the preliminary outcomes will be available for release at Federal Conference.

The Australian Apprentice Wage Subsidy Trial

The Australian Apprentice Wage Subsidy is available as an incentive for employers to engage more apprentices. The trial that commenced on 1 January 2019, continues until 30 June 2023 and will be available to employers who employ a new Australian apprentice in an occupation listed on the National Skills Needs List (NSNL) including in rural and regional workplaces. Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education stated that “Through this incentive we are securing the skills our regional and rural businesses need to remain competitive and give local students new opportunities at home.” Subsidies will be provided at 75 per cent of the apprentice’s award wage in the first year, followed with 50 per cent in the second year and 25 per cent in the third year.

The Training portfolio will continue to raise the concerns of our members to ensure those who choose traineeships or apprenticeships have equal opportunity to reach their potential and follow their chosen career path.

Thank you to my fellow Training councillors, Jane O’Brien, Sally Sullivan, Kristen Coggan, Nikki Macqueen and Suzanne Wilson for their support and encouragement over this last year.

SPEECHES

President's Welcome 2019

Wendy Hick

Good morning everyone. For anyone who might not know me, I'm Wendy Hick, Federal President of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, or ICPA for short.

Before we begin, I would like to show my respect, and acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, and also pay respect to Elders both past and present.

On behalf of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association's, Federal Council, I have great pleasure in welcoming, Federal Life Members, Mrs Julia Materne, Mrs Jane Gloster and Mrs Roxanne Morrissey, ICPA guests, delegates and observers, welcome to our 48th annual, Federal Conference.

This year's conference theme is "Sustain Our Future, Invest in Our Children". We are here at the Adelaide Oval, a place renowned for sporting battles and to borrow a line from our recent media release, we are going in to bat for rural and remote education. We are here to share information, raise issues and discuss the challenges facing our rural and remote students as they strive to find a level playing field when it comes to education. We know it is so important for the sustainability of our rural families and communities for our geographically isolated children to have educational opportunity and the support they need to achieve their goals and dreams. Thank you for attending and being part of the team.

The drought continues, one of the worst droughts experienced in recent memory, there has also been devastating flooding earlier this year in North Queensland with catastrophic results, among other challenges. We know that many who wanted to be here, simply couldn't be, due to feeding stock, repairing fences and their livelihoods and trying to keep things going in these harsh times. Our thoughts and support are with all of these families as well as any others who are dealing with difficulty at the moment.

I'd also like to mention our members who cannot be here because they have had to stay home to continue caring for or teaching their children. These mums, dads and grandparents are also a vital part of our team. We know that they are there supporting us and backing us from the Distance Education classrooms, while they are doing the bus run or taking their children across dusty gravel roads to the local small school.

As a grassroots organisation, this coming together at our conference is so very important on many levels, but one of the greatest benefits is the opportunity for all of us to meet and have a conversation with so many of our members all in one place about our common goals and future direction.

It's wonderful to see representation here from our member states and to have so many branches in attendance at our 48th Conference. I welcome all of our delegates and in particular those of you who are attending conference for the first time. Over the next two days, I hope you will learn from our guest speakers as well as from each other, so please take the opportunity to engage in hearty, enthusiastic and informed conversations and debate. Many friendships are formed at ICPA conferences and it is always good to know that no matter where you live, you are not alone, and we share your struggles with you.

To our guests, thank you for taking the time to be here. We are pleased to have with us some long-standing guests that continue to regularly attend our conferences and to also see many new faces.

We do welcome comment from our guests on the motions presented, so please feel free to speak, as your knowledge and expertise can often help us clarify our position on issues.

Conference provides a unique platform by bringing together people from various areas and backgrounds. This gives us a rare opportunity to be able to share not only information, but also our stories. Telling your story and having your say throughout the discussions over the next couple of days can help bring about understanding of how certain issues affect not only you but also those in your area. It is extremely important that those of us on Council and everyone throughout the room hear what you have to say and I encourage members to tell their story to create an understanding of the challenges our rural and remote students face. The number of motions we have received show that there is still plenty for ICPA to do and still a long way to go to bring about equity of access of education in rural and remote Australia. If you don't have a chance to speak on a motion, your story or information is still very important to us. Please talk to a Federal Councillor, you will get to know who they are over the next few days, or write down what you have to say and give it to us. We are fortunate that there are government and organisation representatives attending the conference. We are very appreciative that they have made themselves available to us. I urge you to please speak with them if you have a chance. Over the next couple of days you have a great opportunity to talk with many people and foster an understanding of the situations you are dealing with on a day-to-day basis out where you live.

Delegates, as you consider the discussion and debate on the motions, be mindful that when you are voting, you are setting ICPA policy. The decisions made here by you as branch representatives, will determine how Federal Council will go forward with our advocacy over the next 12 months.

I'm excited to be a part of this decision making, and I hope you are too. There are a lot of motions on our agenda and we will try to keep things rolling along. We will try to stick to the program, but things may need to be moved occasionally. As we work through the motions, there may be times where I may need to call on the wider experience that we have present in the room for guidance. If we do happen to make a mistake in procedure or something else, please raise a "Point of Order" or let us know, so that we are aware of the error and can take steps to rectify it. We have a lot of things to work through, but we also want to ensure that we proceed in the appropriate manner.

Some of our first time delegates will be nervous and worried about making a mistake, please know that even 'old hands' get nervous when speaking at conference, but we all truly want you to feel welcome and we want to hear what you have to say. If you stumble or get a little lost, we will support you and try to guide you through, and I hope you'll all do the same for me, as I still make mistakes too (hopefully not too many this year...)

Once again, this year, some of our portfolio leaders will be giving a short presentation and summary of our work in their area before we begin debate on those motions. This is to help you become familiar with what's been happening around those issues. All of the portfolio reports and the full reports for the topics that will be presented, can be found in your conference booklets as well as on the ICPA website. Quite a bit of information is contained in the full portfolio reports, and I encourage you to read through them if you haven't already done so.

When we begin presenting branch motions, if you know ahead of time that your branch or council will be requesting a word change, there are forms on your table called Word Change/Amendment forms. Please write your requested word change on this form and give it to the Minutes' table at the back/side. It is greatly appreciated if this can be done ahead of time. This will help simplify the word change process and ensure we have the correct wording for the official minutes that are prepared at the end of conference.

Speaking of Conf Minutes, Sharon Nutt has offered to compile our conference minutes this year and we would like to thank her for offering to do so.

A reminder that consent for use of your image in material, media etc... was given when you registered, and there will be a few cameras around at various times of the day, so if that has changed please let Jane, our Assistant Secretary who is at the Minutes' Table know.

Please, take this opportunity while we are here together, to approach federal councillors on any issues you would like clarified or have an interest in. We always appreciate input from our members.

ICPA would like to thank the sponsors that have contributed towards the conference, as their support helps keep costs to a minimum for attendees. We thank the Australian Government Department of Education and Telstra Country Wide for once again being major sponsors of ICPA and our Federal Conference. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Other major sponsors this year are BHP, OZ Minerals, S Kidman Co and Hancock Agriculture, whom we also thank. In addition to these platinum sponsors, we have also received support from other companies and organisations. All of the sponsors can be found on the ICPA website, in the conference booklet and we will be highlighting our sponsors throughout the conference. Please take notice of the sponsors who have helped contribute to the running of this conference and support them in return when you can. Please also take the time to visit the trade stalls set up for you to visit in between conference sessions. We are grateful for our conference sponsors and groups who are present here in the trade section. I hope that you will make them feel welcome and valued.

Telstra has stand set up and people here to help with any Telstra needs.

Federal Council would like to thank the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) for sponsorship of the Pre-Conference drinks last night, we hope you all enjoyed it and it was tremendous of ABSA to assist us with that.

We thank our hosts, South Australia State Council, and the convenor, Katrina Morris and her team, who have been working very hard to get things ready. Our congratulations to all involved in bringing us together for the Federal Conference in Adelaide.

As we begin, I wish you all a very enjoyable and exciting conference; one that will challenge you, add new focus and renew your strength. May the information provided, along with our debate and discussion, pave the way to sustain our rural and remote children's future. And since we are at the Oval, grab your gloves, put your pads on and let's get ready to bat.

Opening Address

Mrs Julia Materne, ICPA Federal Life Member

Firstly, thank you to the ICPA Federal Council for giving me the honour of Opening the 48th Annual Conference of the Association.

Once upon a time the Isolated Children's Parents' Association was my whole world, apart from supervising/teaching Correspondence and School of the Air lessons, cooking for the men and keeping the homestead fairly presentable. I'm sure many of you can relate to this and to eventually seeing your children off to boarding school in the city. In my case my involvement with ICPA grew as my teaching responsibilities lessened.

Back to the beginning; my husband Brian and I were introduced to the ICPA at the annual Port Augusta School of the Air end of year 'Get Together' in 1980. Here we listened to Don Nicholson and Richard Ragless speaking of the Association just about to enter its 10th year and the Assistance for Isolated Children's scheme introduced in 1973. At that stage our children were in Years 5, 3 and just about to begin Reception.

In those days boarding school was seen as only for the wealthy but hearing of the AIC Boarding Allowance gave those of us who were employed managers, overseers and station hands a glimpse of a future that included secondary education for our children without having to move to town.

In our area of Northwest South Australia, many of the stations were company owned employing staff, while several others were owner managed. Although living hours by four-wheel drive apart we were as close as a community that size could be, enjoying times together at race meetings and School of the Air functions. The ICPA became another means of uniting us, this time through the needs of our children.

My memory is foggy (at the best of times) but our decision to form an ICPA Branch came after a race meeting at Tarcoola or a Christmas party at Kingoonya. Anyway, I was selected to write to Port Augusta Branch Secretary Richard Ragless asking how we should go about forming a Branch. He was most enthusiastic in his response! Again, through the fog I believe the Northwest Branch was formed at our home Wilgena Station in 1981 or early 1982. I do know that four of us attended the 1982 Federal Conference in Alice Springs following the old Ghan railway line camping out in swags over some absolutely freezing nights.

Rory Treweeke was Federal President at that time and I for one was inspired by the Conference. I have always been a lover of causes and to me nothing could be dearer to my heart than my family especially my children's chance at a successful future. Thus, began my 20 year active involvement and 37 year association with the Federal ICPA. I attended as a delegate 16 Federal Conferences ten of those in positions on Federal Council. In 1998 I retired, receiving Federal Life Membership at Hobart in 2003. Over the years I have met many people through the ICPA, some who became life-long friends. A bonus of course was meeting and speaking to those whom we sought to further our cause through political means; Prime Ministers, Premiers, Ministers and Members who listened for the most part and in some cases could see our points and actually pursued them. I hope this is still the case.

It has been my honour in more recent times to be Federal IPA Archivist. Every Pedals Magazine from the 1971-1981 Edition 1 to the latest Edition 153, all printed Federal Conference Minutes from 1982 and all Federal Council minutes, documents and correspondence are kept. I have been able to help with some archival inquires and enjoy the challenge of the search. Maybe one day your archives will be kept electronically but it will have to be someone younger and wiser than me. Just in case it's still me in years to come I will bequeath them in my will and whoever comes to collect them will definitely require a weightlifter and a small truck.

To you first time delegates and observers please note this conference's theme, "Sustain our Future, Invest in our Children". This may be today and tomorrow's theme but it has been ICPA's watch cry since 1971. The motions that will be debated all involve this theme and have since the beginning in one way or another. Governments have so many calls for legislative assistance but it is the 'callers' persistence and insistence on being heard that eventually bears fruit. The ICPA has gained many successes and supporters with its friendly, common sense approach. Of course, with changes in governments and leaders, re-education becomes all too frequently, necessary.

I look forward to your decisions over these two days and wish you every success with your negotiations at all levels.

And with that –

It gives me great pleasure to declare open the 48th Federal Conference of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association.

Minister for Education

The Hon Dan Tehan MP (transcript)

Thank you for the invitation to address your conference today. The Isolated Children's Parents' Association does incredibly important work to represent the needs and views of the families who live in remote Australia.

Our government is committed to ensuring that every Australian child, no matter where they live, has access to a world class education.

We are providing a record level of funding, \$310.3 billion, to State schools, to Catholic schools and to Independent Schools. That's 62% more funding per student, on average, over a decade. We are also ensuring that our record investment is spent wisely by delivering the reforms recommended by David Gonski that will improve student results.

Our government recognises the additional challenges that students face in rural, regional and remote areas. That is why we are providing an additional \$69.7 billion in remote loading for school funding. We are also providing \$4 million to assist 25 non- government schools that were impacted by this year's floods in north Queensland, including 12 schools in Townsville.

Our indigenous youth education package provides an extra \$200 million to support and mentor indigenous students through their secondary studies and we also are investing \$5 million in remote and very remote areas to support and promote school attendance.

The Morrison government wants every Australian, no matter where they live, too share in the benefits of Australia's world class higher education system. More than 45% of people aged 25-34, in our major cities, have a bachelor degree or higher qualification. But that number drops to just 21% for people in our regions. We are working to close that gap. We have provided more than \$400 million to support rural and regional student's access to higher education, including more Commonwealth supported places at regional uni's, an expansion of our successful regional study hubs program and positive changes to Youth Allowance for regional Australians.

We are also directly supporting remote students and regional areas with scholarships. Our government has provided \$58.1million for more than 3000 scholarships for students from regional Australia through the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships. We have also introduced 4720 Tertiary Scholarships to study in regional Australia through the \$94 million Destination Australia Program. I encourage you to promote these scholarships to your members and students that you know.

At the election the Morrison government committed to deliver further for regional higher education. We will invest \$15million to train high achieving teachers to work in rural, remote or disadvantaged schools. We will develop a free voluntary phonics health check that will be available to every parent to ensure their children's literacy skills are developing. We will provide \$15million to further expand the regional study hubs with additional Commonwealth Supported places to support student to study their university course in their local communities. As well as \$2million to expand the Country

Education Partnership's successful Rural Inspire Program to engage rural and regional students with further education.

Our investment in regional and remote education will be informed by the Napthine Review into rural, regional and remote education which is a comprehensive analysis that provides a road map for future success. We are doing this because the Morrison government believes that where you start in life should not determine where you finish. Thank you for all that you do on behalf of remote Australia, and please enjoy your conference

Memorial Mrs Marion Ward

Judy Sinclair-Newton

As a Walgett Branch Life Member and Federal Council's Immediate Past President, I am honoured to be delivering this tribute to Marion, one of ICPA's founding members and share with you her significant commitment in addressing the inequities rural and remote families experience in the pursuit of education for their children.

Marion spent much of her early years in Sydney before marrying and moving to Come-By-Chance near Walgett. Keith and Marion raised three sons and ran the store/post office/ telephone exchange including the Nilma mail run – 52 miles and 52 gates! When she was in Sydney she had completed a business course, worked for various businesses and bought her skills with her, which she applied to a variety of community committees.

At the request of Pat Edgley (founder of ICPA) Marion called a public meeting in Walgett held on 23 November 1971 and Walgett Branch NSW was formed with Marion as the first President, a position she held for eight years. She subsequently became NSW Secretary/ Treasurer from 1973 to 1977 and at the same time Assistant Federal Secretary to Pat Edgley. She was Federal Secretary from 1977 to 1979.

Marion was made a deserved Life Member of Walgett Branch and received a Certificate of Appreciation for her work for Federal Council in 1980. The certificate was presented by Senator Gordon Davidson of South Australia who was the Chair of the Senate Inquiry that reported on the Educational needs of Isolated Children.

While Marion's time on State and Federal Councils may have concluded some forty years ago, her involvement and passion for ICPA has never wavered, taking a very personal interest in our local Branch right to the end.

When we think that our lives are far too busy to be involved in issues such as accessing an education for our children and best felt to others, we need to remember the extraordinary commitment made by such members. While everyone may not have the skills that Marion brought to ICPA we are all living the life of parents who find themselves isolated when accessing an education for our children.

Could everyone please stand for a moment of silence as we honour Marion's lifelong contribution to ICPA.

Why ICPA is as Necessary as Ever after 48 Years

Patricia Mitchell OAM, Patron ICPA Qld Inc

The request by our President to say a few words to you at this, the 48th Federal Conference of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, to compare the economic and social conditions of today with those which prevailed at the time ICPA was inaugurated in 1971, has meant that I have spent many hours rereading many copies of Newsletters, Pedals, Conference Minutes and other documents that I have accumulated over the years since I became a member of ICPA. My reading made me not only note the similarities between then and now, but emphasised for me that ICPA is as necessary today as it has ever been.

I am very proud to be a Life Member of Cloncurry Branch, which I joined in 1980, but I actually became a member of ICPA 46 years ago – when we formed the Augathella branch on 28th July 1973. I became its first President with absolutely no experience but considerable enthusiasm. This was only two years after the initial meeting in Bourke on 16/4/71 when ICPA was formed but there were already more than 70 branches across Australia and State Councils had been formed in most States.

The explosion of interest and commitment in those days before the internet and reliable telephones was extraordinary but reflected the depth of concern that people across rural Australia had about what the future held for their children. It was becoming apparent that in a changing world education would be a key factor in the choices that children would need to make about their futures. The wool boom of the 1950s was long gone, drought and poor commodity prices were huge constraints on people's ability to provide it.

This all sounds strikingly similar to conditions prevailing in many parts of Australia today where the threat of artificial intelligence reducing employment opportunities and constantly fluctuating commodity prices combine with the ongoing battle with 'drought and flooding rains' to quote Dorothea Mackellar, put enormous pressure on parents wanting to provide the best opportunities for their children.

The policy battles fought by ICPA then and since, have had some outstanding successes, some failures and others have seemingly become wars of attrition. The ongoing need for ICPA to still be in there fighting for the future of our children is epitomised in the history of the initial policy for which the Association lobbied to help achieve the objective for which it was founded which is to "lessen the degree of inequality of educational access between geographically isolated and non-isolated children". This policy was to achieve 'the payment of a Living Away from Home Allowance equal to the cost of gaining access to continuing primary or secondary education'. The first huge success was the rapid introduction of the Assistance to Isolated Children's Scheme which was implemented by the Federal Government in 1973, less than two years after the formation of ICPA and in direct response to ICPA's initial objective to 'obtain government assistance for children who do not have daily access to an appropriate school'. This was achieved thanks to the magnificent work of the founding members in several states who demonstrated great skill in using the media (particularly radio) to put the case for change. They worked with both State and Federal politicians to get them to recognise the inequality of access between urban and isolated children in a country where education is compulsory and supposedly free.

However, it has been an ongoing struggle ever since to maintain this recognition and to keep the value of the allowances relevant. This was brought home to me yet again, when I noted the similarity between Agenda item 1 at the first Federal Conference I ever attended, which was the 4th Federal Conference, held in Charleville in 1975, and Agenda item 1 at this, the 48th Federal Conference in 2019. The 1975 motion from Cunnamulla Branch reads "In view of the fact that boarding fees have doubled

since 1970, thus preventing many children from continuing schooling, that Isolated Children's Allowances should be extended substantially". The 2019 motion A1 from the Pilbara Branch (WA) is "That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby both the Minister for Families and Social Services and the Minister for Education for a substantial increase to the Assistance to Isolated Children(AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance to take into account the ever-increasing gap between the allowance and the true cost of boarding". There are a number of similar motions on both agendas and on many of the agendas in the intervening years.

I know I made this same point when I opened the 43rd ICPA Queensland Conference in Townsville in 2014. I noted then, the similarity between conference motions in 1975 and 2014 but annual Presidents' reports, reports of trips to Canberra, meetings with ministers and bureaucrats from intervening years are filled with the efforts made by successive executives to ensure the value of the scheme. Sometimes thanks are recorded for upgrades and improvements but obviously this is a battle we have not won and must continue to fight. The situation is exacerbated today by the fact that the scheme is able to be accessed by families other than the geographically isolated which means the available funds are spread much thinner.

Achieving the introduction of the AIC Scheme was a good start but only the beginning. ICPA continued to draw attention to the inequities and other difficulties faced by families living in the bush and over the next 10 to 15 years education and related issues in rural and regional Australia became the subject for innumerable enquiries, studies and reports from a Senate Standing Committee, several Commonwealth Schools Commission reports and State Government enquiries to those by university faculties, education departments and independent and church school authorities. ICPA was always consulted and we spent a lot of time serving on committees, preparing submissions and responding to reports.

All this gradually bore fruit and we saw huge improvements to existing services and the introduction of new ones such as Special Education Units, Kindergarten and Pre-School programs. Distance Education, which evolved from the old Correspondence Schools and Schools of the Air, became such an effective means of education that I now have concerns that the interests of the Geographically Isolated students for whom the system was developed are in danger of being marginalised by the interests of the increasing numbers of non GI students now using the system.

Communications have been a major interest since the earliest times – largely because of their poor quality or complete lack of anything other than a slow mail service. ICPA was actively involved with the planning for the first Australian satellite - Aussat. The School of the Air by satellite trial conducted out of the Mt. Isa SOTA in 1986-87 had a far-reaching influence on the delivery of Distance Education. By working closely with educators as well as government we have been able to achieve a lot in fields such as curriculum, special education, teacher education and others.

Some issues were pursued for many, many years before being ultimately successful. The bypassing of an inappropriate school to be able to receive living away from home allowances is one that springs to mind. It recurred on conference agendas for at least twenty years before it was finally accepted by government.

Taxation is a policy area in which little headway has been made even though 'The alleviation of some of the educational costs incurred through isolation by taxation concessions or rebates' was one of the very early aims of ICPA. There were 7 motions on tax on the 1975 agenda and I note there are two on the 2019 Agenda – Item A12 from Westmar-Inglestone Branch (Qld) 'that ICPA(Aust) lobbies the relevant minister to support employers wishing to assist with education expenses of children of employees who reside in geographically isolated areas, those eligible for current Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) funding, by removing the Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) on this assistance' and Item

A13 from the Kimberley Air Branch (WA) “that ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to provide for boarding fees to be a tax deductible expense for remote Australian families that are eligible for Assistance to Isolated Children”. There have been many similar ones in the intervening years.

I am aware that over the years because of constant knock backs this policy area has not been pursued as vigorously as others but I would like to say to you as committed members - If this issue, is one you feel is fair and not asking for more than other Australians receive I encourage you to keep pursuing it. Do not be discouraged. This applies to any issues that may arise that you and your branches believe ‘will help lessen the degree of inequality of educational access between geographically isolated and non-isolated children’ – the founding principle of ICPA in 1971 and still crucial today.

I know what busy lives you all lead and thank you for taking the time to be here supporting the interests of our children and communities. I would like to conclude by reading you a poem written by Judy Jakins from Bourke, our first Federal Treasurer, because the sentiments included are mine too and have kept me involved with ICPA for the past 46 years. It was.

ICPA

One step won't take us very far,
We've got to keep on walking
One word won't tell 'em who we are,
We've got to keep on talking.
An inch won't make us very tall,
We've got to keep on growing.
One Canberra trip won't do it all,
We've got to keep on going.
A constant drip of water
Wears away the hardest stone.
But sitting on our backsides
Won't pay the telephone!!
So if you do not help us
Then the job will not get done.
We must have lots more members
If the battle's to be won!!

Presentation of ICPA Federal Life Membership to Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM

Wendy Hick

Trish Mitchell is a familiar face to many in ICPA, but for those of you who may not know her, Mrs. Patricia Mitchell, otherwise known as Trish, has a long history with ICPA.

Trying to summarise Trish's involvement with ICPA in just a few minutes is no easy task and I'm afraid I may not do her dedication to ICPA justice, but I'll give it a go:

In 1973, Trish called a meeting of interested people in Augathella to talk about a fairly new organisation- The Isolated Children's Parents' Association. From that meeting, Augathella Branch was formed and Trish was their inaugural Branch President. Trish has been an ICPA member since the formation of that branch, and she proudly celebrates her anniversary of being an ICPA member for 46 years this week. Trish also assisted Charleville Branch of the Air with their formation in 1976 and she was their first Branch Secretary/Treasurer. In addition, Trish is proudly a member of the Cloncurry Branch, having served previously as Cloncurry Branch President, and she became a Cloncurry Branch Life Member in 1987.

She has served on both Qld State and Federal Councils. She became a Queensland State Councillor in 1977 and was elected to Federal Council in 1982. As the first female Queensland President (1982-1986), Trish also became the first female Federal President in 1985 while continuing on as the Queensland President at the same time. She was our Federal President until 1988 and then the Immediate Past President until 1991, a total of 9 years on Federal Council.

As I mentioned, Trish is a Cloncurry Branch Life Member and to add to that accolade, in 1992, she was the third person in our organisation to be awarded a Federal Award of Merit. She received Queensland State Life Membership in 1995 and became the Patron of Qld ICPA in 2002 and she continues in this role today, some 17 years later.

There is a long list of committees, submissions, delegations and conferences of which Trish has been a part, but the length of this list does not adequately explain the depth of commitment she has given to ICPA and her efforts towards the betterment of education for rural and remote children. In 1996, Trish was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia General Division (OAM) for service to rural education and The Arts.

I'd also like to thank you for continuing to inspire us as ICPA members. Besides all of the things that I mentioned earlier about Trish, she has also strongly supported both state and federal councils over the years and continued to be involved, active and supportive of ICPA and its advocacy. No matter what Trish is involved in, she is always looking for where ICPA might be mentioned or a connection made that might further our cause and we thank you for this. Sometimes a person is such a familiar part of our history, that we can forget to recognise their involvement and participation, but today we would like to recognize all that you have done and continue to do for ICPA by presenting Mrs Patricia Mitchell with Federal Life Membership.

Rural Hardship Education Fund

Wendy Hick

Australia Continues to experience one of the worst droughts in recent times. Some families are now in their 8th consecutive year of drought.

With drought comes a serious impact on rural families' income. This doesn't just affect families out on farms and properties, but the entire community can be affected by the inability to generate income- shop keepers, truck drivers, contractors, chopper pilots, shearers, fencers....the drought affects everyone.

Drought (or a rain deficiency as it's called in some states that do not declare drought) is not the only factor that can inhibit a rural family's ability to generate income. Fire, flood, unforeseen industry impacts such as the Live Export Ban or Dairy Crisis, can lead to almost no income for a family through no fault of their own.

Because of the lack of income, these situations when they arise have a serious impact on the education of children in rural areas.

Children who go away to boarding school because they have no reasonable daily access to a face to face school are often the most affected.

- The cost of educating a child through boarding is extensive, with ICPA research in 2015 showing that families on average had to find between \$17,000 and \$30,000 per child per year after the government allowances to have their children in boarding.
- Often families have more than one child in boarding at once and the cost of educating children from rural and remote areas is unsustainable for families.

- This cost is compounded by events such as the drought or recent flooding in NW Qld.

It is not just boarding students that are affected in these times of hardship though.

- Kindies and early learning services struggle to bring in enough funds from the local community to keep their services open
- Distance education families often have to cut to minimum staff in times of hardship and the mother, who in many cases is also the Home Tutor or supervisor for the DE classroom needs to fill many roles. Families cannot afford to pay a governess or hire an extra person to allow someone from the family to stay in the classroom.
- Small rural schools have high costs in regular times for school camps, bringing in specialised teachers for music and art or in trying to send sporting teams to competitions. In times of Rural Hardship, small rural schools struggle with fundraising in the local community to offer the children the same activities that they would have in better times.
- Students wishing to undertake tertiary study or training are also affected

To try to keep their children in school, in order to access compulsory schooling for the most part, Families are:

- Going into debt and taking on overdrafts
- Splitting the family with one family member moving to town with the children leaving the other parent at home often to struggle along by themselves.
- Leaving the area all together and moving to where they can access a school
- Keeping their children home longer- have heard a number of comments around school enrolments dropping and students not taking up places
- Bringing their children home, which can sometimes be the end of education for that child.
- Some are choosing between children. **Families are choosing which of their children should receive an education.** This should not be happening in Australia today.

Boarding schools for the most part have been extremely supportive and are helping where they can, however at the end of the day, they also have a business to run and they cannot carry the cost of numerous students over a long period of time.

Currently there is no specific education assistance included in drought packages. The NW Qld flood assistance did include a one-time payment of an additional \$1000 per student through the AIC, which families were grateful for.

There has previously been extra assistance for education in drought, 2005 the AIC received an adjustment increase. In the wide spread drought of 2008-2011 a top up was provided to the Assistance for Isolated Children for all students receiving this allowance each year and for a period of time after the drought broke. A Budget Measure was also put in place to provide extra funding for Rural Schools in drought affected areas to be used for whatever needs the schools felt were appropriate. There has been nothing like that this time.

ICPA (Aust) calls for the immediate establishment of a permanent Rural Hardship Education Fund to provide assurance that when times are tough, rural and remote children can continue their education. A program must be put permanently in place so that each time an event beyond people's control affects rural areas, the process does not have to begin again from square one trying to re-establish a program to assist children with education in times of hardship.

This has been left far too long. The drought continues, and families from rural communities continue to struggle. They need help now in order to continue to educate their children. Every child deserves and education no matter where they live.

Communicating with Teenagers

Presented by Hayley Hall, Director of Boarding, Seymour College

Hayley is currently the Director of Boarding at Seymour College, an all-girls boarding school with boarders from Year 6 to 12 here in Adelaide. Before Seymour, Hayley spent five years at Prince Alfred College in boarding, and so has extensive experience in both girls and boys boarding. Originally from London in the UK, Hayley ran two successful companies; one was a national Hip Hop dance school and the other a teacher training company. Hayley holds a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Theology Degree, from Bristol University in the UK and she is also a qualified Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) trainer. Hayley has just finished her first book "How I raised 118 teenagers and lived to tell the tale" and is in the midst of launching her online parenting courses

How I raised 118 teenagers and lived to tell the tale. In the book I share 5 parenting principles. I also run courses where I teach parents these principles

Get the basics rights - the 3 S's – Sleep, Sweat, Salad

Helen Pearson. British Scientists have studied 70,000 children over a 70-year period. Trying to work out: why did some children go on to lead happy and healthy lives VS. difficult lives

Helen Pearson's Ted Talk;

- 1) We must be engaged with our children
- 2) We must read them books and
- 3) We must get them to bed on time

How can you do this?

In order to be able to engage with our teenagers, we have to be able to communicate with our teenagers. So how do we communicate? 93% of our communication is non-verbal. That means that only 7% of what we communicate is our words, i.e. what we say to another person.

Step one to building excellent rapport is noticing how other people communicate. Do they Maintain eye contact? Look around? Stand close to you? Or far away? Speak loudly? Or softly? Speak quickly? Or slowly? Have their arms crossed? Have their legs crossed? Stand still or are they moving? Use specific words?

Step two to building excellent rapport is feedback. By starting to take notice of other people's non-verbal communication, we can start to feed that back to them using our non-verbal, which will make them think we are just like them. Tip: Organise Date Nights. What we schedule happens. And on these date days or nights – practice building rapport with them.

What are the 3 S's?

Sleep: how much sleep does my teenager need?

According to the National Sleep Clinic, teenagers need between 8 to 10 hours of sleep a night.

Please work out, the following:

- School start time for my teenager:
- Time they need to leave the house to get to school:
- Time they need to be woken up:
- Therefore, their Bedtime: (Time they need to be woken up – 10 hours) = time they need to go to bed
- E.g. school starts at 8.30am, need to leave house at 7.30am, they need to be woken up at 6.45am, so they need to go to bed between 8.45pm (Ideally) – 10.45pm.

According to Mindell JA & Owens JA (2003) in a Clinical Guide to Paediatric Sleep, sleep deprivation will impact on a multitude of your teenagers functioning. Namely:

- Their mood
- Their Behaviour
- Their Cognitive ability
- Their academic performance

- And contributing to them being drowsy drivers.

Sweat: How much exercise does my teenager need?

A teenager should be doing at least 60 minutes of exercise a day. Melbourne Boys Grammar school have given each of their Year 9 boarders a Garmin watch which monitors their sleep and exercise levels and it also monitors their stress levels. Through this study they are noting the correlation between lack of sleep, lack of exercise on outputs such as student behaviour and even academic performance.

What we measure improves.

Old School - Exercise chart and set your teenager an exercise goal and see if they can meet it.

New School - purchase a Garmin watch or a FitBit.

Salad: Providing nourishing food

Boarding school in New Zealand has banned all sugar. Foods specifically to develop the teenager brain. Book "smart snacks". Brain foods: avocado, blueberries, coconut oil, broccoli, salmon, eggs, walnuts and green leafy vegetables.

How do you measure against the 3 S's? How does your teenager measure against the 3 S's? What do you notice? Are there any similarities between challenges you are having and your teenager? Do you notice any patterns?

Farewell to Judy Sinclair-Newton

Kate Thompson

It is an absolute honour to present to you all here today, the abbreviated ICPA Federal Council life story of Judy Sinclair-Newton. Hopefully I do her ICPA story justice.

Judy is a life member of the Walgett branch in NSW, I am not sure when she first joined ICPA but think it was about 2005 but ICPA can be very thankful that she did.

Judy joined Federal Council in 2009 in Longreach – yes that is 10 years on council – Judy you can take long service now. ICPA Federal Council can thank in part Jack Beach who apparently spent a bit of time at that conference convincing Judy that ICPA FC was a great path to take. And certainly, the next ten years proved that Judy has been a very valuable addition to ICPA Federal Council and the organisation as a whole.

In 2010, Judy stepped up to Vice-president at the federal conference in Freemantle. This followed with Judy being elected Federal President at the Federal Conference in Darwin in 2011. Past councillor Jane Gloster clearly recalls the meeting when Judy with no coercion, declared her interest and followed up with a nomination for Federal President. This has seen Judy grow from a councillor who was a little unsure of her abilities and very reticent to put herself out there, especially in terms of public speaking, to the Judy we are farewelling from Federal Council today.

In addition to her Vice President and President roles, Judy has led the rural schools and curriculum portfolios at varying points and been a member of others and was always willing and very generous in offering her time to support others outside of her portfolios, including being mentor to new councillors. Judy was also the ICPA representative on ACARA and NRHA and has been the Federal Council conference liaison working with current and past convenors.

I am not sure what Judy would say her highlights have been during time on council but there were many we saw including representing ICPA (Aust) at the live streaming of the launch of nbn's long term satellite "Sky Muster" in 2015, which for ICPA was a great privilege as only a selected number of groups were invited to be present. Judy was progressive as a president and not afraid to make changes that would benefit Council and ICPA Australia. The ICPA website saw a massive overhaul and there were

major constitutional changes and Judy introduced the joint state and federal council meetings on an annual basis. While definitely not a highlight, Roxanne Morrissey pointed out that Roxanne, Judy and Wendy have all been Federal President during devastating droughts and rural adversity.

Judy you have been fantastic to work with, always welcoming, at the end of the line, giving your time to guide councillors, imparting your knowledge. Judy, I admire you, you are an inspiration. Judy, federal council will miss your humour, your stories, that twinkle in your eye when you have something significant to tell us, that infectious quiet laugh when you end up in tears, your mischievous side and your pink text and highlighting – I'll keep that going for you and lastly but by no means least, your friendship.

I thank you on behalf of ICPA (Aust), our members, our state councils and federal council, for your leadership, commitment, patience, generosity of time, inspiration, encouragement, knowledge, guidance, dedication, passion, honesty, support, positivity and for all you have given to ICPA, no matter what has been happening outside FC.

Judy this is certainly not good bye. Good luck and best wishes with your life post ICPA Federal Council. Federal Council stands on the shoulders of GIANTS and Judy you are certainly one of those giants.

Presentation to Outgoing President Mrs Wendy Hick

Nikki Macqueen

Golly gosh! In my 5 years of being a Federal Councillor I have found the absolute worst part is farewelling my fellow councillors off Council. Thankfully this is not a farewell rather an acknowledgement of a stellar job done by our outgoing president Mrs Wendy Hick.

As luck would have it Wendy and I sat next to each other at the 2014 Federal Conference in Launceston as Branch delegates. I joined Federal Council that year with Wendy signing my nomination form. Then in Brisbane at Federal Conference the following year Wendy stepped onto Federal Council with the daunting task of jumping straight into the top job and I took on the Publicity Officer. This began a wonderful friendship which has extended over our four years together on the Executive and I know will last a lifetime.

I am not sure if you all noticed but Wendy is not actually from Australia. She is American, hailing from Chicago. To our benefit (& possibly not thinking anything about ICPA at the time) Wendy's to be husband Lloyd travelled to the US in 1989, found Wendy, then bought her home to live on a remote cattle station in the gulf country of Qld. Lloyd did a great job of selecting his American bride. She gave him 2 strapping sons Adam and Zac and she became the backbone of their grazing enterprise.

Thankfully Wendy doesn't need a lot of sleep because she is often found burning the candle at both ends. Between all the day to day running of six properties over 2 states which includes paying wages, transferring a lot of NLIS tags, quarterly BAS's and of course being a mother and a wife, Wendy has had four solid years of tirelessly working towards geographically isolated children having educational opportunities and ensuring the support that they need to achieve their goals and dreams is given. Wendy is renowned for writing very long emails making sure that she has all the information covered. And it doesn't matter if she is writing to an ICPA member who has a second home allowance query or replying to an invitation from the Prime Minister, Wendy gives each and every person the exact same time because to Wendy nobody is any better or any less important than the other. She has a heart the size of Phar Lap and each and every member of ICPA can rest assured that Wendy has given 220% when she had gone in to bat for them.

Wendy and I have had a terrific relationship during our time on the Executive. The person that the PO works most closely with is the President. I have called on Wendy countless times and often with not a lot of notice to give an interview or to a statement on an ICPA topic and not once have I received a negative or any kind of "I can't" from her. Her professionalism is second to none and I have had an absolute ball standing behind her propping her up. Our telephone conversations are numerous and I know that with every councillor in Wendy's team she has been there giving them that well-deserved pat on the back and encouragement to keep going.

In the four years that Wendy has been our Federal President she has suffered fire, flood, cyclones and is still suffering terrible dry like so many of us. She understands the difficulties faced by our members when they are doing their utmost to give their children the most precious gift which is an education. So, on behalf of every single person in this room and our whole ICPA membership I say thank you Wendy. You will be a wonderful Immediate Past President for Alana as was Judy for you and I am very glad this was not your farewell speech.

Conference Attendance

Federal Council

President	Wendy Hick	
Vice President	Sally Sullivan	
Secretary	Suzanne Wilson	
Assistant Secretary	Jane Morton	
Treasurer	Lisa Slade	
Publicity Officer	Nikki Macqueen	
Councillors	Diane Skene	Kristen Coggan
	Alana Moller	Kate Thompson
	Jane O'Brien	Christie Goddard
Immediate Past President	Judy Sinclair-Newton	
Federal Web Manager	Sue Shotton	
Federal Life Members	Roxanne Morrissey	
	Jane Gloster	
	Julia Materne	

State Council Delegates

New South Wales	Claire Butler	Deb Castle
Northern Territory	Sarah Cook	Rebecca Cadzow
Queensland	Tammie Irons	Kellie Ostwald (1)
		Wendy Henning (2)
South Australia	Jill Greenfield	Edwina Bowie
Western Australia	Tash Johns	Bianca James

Branch Delegates

Alice Springs NT	Amber Driver (1)	Lisa Kimlin (1)
	Ley Fitzpatrick (2)	Katherine Warby (2)
Balranald NSW	Tracy O'Halloran	
Blackall QLD	Susie Milson	James Milson
Bourke NSW	Prue Ritchie	Tanya Mitchell
Broken Hill NSW	Ali Allison	David Shrimpton
Central West Plains NSW	Sally Quigley (1)	Madeline Simmons
Charleville QLD	Christy Bredhauer	
Charters Towers QLD	Miranda Ryan (1)	Sonia Spurdle (1)
	Kim Donaldson (2)	Sue-Ann Jones (2)
Clermont QLD	Christy Moller	Kasie Scott
Cloncurry QLD	Hamish Griffin	Patricia Mitchell OAM
Flinders Ranges SA	Mija Reynolds	Michelle Hilder (1)
		Belinda Rowe (2)
Gascoyne WA	Jane Hughes	
Goldfields Eyre WA	Tallaya Wood	
Hay NSW	Sandra Ireson	
Hillston NSW	Laura Stalley	
Hyden WA	Bianca James	Samantha Greay
Katherine NT	Kerrie Scott	Amanda Murphy

48th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Kimberley Air WA	Jo Camilleri	Constance Wood
Kindon QLD	Daryl Martin	Mandy Martin
Lakes District WA	Kym Ross	
Louth NSW	Gabie Le Lievre	
Mt Isa Branch of the Air QLD	Sancia Fegan	
Marla Oodnadatta SA	Helen Williams	Kirsty Williams
Maree Air SA	Jodie Keogh	
Mitchell-Tambo/Dunkfield QLD	Sally Campbell	
North East SA	Kristina Crawford	Leisa Breeding (1) Penny Rasheed (2)
North West SA	Jessica Barry	Candice Brown
North West Slopes NSW	Geraldine Clark	Julia Orman
NSW Lone Members NSW	Heather Whigham-Reid	
NT Lone Members NT	Michael Wilson	
Pilbara WA	Abbra Slocombe	
Port Augusta SA	Kate Greenfield	
Richmond QLD	Kim Hughes	
Tambo QLD	Louise Martin	
Tibooburra/Milparinka NSW	Vicki Olds	
Walgett NSW	Elizabeth Powell	Karen Ricardo
WA Lone Members WA	Sandie McCombie	
Wentworth NSW	Rachael Litchfield	Bree Wakefield
Western Downs QLD	Miranda Ronnfeldt	Briony Sinclair
Winton QLD	Kate Bradshaw	Katrina Paine
Yalgoo WA	Roxanne Morrissey	

State Observers

QLD Council ICT Adviser	Jeff Little
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Branch Observers

Alice Springs NT	Georgina Hamlyn Katherine Warby (1) Amber Driver (2)	Ley Fitzpatrick (1) Benjamin Quilliam (2) Lisa Kimlin (2)
Charters Towers	Kim Donaldson (1) Miranda Ryan (2)	Sue-Ann Jones (1) Sonia Spurdle (2)
Flinders Ranges SA	Joanne Risdale Sonya Fels Lisa McIntosh	Emilee Warnest Sharon Nutt Michelle Hilder (2)
North East SA	Kerry Williams Leisa Breeding (2) Ros Breeding	Katie Robinson Penny Rasheed (1) Carol Burford
North West SA	Petie Rankin Joanna Gibson	Lynly Kerin
Port Augusta SA	Katrina Morris	Barb Woolford
Southern Downs QLD	Carmel Elliott	

Convening Committee

**Convenor
Committee**

Katrina Morris	
Kirsty Williams	Petie Rankin
Jodie Keough	Jill Greenfield
Lynly Kerin	Joanna Gibson

Conference Guests

Adrian Byrne	St Ignatius' College, NSW
Andrew Stojanovski	Aust Govt Department of Social Services
Anita Jovanovski	NSW Family Day Care Association
Annette Pilloni	Aust Govt Department of Education ACT
Annette Boyle	St Hilda's School QLD
Ben Stockwin	Primary Industry Education Foundation Australia
Benjamin Quilliam	Frontier Services NT
Bernie Dean	Immanuel College SA
Bill McIntosh AM	Outback Communities Authority SA
Carrie Cousar	Scotch College Adelaide SA
Christian Oneto	St Joseph's Nudgee College QLD
Claire Wiseman	Regional Development Australia, Far North SA
Clinton Hort	Philmac Pty Ltd
David de Carvalho	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
Debbie O'Donoghue	Aust Govt Department of Education
Dianne Giblin	Australian Council of State School Organisations
Dianne Knauerhase	P.A. Services
Elizabeth Anderson	Stock Journal SA
Elizabeth Ellis	Telstra
Eugene Evans	Rostrevor College SA
Gareth Downing	Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)
Geoff Deans	Oz Minerals
Guy Mathews	Student & Parenting Programmes, Aust Govt Dept of Human Services
Hayley Hall	Seymour College SA
Ian Andersen	Fairholme College QLD
Ian Walton	Fairholme College QLD
Jacob King	NBN Co
James Couper	Marist College Ashgrove QLD
Jane McIntosh	Outback Communities Authority SA
Janet Barnes	Telstra Regional Australia Executive
Jessica Hackett	Connellan Airways Trust
Jessica French	Remote & Isolated Children's Exercise Inc. SA
John Da Cruz	PLC Sydney NSW

Julie Taylor	Open Access College SA
Kara Cleary	Scotch College Adelaide SA
Karen Davies	Stuartholme School QLD
Karen McColl	Office of the Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention SA
Karla Bridges	North QLD Livestock Industry Recovery Agency - NQLIRA
Kate Gunn	University of South Australia SA
Kate Hadwen	Pymble Ladies' College NSW
Kathryn Piper	Frontier Services NSW
Katie Crombach	Open Access College SA
Ken Swan	Director - The Wealth Academy QLD
Kristen Sharpe	Stuartholme School QLD
Kylie Lindsay	NBN Co
Margaret Hopwood	Pembroke School, SA
Mark Bolton	Regional General Manager SA, Telstra
Mark Sutton	Outback Communities Authority SA
Megan Hamper	Remote & Isolated Children's Exercise Inc. SA
Meredith Ridgway	Scotch College Adelaide SA
Mitchell Eyles	SkyMesh Pty Ltd
Narelle Burke	Catholic School Parents Australia
Nathan Willason	Telstra
Rachael McIntyre	NBN Co
Rachel Stenslunde	St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls WA
Ray Pearson	St Peter's College, SA
Rebecca Osborne	Scotch College Adelaide SA
Richard Stokes	Australian Boarding Schools Association
Rob Harkin	Department for Education SA
Robyn Yates	Association of Independent Schools NSW
Ross Makris	Student & Parenting Programmes, Aust Govt Dept of Human Services
Sam Hedditch	Oz Minerals
Sam Prior	Scotch College Adelaide SA
Samantha Mundy	Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise Inc. SA
Shane Poulson	Tasmanian Catholic School Parents Council
The Hon Shane Stone	North QLD Livestock Industry Recovery Agency - NQLIRA
Sharni Wilson	Katherine School of the Air NT
Simon Shepherd	Westminster School SA
Sophie Ward	Guest
Stephen Higgs	Victorian Ecumenical System of Schools VIC
Tanya Malins	Office of the Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention SA
Thomas Dunsmore	Australian Boarding Schools Association
Tim Saul	NBN Co
Tony Watt	The Southport School QLD
Vic Knauerhase	PA Service
Vicki Saarinsen	NSW Family Day Care Association

Conference Apologies

Members

Megan McNicholl	Federal Life Member
Mac McClymont	Qld ICPA Inc. Life Member
Jeanette De Langrafft	Lakes District Branch WA
Emily Gardner	Midlands Branch, TAS
Peter & Paula Heelan	Belyando/Mt Coolon Branch Qld
Deborah Keats	President, Julia Creek Branch Qld

Guests

Tom Alegounarias	Chair, NSW Education Standards Authority
Hon Karen Andrews MP	Federal Minister for Industry, Science & Technology
Gillian Bale	NSW Centre for Effective Reading, Dept of Education & Training, NSW
Hon John Barilaro MP	Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional NSW, Skills & Small Business
Trish Bergin	First Assistant Secretary, Office for Women, Dept of Prime Minister & Cabinet
Allan Booth	Director, Learning Systems, Dept of Education & Training, NSW
Boyd Brown	Regional General Manager, Telstra Retail & Regional WA
Tim Bullard	Secretary, Dept of Education, TAS
Hon Linda Burney MP	Federal Shadow Minister for Human Services & Preventing Family Violence
Tanya Cameron OAM	National President of Country Women's Association of Australia
Belinda Catelli	Branch Manager, ECEC Integration & Support, Aust Govt Dept of Education
Kylie Catto	President, WA Council of State School Organisations Inc.
Tony Cook	Director-General, Dept of Education, Qld
Hon Roger Cook MLA	Deputy Premier for WA, Minister for Health & Mental Health
Claire Coulton	Head of Advocacy & Govt Relations, Royal Far West, NSW
Ros Curtis	Principal, St Margaret's Anglican Girls School, Ascot, Qld
Libby Dalton	Ex-General Manager for Customer Experience, Telstra Country Wide
Candy Dempster	Principal, Columba Catholic College, Charters Towers, Qld
Senator Richard De Natale	Senator for Victoria, Leader of the Australian Greens
Mark Diamond	CEO, National Rural Health Alliance
Hon Sue Ellery MLC	Minister for Education & Training, WA
Nigel Fairburn	Principal, Blackheath & Thornborough College, Charters Towers, Qld
Senator Mitch Fifield	Senator for Victoria
Hon Paul Fletcher MP	Federal Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts
Lia Finocchiaro	Deputy Opposition Leader, NT
Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP	Federal Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry
Anthony Garnham	Director for Business Development, Beacon Foundation
Alex Gordon	Deputy Secretary, School & Youth, Aust Govt Dept of Education
Valerie Gould	Executive Director, Association of Independent Schools of WA
Carolyn Grantskains	Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools SA
Senator Sarah Hanson-Young	Senator for SA

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Hon Ed Husic MP	Federal Member for Chifley, NSW
Hon Bob Katter MP	Federal Member for Kennedy Qld
Tim Katzur	Head of College, St Peter's Lutheran College, Indooroopilly, Qld
Peter Kelly	Deputy Director-General, State Schools, Dept of Education, Qld
Senator Kristina Keneally	Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Federal Shadow Minister for Home Affairs, Immigration & Citizenship
Kerin Kiepe	Principal, Somerville House, South Brisbane, Qld
Sue Kingwill	CEO, Contact Inc.
Tanya Lehmann	Chair, National Rural Health Alliance
Hon Michelle Lensink MLC	Minister for Human Services, SA
Hon David Littleproud MP	Federal Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disasters & Emergency Management
Prof Simon Maddocks	Vice-Chancellor & President, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, NT
Hon Steven Marshall MP	Premier for SA
Paul Martin	Acting CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority
Senator Jenny McAllister	Senator for NSW
Hon Mark McGowan MLC	Premier for WA, Minister for Public Sector Management, State Development & Jobs & Trade
Senator James McGrath	Senator for Qld
Hon Simone McGurk MLA	Minister for Child Protection, Women's Interests, Prevention of Family & DV, Community Services, WA
Senator Nick McKim	Senator for Tasmania
Dr John McVeigh	Federal Member for Groom, Qld
Hon Mick Murray MLA	Minister for Seniors, Aging, Volunteering, Sport & Recreation, WA
Dr Geoff Newcombe AM	Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools, NSW
Ms Sarah Parker	President, Australian Women in Agriculture
Senator Rex Patrick	Senator for SA
Hon Dominic Perrottet MP	NSW Treasurer & Minister for Industrial Relations
Dr Lee-Anne Perry	Executive Director, Qld Catholic Education Commission
Mr Rick Persse	Chief Executive, Dept of Education, Adelaide SA
Mr Rowan Ramsey MP	Federal Member for Grey, SA
Senator Janet Rice	Senator for Victoria
Senator Anne Ruston	Federal Minister for Families & Social Services
Hon Rita Saffiotti MLA	Minister for Transport, Planning & Lands, WA
Mr Mark Scott	Secretary, Dept of Education, NSW
Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP	Federal Member for Mayo, SA
Senator Arthur Sinodinos	Senator for NSW
Hon Angus Taylor MP	Federal Minister for Energy & Emissions Reduction
Hon Dan Tehan MP	Federal Minister for Education
Mrs Rosemary White	Asst Director, Education, Access & Equity Team, Aust Govt Dept for Education
Mr Josh Willie MLC	Shadow Minister for Child Safety, TAS
Dr Julie Wilson- Reynolds	Principal, St Hilda's School, Southport Qld

Financial Statements

**ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.**

**FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2019**

ITEMS:	PAGE NO:
1.COMMITTEE'S STATEMENT	1
2.COMMITTEE'S REPORT	2
3.AUDIT REPORT	3
4.INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT	5
5.BALANCE SHEET	7
6.NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS	8

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ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

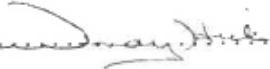
STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE


The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on the pages.

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC. as at 31 MAY 2019 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

.....


.....


Dated this 25th day of July..... 20 19

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ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Your committee members submit the financial report of ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC. for the year ended 31 MAY 2019.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The names of committee members at the date of this report are:

President	Wendy Hick
Vice President	Sally Sullivan
Immediate Past President	Judy Sinclair-Newton
Secretary	Suzanne Wilson
Treasurer	Lisa Slade
Assistant Secretary	Jane Morton
Publicity Officer	Nikki Macqueen
Councillors	Jane O'Brien (Membership Officer)
	Kate Thompson
	Di Skene
	Alana Moller
	Caroline Robinson
	Christie Goddard
	Kristen Coggan

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The principal activities of the association during the financial year were advocating and promoting awareness of the need for equitable access to educational opportunities for families in regional and remote area.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

OPERATING RESULT

The profit from ordinary activities after providing for income tax amounted to profit of \$14,144.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee.

.....
Wendy Hick

.....
Lisa Slade

Dated this 25th day of ... July 20 19

Independent auditor's report to the members

**ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.**

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

I have audited the financial report of Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc. (the association), which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 31 May 2019, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the association as at 31 May 2019 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act of Western Australia 2015*.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report. I am independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110: *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act of Western Australia 2015*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report

The committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act of Western Australia 2015* and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.


Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Auditor's name and signature: 
David Grantley Murdock

Name of firm: D G Murdock

Address: 117 Greenhill Road
UNLEY SA 5061

Dated this 26th day of July 2019

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ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
INCOME		
Accommodation Reimbursements	94.09	1,493.64
Badges and Pins	1,104.93	533.42
Donations Received		
Donations - Branch	9,200.00	21,800.00
Donations - Other	50.00	26.35
Federal Conferences	13,553.41	48,688.22
Government Grants Received	34,000.00	34,000.00
Interest Received	8,177.44	6,246.56
Memberships and Subscriptions		
Membership	54,347.96	63,612.81
Membership - Tas Online Collected	1,050.00	525.00
Sponsorship (Conference)	13,636.36	10,750.00
Sundry Income	1,231.95	1,472.41
	136,446.14	189,148.41
LESS: EXPENDITURE		
Accounting & Audit Fees	1,900.00	1,850.00
Badges and Pins Expenses	1,291.86	981.45
Bank Charges	55.79	104.00
Canberra Delegation Expenses	6,803.31	14,614.66
Computer Expenses	-	200.00
Donations	600.00	600.00
Federal Conferences		
Federal Conferences - Councillor Expenses	34,580.60	35,794.88
Federal Conferences - Convening Committee	19,413.63	30,909.09
Freight & Cartage	592.19	-
Insurance	1,790.25	1,738.76
Meetings		
Meetings - Face to Face	23,190.36	28,012.08
Meetings - Other Expenses	4,791.23	3,692.45
Printing & Stationery	1,806.68	1,992.58
Postage	244.27	543.34
Repairs, Replacement & Maintenance	972.27	454.55
State Conferences	16,067.74	3,705.27
Subscriptions and Memberships		
Memberships	910.23	580.26
Membership Fees - Tasmania Online Memberships	935.00	525.00
Sundries	1,229.47	6,885.25
Telephone & Internet	127.27	-
Web Page Expenses	4,999.93	3,217.17
Website Online Membership	-	6,542.73

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ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	122,302.08	142,943.52
PROFIT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	14,144.06	46,204.89

The accompanying notes form part of the financial statements.

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ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MAY 2019

	NOTES	2019 \$	2018 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash			
Bank Accounts			
ANZ Credit Card		33.54	33.54
Suncorp Everyday #8011		2,590.98	3,573.12
Suncorp Business Saver #0139		335,678.23	340,776.21
Suncorp Dept. Ed Grant #0112		54.73	23,351.85
Suncorp General #9912		47,335.19	4,999.59
Suncorp Membership #9963		2,577.00	-
Suncorp P. Edgley #0066		0.95	0.93
Suncorp East Coast - TAS #5845		2,684.89	-
Total Cash		390,955.51	372,735.24
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		390,955.51	372,735.24
TOTAL ASSETS		390,955.51	372,735.24
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors & Borrowings			
Bank Overdraft (Unsecured)			
Suncorp Membership		-	5.00
Funds Held - East Coast Branch TAS		2,684.89	-
GST Paid/Collected			
GST on Sales/Income		17,871.56	1,012.00
GST on Purchases/Expenses		(17,890.16)	(2,426.92)
Total Creditors & Borrowings		2,666.29	(1,409.92)
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		2,666.29	(1,409.92)
TOTAL LIABILITIES		2,666.29	(1,409.92)
NET ASSETS		388,289.22	374,145.16
MEMBERS FUNDS			
Retained profits	2	388,289.22	374,145.16
TOTAL MEMBERS FUNDS		388,289.22	374,145.16
Auditors Remuneration	3		

The accompanying notes form part of the financial statements.

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**ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.**

**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2019**

Note 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Constitution and Associations Incorporation Act (WA).

Reporting Entity

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

Accounting Policies

The financial report has been prepared on a cash basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or except where specifically stated current valuations of non-current assets.

Revenue Recognition

Revenue (including Grant Income) is recognised on receipt.

Plant & Equipment

Purchases of office equipment are expensed on acquisition.

Taxation

The association is exempt from income tax, however is registered for GST

Insurance

Insurance as required pursuant to the Associations Incorporation Act of Western Australia 2015 is maintained

Mortgages

There were no Mortgages, Charges or Securities over this Association at the date of this report.

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ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2019

Note 2.

RETAINED PROFITS

Retained profits at beginning of the financial year	374,145.16	327,940.27
Net Profit	14,144.06	46,204.89
Total available for appropriation	388,289.22	374,145.16
Retained profits at the end of the financial year	388,289.22	374,145.16

Note 3.

AUDITOR'S REMUNERATION

Audit	1,900.00	1,850.00
	1,900.00	1,850.00

48th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2019

Note 4.	2019	2018
Donations - Branch		
Alpha	1,500.00	3,000.00
Arcadia Valley	-	200.00
Belyando-Mount Coolon	500.00	500.00
Bourke	-	100.00
Charters Towers	-	1,000.00
Clermont	1,500.00	1,500.00
Cloncurry	-	5,000.00
Hughenden	-	-
Hyden	-	1,000.00
Katherine	-	5,000.00
Kindon	-	-
Lakes District	200.00	500.00
Longreach	-	-
Louth	500.00	500.00
Mid West	2,000.00	-
Mount Isa	-	500.00
Namoi	1,000.00	-
Richmond	-	-
Tambo	-	2,000.00
Westmar/Inglestone	1,000.00	-
Winton	1,000.00	1,000.00
	9,200.00	21,800.00

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

REGIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016-2019
STATEMENT BY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2019

In our opinion:

- a) The accompanying financial report presents fairly the state of affairs of the Project as at 31 May 2019 and the results for the period ended on that date
- b) All funding received was expended for the project and in accordance with this agreement.
- c) The accounts of the Project have been properly prepared and are in accordance with the books of accounts of the Association.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Committee.

.....
.....

.....
.....

Dated this 25th day of July..... 2019

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ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

REGIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016-2019 GRANT ACQUITAL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2019

	2019	2018
Income		
Grants Received	34,000.00	34,000.00
Interest Received	275.40	141.31
GST Received	3,400.00	3,400.00
	<u>37,675.40</u>	<u>37,541.31</u>
Expenses		
Bank Charges		-
Canberra Delegation Expenses	7,076.19	6,936.09
Federal Conference Expenses	24,690.82	13,152.90
Meetings	409.62	7,568.71
State Conferences	2,538.28	6,618.06
GST Paid	3,065.36	3,118.88
Membership	-	-
Insurance	-	-
	<u>37,780.27</u>	<u>37,394.64</u>
Profit/(Loss) for the year	<u>- 104.87</u>	<u>146.67</u>
Bank Reconciliation Statement		
Opening Balance	159.60	12.93
(Add) Receipts	37,675.40	37,541.31
(Less) Payments	(37,780.27)	(37,394.64)
Closing Balance	<u>54.73</u>	<u>159.60</u>
Balance per Bank Statement at 31/05/2019	54.73	
Outstanding Reimbursement to General Account	-	
	<u>54.73</u>	

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

REGIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
GRANT ACQUITTAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2019

Auditors Certification:

I have audited the attached Grant Acquittal - Income Statement for the period 1 June 2018 - 31 May 2019.

In my opinion that Statement has been drawn to present fairly the relevant financial transactions for the period 1 June 2018 to 31 May 2019.

A qualified audit opinion was issued on the 2018/2019 annual financial statements of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc. In relation to receipts and other fund-raising activities our audit was limited to amounts recorded.

Auditor's name and signature:


David Grantley Murdock

Name of firm:

D G Murdock

Address:

117 Greenhill Road
UNLEY SA 5061

Dated this 26th day of July 2019

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Membership as at 31st March 2019

Western Australia	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Esperance	18	25	21	26	27	21
Gascoyne	10	12	16	12	18	11
Goldfields Eyre <i>(Kalgoorlie Air)</i>	18	16	18	16	12	19
Hyden	40	31	33	47	46	38
Kimberley Air	10	8	8	10	12	9
Kondinin	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Lakes District	48	48	49	52	44	44
Meekatharra Air	17	20	14	15	16	20
Midwest	58	41	48	51	49	46
Pilbara	16	11	14	18	17	17
WA Lone Members	32	31	34	30	36	24
Yalgoo	7	8	9	10	9	7
Central Wheatbelt North <i>formerly Kalannie</i>	23	22	33	35	29	18
	297	273	297	322	315	274

South Australia	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Eyre	7	10	0	0	0	8
Far West	12	1	1	1	0	0
Flinders Ranges	20	25	23	18	26	24
Marla Oodnadatta	6	7	7	10	10	10
Marree Air	13	13	14	16	13	10
North East Districts	17	17	13	16	18	16
North West	8	8	10	11	11	11
Port Augusta	15	10	9	7	8	9
SA Lone Members	11	9	8	11	16	7
	109	100	85	90	102	95

Tasmania	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Central Highlands	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
East Coast	19	14	14	19	18	7
Midlands <i>(Oatlands)</i>	9	17	17	16	14	9
TAS Lone Members	8	5	5	7	8	7
	36	36	36	42	40	23

Northern Territory	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Alice Springs	39	43	48	44	51	41
Barkly	recess	recess	recess	closed 2017	closed	Closed
Katherine	55	56	52	52	64	52
NT Lone Members	9	11	10	10	14	12
	103	110	110	106	129	105

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New South Wales	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Balranald	38	44	54	56	47	39
Boomi	12	18	11	20	19	18
Bourke	36	35	24	28	29	29
Brewarrina	14	18	15	18	19	14
Broken Hill	41	46	37	33	37	33
Bullarah <i>amalgamated with Moree</i>	18	7	14	12	12	Closed
Central West Plains (<i>Tottenham</i>)	98	92	95	92	92	95
Collarenebri-Mungindi	13	10	16	11	19	15
Cobar	6	7	0	0	recess	recess
Condobolin	8	10	8	12	13	8
Corinella	7	0	0	0	recess	recess
Goolgowi	15	14	11	13	13	13
Hay	86	79	80	78	74	57
Hillston <i>out of recess</i>	14	11	11	0	recess	6
LR/Goodooga	15	15	2	8	9	10
Lord Howe Island	10	14	10	11	11	11
Louth	17	14	17	26	24	23
Monaro	30	26	21	31	31	29
Moree <i>amalgamated Bullarah</i>	17	18	23	15	24	33
Namoi (<i>Burren Junction</i>)	59	54	50	43	48	42
NSW Lone Member	97	97	69	103	122	109
Nyngan	33	27	25	30	25	23
Paroo	0	0	6	recess	recess	recess
Quambone	50	42	42	39	35	40
Rankins Springs	42	40	36	33	25	26
Tibooburra/Milparinka	14	12	13	11	14	18
Tilpa	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Vermont Hill	18	19	17	18	10	6
Walgett	52	42	39	35	43	35
Warrumbungle	0	23	2	1	recess	recess
Wentworth			17	17	24	26
West Wyalong	6	3	8	2	recess	
North West Slopes					8	9
	866	837	773	796	827	767

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Queensland	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Alpha	20	27	36	28	32	22
Aramac-Muttaburra	28	25	34	30	35	32
Arcadia Valley	14	12	14	16	18	9
Auburn-Burrandowan-Cardarga	37	13	11	13	32	28
Augathella	7	9	8	14	22	17
Belyando-Mt Coolon	41	40	32	43	49	40
Blackall	30	38	33	0	34	29
Bollon	19	15	21	1	16	19
Bouli-Bedourie-Birdsville	11	15	15	16	15	14
Capricornia (BOTA)	20	16	19	21	22	29
Channel Country	5	8	0	0	5	1
Charleville	21	19	20	25	20	24
Charleville B.O.T.A.	11	10	10	9	10	0
Charters Towers	44	47	58	46	56	55
Clarke Creek	13	12	15	17	18	23
Clermont	53	31	52	44	55	53
Cloncurry	8	12	9	14	10	16
Cunnamulla	14	9	12	22	28	22
Dawson Valley	18	16	15	10	17	13
Dirranbandi	29	26	27	27	29	32
Dunkeld with <i>Mitchell-Tomoo</i>	0	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Far North QLD (<i>Cairns Radio</i>)	26	1	31	0	32	9
Hughenden	31	31	27	16	16	17
Julia Creek	28	26	25	19	32	27
Kindon	25	26	29	28	31	30
Longreach	40	41	34	22	38	16
McKinlay	9	0	11	0	0	4
Mitchell Toomoo-Dunkeld	33	37	43	38	34	34
Moonie	29	29	29	26	25	24
Mt Isa B.O.T.A	24	27	30	37	35	30
Nebo	0	13	14	0	9	20
North Burnett (<i>Eidsvold-Cracow</i>)	7	0	7	13	18	13
QLD Lone Members	24	26	24	15	25	20
Quilpie	17	20	39	29	32	14
Richmond	22	23	13	18	17	19
Roma	24	27	21	23	30	28
Southern Downs (<i>Stanthorpe District</i>)	27	36	33	36	31	30
Springsure-Rolleston	18	10	0	0	21	17
St George	41	39	37	41	49	46
Talwood	27	33	22	4	9	23
Tambo	27	32	30	24	27	27
Taroom Wandoan	35	33	33	42	39	43
Thargomindah	11	6	8	0	1	0
Western Downs (<i>Condamine-WD</i>)	29	34	33	34	37	40
Westmar Inglestone	50	52	58	64	53	53
Winton	37	37	33	33	40	29
Yaraka-Isisford	26	30	30	34	31	32
	1110	1069	1135	992	1235	1123

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Australia Wide Membership Totals	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
New South Wales	866	837	773	796	827	767
Northern Territory	103	110	110	106	129	105
Queensland	1110	1069	1135	992	1235	1123
South Australia	109	100	85	90	102	95
Tasmania	36	36	34	42	40	23
Western Australia	297	273	297	322	315	274
	<u>2521</u>	<u>2425</u>	<u>2434</u>	<u>2348</u>	<u>2648</u>	<u>2387</u>
Corporate					1	4

Financial Branches 31/05/2019	
New South Wales	25
Northern Territory	3
Queensland	45
South Australia	7
Tasmania	3
Western Australia	12
	95