

Isolated Children's Parents' Association
of Australia Incorporated



Minutes

of the

47th Annual Conference

COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

1st & 2nd August 2018

QT Hotel, Canberra, ACT

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Canberra, ACT

held at the

QT Hotel, Canberra, ACT

Hosted and convened
by
ICPA NSW State Council

Convenor:
Mrs Caroline McDonald

47th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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Numbering of motions is as recorded in these minutes - the number following in parenthesis refers to the number as it appeared on the Agenda at Conference, e.g. M15 (A14) refers to motion 15 which was agenda motion 14. "F" stands for floor motion and "S" for supplementary motion.

BOARDING SCHOOLS/SCHOOL TERM HOSTELS

M25(A1), M26(A2), M27(A3), M28(A4), M29(A5),
M30(A6), M31(A7), M32(A8), M48(A9), M49(A10),
M50(A11), M51(S1), M52(S2), M86(F1),

COMMUNICATIONS

M65(A12), M66(A13), M67(A14), M68(15),
M69(A16), M70(A17), M71(A18), M72(A19),
M73(A20), M74(A21), M75(A22), M76(A23),
M77(A24), M78(A25), M79(A26), M80(A27),
M81(A28), M82(A29), M83(S3),

CURRICULUM

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DISTANCE EDUCATION

M19(A31), M20(A32),

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Early Learning M1(A34), M2(S4), M3(A33),

Child Care

M4(A35), M5(A36), M6(A37), M7(A38), M8(A39),
M9(A40), M10(A41), M11(S5), M12(S6), M13(S7),
M17(S8), M18(S9),

Other

M21(A42), M22(A43), M23(A44), M24(S10),

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M37(A49), M38(A50),

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M14(A51), M15(A52), M16(A53),

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Access Allowance

M53(A54), M54(A55), M55(A56),

Youth Allowance

M56(A57), M57(A58), M58(A59), M59(A60),
M60(A61), M61(A62), M88(F3),
M89(F4),

Other

M62(A63),

TRAINING

M63(S11), M64(S12),

MISCELLANEOUS

M84(A64), M85(A65), M87(F2),

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

M39(A66), M40(A67), M41(68), M42(A69),
M43(A70), M44(A71), M45(S13), M46(S14),

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ICPA Federal Council 2017 - 2018

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Camooweal QLD

Vice President

Mrs Sally Sullivan
Mataranka NT

Secretary

Mrs Suzanne Wilson
Darwin NT

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Imm. Past President

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Dubbo NSW

Committee

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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

Federal Webmaster

Mrs Nikki Macqueen
Millmerran QLD

ICPA Website Manager

Mrs Sue Shotton
Winnellie NT

Pedals Editor

Mrs Raelene Hall
Meekatharra WA

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Millmerran QLD

Imm. Past President

Ms Judy Sinclair-Newton
Dubbo NSW

Committee

Mrs Di Skene
Brookstead QLD

Committee

Mrs Kristen Coggan
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Committee

Mrs Caroline Robinson
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Committee

Mrs Alana Moller
Clermont QLD

Committee

Mrs Christie Goddard
Bollon QLD

Federal Webmaster

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Millmerran QLD

ICPA Website Manager

Mrs Sue Shotton
Winnellie NT

Pedals Editor

Mrs Raelene Hall
Meekatharra WA

COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

Conference Program Day 1 - Wednesday 1st August 2018

9:00am	National Anthem Welcome Conference Convenor Introduction of Guests & Delegates Confirmation of 2017 Alice Springs Conference Minutes Official Opening of Conference Strategic Advisor - Regional Development, Charles Sturt University Presentation - video message Minister for Education and Training Federal ICPA President's Report Memorial - Mr Eric (Bunny) Powne MBE New South Wales ICPA President's Report	Queanbeyan Public School Senior Choir Ensemble Mrs Wendy Hick Mrs Caroline McDonald Mrs Suzanne Wilson Mrs Sally Sullivan Mrs Fiona Nash Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham Mrs Wendy Hick Mrs Carmel Elliott Mr Bruce Paynter
10:30am	Morning tea	
11:00am	Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Presentation Early Childhood Education and Care Agenda Motions South Australia ICPA President's Report Presentation - Royal Far West Chief Executive Officer Specific Needs Agenda Motions	Mrs Jane Morton Mrs Mija Reynolds Ms Lindsay Cane
12:30pm	Lunch	
1:30pm	Keynote Speaker "Are Robots Coming to Steal Our Children's Jobs?" CEO And Co-Founder Education Changemakers Presentation – DEMY (Distance Education Middle Years) misconceptions and benefits Middle Years Leader Alice Springs School of the Air Distance Education Portfolio Presentation Distance Education Agenda Motions Tasmania ICPA President's Report	Mr David Faulkner Dr William Newman Mrs Alana Moller Mrs Emily Gardner
3:00pm	Afternoon tea	
3:30pm	Presentation - A Journey with Isolation the insight gained & lessons learned while growing up with isolation Boarding Schools/School Term Hostels Agenda Motions Rural Schools/Schools Travel Portfolio Presentation Rural Schools/School Travel Agenda Motions Introduction of candidates for Federal Council Conference arrangements	Mr Nathan Kitto Mrs Di Skene Mrs Caroline McDonald
5:30pm	Close of Business Day 1 <i>Pre-dinner tour of Australian War Memorial followed by the Conference Dinner. Bus transfers depart at 6:00pm.</i>	

Conference Program Day 2 - Thursday 2nd August 2018

8:30am	Annual General Meeting	
9:00am	Conference resumes	
	Conference arrangements	Mrs Caroline McDonald
	Curriculum Portfolio Report	Mrs Judy Sinclair-Newton
	Curriculum Agenda Motions	
	Queensland ICPA President's Report	Mrs Tammie Irons
	Presentation - Year 12 - what's next?	Ms Kellie McInnes Ms Wendy Walker
	Tertiary Portfolio Presentation	Mrs Kate Thompson
	Tertiary Agenda Motions	
10:30am	Morning tea	
11:00am	Tertiary Agenda Motions	
	Western Australia ICPA President's Report	Mrs Natasha Johns
	Communications Portfolio Presentation	Mrs Wendy Hick
	Presentation - The nbnTM effect	Ms Lalla Mackenzie
	Senior National Stakeholder Relations Manager, nbn TM Local	
	Communications Agenda Motions – Internet	
	Conference arrangements	Mrs Caroline McDonald
12:30pm	Lunch	
1:30pm	Presentation - Telstra Country Wide (TCW)	Mrs Jenny West
	NSW/ACT Telstra Country Wide	
	Communications Agenda Motions - Telephone, Mobile	
	Miscellaneous Agenda Motions	
	Northern Territory ICPA President's Report	Ms Tiani Cook
	Regional Telecommunications Review	
	- Discussion Session	Ms Wendy Duncan Ms Kylie Stretton
	Conference arrangements	Mrs Caroline McDonald
3:30pm	Afternoon tea	
	Conference Agenda Motions continued	
	Advocacy Forum - Building Bridges	
	Better Internet for Regional, Rural and Remote Australia (BIRRR)	
5:30pm	Close of Conference	
	<i>Post Conference Dinner held on site at QT Hotel at 7pm.</i>	

DAY ONE Wednesday 1st August 2018

9.00am Conference commences

National Anthem

Sung by students from the Queanbeyan Public School Senior Choir Ensemble

Welcome by Federal ICPA President Mrs Wendy Hick (page 101)

Conference Convenor Mrs Caroline McDonald
Welcome and overview of conference arrangements

Introduction of Guests
Introduction of Delegates and Issuing of Voting Cards Mrs Suzanne Wilson

Confirmation of the 2017 Minutes, Alice Springs Conference

“That the 2017 Federal Conference Minutes be accepted.”

Moved: Sally Sullivan Federal Council
Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council **CARRIED**

Business arising from the 2017 minutes: NIL

Official Opening of Conference

Strategic Advisor - Regional Development,
Charles Sturt University Mrs Fiona Nash (page 104)

Vote of Thanks Mrs Wendy Hick

Video Message from Minister for Education
and Training Hon Simon Birmingham (page 107)

Federal ICPA President's Report Mrs Wendy Hick (page 54)

Presentation - VALE E.C. (Bunny) Powne MBE Mrs Carmel Elliott (page 108)

New South Wales ICPA President's Report Mr Bruce Paynter (page 59)

Federal Council “Join the Team” video clip played, and conference members reminded to hand in nomination forms for Federal Council.

10.41am Morning Tea

11:05am Conference resumes

Presentation - Federal Award of Merit Mrs Wendy Hick (page 123)
Presented to Mrs Sue Shotton

Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Report Mrs Jane Morton (page 88)

Explanation of new procedure of conjoined motions Mrs Wendy Hick (page 124)

Early Childhood Education and Care - Early Learning - Agenda Motions

M1 (A34) Katherine Branch (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to monitor the transition of rural and remote Early Childhood Mobile Services from the Federal Budget-Based Funding (BFF) model to replacement funding models."

Moved: Sarah Measey NT State Council (NT)

Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Some rural and remote Early Childhood Services were funded through the Federal Department of Education and Training with Budget Based Funding (BBF) which has changed to the 'Jobs for Families: Childcare Package' from July 2018. Some of those services, such as the Katherine Isolated Children's Services (KICS), were unable to transition to that package because their primary role does not include child care. KICS funding will now come from the Dept of Prime Minister and Cabinet under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) as 70% of its clientele are indigenous families. KICS have been funded at the same level as the past 8 years for a period of 18 months, which still does not give staff long term certainty. KICS has been operating since 1988 and is a highly regarded provider of 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.

KICS is not the only organisation, nationally, facing uncertainty. ICPA (Aust) is well placed to keep government accountable to ensure organisations such as KICS continue to operate are funded at levels commensurate with their needs.

M2 (S4) Cunnamulla Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Government Departments to identify future funding for new and existing play-based Children's Mobiles that, due to their service of rural and remote children, are unable to transition to the new Federal Government (centre-based) Jobs for Families - Child Care funding."

WORD CHANGE

Tammie Irons (Queensland State Council) requested conference permission for word changes. Remove the word *relevant* and add the word *Federal*. Remove the word *Departments*. Remove *Children's* replace with *Early Childhood*. Remove *Mobiles* and replace with *Mobile Services*.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to identify future funding for new and existing play-based Early Childhood Mobile Services that, due to their service of rural and remote children, are unable to transition to the new Federal Government (centre-based) Jobs for Families - Child Care funding."

Moved: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The Federal Government Budget Based Funding for play-based children's mobile services that are unable to transition to the new Federal Government (centre-based) Jobs for Families - Child Care Funding ended on 30 Jun 2018. New funding has been identified for existing play-based mobiles under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (18mths

funding) and the Department of Social Services (12mths funding). The Paroo Contact Children's' Mobile (PCCM) had its BBF funding withdrawn as a result of a new, more efficient business model being classified as 'a new service' by the Department of Education. The PCCM, like many mobile groups have existing infrastructure, services areas and equipment to be able to continue and more importantly improve and grow if secure funding was made available for new and existing services from the Federal Government. Early Childhood mobile services ensure equitable access and continuation of child development activities to the children and their families in remote and isolated areas of outback Australia.

M3 (A33) CONJOINED MOTION presented by: Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA), Katherine Branch (NT), Northern Territory State Council (NT), and Western Australia State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government to extend the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education component to cover all pre-compulsory students who are enrolled via a distance education program."

Moved: Elyce Donaghy Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA)
Seconded: Tash Johns Western Australia State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation: (Goldfields Eyre Branch WA)

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.

Explanation: (Katherine Branch NT):

The Federal Government is committed to ensuring that every child has access to a quality early childhood education program; all states and territories have signed up to the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education for 2016 and 2017. 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. Extract from: www.education.gov.au/universal-access-early-childhood-education

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 (Semester 1 2018) 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 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 small portion of the tens of billions of dollars allocated to early

childhood education and care, some of which is supposed to ensure the system is more accessible, affordable and fairer for families.

Explanation: (Northern Territory State Council NT):

The Federal Government is committed to ensuring that every child has access to a quality early childhood education program. For most rural and remote children this means enrolment in preschool from when they are 3 ½ years old. Setting up the classroom for distance education delivery for Pre-schoolers costs the same as for the first year of compulsory schooling. Extending the AIC distance education allowance to include these students will ensure greater and more equitable participation in Early Childhood Education by rural and remote students. Rural and remote families have no other day care options for pre-school age children, and it becomes the family's responsibility to set up these learning environments for their young children to cover all aspects of early child development.

Explanation: (Western Australia State Council WA):

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.

Early Childhood Education and Care - Child Care - Agenda Motions

M4 (A35) Louth Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Education and Training review the employee requirements for In Home Care Educators for remote families to allow for more flexibility especially in the Certificate III in Early Childhood requirement."

Moved: Bree Wakefield Wentworth Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Nerida Healy Wentworth Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The difficulty of finding suitable Educators to employ for remote families is becoming almost impossible.

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. Often there are issues with Educators only realising the unsuitability to this environment after they have arrived. These "false starts" are stressful for the children involved and the entire family however also have ramifications for the educator.

From 2 July, 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). This would mean that there is no relevance for gap students to be employed as educators therefore limiting the eligible potential employees even further.

Those of us in the Parkes electorate would like to thank Mark Coulton for his recognition and understanding of the dire situation remote families would be in without subsidised In Home Care.

This funding has meant that families have been able to remain together on the land in isolation.

M5 (A36) Belyando/Mt Coolon Branch (QLD)

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

Moved: Amanda Clark Belyando/Mt Coolon (QLD)

Seconded: Goscelyn Sullivan Belyando/Mt Coolon (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The "In Home Care National Guidelines" revised 1st March 2018 edition, Section 3.6.1, states, "*IHC educators will be required to have a minimum Certificate III level qualification in a relevant course or be working towards a Certificate III qualification and provide documentary evidence.*"

This will require those educators who are actively studying an Early Childhood Education qualification to complete a number of practical placement hours in an Early Childhood Service as part of their 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?

For this reason, if a weighted percentage of the educator's required practical placement hours can be obtained in their current position as an Early Child Care educator at their place of employment it will 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.

M6 (A37) Bollon Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Education and Training to revisit the Family Assistance Law so In Home Care Educators and Nannies are explicitly able to supervise students in the Distance Education classroom where, for medical reasons or geographical isolation, mainstream schooling is not an option."

Moved: Christie Goddard Bollon Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Fiona Cameron Bollon Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Due to Family Assistance Law, families are not entitled to Child Care Benefit while the In-Home Carer is supervising children during their on-air lessons. This legislation should be revisited so that families' who have no other option, due to geographical isolation or medical reasons, but to educate their children via distance can receive essential financial support. This support enables parents to participate in the workforce, look for work, study or volunteer. This is the intent of the Child Care Benefit policy.

M7 (A38) Belyando/Mt Coolon Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Education and Training for the In Home Care Scheme to allow rural and remote families access to "Outside School Hours Care" of school aged children by not reallocating places on the basis of 0-5 year old age criteria, rather on a needs and child care service accessibility basis."

Moved: Goscelyn Sullivan Belyando/Mt Coolon (QLD)

Seconded: Amanda Clark Belyando/Mt Coolon (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The "In Home Care National Guidelines" revised 1st March 2018 edition, Section 2.3, states, *"Initial allocation of places will reflect utilisation as at 1 July 2018, however, places will be re-allocated on the basis of 0-5-year-old jurisdictional population to enable an equitable allocation across states and territories within a two-year timeframe, and as families leave this care type."*

The Child Care Subsidy includes "Outside School Hours Care" (OSHC) and therefore by restricting allocated places on the basis of 0-5 year olds, In Home Care are discriminating against Rural and Remote families who have school aged children (greater than 5 years old) and no other alternative to OSHC by placing this age restriction on place allocation. Rural and Remote families in this situation will no longer be able to access OSHC through the Child Care Subsidy like their urban counterparts.

M8 (A39) Belyando/Mt Coolon Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister of Education and Training for the In Home Care Scheme to give families the opportunity to source and introduce an appropriate educator suited to the family to the agency for further screening."

Moved: Goscelyn Sullivan Belyando/Mt Coolon (QLD)

Seconded: Amanda Clark Belyando/Mt Coolon (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The "In Home Care National Guidelines" revised 1st March 2018 edition, Section 2.3, states, *"IHC Support Agencies will match families to educators/services able to meet their needs and refer families to other support services as required."*

Child care services through In Home Care in rural and remote families is a unique situation where beyond the hours of child care the educator is very much a part of the family's life. Majority of the time educators will be accommodated either in the family home or a dwelling in close proximity to the family home and due to isolation, the family may also be the only other social company available. Hence, the educator and family are required to have a work and personal relationship.

The concern with the IHC agencies matching educators to families is that although the educator is qualified for the family's requirements they may not be suited to that family's personalities, values, or lifestyle. For a healthy work and living environment for all parties involved it is important that the educator compliments the family's values and lifestyle. Therefore, families should have the right to choose an educator based not only on qualifications but also personal/life morals/values to fit their family's dynamics and job description and then introduce them to the agency for further screening into the service.

M9 (A40) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies relevant Ministers to enable In Home Care facilitators to administer shared care contracts."

Moved: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

Seconded: Emma Chalmers Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Sometimes more than one family lives on one site. It makes sense to share care if legitimate ratios are met.

M10 (A41) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Education and Training to ensure there is a valid increase to In Home Care places in regional and remote areas following the introduced changes to the In Home Care Program on 2nd July 2018."

Moved: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)
Seconded: Emma Chalmers Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

There has historically been a shortage of places in Central Australia for In Home Care. Applicants are ranked according to set criteria however families can wait for up to two years to gain a place and there are normally families on the waiting list. Some people find the process so daunting they don't reapply or indeed apply in the first place. There are currently families without educators. There is a real concern amongst families, on social media and in forums that families use to find suitable educators, that with the changes requiring educators to have a Certificate 3 or above qualifications (or be willing to enrol in and complete an appropriate qualification) will mean that they will not be able to recruit an educator. Most In Home Care educators are gap year people who generally come straight from school. There is a shortage of qualified educators. The new process means the agency is supposed to recruit on behalf of the family, but most families will tell you they have a tough time finding educators and worry will the agency be as diligent. If families find themselves unable to find an educator, they have to forfeit their place. This will affect the data because suddenly it will appear as if there is no demand for In Home Care.

For families in our district, In Home Care fills the stop gap that would normally be filled by families and friends if they lived in the city. More and more both parents need to be working full time. Because of their isolation it is impossible to rely on ad hoc care arrangements. Children would therefore be required to be in the workplace posing a danger to themselves and others. In Home Care is vital to isolated families.

A specific example: recently, one of our members' husbands was badly injured, they had to rush straight to town for medical care and it has been almost 12 weeks of in and out of town and interstate to receive medical attention. This was stressful enough without having to worry about organising child care. Without the In Home Care educator the children would have spent a considerable amount of time in hospitals and in transit between facilities and home for appointments.

M11 (S5) Clermont Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the relevant ministers to revise the In Home Care National Guidelines to incorporate educators employed to supervise Distance Education Lessons."

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

CARRIED

Explanation:

The In Home Care Guidelines only allow for child carers for under school-age children or out-of-school-hours care for older children. In remote areas parents are required to supervise the delivery of lessons being taught by distance education. If the In Home Care guidelines allowed the educators to supervise the distance education schoolwork, it would assist in alleviating a substantial cost burden carried by geographically isolated families educating their children. We would like to increase the transparency of the selection criteria, process and placement of families on the waitlist.

M12 (S6) Wentworth Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) request the Minister for Education and Training review the requirement for remote families that from January 2020, educators employed via In Home Care have to have or be working towards Certificate III in Early Childhood."

Moved: Bree Wakefield Wentworth Branch (NSW)

Seconded: Nerida Healy Wentworth Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We thank the Minister for the transitional measures put in place from 2 July 2018 however concerns remain as to the process post the transitional measures.

It is increasingly difficult to find a suitable governess to employ in a remote location and it is not unusual to go through several governess ' before finding a suitable one. It is a challenging environment to live and work in and many turn up and realise they are not suited to the job or environment.

Post Jan 2020, an unqualified educator is required to enrol in Cert III in Early Childhood prior to starting the job. This is a cost that will be pushed on to already struggling families. It is important to note that the NSW Education Department has recognised the stress this is placing on families and are looking into ways they can be of assistance.

This ruling effectively narrows the pool of potential employees and eliminates gap year students who are looking at alternate studies but are wanting to qualify for independent Austudy before going to university.

Wentworth Branch would like to see a twelve-month grace period for remote families/ educators, that if the educator continues to be employed through In Home Care they then must enrol and complete the qualifications.

M13 (S7) Clermont Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies relevant ministers to consider school-aged child care qualifications to pertain to state requirements rather than a blanket Cert III for ECEC for all In Home Care Educators."

Moved: Kasie Scott Clermont Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Christy Moller Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Recent school-aged child care requirements obtained from the Australian Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) indicate that each state has different qualifications not necessarily consistent with the Certificate III required for IHC.

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-01/ACECQAApprovedQualificationListOSHC.pdf>

Perhaps, there can be some leniency in the requirements for caring for school-aged children.

Video Clip - COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

"What would you say to the Prime Minister?"

SA ICPA President's Report
(presented on behalf of Mrs Kerry Williams)

Mrs Mija Reynolds (page 69)

Presentation
Chief Executive Officer, Royal Far West

Mrs Lindsay Cane (page 111)

Convenor

Mrs Caroline McDonald

12:38pm Lunch

1:16pm Conference Resumes

The Chair reminds delegates that all word changes to motions are to be written down and handed into the minutes table.

The Chair informs conference delegates and guests that The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC has joined the conference proceedings.

Specific Education Needs - Agenda Motions

M14 (A51) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the relevant bodies for the establishment of mental health resources which specifically assist geographically isolated students and families, particularly around the issue of bullying.”

Moved:	Sancia Fegan	Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)
Seconded:	Christy Moller	Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

A tragic event earlier this year highlighted the need for a specifically dedicated helpline or section of mental health services which can address and assist rural and remote families/students with the unique mental health challenges they face due to distance. These unique challenges can include leaving home for boarding school with family support being a great distance away, parents needing to rely on school staff to identify problems and “know their children” well enough to raise concern, attending a small rural school where students feel they cannot escape situations because “everyone knows”, and children watching parents struggle with mental health as they deal with hardships such as drought, industry downturns, concerns around meeting school fees, etc.

Assistance could be in the form of “helpline” or online site/chatroom which specifically understands rural and remote student mental health challenges and these resources could perhaps be incorporated under an already existing organisation or mental health program but have a rural and remote/geographically isolated focus.

In addition to students needing somewhere to turn when they need assistance, resources should be available for rural and remote parents to help them offer their children strategies to deal with situations they may face in their schooling such as bullying and cyber-bullying. Rural students often have very little face to face social experience and from a young age are usually happy to see other children. “Teasing” and bullying can be new concepts that geographically isolated children have not experienced prior to going away to school and rural and remote students can be thrust into an environment with other students who may have quite different social experience and awareness.

Currently specific information around strategies in dealing with bullying while living away from home or in a small close-knit community are not readily accessible for rural and remote families. Information and resources are needed so that geographically isolated families can better prepare their students for going away to boarding school or rural school situations.

M15 (A52) South Australian State Council (SA)

"That ICPA (Aust) appeals to the appropriate ministers to introduce travel and accommodation allowances for rural and isolated families travelling to access face-to-face allied health services."

Moved: Mija Reynolds South Australian State Council (SA)

Seconded: Joanna Gibson South Australian State Council (SA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

As part of early identification and intervention for special needs and learning difficulties, rural and isolated children require allied health services such as speech pathology, occupational therapy and mental health services. Despite the availability of technology such as Skype or Telehealth, it is still necessary that the child and the therapist come face-to-face on a regular basis. Face-to-face sessions provide an opportunity for the therapist to perform assessments and gain a better understanding of the child's needs and abilities, which then give accurate direction for therapy to meet the child's learning and developmental goals. To attend a session in person is extremely costly for families having to travel great distances, pay for accommodation and living expenses while away. For children with special needs and/or learning difficulties, early intervention with allied health professionals is vital for the child to have a successful education. Even those who qualify for NDIS are left significantly out of pocket as travel and accommodation is not provided under this scheme.

M16 (A53) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Health and the Minister for Education and Training to collaborate for equitable subsidies nationally for accommodation and travel for children with specific or special learning needs to attend appointments with qualified specialists."

Moved: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

Seconded: Emma Chalmers Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Members that need to access special need appointments for their children such as speech pathology, specialised tutoring, hearing appointments, etc. would like to ensure that there is consideration within the Patient Assistant Travel Scheme (PATS) for these out of pocket expenses incurred by the family when traveling hundreds; and in some cases, thousands of kilometres per visit to a learning specialist are offset within the Patient Assistant Travel Scheme.

Early Childhood Education and Care - Child Care - Agenda Motions continued

M17 (S8) Alpha Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to immediately address the confusion, uncertainty and lack of information around the financial changes to the In Home Care Scheme."

Moved: Anna Appleton Alpha Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Loretta Goodwin Alpha Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The new In Home Care National Guidelines came into effect on 1 July 2018. Our branch members have experienced distress and financial hardship as a result of the misinformation, confusion and lack of information around the changes to the In Home Care Guidelines. There has been no ability to forward budget and plan for the changes, families

were not given any indication prior to the new rollout about their out-of-pocket costs and co contributions. There was no ability for families to get a sample payslip through the new software therefore no opportunity to have an idea about financial cost for families. This issue is ongoing with reports of software crashes and families left in the dark in regard to the parent co contribution for their carer. In some cases, carers have not been paid their fortnightly entitlements because of the confusion and software crashes. During this time the carer is still employed, and many families have been left wondering if this is affordable for the future care of their children. It also places carers wondering if they have a future position and, in some cases, has changed weekly income for the carer. Families are reporting wasting a considerable amount of time trying to get their issues resolved which is adding to the financial and emotional stress they are already placed under due to the ongoing drought.

M18 (AS9) Blackall Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government to relax the legislation for the need to have a qualified Early Childhood Teacher or Certificate III ECEC qualified person, run a kindergarten program in rural and remote child care centres, when recruitment to these positions cannot be filled.”

Moved: Donna Doyle Tambo Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Heather Turnbull Tambo Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Although waivers are presently granted for the current legislation that was put into place in 2012, Rural and remote Child Care Centres are having problems recruiting staff due to the following:

- No incentives to go to rural and remote areas, although State Government has offered to subsidise training.
- Even though Lady Gowrie has offered to pay for training, subsidies housing and pays above the award, they cannot compete with teachers/relief teachers (on \$360 per day) or the call of the coast.
- The associated paperwork is excessive. When an already stretched centre manager has to complete the required portfolios each day they do not have the required staffing numbers to give them time during working hours and have to complete the paperwork in their own time (keeping in mind most centres operate have a 6.30 am to 6 pm).
- The rules and regulations related to a Child Care Centre are more onerous than that for a primary or high school teacher.
- Expectations do not equal the wages!!
- Child care is NOT a babysitting service as the majority of us believe. The stress and official procedure that are associated with the operation of a centre are inconsistent with the outcomes.
- Due to the fact that it has been so difficult to get child care centres in many rural and remote townships it has been left to local councils to operate the establishments. This is not core council business and they are not qualified (nor should they be) to run them. The local councils are doing this purely as a service to the towns but unfortunately do not fully understand the technicalities involved.
- Dysart, Thursday Island, Theodore, Longreach, Barcaldine, Tambo, Winton and Blackall are all having recruiting problems either with an Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) and/or associated certificate qualified staff. There may be many other centres, but these are either in our local area or affiliated with Lady Gowrie.
- Information received seems to indicate that a permanent dispensation to the new legislation, not just a waiver, is required in rural and remote areas.

- Any centre is better than none as the only alternative now is to close the business down, if qualified staff cannot be recruited, as has happened in Blackall.

Keynote Speaker

Mr David Faulkner

CEO and Co-Founder of Education Changemakers
“Are Robots Coming to Steal Our Children’s Jobs?”

The Chair acknowledged the arrival of Senator James McGrath. Senator for Queensland and the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister.

Presentation

Dr William Newman

Alice Springs School of the Air Middle Years Leader
Distance Education Middle Years (DEMY) – misconceptions
and benefits

Distance Education Portfolio Report

Mrs Alana Moller (page 86)

Distance Education - Agenda Motions

M19 (A31) CONJOINED MOTION presented by: Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA), Katherine Branch (NT), Northern Territory State Council (NT), Pilbara Branch (WA) and Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role the Home Tutor undertakes when educating students via distance education.”

Moved: Sarah Cook

Northern Territory State Council (NT)

Seconded: Tash Johns

Western Australia State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation: Goldfields Eyre (WA)

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 needs be acknowledged. Home Tutors provide what the government simply cannot cost effectively supply and as such should be recognised and remunerated fairly.

Explanation: Katherine Branch (NT)

Katherine Branch thanks ICPA (Aust) for your continuing pursuit of this motion. 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: Northern Territory State Council (NT)

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. When a family member (often the mother) takes the on the responsibility of being the Home Tutor, they are effectively unable to gain employment within the family business, ranger station, remote community etc. Therefore, the income for that family can be halved. This has a detrimental effect on the families living remotely and schooling with Distance Education. The costs involved with remote living and schooling is often a monetary pressure that is placed on one of the parents as the other is teaching the children. Remote families often have no access to after school care, or day care for under school age children, so there is no opportunity for the home tutor (mother) to seek employment to relieve the burden of a sole income family. Travel expenses are high, fuel costs are high and there are many other expenses that remote families encounter while educating their children, not to mention the looming expense of secondary schooling.

Explanation: Pilbara Branch (WA)

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: Western Australia State Council (WA)

WA State Council would like to thank Federal Council for their 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.

M20 (A32) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

"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."

Moved: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)
Seconded: Emma Chalmers 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 school of the air centres and Schools of Distance Education are so important to rural and remote communities. This scenario that our neighbours in Western Australia faced last year caused isolated families with children utilising distance education across Australia to ask, "could this happen to us".

We would like to thank Federal ICPA and ICPA branches at every level for providing a sound and structured voice for distance education when assisting Western Australian families in their plight to reverse the decision to centralise regional schools of distance education.

Members will take comfort knowing ICPA are advocating for the benefits of Schools of the Air and Schools of Distance Education in the course of our business.

Video - COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

Tasmania ICPA President's Report

Mrs Emily Gardner (page 71)

Video - COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

3:13pm Afternoon Tea

3:35pm Conference Resumes

Presentation - A Journey with Isolation – the insight gained & lessons learned while growing up with isolation Mr Nathan Kitto (page 115)

Early Childhood Education and Care - Other - Agenda Motions

M21 (A42) Western Australia State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government and support the State ICPA organisations in lobbying to implement changes needed to the Working with Children Check (WWCC) in their respective states."

Moved: Tash Johns Western Australia State Council (WA)

Seconded: Bianca James Western Australia 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.

M22 (A43) Tambo Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Immigration and Border Protection to extend 2nd Year visa eligibility to include child care and governing/teaching in geographically isolated areas."

Moved: Heather Turnbull Tambo Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Donna Doyle Tambo Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently, domestic positions such as child care and governing/teaching are not eligible for the visa extension requirements. There is a huge shortfall of qualified Australian teachers and carers that want to come and teach in rural and remote areas. Many foreign teachers and carers are willing to come and work in these areas and if this could qualify them for their 2nd year visa under the "Specific Work" list, it would open up the opportunities for more families to have their children taught or cared for by qualified staff. This, in turn, would only be for the betterment of our children's education and care.

M23 (A44) Tambo Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection to recognise volunteering work, performed in rural and remote locations, that meet the 2nd year Visa application guidelines."

Moved: Donna Doyle Tambo Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Heather Turnbull Tambo Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The current situation is that for backpackers to gain their 2nd year Visa, they must provide payment slips, compliant with the relevant award, to the immigration department as proof of work in eligible postcodes. In theory that is fine but in practice the rural industry offers experiences and often packages that do not fit the normal award rate conditions such as accommodation, meals, travel expenses and other incidentals. The government needs to look at more flexible arrangements in rural and remote locations in relation to the recognition of volunteer hours for 2nd year Visa extensions. Since the removal of volunteer recognised hours from the 2nd year Visa extension criteria, the number of travelling backpackers assisting in rural and remote areas has declined dramatically. This has resulted in it being more and more difficult for families to source young people to assist on the farm.

One area where these rural and remote helpers have been valued and essential is in the home classroom setting. Whilst this type of work does not gain eligibility on the 2nd year visa it is a key part of running the properties smoothly in more than one way. Home tutors, who are often mothers, who often are struggling to keep pace in the classroom and in the paddock have the opportunity to gain some assistance for a few hours or have the opportunity to drop some or all of their outside farm work commitments to be able to completely focus on the schoolroom activities. Being able to have a willing station hand, who is not putting extra financial pressure on the business, for assisting in the paddock work really allows the mother/tutor to focus and complete all class work within the set times. Schooling and keeping families on properties is essential and these willing workers, under these labour exchange programs, really assist families to keep the school/station work balance in check. To maintain equal standards, having your home tutor available for the whole school day is essential and if willing workers can fill the gap to allow that to occur then this ability to sign 2nd year visa working days for volunteers is essential.

M24 (S10) Clermont Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) asks the relevant ministers to extend the "Working Holiday Maker" Program Visas from six to twelve months for those working with one employer in remote areas of Australia."

WORD CHANGE

Kasie Scott (Clermont Branch) requested conference permission for a word change. Remove the word *in* and replace with the words *to all rural and*.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

"That ICPA (Aust) asks the relevant ministers to extend the "Working Holiday Maker" Program Visas from six to twelve months for those working with one employer to all rural and remote areas of Australia."

Moved: Kasie Scott Clermont Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Christ Moller Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

In Northern Australia, families are able to employ someone to take on an outside position for a continuous period of 12 months, allowing a family member to supervise the lessons in the distance education classroom uninterrupted, and therefore we seek the same for all remote areas of Australia.

Presentation

Mrs Wendy Hick (page 124)

Certificate of Appreciation presented to the Australian Boarding Schools Association. Richard Stokes accepted on behalf of the association.

The Chair advised guests that Telstra was providing free Wi-Fi for conference guests and delegates if they wish to access this.

The Chair reminded delegates and guests that the Association's AGM would commence at 8:30am tomorrow morning.

Boarding Schools/School Term Hostels - Agenda Motions

M25 (A1) Pilbara Branch (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby both the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Education and Training for a 50% 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: Sandie McCombie Pilbara Branch (WA)

Seconded: Tash Johns Western Australia State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We thank the Australian Government for the increase in 2016 to the AIC Additional Boarding Allowance, which is "means-tested", however there is only a small minority of people that have approval for that additional allowance.

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 by 30% over the next four years. On average

boarding facilities increase their fees by 4 - 8% per annum, which is supported by the recent research undertaken by ICPA (Aust) into the costs of boarding. Our members feel very strongly about this issue and feel the Government have lost touch with the educational needs of rural and remote families.

M26 (A2) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby both the Minister of Social Services and Minister for Education and Training for an increase to the Federal allowance - Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance, to help alleviate financial pressures from increased fees by boarding schools and hostels.”

Moved: Tash Johns Western Australia State Council (WA)

Seconded: Bianca James Western Australia State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

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. 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.

M27 (A3) Bollon Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Education and Training to address the ever-growing shortfall of the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance by increasing it and aligning it with the Education Sub-Index of the Consumer Price Index.”

Moved: Fiona Cameron Bollon Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Christie Goddard Bollon Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Members are appreciative of Government's acknowledgement of the significant cost burden faced by rural families trying to educate their children and want to ensure that this acknowledgement continues by ensuring allowances are increased alongside tuition cost increases. The only option for many geographically isolated families to access an education on par with that of their urban cousins is boarding school and the average cost of this is well beyond the reach of many families. For example, tuition and boarding fees at typical Brisbane schools in 2018 are about \$35 - 40,000 per child and the median annual household income for 2016 was \$74,776 (ABS, 2016 Census). Faced with these expenses, ordinary Australian families cannot afford to live in rural areas. We call for ongoing increases in the AIC and to align those increases with the Education Sub-Index of the Consumer Price Index, so the average family can afford to educate their children and remain living and working in rural Australia.

M28 (A4) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers 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: Sarah Cook Northern Territory State Council (NT)

Seconded: Sarah Measey Northern Territory State Council (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 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. Resulting in the gap between the allowance and the real cost of educating isolated students widening substantially.

M29 (A5) Nyngan Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Education and Training for an increase to the AIC Boarding Allowance to more closely reflect the real costs of educating isolated students."

DEEMED COVERED BY M28 (A4)

Explanation:

Boarding school fees continue to rise at a greater rate than the CPI. A Nyngan branch member at the end of 12 years of secondary education for 4 daughters has watched her tuition and boarding fees increase from \$28,000 to \$58,000 per annum per child. The AIC Boarding Allowance, an equity allowance, needs to be updated constantly to reflect the increasing financial burden being placed on isolated families by the government to educate their children. There is an underlying problem of ongoing erosion of this benefit as an allowance, as boarding and tuition fees increase at a greater rate than the allowance. If Mr Turnbull is serious about providing world-best educational opportunities that will equip children with the skills they need, this equity allowance needs to remain equitable, giving rural parents' choice in education for their child equivalent to their city counter parts.

M30 (A6) Bollon Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Education and Training to review the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance and give special consideration to families with more than one child by increasing those families' allowances so access to an affordable equitable education is within reach."

Moved: Christie Goddard Bollon Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Fiona Cameron Bollon Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Members are appreciative of Government's acknowledgement of the significant cost burden faced by rural families trying to educate their children. We ask Government to further acknowledge the increased cost burden to those families with more than one child by supplementing their allowances with added payments. The only option for many geographically isolated families to access an education on par with that of their urban cousins is boarding school and the average cost of this is well beyond the reach of many families. For example, tuition and boarding fees at typical Brisbane schools in 2018 are about \$35 - 40,000 per child while the median annual household income for 2016 was \$74,776 (ABS, 2016 Census). For families with several children these costs quickly become insurmountable and alternatives such as relocating become attractive, leaving rural Australia with a further diminished population. We propose another element be

introduced to the AIC to help families meet these costs and remain living and working in rural Australia.

M31 (A7) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister of Human Services and the Department of Human Services streamline the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) payment system to ensure a common payment date for families with multiple students."

Moved: Sancia Fegan Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)
Seconded: Kasie Scott Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

It is problematic for families whose students receive Assistance for Isolated Children to keep track of payments if payments for multiple students in the family are received at different times. Families who receive the AIC Second Home Allowance, which is paid fortnightly, can have a child paid on one fortnightly cycle and then other children paid on the following week. This makes it more difficult for families to keep track of payments. At the start of the 2018 school year, numerous families who receive the AIC Boarding Allowance also received their payments on different days, sometimes weeks apart, even though all of the students in the family had their AIC renewal forms or applications sent in at the same time. This is problematic for families in making plans for school payments as well as continuously needing to check their bank accounts to see if the remaining students' payments have gone in.

M32 (A8) North West Branch (SA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Human Services to introduce an online form for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance annual renewal."

Moved: Jill Greenfield North West Branch (SA)
Seconded: Lynly Kerin North West Branch (SA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The AIC allowance can currently only be claimed using a paper-based form and returning by Australia Post. This is a yearly renewal process. This year members of our branch were affected by the sudden and unexplained cancellation of their allowance. In some instances, this has a flow on effect as our State Education Allowance is dependent on the student receiving the AIC Boarding Allowance. Despite many calls to the AIC telephone number the problem was only rectified when our member contacted an ICPA federal councillor. This scheme needs to have a better system in place to manage and resolve any issues regarding this allowance.

Rural Schools/School Travel Portfolio Report

Mrs Di Skene (page 91)

Rural Schools/School Travel - Agenda Motions

M33 (A45) South Australian State Council (SA)

"That ICPA Federal Council continues to seek concessional airfares for rural and remote students who rely on air services to access an education."

Moved: Joanna Gibson South Australian State Council (SA)
Seconded: Mija Reynolds South Australian State Council (SA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

For many students in rural and remote areas, the only option for secondary schooling is boarding away from home. Often flying is the most practical form of transport when

returning home for an exeat weekend or school holidays. In some cases, it is the only option to ensure the student has adequate time at home, without spending an entire weekend travelling. However, the cost of regional flights is prohibitive for most families. Rex has a “bush to boarding” scheme in some states in Australia, offering reduced airfares for students travelling to and from school. We would like to see this type of scheme extended to SA regional airlines.

M34 (A46) 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: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

Seconded: Emma Chalmers Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

This includes, bus, train and aircraft providers.

M35 (A47) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that QANTAS Airways continue their Residents Fares Scheme and expand this scheme to more regional areas as well as review the eligibility criteria to better include students who travel by air to access schooling.”

Moved: Bianca James Western Australia State Council (WA)

Seconded: Tash Johns Western Australia State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

QANTAS introduced a Residents Fares scheme last year for a 12-month trial period. This enabled residents from select towns or areas in WA and QLD to book Resident Fares, seeing a reduction in fares by up to 30%. There have been instances where families have gone to book their student’s flights home for either boarders’ weekends or end of term holidays but not being eligible due to the departing point not origination at their resident fare regional airport. WA State Council would like to see QANTAS review the criteria for students who may board away from home or be travelling from a regional area for school camps/trips and to extend the trial period after 12 months as well as open these trials to more areas where regional students travel by air to access schooling.

M36 (A48) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant bodies for a Fares Allowance component to be added to the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme (AIC) similar to what is available under Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY programs.”

Moved: Sancia Fegan Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

Seconded: Christy Moller Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Both Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY programs offer eligible students a Fares Allowance for travelling between home and their place of study if they need to live away from home in order to access this study. Geographically isolated students who receive the Assistance for Isolated Students Boarding Allowance and Second Home Allowance also live away from home to access schooling and should have a Fares Allowance comparable to the other Commonwealth Programs available to them. While some states do offer travel assistance to students from rural and remote areas, others offer no assistance at all and there is great variance between states. Having a Fares Allowance available under the AIC

Scheme would ensure that all eligible geographically isolated students would have assistance available to them to help offset the cost of travelling to compulsory schooling.

M37 (A49) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to liaise with Minister for Social Services and the relevant Ministers for an equitable approach, so that, all Rural and Remote students receive a Student Travel Allowance that reflects the actual costs involved to get students from their home, to their place of education within Australia.”

Moved: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)
Seconded: Emma Chalmers Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The Northern Territory Student Travel Allowance and Mid-Term travel allowance presently only assists with travel from place of residence to a point of transport within the NT. The NT have very few options when choosing a secondary boarding school for our students. Some students must board interstate to best meet the needs of the child. Reasons for choice of secondary boarding schools vary from family to family based on subject choices, access to a range of Sports, children and learning needs and interests, family responsibilities, extended family and support networks and location. For example, there are more subject choices available in metropolitan areas. Further, despite a large base of children from agricultural families there are no secondary agricultural colleges in the Northern Territory and little agriculture is taught in schools. State level sport options are very limited in the Northern Territory. Currently the travel allowances available to our students are not available when children travel interstate for the school terms. Families in other states may also encounter similar issues when choosing to cross borders for their education.

M38 (A50) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby relevant Federal Ministers on the importance of continually improving our regional and remote roads network to a safe and all-weather access standard; for the benefit of our children and families’ safety while travelling these roads to attended education and related services.”

Moved: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)
Seconded: Emma Chalmers Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The extensive road network in the Northern Territory that links our rural and remote families with their major centres (where our distance education hubs are located), are often unsealed dirt and gravel beef roads. The Northern Territory Department of Roads and Infrastructure is funded jointly by Territory and Federal Government – not by local shires or councils. We would like to place pressure on Federal Government to ensure the road funding they are contributing to the Northern Territory Department of Roads and Infrastructure is allocated to our unsealed roads. Bringing them to an all-weather, safe trafficable surface. It is critical that these unsealed highways throughout the Northern Territory are on the top of the list in regard to road funding allocation.

It is unacceptable that our major unsealed roads like the “Sandover” and “Tanami” Highways in some stretches, are not serviceable after less than 25mm of rain.

One family from our branch has to travel 730km to Alice Springs every time to attend In-school Weeks. This is their shortest possible route which includes over 400km of an unsealed section of the Tanami road. The mother drives this distance in one day, by herself with 5 young children. In 2016, due to a rain event on the road 300km from town, the family

had to make a 700km detour, so the children could attend their NAPLAN/Sporting In-school Week. In total, they travelled over 1400km in one day to attend an educational function. This dangerous situation could be avoided by providing families with safe and all-weather access roads.

Alice Springs School of the Air currently schedules a yearly visit for each child enrolled with their teacher. These qualified teachers need to drive themselves out to the remote locations, often on unsealed roads. On one journey along the “Sandover” Highway, a decision was made by the teacher that the road was no longer safe to drive along, and they turned around and headed back to Alice Springs. This is the reality our rural and remote families live with all year round. We must drive along these roads to our major centres to access In-school events and specialist appointments for our children. We should not have to be weighing up the safety factors of our major arterial road network each time our children need to go to town to see their teacher.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the Federal and Territory Government for their continued effort in sealing the “Outback Way” - a longstanding project supported by many governments over more than a decade. It stretches from Winton QLD, to Laverton WA and across the Plenty Highway NT covering 4,615km with large sections of this unsealed. It has been flagged to be completed by 2025 and would ensure that rural and remote families access to education facilities and road safety would improve dramatically.

We would like to ensure the initiative to seal the “Outback Way” when completed, is carried over to our other unsealed road networks throughout the NT. The “Outback Way”: More than \$205 million in Territory and Federal Government funding has been committed since 1997 when the Outback Highway Development Council was formed, an estimate of the total cost will be in excess of \$600 million. The ultimate goal is to link sealed roads stretching 4,615km from the west coast capital of Perth, passing Uluru and the inland hub of Alice Springs, before finishing in tropical north Queensland at Cairns.

The Chair calls for all nominations for AGM.

Conference arrangements

Mrs Caroline McDonald

5:16pm Close of Business Day One

DAY TWO Thursday 2nd August 2018

AGM

AGM declared open at 8:32am

Check is made to ensure everyone has their voting cards

Introduction of Delegates and Branch Observers

Mrs Suzanne Wilson

Annual General Meeting

Treasurer's Report

Mrs Lisa Slade (page 57)

AGM Motions

Setting of the 2019 Membership Fees

M39 (A66) ICPA (Aust) Federal Council

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

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council

Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

M40 (A67) ICPA (Aust) Federal Council

"That Corporate Membership remains at \$220.00 per organisation."

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council

Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

Appointment of Auditor

M41 (A68) ICPA (Aust) Federal Council

"That RJC Evans and Co. Adelaide, be appointed as auditor for the 2018 – 2019 financial year."

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council

Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

Adoption of Financial Statements

M42 (A69) ICPA (Aust) Federal Council

"That the 2017 - 2018 Audited Report and the 2017 - 2018 Regional Student Engagement Strategy 2016 - 2019 Grant Acquittal Audited Report be received and accepted."

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council

Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

Constitution and By-Laws

M43 (A70) ICPA (AUST) Federal Council

"That the amended sections of the Isolated Children's Parents Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution updated June 2018, as circulated, be adopted."

WORD CHANGE

Suzanne Wilson (Federal Council) requested a word change. Addition of an apostrophe at the end of the word Parents.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

“That the amended sections of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia Constitution updated June 2018, as circulated, be adopted.”

Moved: Suzanne Wilson Federal Council
Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

Explanation:

Amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia Constitution are in accordance with the *Western Australian Associations Incorporation Act 2015* which require a number of matters be included in an association’s constitution.

M44 (A71) ICPA (AUST) Federal Council

“That the amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia Incorporated By-Laws updated June 2018, as circulated, be ratified.”

WORD CHANGE

Suzanne Wilson (Federal Council) requested a word change. Addition of an apostrophe at the end of the word Parents.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

“That the amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia Incorporated By-Laws updated June 2018, as circulated, be ratified.”

Moved: Suzanne Wilson Federal Council
Seconded: Kate Thompson 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, throughout the year.

Federal Council now presents the following changes for ratification. The following By-Laws have been updated:

- By-Law 1 (Administration Roles and Responsibilities)
- By-Law 6 (Payment of Subscriptions for Branch and State Life Members) and
- By-Law 12 (Federal Award of Merit)

New By-Laws include:

- By-Law 3 (Workplace Health and Safety)
- By-Law 4 (Use of ICPA Logo)
- By-Law 5 (Branch Dissolutions, Recess and Closures)
- By-Law 9 (Social Media)
- By-Law 11 (Federal Certificate of Appreciation)

Election of Federal Council for 2018 - 2019

All positions were declared vacant and the returning officer Mrs Roxanne Morrissey, ICPA Federal Life Member, took the chair.

President

Wendy Hick

Nominated Sally Sullivan
Seconded Lisa Slade

Katherine Branch NT
Flinders Ranges Branch SA
DULY ELECTED

47th ANNUAL CONFERENCE AGENDA ITEMS, MOTIONS AND AGM

Vice President	Sally Sullivan Nominated Seconded	Caroline Robinson Nikki Macqueen	Brewarrina Branch NSW Kindon Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
Secretary	Suzanne Wilson Nominated Seconded	Sally Sullivan Lisa Slade	Katherine Branch NT Flinders Ranges Branch SA DULY ELECTED
Assistant Secretary	Jane Morton Nominated Seconded	Kate Thompson Alana Moller	Midlands Branch TAS Clermont Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
Treasurer	Lisa Slade Nominated Seconded	Nikki Macqueen Di Skene	Kindon Branch QLD Kindon Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
Publicity Officer	Nikki Macqueen Nominated Seconded	Lisa Slade Sally Sullivan	Flinders Ranges Branch SA Katherine Branch NT DULY ELECTED
Ex Officio Immediate Past President	Judy Sinclair- Newton		
COMMITTEE	Kate Thompson Nominated Seconded	Jane Morton Alana Moller	BBB Branch QLD Clermont Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
	Diane Skene Nominated Seconded	Nikki Macqueen Kate Thompson	Kindon Branch QLD Midlands Branch TAS DULY ELECTED
	Caroline Robinson Nominated Seconded	Alana Moller Di Skene	Clermont Branch QLD Kindon Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
	Alana Moller Nominated Seconded	Kate Thompson Di Skene	Midlands Branch TAS Kindon Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
	Jane O'Brien Nominated Seconded	Jane Morton Sally Sullivan	BBB Branch QLD Katherine Branch NT DULY ELECTED
	Kristen Coggan Nominated Seconded	Kristy Sparrow Kylie Stretton	Alpha Branch QLD Charters Towers Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
	Christie Goddard Nominated Seconded	Caroline Robinson Suzanne Wilson	Brewarrina Branch NSW NT Lones Branch NT DULY ELECTED

Kristen Coggan and Christie Goddard introduced themselves to members as new incoming councillors.

Vote of thanks to Roxanne Morrissey as Returning Officer Mrs Wendy Hick

Video - Children from South Australia invite members to Adelaide for the 2019 ICPA Federal Conference.

AGM Motions - continued

Conference Venue Motions

M45 (S13) South Australia State Council (SA)

"That South Australian State Council host the 2019 Annual Federal Conference in Adelaide on the 31 July and 1 of August 2019."

Moved: Joanna Gibson South Australia State Council (SA)

Seconded: Mija Reynolds South Australia State Council (SA)

CARRIED

M46 (S14) ICPA (AUST) Federal Council

"That the 2020 ICPA Federal Conference be held in Tasmania."

Moved: Suzanne Wilson Federal Council

Seconded: Sally Sullivan Federal Council

CARRIED

AGM General Business

Video highlighting the sights of South Australia, the location for the 2019 ICPA Federal Conference.

ICPA Web Manager Report

Mrs Sue Shotton page (75)

Pedals Editor Report

Mrs Raelene Hall (77)

Vote of thanks to scrutineers -

Richard Stokes (ABSA) and Sue Kingwill (Contact Inc)

Mrs Wendy Hick

Vote of thanks to Carmel Elliott for

compiling the conference minutes for the past 5 years

Mrs Wendy Hick

9:31am AGM closed

9:32am Conference Resumes

Introduction of Guests

Mrs Suzanne Wilson

Conference arrangements

Mrs Caroline McDonald

Curriculum Portfolio Report (tabled)

Mrs Judy Sinclair-Newton page (page 84)

Curriculum - Agenda Motions

M47 (A30) Tambo Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant bodies to ensure that Primary Production is included as a compulsory component in the national curriculum."

Moved: Heather Turnbull Tambo Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Donna Doyle Tambo Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently, there are many children who do not know where their food or fibre comes from. As time goes on an understanding of primary production, generally speaking, reduces as more of our population resides away from areas that produce food and fibre. For example, we are witnessing great conflict between our farmers and non-farmers in regard to vegetation management of our land. If all school students can be given a broad understanding of primary production in the classroom it may help to alleviate some of these issues. This understanding could be delivered via a national curriculum unit that follows the spiral delivery model being built on through year levels to continue understanding growth, interest and enthusiasm for primary production. It is envisaged that the units would be developed in conjunction with industry experts (e.g. Dept. Agriculture and Fisheries) as opposed to curriculum writers alone.

Boarding Schools/School Term Hostels - Agenda Motions - continued

M48 (A9) Westmar/Inglestone Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Minister to support employers wishing to assist with education expenses of employees’ children who reside in geographically isolated areas, by removing the Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) on this assistance.”

Moved: Fiona Brown Westmar/Inglestone Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Many employers/employees in rural and regional areas find secondary schooling of employees’ children a hard time for all. Many families leave their place of employment to school 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 the FBT. If this was removed it would provide a greater incentive for employers to assist with some of the 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.

M49 (A10) Tambo Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the relevant Ministers to ensure that any drought relief measures that are introduced by the federal government include an education subsidy component.”

Moved: Donna Doyle Tambo Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Heather Turnbull Tambo Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We thank ICPA (Aust) for their effort thus far in lobbying for a drought education subsidy. It is important, however, to continue to highlight how critical this issue is in attempting to retain families in rural and remote locations as currently, the population in rural and remote Australia continues to decline. This decline needs to be stopped. One of the key reasons families are leaving rural and remote locations, or families are splitting, in particular in town families, is due to the lack of affordable education.

M50 (A11) Tambo Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) raises awareness among banks about the changing ages for children now entering high school and the need for children to have an independent bank account when they are living away from home."

Moved: Heather Turnbull Tambo Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Donna Doyle Tambo Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

With children now entering their high school years at ages from 11 and up, many are heading off to boarding school at this age. It should not be unreasonable to suggest that children who are in high school are old enough to manage an access card bank account. Banks, currently, are either not offering products to cater for this market as they have a 12 year and over policy only for some accounts or they are providing incorrect information to parents when they are asked about accounts for children. Some parents have been told there are no options for children to have access to money via a card until they are 12. Having children with no access to a bank account, leaves families with options such as opening accounts in parents' names or sending kids to school with cash, both of which are undesirable options. When children are already faced with boarding great distances away from their homes and families when they are 11 years old the removal of how to have safe access to money by having an access card to use would be one thing off the long list for parents to worry about. With awareness being raised with banks we feel that the incorrect information about available bank accounts being provided to families would lessen and families would be able to sign up for the accounts that are available - for example signing children up to an access account not a debit/credit card account.

M51 (S1) Southern Downs Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Prime Minister and his office, the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Social Services for the immediate establishment of a Rural Hardship Education Fund."

Moved: Bernadette Walker Southern Downs Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We thank the Hon Malcom Turnbull and The Hon David Littleproud for their recent visit to some of the most drought ravaged areas of our country. We note with deep regret a lack of announcements both in the recent budget and since their visit regarding rural education. Geographically isolated students should not be disadvantaged or unable to attend their studies at boarding school or tertiary institutions due to ongoing long-term droughts or times of rural hardship. Educational expenses are an investment for the future prosperity of all our rural and remote communities. When many families experience severe financial hardship the cost of education is often not the priority when trying to trade through exceptional circumstances. We implore the government to take some action, establish this fund and ease some of the enormous financial and mental pressure that many families in this situation continue to struggle with.

M52 (S2) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies relevant ministers for the establishment of a 'Rural Hardship Education Fund' to assist families meet education costs in times of difficulty."

Moved: Sancia Fegan Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

Seconded: Kasie Scott Clermont Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

At present there are large areas of rural Australia suffering greatly through one of the worst droughts in memory. Drought and other unforeseen disasters such as fires, floods and industry events which are out of producers control such as 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 rural families 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 the past, 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. 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 don't receive a further education. 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. A Rural Hardship Education Fund to assist rural families that need financial help to ensure that their children can remain in schooling during tough times is essential.

Video - COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

ICPA Queensland President's Report

Mrs Tammie Irons (page 68)

Presentation – Year 12 What's Next?

Dept of Education and Training

Ms Kellie McInnes and Ms Wendy Walker (page 119)

Conference Arrangements

Mrs Caroline McDonald

10:35am Morning Tea

11:06am Conference resumes

Tertiary Portfolio Report

Mrs Kate Thompson (page 95)

Tertiary - Access Allowance - Agenda Motions

M53 (A54) Western Australia State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government for the introduction of a Tertiary Access Allowance (TAA) to help provide rural and remote students with the financial ability to attend a tertiary institution of their choosing."

Moved: Tash Johns Western Australia State Council (WA)

Seconded: Bianca James Western Australia State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

WA State Council acknowledges and thanks Federal Council for their continued lobbying for the establishment of a Tertiary Access Allowance for rural and remote students. 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.

M54 (A55) Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Education and Minister for 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: Ellen Walker Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Geoff Walker Rankins Springs Branch (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 student lives more than 90 minutes away by public transport from the tertiary institution of their choice.

M55 (A56) 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: Scott Mitchell Bourke Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Tanya Mitchell 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.

Tertiary - Youth Allowance - Agenda Motions

M56 (A57) Western Australia State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government to raise the parental income limit criteria for rural and remote dependent students to access Youth Allowance."

Moved: Tash Johns Western Australia State Council (WA)
Seconded: Bianca James Western Australia State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

For a student to be eligible to receive dependent Youth Allowance, the base Parental income limit for dependent Youth Allowance is \$52,706, this amount can alter depending on other children in the family (Family Pool). Families in this income bracket would financially find it very difficult to fully support a student, particularly if they need to move away from home. Many rural and remote students are forced to work many hours in part-time employment to help alleviate the reliance on their families, causing many hours away from valuable study time.

M57 (A58) Kindon Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister of Social Services to adjust the qualifying amount for rural and remote students wishing to apply for independent Youth Allowance under the part-time work or earnings criteria."

Moved: Suzie Killen

Kindon Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Tash Johns

Western Australia State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We thank the Federal Government for changing the time frame that rural and remote students need to qualify for independent Youth Allowance through part-time work or earnings. As of January 1, 2018, the time regional and remote students need to be employed under the self-supporting criteria is 14 months however the qualifying amount has not changed from when the time frame was 18 months. That takes four months away from the time frame to earn the same amount of money. In effect, a student who began their employment from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 has to earn \$24,042 over a 14-month period, or average \$430 each week for those 14 months whereas when it was over 18 months the average was \$330. We ask the Minister to please adjust this amount to reflect the appropriate amount, 75% of the National Training Wage Level A over 14 months.

58 (A59) Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) urges the Minister for Social Services to change the criteria for receiving independent Youth Allowance so that all rural and remote students who have to live away from their family address to access tertiary studies are eligible for the Living Away from Home rate as soon as they commence the tertiary course of their choice."

Moved: Ellen Walker

Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)

Seconded: Geoff Walker

Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)

LOST

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 \$150,000. 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 the Away from Home rate of independent Youth Allowance from the time they leave secondary school.

M59 (A60) 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."

Moved: Scott Mitchell Bourke Branch (NSW)

Seconded: Tanya Mitchell Bourke Branch (NSW)

LOST

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 and **the current level of combined parental income limit is too low**. 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**. These students have to move hundreds of kilometres to major regional centres or cities, paying 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 children are the very ones that have to be considered for eligibility for independent Youth Allowance. These students should be putting their efforts into studying their chosen degree, not worrying about finding a job in a new environment and supporting themselves. It leads to high dropout rates and increased stress and anxiety on individuals.

M60 (A61) Balranald Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Social Services to recognise students from rural and remote areas who have to live away from home to access a tertiary education as eligible for the Independent Youth Allowance at the Living Away from Home rate immediately after completing their secondary education."

WITHDRAWN

Explanation:

Currently students are eligible for independent Youth Allowance under the part-time work earnings rule for rural and remote students if, since leaving secondary school they have:

- earned at least \$24,836 in a 14-month period or
- worked part-time (at least 15 hours each week) for at least 2 years and
- their parents earn less than \$150,000 in the base tax year.

Students who live out of a town and go to a boarding institution, whether it be a boarding house or a boarding school, very rarely get the chance to have a paying job before they leave school. Most in years 11 and 12 spend a good amount of time studying in their holidays, so as to gain the score for them to get into the course they desire. An example from our area is a young person from the Balranald area, immediately after completing year 12 is offered a University placement in Melbourne, four hours away. The young person has to leave home, live separately from their parents, set up another home with necessary furniture and whitegoods, pay bills and by all accounts, live completely independent of their parents. Despite this, the young person is still classified as dependent under the Youth Allowance criteria. Using the rural and remote student rule previously stated, in order for this student to be classified independent, they must first take 14 months to earn minimum earnings of \$24,836, which often means leaving Balranald to gain employment for 14 months, exhausting their earnings on daily living expenses, when during all this time they could have been living away studying and half way through their tertiary course. On top of this, the combined parental income for the base year needs to be less than \$150,000, in order for the young person to receive independent Youth

Allowance, under the rural and remote student rule. It is certainly very hard to understand why a young person from a rural or remote area who moves away, earns the minimum earning required, is by all accounts, living independently from the parents and then has to satisfy an additional criteria of a parental income limit of less than \$150,000.

Compare this to a metropolitan young person, living with their parents, in the family home, in the city with a university nearby. Under the Independence through full time work rule, the young person may be considered Independent if they have worked at least 30 hours per week over 18-months within a two-year period. Under this rule, parental income is not tested. That student, by all accounts, can become eligible for independent Youth Allowance and can still live at home with their parents whilst accessing their course on a daily basis. That student can continue to have all the family support they need around them, their childhood bed and meals at the family table. In no way does Balranald branch wish to take anything away from a Metropolitan student in this situation, but it is important to make this comparison in order to have equitable access to Independent Youth Allowance for rural and remote students. Put simply, a rural and remote student who, after immediately finishing school must move away from home to commence their tertiary studies, should automatically satisfy the independence criteria and qualify for the Independent Youth Allowance at the Living Away from Home rate. This situation is now only exacerbated by the fair work rules as we are hearing from members who rely on penalty rates on weekends in order to study during the week is having a huge impact.

M61 (A62) Bourke Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) urges the Federal Government to find a solution to inhibiting waiting times to make contact with Department of Human Services staff when making or needing information regarding Youth Allowance applications."

Moved: Scott Mitchell Bourke Branch (NSW)
Second: Tanya Mitchell 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. 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 Human Services office does not have expertise/not permitted to answer Youth allowance questions**, hence the need for confirmation by telephone.

Tertiary - Other - Agenda Motions

M62 (A63) 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: Ellen Walker Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)
Second: Geoff Walker Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)

CARRIED

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.

Video - COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

Training - Agenda Motions

M63 (S11) Southern Downs Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Education and Training and Australian Apprenticeships to immediately provide a one-off increase to the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA-Commonwealth) rate of payment for Australian Apprentices and index this payment against the CPI to protect these financially vulnerable students."

WORD CHANGE

Bernadette walker requested conference permission for a word change. Remove the words *Minister for Education and Training and Australian Apprenticeships* and replace with *relevant Ministers*.

COINFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Ministers to immediately provide a one-off increase to the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA-Commonwealth) rate of payment for Australian Apprentices and index this payment against the CPI to protect these financially vulnerable students."

Moved: Bernadette Walker Southern Downs Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Many of our rural and remote school leavers look to undertake apprenticeships upon graduation. Rarely are vacancies available in our rural and remote communities to meet the demands of these school leavers therefore many need to leave in order to gain their placements. This means these trainees cannot live in the family home whilst completing their apprenticeships. Whilst we acknowledge the existing allowance, the rate for the LAFHA has not increased since 2015 and remains at:

- \$77.15/week up to first 12 months
- \$38.59/week up to second 12 months
- \$25.00/week up to third 12 months

Many of these apprentices often live in areas of high rent due to the industries in which they work and as apprentices receive minimal wages, we urge the Department to look at these payment rates and adjust them accordingly.

M64 (S12) Southern Downs Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Education and Training and the Minister for Human Services to include apprentices in the Relocation Scholarship Scheme."

Moved: Bernadette Walker Southern Downs Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Many rural and remote apprentices cannot access their placements / traineeships / apprenticeships within their home communities. These young people are then forced to relocate to many diverse areas of Australia which are expensive to access. The significant upfront costs to move to these areas is often higher than experienced by their university

attending counterparts for example higher advance rental payments and larger bonds. These students are no different, they too are learning some vitally important skills that we hope they will bring back to our rural and remote communities and should therefore be included in the Relocation Scholarship Scheme.

Western Australia ICPA President's Report

Mrs Tash Johns (page 72)

Video - COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

The Chair acknowledged the arrival of Mr Lachlan Hunter who is Senator Bridget McKenzie's advisor.

Communications Portfolio Report

Mrs Wendy Hick (page 80)

Presentation - The nbnTM effect

Ms Lalla Mackenzie

Senior National Stakeholder Relations Manager, nbnTM local

Communications - Internet Access - Agenda Motions

M65 (A12) Katherine Branch (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate that the Minister for Communications ensures that all Australian students have adequate internet access with regard to speed, quality, capabilities and cost of the service."

Moved: Sarah Cook Northern Territory State Council (NT)

Seconded: Sarah Measey Northern Territory State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We acknowledge and thank ICPA (Aust) and the Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia and the Rural, Remote and Regional Communications Coalition for their continuous and effective lobbying of the Federal Government, Telstra, nbn and other providers on internet and telecommunication issues in the bush.

While expected data speeds, plan sizes and service reliability are continuously improving, Sky Muster users still 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.

The education port in some states or provision of internet by government in others is great for distance education students. Students of small schools, tertiary students and boarding students can all be required to access the internet for their schooling/studies whilst at home and broadening of the education port eligibility criteria to encompass these cohorts would help make their education more equitable too.

M66 (A13) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Communications, Minister for Regional Communications, 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, and cost to meet their educational needs."

Moved: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

Seconded: Emma Chalmers Alice Springs Branch (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

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. This internet service has been provided by the NT Department of Education and managed, monitored and fixed by the Internet Technicians at ASSOA. ASSOA are now 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 family's own internet connection, the children will still have enough reliable internet access to ensure speed, quality, capabilities and cost meet their daily schooling needs.

M67 (A14) North West Branch (SA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to strongly lobby the nbn for the nbn Sky Muster Education Service to include rural and remote children attending preschool over the internet through a recognised distance education preschool program."

WITHDRAWN

Explanation:

The Education Port has been fantastic for those students studying via distance education. In South Australia, for example, children studying Kindergarten (Preschool) externally through the Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise (RICE) are not eligible for the nbn Education Port. These students, and those transitioning into Kindy, also require a reliable internet connection and substantial amounts of downloads to successfully engage in their learning. We are asking for these children to be able to be included in this scheme.

M68 (A15) South Australia State Council (SA)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies NBN Co to ensure all rural and remote children studying via a recognised Distance Education program have access to the nbn Sky Muster Education Service where the family home is reliant on the nbn Sky Muster Satellite for internet connectivity."

WITHDRAWN

Explanation:

Currently children studying preschool externally through e-kindy/preschool/early years programs (such as that delivered by SA's Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise (RICE) and Alice Springs School of the Air's "Play ASSOA") are not eligible for the nbn Education Port. We are asking for all e-kindy preschool (early years) students across Australia to be included in this scheme. Students studying at any level of Distance Education require a reliable internet connection and substantial downloads to successfully engage in their learning. Tertiary students studying online also have a great need for access to the Education Service.

While the Sky Muster Satellite has improved reliability, connectivity and speed of internet access to families in rural and remote South Australia, the cost of plans and access to data still lags a long way behind what is available to those in urban centres. Access to the education port for all families with students learning via distance education will help ensure there is sufficient data to meet the educational needs of the family.

Conference Arrangements

Mrs Caroline McDonald

12:40pm Lunch

1:25pm Conference Resumes

Communications - Internet Access - Agenda Motions - continued

M69 (A16) Westmar/Inglestone Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Communications, Minister for Regional Communications and National Broadband Network Company to extend the current Sky Muster Education Port to include Tertiary students studying online from rural and remote locations."

Moved: Fiona Brown Westmar/Inglestone Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Many rural and remote tertiary students are choosing to study by distance education or online as this allows them to remain at home or continue to work and live in rural and remote communities. Currently the Education Port only includes primary and secondary students studying via distance education. Online learning requires tertiary students to log in to streamed, live tutorials up to 4 times a week. Current download data is being used up within 2 weeks of the month and the students are then unable to attend the online tutorials for the next 2 weeks. The Education Port needs to be made available to tertiary students studying from rural and remote locations.

M70 (A17) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Communications and the Minister for Regional Communications and nbn to ensure all rural and remote students (distance education, tertiary, boarding school students and small rural school students) with Sky Muster as their home internet service have access to the nbn Education Port."

Moved: Sarah Cook Northern Territory State Council (NT)

Seconded: Sarah Measey Northern Territory State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

In this modern age, students need to have access to reliable internet to enable them to successfully engage in their studies. For example, a student who attends a small rural school may have access to the internet and adequate data whilst at school. After school or on days when access to school is problematic students will require good internet and sufficient data for completing homework, working in online environments or on research assignments. Students will be negatively impacted if internet quality and reliability and data availability are inadequate. Likewise, some isolated students undertake online tertiary and training courses from home, boarding students require internet for school work during holidays and of course, distance education students have very high internet requirements.

Presentation - Telstra Country Wide (TCW)
NSW/ACT State Director Telstra Country Wide

Ms Jenny West

Telstra Prize Draw was won by Mrs Constance Wood, delegate for Kimberley Air Branch (WA)

Communications - Telephone - Agenda Motions

M71 (A18) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to work with the Minister for Communications 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 repairs and

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: Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)
Seconded: Emma Chalmers 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 school room 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.

M72 (A19) Balranald Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Federal Ministers to ensure that the Universal Service Obligation remains on the standard telephone landline services for all rural and remote families.”

Moved: Helen Ponder New South Wales State Council (NSW)
Seconded: Bruce Paynter New South Wales State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The recent Productivity Commission’s report has recommended that the Universal Service Obligation be removed from Landlines. This is due to the increase in households relying on mobile phones as the only form of telecommunications and more reliable access to nbn internet.

For members in rural and remote areas of Balranald this is not an option. VoIP (Voice over the Internet Protocol) is unreliable especially for those on Sky Muster. Unlike the current landlines, VoIP on Sky Muster requires electricity. For those living in mobile black spots larger than Sydney and the Blue Mountains combined, sole reliance on Sky Muster for voice calls is a huge step backwards. The latency issues with delayed lags on satellite, combined with weather issues and electricity means that Sky Muster cannot be relied on 24 hrs. per day as per the requirements of the universal service obligation. The latency is extremely problematic for distance education students who rely on a landline voice service for their lessons.

Our area has a lot of black outs during storms, if there was not the current landline there would be no way of reporting loss of power as there is limited or no mobile service and often this goes out too during a blackout. If VoIP, were the only service available, students would also be “off the air” whenever the power failed. It is therefore important to keep the landlines so there is a reliable form of communication in emergency situations and for basic day to day services such as education.

Our area has a lot of blackouts during storms, if there was not the current landline there would be no way of reporting loss of power as there is limited or no mobile service and often this goes out too during a blackout. It is therefore important to keep the landlines so there is a reliable form of communication in emergency situations.

The Chair thanked all guests for being available during conference proceedings to answer questions off the floor.

M73 (A20) Queensland State Council (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Regional Communications to reintroduce a program to provide a subsidy for satellite telephones for use in rural and remote regions."

Moved: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The gaps in Mobile coverage in Rural and Remote regions place people who operate in these areas at a large disadvantage for Education, Business and Safety. Access to Satellite mobiles will go towards minimising this disadvantage and offer a backup service should outages occur with primary sources of communications. This will allow schooling to continue uninterrupted. Safety of students and staff in small rural and remote schools is paramount and to have a satellite phone is a real reassurance if there is only one other means of communication.

M74 (A21) Queensland State Council (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies Telstra and the Minister for Regional Communication to ensure the time taken to restore faults in the Rural and Remote areas is within the Customer Service Guarantee guidelines."

Moved: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Delays at times far outweigh those under the Customer Service Guarantee (CSG) guidelines. Some Faults have taken weeks to restore and Interim service were not offered. These delays are inhibiting the ability DE students to complete their work and remain engaged.

M75 (A22) Queensland State Council (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies Telstra to ensure interim service technology is offered to customers with potential and actual extended outages."

DEEMED COVERED BY M71 (A18)

Explanation:

Users have been left for extended times without service, without the offer of a temporary service. This is extremely disruptive for distance education classrooms not to mention general safety and needs of a business.

M76 (A23) Queensland State Council (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies Telstra to ensure Call and Faults centre staff abide by the guidelines for priority repair times."

Moved: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Users including DE Students who have a registered Priority Medical condition have reported service failures. These were extended isolations out of mobile coverage that were not repaired in the required timeframe nor was an interim service offered. Our students have a right to access their education, and to a protective mantle of safety and health that telephone access provides, and these times must be prioritised in order for them to continue their schooling in safety.

M77 (A24) Queensland State Council (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies Telstra to improve the management of its rural and remote infrastructure."

Moved: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

User experience does not always match Telstra's perceived service levels gained by looking at a screen from afar. This has resulted with extended service issues with a resulting disruption to DE lessons and small schools. Education in rural and remote areas needs to be a priority issue for Telstra and the infrastructure which provides these services needs to be managed and maintained at the highest level.

M78 (A25) Queensland State Council (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies Telstra to provide a permanent rural and remote call centre."

Moved: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

ICPA Qld thanks and commends Telstra on the introduction of the Rural and Remote Call Centre trial. ICPA Qld is seeking its permanent establishment for all rural and remote customers. Rural and remote customers have such a unique set of circumstances that is not understood by the majority of sales and service personnel. This lack of understanding can result in lengthy delays for installation and repairs and can have a major impact on distance education classrooms and small schools.

M79 (A26) Yaraka/Isisford Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies Telstra put in a process to allow "Third Party" fault reports to be received when the Owner of the faulty service is unable to contact Telstra directly."

Moved: Ingrid Miller Yaraka/Isisford Branch (QLD)
Seconded: Kate Bradshaw Winton Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

There has been an ongoing issue in areas outside towns where telephone services have failed and due to location or age, the owners are unable to contact Telstra directly to report it. When someone has tried to report it on their behalf, the report has been refused. This issue is mainly an issue when an overseas call centre is involved. As being without a phone service hinders the education of distance education students in particular, we urge for a process to be put in place so that a third party can report faults when a family is unable to do it themselves resulting in a quicker reporting time which would see families phone service up and running more quickly and students back on lessons sooner.

Communications - Mobile Coverage/Service - Agenda Motions

M80 (A27) Queensland State Council (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Communications for the continuation of the Mobile Black Spot program."

Moved: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The continued expansion of the Mobile network will increase access to communications in rural and remote areas. It is extremely important to small rural and remote schools where the only other alternative is satellite for communication. Mobile coverage in small schools gives the school two means of communications should one fail. This will not only improve improved safety in the school, but also when travelling for parents and school buses in these areas.

M81 (A28) Balranald Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the relevant Federal Ministers to ensure that rural and remote schools are prioritised for any expansion of the mobile coverage footprint into regional Australia."

Moved: Helen Ponder New South Wales State Council (NSW)

Seconded: Bruce Paynter New South Wales State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Balranald Branch is of the view that the selection of priority regions for the implementation of Mobile Phone coverage should include a priority for rural and remote schools that are currently without reliable mobile phone service.

Most rural and remote schools are evacuation points in the event of emergencies occurring within the area and surrounding communities. Clare Public School is 155km from Balranald and consists of a school only. It is not part of a town. In the event of bushfires and other natural disasters, Clare Public School is the emergency evacuation point and, as the centre of the community, holds the Royal Flying Doctor medical chest and a defibrillator in case of a medical emergency.

Unfortunately, Clare Public School sits within a 15,000sq km mobile blackspot that is bigger than Sydney and the Blue Mountains combined. Clare Public School has limited unreliable mobile phone coverage by using an external Yagi aerial situated on the teacher's house pointing to the tower at Mossgiel on the Hay/Ivanhoe Road (50km away), with the next mobile coverage approximately 120kms away from the school if travelling by road from Balranald.

Balranald Branch seeks the support of ICPA (Aust) to ensure that the Commonwealth Government prioritises Rural and Remote Schools for future expansions of the mobile footprint under the mobile blackspot programme. Time and time again under the programme we are seeing fringe areas being successful. We are yet to see a remote area in NSW that has a huge impact, such as a remote school being successful. The time for Telcos applying for areas that deliver the most profits must stop.

M82 (A29) Queensland State Council (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Regional Communications to implement a program to provide a subsidy for Fixed and Mobile phone (for use in cars and trucks) boosters including suitable antennae."

Moved: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

Seconded: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The gaps in Mobile coverage in the Rural and Remote regions place people who operate in these areas at a large disadvantage for Education, Business and Safety. Affordable access to mobile phone mini repeaters will go towards minimising this disadvantage to ensure transient students can access their educational resources whilst away from home.

Such a tool also provides an extra safety measure for families and teachers travelling on isolated roads to access school or work.

The Chair thanked Telstra for coming and answering questions on the conference floor.

Communications - Internet Access - Agenda Motions - continued

M83 (AS3) Alpha Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Communications, Minister for Regional Communications and nbn to investigate alternatives to increase data allowances for education (such as Data Pack Add-Ons) for ALL Rural, Regional and Remote students using nbn Sky Muster."

Moved: Anna Appleton Alpha Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Loretta Goodwin Alpha Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Sky Muster plans are not only limited in on and off-peak data, each residence is also only limited to one plan. The very nature of living in a RRR area means that most households only have one plan and as such data must be rationed between business, personal, health and education usage. Often education of RRR students suffers because of this, in particular those students who cannot access the Education Port.

Tertiary study externally is becoming an increasingly popular form of study because it allows students to remain active and valued members of their rural community meaning that they can continue to study without having to move away from their home. Due to advances in technology and education, external Tertiary study has also become very data hungry with most tertiary institutions sending videos of lectures and tutorials.

Secondary students are also experiencing an increase in online activity for study, requiring access to webpages that utilise video data and downloading of documents as well as online tutorials and research. Primary students from small schools also have a need to access the internet for homework and assignments e.g. (Mathletics, reading eggs)

Many students are now utilising specialist support services such as speech pathology, occupational therapy, mental health, music lessons or extra-curricular tutorials such as Kip McGrath. These lessons and support often require high bandwidth video capabilities.

There needs to be more done to ensure RRR students are not impacted by limited data. Rural/remote kids can't compete when their town-based counterparts have unlimited access to data. A data pack add on for students is one suggestion that would enable the purchasing (at a reduced cost) of extra data wholly for educational use could be a viable option to ensuring all of our RRR students are not left behind.

Video - COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

Regional Telecommunications Review – Discussion Session

Ms Wendy Duncan
Ms Kylie Stretton

Nikki Macqueen thanked Andrew Marshall from Fairfax Media for covering conference.

Conference Arrangements

Mrs Caroline McDonald

3:42pm Afternoon Tea

4:12pm Conference Resumes

Conference Arrangements - dinner information

Mrs Caroline McDonald

Fundraiser Idea for ICPA

Ms Jessie Donohoe

NT ICPA President's Report

Ms Tiani Cook (page 63)

Miscellaneous - Agenda Motions

M84 (A64) Tambo Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the federal government to form and manage a National Rural and Remote Education Alliance similar to that of the National Rural Health Alliance."

Moved: Heather Turnbull Tambo Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Donna Doyle Tambo Branch (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Educational outcomes for rural and remote students have been proven to be well below that of metropolitan counterparts. Therefore, it is more important that the bringing together of motivated rural and remote education advocates such as SPERA, Science, ICT and mathematics education in rural and regional Australia (SiMERR), gifted and talented interest groups, state government education departments for example and of course ICPA occurs sooner rather than later. By forming an Alliance these groups will have a common platform to share the results of studies, research and coal face knowledge. This collaborative approach can only mean an improvement in the learning outcomes for rural and remote students.

M85 (A65) Bollon Branch (QLD)

"Bollon ICPA would like to move a vote of thanks to ICPA of Federal Council for the outstanding work they do in advocating for rural Australian families progressing our issues and bringing them to the attention of Federal politicians and departments to improve the educational outcomes for our children."

WORD CHANGE

Christie Goddard (Bollon Branch) requested a word change. Remove the word *of* before Federal Council and add the word *of* before Federal politicians.

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

"Bollon ICPA would like to move a vote of thanks to ICPA Federal Council for the outstanding work they do in advocating for rural Australian families progressing our issues and bringing them to the attention of Federal politicians and departments to improve the educational outcomes for our children."

Moved: Fiona Cameron Bollon Branch (QLD)

Seconded: Christie Goddard Bollon Branch (QLD)

CARRIED WITH ACCLAMATION

Video - COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

Floor Motions

The Chair outlined the protocol for the acceptance of floor motions for the benefit of guests and delegates.

Floor Motions - Boarding Schools/Hostels

M86 (F1) Queensland State Council (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobby relevant bodies to ensure all boarding school and hostel supervising staff regularly undertake and update training in Youth Mental Health First Aid."

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

Moved: Tammie Irons Queensland State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

There is a need for all staff who are involved with supervising children within boarding facilities to have the skills to identify students who may be struggling. First aid for the mind should be just as important as first aid for the body.

M87 (F2) New South Wales State Council (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Treasurer to remove the Fringe Benefits Tax on accommodation for essential boarding staff at all metropolitan boarding schools."

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED (VOTES HAD TO BE COUNTED)

Moved: Helen Ponder New South Wales State Council (NSW)
Seconded: Bruce Paynter New South Wales State Council (NSW)

LOST

Explanation:

Many employers/employees in rural and regional areas find secondary schooling of employees' children a hard time for all. Many families leave their place of employment to school 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 the FBT. If this was removed it would provide a greater incentive for employers to assist with some of the 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.

Floor Motions - Youth Allowance

M88 (F3) Bourke Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) urges the Federal Government to change the criteria for gaining independent Youth Allowance, where students are ineligible for dependent Youth Allowance, so that rural and remote students who have to leave home to study at tertiary level are eligible for Youth Allowance at the commencement of their tertiary course."

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

Moved: Scott Mitchell Bourke Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Tanya Mitchell 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 and **the current level of combined parental income limit is too low**. 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**. These students have to move hundreds of kilometres to major regional centres or cities, paying 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 children are the very ones that have to be considered for eligibility for independent Youth Allowance. These students should be putting their efforts into studying their chosen degree, not worrying about finding a job in a new environment and supporting themselves. It leads to high dropout rates and increased stress and anxiety on individuals.

M89 (F4) Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) urges the Minister for 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 address to access tertiary studies, are eligible for the Living Away from Home rate as soon as they commence the tertiary course of their choice."

CONFERENCE PERMISSION GRANTED

Moved: Ellen Walker Rankins Springs Branch (NSW)
Seconded: Geoff Walker Rankins Springs Branch (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 \$150,000. 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 the Away from Home rate of independent Youth Allowance from the time they leave secondary school.

Video - COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

Advocacy Forum - Building Bridges

Better Internet for Regional, Rural and Remote Australia (BIRRR)

Kristy Sparrow (page 121)

Video - COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS

South Australia 2019 conference video played

Vote of Thanks

Wendy Hick moved a vote of thanks to the AV Team.

CARRIED WITH ACCLAMATION

Wendy Hick moved a vote of thanks to the minutes table and to all the people who have worked behind the scenes to make conference a success.

CARRIED WITH ACCLAMATION

Wendy Hick moved a vote of thanks to the Conference Convenors and the Convening Committee.

CARRIED WITH ACCLAMATION

Sally Sullivan moved a vote of thanks to the Chair, Mrs Wendy Hick.

CARRIED WITH ACCLAMATION

5:43:pm Close of Conference Day Two

Conference Reports 2018

FEDERAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mrs Wendy Hick

Federal Life Member, Mrs. Roxanne Morrissey, fellow ICPA members and guests, I would like to update you on the work of the ICPA Federal Council.

It has been an encouraging time for ICPA as there has been an undeniable focus on regional, rural and remote education in many areas.

After travelling to Alice Springs for the Federal Conference last August, Federal Council set to work actioning the 100 motions that were carried at that conference.

At the 2017 Federal Conference, five new councillors were elected to Federal Council and we also had four executive role changes. After the Conference, Federal Council soon found their feet and dove head first into the tasks to be done. To their credit, the new councillors and executives did a tremendous job in learning their roles quickly and have been very enthusiastic and a great assistance in our advocacy.

With numerous federal government position changes earlier this year, it has at times been challenging, as we have tried to keep our foothold and maintain the momentum that we had achieved on several issues. ICPA (Aust) continues to work closely with numerous other organisations as well as the various Commonwealth Departments and we have a good working relationship with many in government.

With our Federal Conference being held in Canberra this year, it has made it possible for a number of the Departments which we work regularly with to attend and become more familiar with ICPA and our members. We have representatives from the Department of Education and Training, Department of Human Services, Department of Social Services and Department of Communications present at the conference.

Besides the meetings, delegations, letters and consultations we have been involved in, Federal Council has worked on numerous written submissions. In the current climate, the federal government has been seeking input and discussion in many areas and there seems to be a submission available for comment on just about any topic imaginable, and certainly plenty to comment on in the area of regional and rural education. Attending to these submissions has kept Federal Council busy but it has been very beneficial to have had so much opportunity to provide comment. We've completed 15 submissions since the 2017 Federal Conference. Our largest submission undertaking by far was the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education or IRRRRE as it has become affectionately known by.

A promise from the 2016 federal election, the IRRRRE saw, for the first time in decades, government showing a significant focus on rural and remote education. Professor John Halsey was chosen to lead the Review and members of Federal and State Councils met with Professor Halsey at last year's Federal Conference. We also attended various consultations around the country to bring to the forefront multiple rural and remote issues. This Review provided ICPA with an avenue to seek address for the majority of the issues and concerns that members have raised over the past years. Trying to define and compile in their entirety the many educational challenges that our rural and remote students have faced for years and fit them into one document certainly tested the mettle of our Federal Council, particularly as submissions were called for almost immediately after our Federal Conference which had seen, as I mentioned earlier, a number of new councillors join our team. It was a steep learning curve for the new councillors, but they were up for the

challenge. In the end, Federal Council finished with a 44 page submission and our new council had become cohesive in working through the submission process. The final report from the Review was submitted to the Australian Government in January 2018 and at the end of May, the Government responded that they would accept all 11 recommendations from the Review. It is encouraging to see regional, rural and remote education having such a focus at present and ICPA looks forward to seeing what follows on from the recommendations.

The arrival of the Federal Budget 2018-2019 saw a win for regional and remote students. While it wasn't the increases to the Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance that we had hoped for, what the Federal Budget announcement this year did include was the news that as a result of the IRRRE Review \$53.9 million will be allocated to improve regional students' access to Youth Allowance by changing the threshold and assessment year for parental income. The regional independence criterion for parental income under youth allowance will increase from \$150,000 to \$160,000 and the "Family Pool" will also now be considered for students from regional and remote areas. ICPA (Aust) welcomed this announcement in the Budget and we have also welcomed the national focus on regional, rural and remote education which will hopefully provide future improvements for our students.

Federal Council continued to work in a number of key areas this year and we will be hearing more detail about these topics in the portfolio presentations later in the conference, but I did want to mention some of the main issues we have been working on.

Communications continues to be a major sector of our efforts. ICPA (Aust) remains a member of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition and this has been a very welcomed forum where we can take our members' issues. By being a part of the RRRCC, we have managed to strengthen our voice as the Communications Coalition now encompasses 21 member bodies.

ICPA (Aust) with the help of State Councils continues to be very active in many networks as we seek better internet, telephony and mobile services for regional, rural and remote students.

One communications issue in particular that I would like to mention is the concern around landline phones remaining in place. Uncertainty around the future of landline services for voice has been a major concern for our members. ICPA (Aust) and RRRCC have met with numerous government representatives this year and strongly voiced our members' concerns over a potential loss of landlines and the possibility of landlines being replaced by VoIP services which currently do not adequately meet the need of those living in rural and remote Australia. ICPA (Aust) also maintains that Australians living outside of large metropolitan centres must have at least two methods of accessing communications (i.e. landline and satellite internet) due to the distance to other means of communication and the implications for safety when one service fails. This message seems to have been understood and supported by many in government and we are hopeful that this consideration for voice services for those in regional, rural and remote areas will continue to be upheld. Federal Council met with the office of the Minister for Communications in May and we were reassured to hear that "Current USO arrangements will remain in place unless and until robust and workable alternatives that are more cost-effective are identified, proven and able to be implemented".

The last few months have been very busy in the area of Early Childhood Education and Care. Federal Councillor, Jane Morton has attended numerous meetings and sessions 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.

ICPA also continues to monitor the transition from Budget Based Funding for mobile playgroups and other mobile services utilised by rural families to the new model.

For a long time, ICPA (Aust)'s request for changes to assist more regional, rural and remote students to access tertiary study seemed to go unheard, however in the last few years, we have seen some tremendous changes. Another very positive result in the tertiary portfolio was the welcome change in Youth Allowance at the start of this year for those rural and remote students qualifying for independent Youth Allowance through part-time work or earnings, in the reduction of the Gap Year from 18 months to 14 months. ICPA (Aust) had been lobbying for this change for many years and now these efforts have been rewarded. This reduction of the Gap Year as well as the Budget announcement already mentioned should assist a number of our rural students.

When Federal Council learned of difficulties some families were having at the start of the schoolyear in getting their Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance renewed or their applications processed, and in some cases, families receiving the allowance for some of their children but not for others, we created a survey to try to gather information around what our members were experiencing with their AIC applications. Members supported the survey well and the information gathered has been very beneficial in discussions with the Department of Human Services as well as the Minister for Human Services' office and hopefully the comments and information gathered will assist in a smoother AIC application and renewal process in the future.

Federal Council has also begun a project revolving around students who need to board away from home in order to access an education. As geographically isolated families are aware, the gap between the allowances available and the cost of keeping their children in education is widening and continues to be very difficult for families to meet. We hope that by showcasing where our students live, what they love about where they live, and also, that due to distance, they have a necessity in going away in order to receive further education, may help foster a better understanding and support for these families. So, stay tuned for more on that project in the future. With drought continuing to cripple a large section of our country, the out of pocket costs families face is being exacerbated. It is critical that we do everything we can to ensure families can keep their children in school during times of rural hardship, whether this is due to drought, fire, flood or an industry impact on their family income.

Of course, ICPA is not only about boarding and we also want to showcase all of the students we represent and the various ways they attend school. Federal Council will also be working on a larger, more encompassing project that will highlight all of our ICPA students, where they live and where they go to school.

One of ICPA's strengths is the way we unite and support each other. State and Federal councils have continued to work together this year in various ways including teleconferences between the state and federal portfolios and executives. In mid- February, representatives from most State and Federal Councils met in Sydney for face to face meetings and an information session at the nbn Discovery Centre. It was a very productive few days and extremely rewarding.

Federal Council would to thank the State Councils for their ongoing support of federal issues and their dedication and commitment. State Councils have been doing a terrific job in keeping the issues for ICPA families being talked about at all levels.

Federal Council looks forward to continuing to work with state councils, branches and members.

I would like to close with a quote from Walt Disney, "Our greatest natural resource is in the minds of our children."

ICPA seeks equity in access to education for geographically isolated children. We will continue to advocate wherever possible to ensure that our rural and remote children also have the opportunities to reveal the natural resources in them.

Our Conference theme is COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS and we are gathered here to bring the message of our children's needs to the heart of our nation. Let's keep the message loud so that we are certain it is heard, COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS.

FEDERAL TREASURER'S REPORT

Lisa Slade

It might be easier to tell you the places that Federal Council have not been flying the ICPA flag this year! Federal Councillors have attended all State Conferences, face to face meetings and delegations to Canberra in November and May. Wendy and Suzanne attended the Joint Councils face-to-face meeting in Sydney in February and it would be remiss of me not to mention the various other meetings, forums, and reviews conducted across the country that Councillors have attended throughout the year. All attendances at such events are scrutinised to contain travel costs to only those that align with our policies and direction given to Council by members in the form of motions at the preceding Federal Conference. While attending meetings face-to-face is the preferred option, participating via teleconference is also proving to be a successful choice particularly when some meetings or forums may only last an hour or so. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many organisations who assist by covering the costs associated with attending meetings.

We are thankful again to have the support and financial assistance from the Department of Education and Training through the Regional Student Engagement Strategy grant funding. This year in February we received the third instalment (of four) of funding. Funding contributes towards providing the Australian Government with an understanding of the issues faced in the education of children in rural, regional and remote areas. The acquittal of this grant is attached to the Financial Statements for your review. I am delighted to let members know that we recently received advice from the Minister for Education and Training, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, that our recent application to renew this funding for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 financial years has been successful.

I would like to take this opportunity to also thank Telstra for their generous sponsorship of this year's Conference and also their continued support of our organisation Australia-wide. Federal Council is humbled by the generous donations that we have received from our branches across the country. This year we have received a staggering \$21,800 from our branches. Every donation, no matter how big or small, goes a very long way towards getting our Federal Councillors across the country to hear the issues firsthand. These funds also enable us to take the lobby directly to the decision makers who are capable of enacting change. We know the enormous effort that goes into fundraising at branch level and truly appreciate that we are the recipients of that hard work. A warm thank-you to the following branches who have donated this year: Alpha Branch, Arcadia Valley Branch, Belyando/Mt Coolon Branch, Bourke Branch, Charters Towers Branch, Clermont Branch, Cloncurry Branch, Hyden Branch, Katherine Branch, Lakes District Branch, Louth Branch, Mount Isa BOTA Branch, Tambo Branch and Winton Branch.

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of this financial year, we had 2648 financial members and one corporate member, which is a pleasing 300 more than last year and a five-year membership high. It would be hard to attribute this increase to one thing with so much happening over the past year, but I am confident that the new online membership payment system has definitely played its part. We were informed in early 2018 that the West Wyalong Branch in NSW have been placed into recess.

The inaugural year of online memberships has been a learning curve for not only Federal Council, but State and Branch Treasurers. We appreciate the tremendous effort that has gone into ensuring a seamless integration to complement existing membership processes across all three tiers of ICPA. The relatively smooth roll out can be attributed to the extensive behind the scenes work carried out by Sue Shotton and Jane O'Brien who have worked tirelessly through numerous scenarios to support a positive online renewal process for members. It is exciting to let you know that in the 2017 – 2018 financial year we have had 887 members renew online, which has far outweighed our initial expectations.

I cannot imagine life as Federal Treasurer looking after the financials and memberships together. My hat goes off to those before me that capably managed both, which leads me to Jane O'Brien, our Federal Memberships Officer. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with Jane this year, she has taught me many valuable lessons and persisted with a constant trickle of queries. Jane works very hard behind the scenes to ensure everything is running like clockwork and never complains. She has been an enormous support not only to me, but to members, branch and state executives across the country. Thank you, Jane.

FINANCES

The audited financial statements for the 2017-2018 financial year covers all of Federal Councils financial accounts. It also includes the Department of Education and Training Regional Student Engagement Strategy acquittal as mentioned above. Copies can be found on your tables.

It seems the 2017 AGM was a good time to take on the Treasurer's role, as I am pleased to report a profit of \$46,204.89 for this past financial year. While I would like to take the credit for such a great financial outcome, we received a large boost from the 2017 Federal Conference Convening Committee. They were able to remit an amount over \$48,000 back to Federal Council following Conference. Thank you again ladies, I am not sure we will ever see the likes of that again!

The Pat Edgley Memorial Tribute was exhausted of its funds last financial year and Federal Council are looking to other avenues to help assist with Federal Conference costs. For the 2018 Federal Conference, \$3000 from our General Account, \$10,000 from the Department of Education and Training funding have been provided to help the Convening Committee with running costs.

As mentioned earlier, the online membership rollout saw ICPA incur some quite substantial initial set-up costs. A big shout out to our State Councils for contributing financially towards paying for a portion of those costs, indicative of their State membership numbers. We greatly appreciate your support, thank you.

A couple of things to note from the financial statements. Delegation expenses have decreased, and face-to-face meeting expenses have increased as compared to last year. This can be attributed to a few things. Federal Council only attended one Delegation to Canberra in May this year and no mini-delegations were able to be scheduled. Expenses from the previous financial year's face-to-face meeting in Brisbane in late May spilled over

into this financial year and our November face-to-face meeting was well attended by the new Council. Meeting face-to-face is invaluable and enables Council to work through an enormous workload in an intensive and short time period, however it is an expensive exercise and we are always vigilant on how we can keep costs down. We are also at the mercy of where Councillors live and sometimes travel costs can be our arch nemesis.

While branch donations have increased twofold this financial year, we have missed the generous donation from Ridley Agriproducts Wet Season Block Promo that we received last financial year, seen in the financial statements as a decrease in 'Donations – Other' income line.

You will also note that our sundry expenses are also higher this year as compared to last year. This expense line is made up of a combination of transactions including Boarding Parent Handbook purchases, Connecting Up Conference Registration, Broadband for Bush Registration, Taroom/Wandoan branch delegate sponsorship for Federal Conference 2017 to name a few of the bigger items. Some of the differences can also be attributed to different Federal Treasurers' recording expenses in different ways. At the beginning of the 2018-2019 financial year, I have spent some time tidying up incoming and outgoing accounts in our accounting program to help limit recurring differences moving forward.

This year we transferred all of our financial accounts over to the Suncorp Bank, having had two legacy accounts with the ANZ Bank. This transition has helped to streamline data entry and reconciling accounts at the end of each month.

As we are looking healthy financially and have received such generous support from our branches this year, Federal Council feels our federal membership fee should remain at \$22 per member family and the corporate membership fee at \$220 per organisation. Due to a change in location of the Federal Treasurer, we have sourced an Auditor in South Australia, RJC Evans and Co. who we will be recommending to prepare and audit our financials in 2019.

Thank you to all that have provided me with assistance throughout the year, as with anything new, it has been a steep learning curve. I am continually inspired by the amazing group of women I am lucky enough to share this journey with and look forward to the year ahead.

NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bruce Paynter

I am humbled by the opportunity to serve as the ICPA NSW President, particularly at a time of great transition in education.

It is a privilege to work with dedicated and caring State Council members and the ICPA community, all of whom strive for the highest educational standards for our children, in an effort to make a profound difference to their lives.

Our Constitution (March 2017) could not be clearer: "The policy of the Association shall be related to education and other issues that have an influence on educational opportunities for geographically isolated children in New South Wales."

ICPA NSW continues to consult through collaborative engagements with our stakeholders and this has resulted in progress in many areas but, unfortunately, not always in a timely manner.

Quick Facts

- a) Main Deputation. Sydney: 30 meetings, 11 State Council members, over 3 days
- b) Welcomed new Branch – North West Slopes
- c) Membership has increased
- d) Wentworth Branch convening next NSW State Conference: 6 – 7th March 2019
- e) 74 new enquiries came from Boarding Schools Expo's, including Dubbo, Griffith and Wagga Wagga, with Narrabri Expo still to come
- f) Formal Community Partnership established with Telstra Country Wide
- g) ICPA NSW is combining resources for isolated regions with Contact Inc, Royal Flying Doctor, Royal Far West and the Country Women's Association
- h) Branches are connecting with members more frequently using teleconferencing and Social Media, including Facebook

Portfolio reports can be found on our website www.nsw.icpa.com.au

- **Early childhood**
In Home Care changes; new Pre-School progressing; 3yr olds pre-school funding
- **Travel**
Seat belts on Buses; School Drive Subsidy
- **Communications**
Black Spot R3; SkyMuster; NBN Survey; Teleconferencing State Council & Branches; NGWL new plans, Universal Service obligation
- **Allowances State and Federal**
Implementation of new AIC rates, Link AIC increases to CPI
- **Boarding Schools, Agricultural High Schools and Hostels**
Boarding Schools Isolated Scholarship nine students awarded DoE scholarships
- **Distance Education**
NBN educational ports. Allocation of computers to some students prior to commencing kindergarten
- **Rural Schools**
Active Kids Vouchers
- **Special Education**
Allied Health; alliance with RFDs, RFS, CWA, Contact Inc, NDIS Issues
- **Tertiary Education**
No fees for selected TAFE courses including building, hospitality. Country Universities – continue development

Transition in Education

ICPA NSW has been invited to participate in the Educational reforms instigated by the Federal Government, under Gonski 2. The New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) has been charged by the New South Wales Government to carry out the review in conjunction with Professor Geoff Marsden. There have been sixteen educational reviews since 1880, but what makes this one different is the approach being taken. The **terms of reference** will be developed using a consultative approach between NESA and key stakeholders, which is a significant change from the past. ICPA NSW has been and continues to be heavily involved in these formal and informal consultations, including making written submissions. July to December 2018 will see NESA visit and consult, with the assistance of ICPA NSW, the remote and isolated regions of New South Wales.

NESA Link: <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au>

Report from Cheryl Best, A/Executive Director, Learning and Teaching, DET NSW

Rural and Distance Education supports regional and remote communities to ensure students from preschool to Year 12 have access to quality education. The Rural and

Distance Education team work to overcome disadvantage in NSW rural and remote communities.

The NSW Isolated Children's Parents' Association has a long association as a major stakeholder in the work of supporting rural education within NSW and consistently interacts with the NSW Department of Education through Rural and Distance Education to ensure we achieve the best possible outcome for our students. Current examples of this association are reflected in the 2018 allocation of boarding scholarships and the building of NSW's first purpose-built Distance Education School since 1992, Finigan School of Distance Education at Queanbeyan.

Finigan with its 'state of the art' facility design and collaborative technologies, is due to be completed in 2019 and will service the regional communities located in the southwest NSW. NSW ICPA has been part of the origin of this school since its inception, including participation in the Project Control Group and the recent selection panel for the school's Principal.

Further information and the full report can be found at:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/rural-and-distance-education/rural-and-remote-education>

Report from Duncan Taylor, CEO, Country University Centres

The Country University Centres are a community driven enterprise, building an affiliated network of higher education facilities in regional and rural communities, to support university students to successfully pursue higher education while remaining in their communities with family, friends and local employment. Each Centre is staffed, fitted out with state-of-the-art technologies and high bandwidth, and provides a collegiate environment of learning to support all higher education students in that community to access any course at any university. As a result, students have staff assistance, peer support and opportunities for group learning, and early evidence is supporting the success of outcomes.

Centres have now been established in three NSW regional communities, and the model is currently supporting students studying 92 different undergraduate and postgraduate courses at 30 different universities.

The first centre was opened in Cooma in 2013. In 2018, a Centre was opened in Broken Hill which has 76 students registered as at the end of semester one. Over 60% of these students are first in family, and 17% identify as Indigenous. Narrabri and Moree have announced Country University Centre facilities opening for the 2019 university year.

Full report can be read on our website and for further information, contact the Country University Centres CEO, Duncan Taylor, at duncan.taylor@cuc.org.au

State Conference – Mudgee 'Never aLone'

The 46th NSW Annual State Conference was convened by our Lone members in March 2018 in Mudgee. All preparations for the conference were conducted by teleconference with email confirmation. His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (ret'd) and his wife, Mrs Linda Hurley, opened the conference. The Governor and his wife have agreed to be joint Vice-Regal patrons of ICPA NSW, which is a tremendous honour for our association.

Motions were presented and voted on during the conference and it was noted that, unfortunately, many concerns have made slow progress. However, that will not stop our continued advocacy on behalf of our children.

Brendan Maher, CEO, R U OK? was our keynote speaker. He gave us a timely reminder about helping others that added special meaning to many at this time, given drought conditions and the mental health of our members a real concern. Inspirational speaker, Nathan Kitto, followed. Wow! We all need to learn from this young man that: "Everything is possible".

25 Branch delegates and other representatives attended:

Department of Education, TAFE NSW, Transport for NSW, Contact Inc, Country Women's Association, Boarding School's Expo, Australian Boarding Schools Association, Royal Far West, Catholic Schools Parents, Country Care Link, Universities Admission Centre, Telstra County Wide

Full conference report available at the ICPA NSW website.

Consultation with our community

There has been strong engagement with a broad community spectrum who are interested in Rural, Remote and Isolated education outcomes, this has provided a genuine platform of consultation and advocacy.

Their input and guidance negate complacency.

ICPA Federal Council

The Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC

The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC

The Hon Andrew Constance MLC

New South Wales Educational Standards Authority (David de Carvalho)

ABC Radio (Sally Bryant)

2WEB Outback Radio

Contact Inc. (Sue Kingwill)

Distant Education - DET (Mike Tom)

School Performance Rural South West Geoff Pellizzer – Executive Director

Bush Children's Education Foundation

Transport for NSW

Destination NSW

RAS Foundation (Cecilia Logan)

Boarding School's Expo (Meg Bennett)

Country Women's Association (Annette Turner and Trish Stabback)

What's next?

Areas of concern for the State Council, as we work forward:

- Transition in Education, Curriculum Review and implementation
- Access to Early Learning, how do we meet the 600 hours
- Early childhood transport
- In Home Care
- Data allowances from SkyMuster for Tertiary Students
- Reliable Mobile services must be a priority for Rural, Remote and Isolated schools
- AIC tied to CPI and boarding fees
- Regional Television Services Review (VAST)
- Active Kids Vouchers for members
- State Council response to Regional Telecommunications Review
- Website pages for NBN and Telstra Country Wide

These are some of the many challenges that ICPA NSW will face over the coming year. I am seeking our member's thoughts and opinions, believing that this expanded knowledge will enhance our advocacy on behalf of our children.

Our State Council looks forward to working together with the ICPA Federal Council to improve the educational opportunities for geographically isolated children across Australia.

SAVE THE DATE!

New South Wales State Conference 2019

Come and join us on 6-7 March 2019 in the heart of the Riverina.

Hosted by ICPA Wentworth branch.

Incredible location, food and wine.

NORTHERN TERRITORY PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Tiani Cook

Madam President, Federal Councillors, Distinguished Guests and friends, it is my pleasure to present the Northern Territory President's Report at the 2018 Federal ICPA Conference being held in our Nation's Capital.

The Northern Territory ICPA State Council continue to move forward as a respected and reputable organisation with a growing ability to connect with stakeholders and community groups in the effort to ensure equitable levels of education for bush kids right across our great territory.

I feel honoured to be part of the inspirational, motivated and respectable group of people who make up the ICPA team, representing rural and remote families spanning Australia.

2017 NTICPA STATE Conference and State Council Member Update

NTICPA held our annual Conference on the 21 March 2018. Hosted by, and held in Alice Springs, the theme was "Special Needs in Isolation".

We had a great line up of speakers to discuss specific learning needs, including SPERA, Carers NT, Department of Education Reps and AHVISE. We also heard from Telstra and NBN discussing the fast-paced world of telecommunications which encapsulates the way in which our kids' education is delivered.

At our AGM we said goodbye to State Secretary Alethea Nicolle and Councillors Kerrie Scott and Leza Cook.

NTICPA welcomed Sue Wilson - Secretary, Bec Cadzow - Assistant Secretary and Anna Weir - NT Councillor who joined me along with Sally Sullivan - VP, Sarah Measey - Treasurer and Sarah Cook - Publicity Officer returning for the 2018/19 term on NTICPA State Council.

We are privileged to also have the services of Sue Shotton as NT Web Master, Ruth Woerle as Newsletter Editor and Alethea Nicolle as Home Tutor Register Coordinator. Sue Shotton also kindly put her hand up to help out with updating our Policies and By-Laws which were very much in need of contemporising.

NTICPA consists of 3 branches; Alice Springs and Katherine along with the Lone Members branch which is governed by state. ICPA membership in The Northern Territory is \$50 per annum.

Down the Track, NTICPA Magazine

The "Down the Track" State Magazine produces 350 copies, three times per year, which is distributed to all members, parliamentary representatives, rural and remote schools and our sponsors.

Thank you to Ruth Woerle for her ongoing dedication to editing, collaborating and distribution of each “Down the Track” Issue.

Grants Program

NTICPA bursaries, grants and competitions include the Zoetis “Pastoral Industry” Student Grant, the Post-Secondary Bursary and the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal Back to School Competition.

Donations from the Siba Ships and The Wellard Rural Export Group continue to allow NTICPA to offer the “Bridging the Gap” grants program. Awarded in February and August each year the grant assists in the costs associated for a young person between the age of 15 and 22 years to attend an educationally based activity, purchase relevant study or career materials or undertake personal development activities.

Alice Springs offers a further 4 bursaries for branch members and Katherine ICPA Branch now offers 5 with the release of a new bursary for branch members called “The Extraordinary Opportunity Grant” (EO Grant). The EO Grant was designed last year to provide financial support to students wishing to pursue an extraordinary opportunity in the fields of sport, arts, music, agriculture, or academics, with the emphasis on applicants not being necessarily gifted, but with a driving passion and proven commitment to their chosen field.

This year also saw NT ICPA again receive a \$10k donation from AHA NT Branch which was split between Alice Springs and Katherine branches for Social Development Camps for Children within the member areas. Katherine held a second hugely popular ‘Mataranka Sports Camp’ and Alice Springs is working towards holding another STEM workshop, due to the positive feedback from last year’s program of the same nature.

Tom Curtain CD Launch - 14 November 2017

NTICPA were very grateful to Annabel and Tom Curtain for their incredibly generous donation of \$2 from every CD and Digital Album sale made from Tom's album “Territory Time” for the period from the launch date - Tuesday 14 November 2017 through until the end of the “Territory Time Tour” which wrapped up 10 March 2018. Tom and Annabel's donation totaled an incredible \$1,182.00.

“Territory Time”, debuted at Number 1 in the Australian Country iTunes Music Charts and Number 12 across all genres. We feel proud and honoured to have been a part of this journey with Tom and Annabel who are champions of bush kids.

AHA Luncheon - 21 November 2017

Kerrie Scott and I attended the AHA NT Presidents Luncheon in November 2017. There were approximately 400 people at the event.

AHA NT CEO Des Crowe acknowledged and commended the ongoing work NTICPA does on behalf of remote students in the Northern Territory bringing awareness to our organisation within a group of people who weren't previously aware of the work NTICPA do.

This is the second year AHA NT have donated funds raised at their luncheon which have gone toward Social Development Camps held by both the Katherine and Alice Springs ICPA Branches.

Minister for Corporate and Information's Services Digital Excellence Awards - 1 December 2017

I was privileged to receive an invitation to attend the Minister for Corporate and Information Services, Digital Excellence Awards late last year which showcased some of the many facets of the technology and telecommunications division within the NT.

The recent Northern Territory Government Discussion Paper, "Towards a digital strategy for the NT", stated that by 2030, one in two Australians will need skills in programming, software development and building technology to remain competitive.

It's never been more evident to me that we need to get our Telecommunication Issues in the Bush right to ensure our kids don't get left behind when it comes to STEM programs (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and creating competitive futures for RR students moving forward.

It's rather ironic, when the very delivery of Rural and Remote kids' education, so heavily relies upon technology and communications working efficiently in the first place.

Annual State Presidents and Secretaries F2F, Sydney - 13/ 14 February 2018

In February I flew to Sydney for the annual ICPA State Presidents and Secretaries Face-to-Face Executives' Meeting. State and Federal Representatives were also privileged to go on a tour of the NBN Discovery Centre. It was an enjoyable and productive couple of days of networking and brainstorming with much coming from the meeting discussions including updates on the following:

- In Home Care Program - what we can expect for June 2018 when changes are implemented, trusting all goes to plans.
- Assistance for Isolated Children's' Systems Glitch - the December 2017 Centrelink computer systems hiccup, which caused undue stress to families.
- The Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education - ICPA Australia's Submission.
- Online Membership Progression – an update on the system.
- Motions wording protocol for State Conferences.
- Advice for State Council submissions into Federal Inquiries and Reviews.
- ICPA (Aust) Constitutional changes - an insight to the suggested changes and updates.

NTICPA Submissions

NTICPA have been busy with submissions this past term, with Councillors jointly compiling submissions to:

- Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education.
- NT Government's 10-year early childhood development strategic plan.
- The operation, regulation and funding of air route service delivery to rural, regional and remote communities.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transports References Committee, Senate Inquiry into Regional Air Services, Formal Public Hearing - 4 April 2018

NTICPA Councillor and Boarding Schools Portfolio Leader, Sarah Cook attended the hearing in Alice Springs speaking with senators, taking about NTICPA's recommendations presented in our submission.

Senator Rex Patrick, Senator Glenn Sterle, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy and Senator Barry O'Sullivan were all very interested in the recommendations made in NTICPA's Submission, making comment and asking questions in regard to how long ICPA had been lobbying for more equitable flights.

The senators were keen to learn why NTICPA hadn't received traction or agreement from the Northern Territory government on discounted airfares. Disappointingly, comments made, suggested the senators felt subsidized airfares were a Northern Territory Government responsibility, but we should strongly seek an audience with Airline Companies in a follow up to the Senate Inquiry.

National Review of Teacher Registration Expert Panel Members Forum - 6 April 2018

NTICPA Treasurer and Small Schools Portfolio Leader, Sarah Measey along with NTICPA Secretary Sue Wilson attended the hearing in Darwin speaking with the panel's chair, Chris Wardlaw, in regard to the consultation for the National Review about NTICPA's member views.

All Australian Education Ministers agreed to the review and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was tasked with undertaking the National Review of Teacher Registration. The Review focused on existing arrangements for teacher registration across Australia, and the role that the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers play in driving quality teaching through registration.

NTICPA has had on ongoing motion over the last couple of year requesting that NTICPA monitor the NT Teachers Registrations Board's teacher registration process to ensure rural and remote teachers are able to maintain their teacher registration. This forum was an excellent opportunity for us to share members' issues surrounding teacher registrations.

NBN Multicast Trials

NT distance education schools have been undergoing multicast trials for almost two years in the effort to ensure a smooth transition from the STARS network to NBN Sky Muster Satellite.

The NT Minister for Education recently advised NTICPA that an evaluation report will be finalised by July 2018. So, by the time this report is printed we expect to have been notified and consulted, as promised by the Department, with respect to the proposals for exploring future options.

The Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee Forum - 5 June 2018

RTIRC held their first roundtable session in Katherine 5 June 2018. This was an excellent platform for me to speak candidly with committee members: Sean Edwards, Kylie Stretton and Paul Weller discussing member issues and incorporating state conference motions into the consultations on the day. The official RTIRC Issue paper was also released.

The committee were especially chuffed to learn I drove over 700kms to attend their forum.

NTICPA plan to either feed into the ICPA (Aust) Federal Submission or submit our own, due before 5 August 2018.

Broadband for the Bush Forum - 7/8 June 2018

The B4BA Forum was held in Darwin this year and I was given the opportunity to present to conference on the "Value of Effective and Reliable Digital Technology for Social, Emotional, Physical, Financial and Educational Productivity of Families living in the Bush". I had tremendous positive feedback from my presentation and was delighted at the conference program content and calibre of information being presented by the other speakers.

I also had an opportunity to discuss telehealth trials in partnership with the Charles Darwin University; Northern Institute of Research fellow Marianne St Clair, who is enthusiastic about working together to expand access to telecommunications and telehealth in remote areas through the trial.

Cathy Van Extel from Radio National chaired a panel to discuss “Big Ideas from the Bush and what constitutes a truly digital Australia where no individual or place is left behind”. Daniel Featherstone, General Manager, IRCA (indigenous remote communications association) and Jim Wyatt, principal at Optimi Digital along with myself were the panelists, the segment aired on ABC Radio National in late July.

NTICPA Delegations in Darwin 20/21 November 2017 and Mini Delegations 11/12 June 2018

In November last year, 4 NTICPA Councillors: Sally Sullivan, Kerrie Scott, Sarah Cook and I attended two days of meetings with government Ministers and parliamentary representatives, relevant departmental officers and other important stakeholders in Darwin to address some of the issues affecting bush kids’ access to education.

Every year, NTICPA Councillors attended delegation in Darwin at the end of the year to advocate on behalf of members and put forward the motions passed at our Annual State Conference earlier in the year.

In June this year, NTICPA embarked on a second, “Mini Delegation” with 5 Councillors: Sarah Measey, Sue Wilson, Sally Sullivan, Sarah Cook and myself, making the trip to Darwin. We anticipated speaking with relevant stakeholders closer to State Conference, with issues still fresh in our minds, more beneficial and it most certainly appeared that way.

We met with representatives from Qantas and Virgin as a follow up to the Senate Inquiry into Regional Air Services - Formal Public Hearing, Ministers, Stakeholders and the Department of Education. The Mini Delegation was a huge success, with positive and promising feedback resulting from previous discussions finally coming to fruition. We’ve learned you definitely don’t underestimate the power of face to face discussions!

Mini Delegations are set to become a permanent fixture in NTICPA’s calendar (finances permitting) in the first half of each year with follow up delegations in November as usual.

NT Ministerial Cabinet Portfolio Re-Shuffle

Late June 2018 saw the NT Minister for Education change in a portfolio re-shuffle. Hon Eva Lawler has been replaced as Minister for Education by Hon Selena Jane Malijarri Uibo. NTICPA Councillors are yet to meet Minister Uibo but are hopeful we will have a productive relationship, as we did with Minister Lawler.

Through the DoE and Minister’s Office we have had a couple of very encouraging wins in the last few months, as a result of years of hard work and persistence:

- As a response to NTICPA’s ongoing request for more equitable early childhood identification of specific needs - parents and home tutors have been granted access to the Department’s online professional learning course for teachers of students with specific needs. The online training sessions on “Understanding Dyslexia and Significant Reading Difficulties” is comprised of blended learning, with a component of the delivery via video-conferencing or tele-conferencing capability.
- In the pursuit of a more equitable NT Living Away From Home Allowance – NTICPA was super excited to receive the news of assistance for rural and remote Territory students who board interstate. Students boarding within the NT have received a boarding subsidy for some years and now the Northern Territory Department of

Education has approved an Interstate Boarding Allowance of \$2000 per year that will provide financial assistance towards boarding costs for students attending an interstate boarding facility.

Regrettably I haven't been able to attend this year's conference in Canberra in person, but I hope everyone has a wonderful time catching up with old friends and making new ones.

Thank you.

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 today – my first official act as the new Queensland President.

June 12-14 saw over 230 attendees converge on Winton for Queensland's 47th State Conference. The convening committee staged an amazing event and Winton, along with its new Waltzing Matilda centre, was showcased to perfection. The amount of work put into convening a conference by our amazing members' year after year is certainly something which all of ICPA can be proud of, and Canberra is no different.

At conference our amazingly competent President Mrs Kim Hughes, became the still amazingly competent Immediate Past President, allowing me the opportunity to step into those rather large shoes and continue to captain the fantastic crew of State Councillors we have. We also said goodbye to long time State Councillor, and former State Secretary, Mrs Kate Twist, and our #iamicpa campaign manager and State Publicity Officer Mrs Natalie Kenny. Whilst Nat has taken over as Queensland's *News & Views* Editor and we will no doubt continue to hear from Kate, they will be sadly missed and their contribution to ICPA Queensland is well noted. We were lucky enough to welcome two new State Councillors to our ship with Mrs Kate Bradshaw from Winton and Mrs Michelle Freshwater from St George climbing aboard, and Mrs Wendy Henning walked the plank to join Mrs Louise Martin as Vice-Presidents. I am very excited to have such a passionate and dedicated council with which to conquer my sea legs and we look forward to the year ahead working together for the benefit of all of our children.

Queensland's #iamicpa campaign has continued this year with a revamp at Winton allowing boarding schools and branches alike to get on-board! We even had the entire conference floor 'digging deep for education' and doing an #iamicpa video. Qld State Council have really enjoyed seeing where this campaign has taken us, and we acknowledge the powerful impact that social media has these days as a tool in getting our message across.

Queensland State Council continues to receive great support from the Department of Education, with the recently created Rural, Remote and International Branch affording us a direct contact for our lobby. The relationship which has been forged with this branch has allowed us to streamline our departmental meetings and develop briefing documents, much of which is coordinated by the branch themselves. We are represented on many stakeholder groups within the Department of Education including the Joint Parent Council, The Rural and Remote Education Reference Group, the Senior Assessment Taskforce Implementation group, the Teacher Transfer Mobility Working Group and the Remote Kindergarten Pilot Working group to name a few. It is reassuring that ICPA Qld is considered a valuable member of stakeholder groups and our opinion is often sought.

ICPA Qld continues to form exciting new partnerships and achieve steps forward for rural and remote education in our state. In recent months we have seen a commitment from our government to ensure all dedicated teacher housing has access to an internet connection and that four new Professional Learning and Wellbeing Centres will be opening, with the first two up and running in Mt Isa and Roma this term. We have seen the introduction of nbn local which has allowed a dedicated workforce to focus on customer experiences in regional and remote communities as well as working with key stakeholders to provide education and guidance. Queensland's Remote Kindergarten Pilot has consolidated this year and we hope that we will see an expansion of this pilot into more schools in 2019. The development of our relationships with various educational centres like the Kelvin Grove TECE has allowed us to present a rural and remote perspective to preservice teachers in workshops and conference panels – an opportunity we have embraced with open arms and the results have been very positive.

What next? After attending our delegations in Brisbane last week, State Council looks ahead to working on forwarding motions both current and continued, as well as focusing on improving partnerships and alternative approaches to achieving equity in education. As Queensland moves toward the introduction of the ATAR system in 2019, ICPA Qld will be focused on ensuring the impact on rural and remote students is considered and minimal. We continue to lobby for increased cross-departmental cooperation within our government and the ongoing request for an increase in allowances. As always, we look to continue to support Federal ICPA in their endeavours at a national level and on behalf of Qld State Council I wish Wendy and her team all the best for this conference as we celebrate the passion and dedication we all hold for rural and remote education across Australia.

Thank you to all who have made the journey here to our capital to bring the voice of your community to life - I am always so invigorated after a conference and it is you, the members, who bring the inspiration to continue.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Kerry Williams

Madame President, Federal councillors, ICPA members and guests, it gives me great pleasure to present the South Australia President's report on behalf of Kerry Williams, who is unable to be with us today.

Our State Conference was held in Port Augusta on 18th May, hosted by the Flinders Ranges Branch. The theme: "Education, The Range is Far and Wide" incorporated the physical landscape of the iconic Flinders Ranges region with the range of educational opportunities and challenges faced by our families.

Fourteen motions were presented on the day. These included thanking the former Minister for Education for extending the State Education Allowance to recipients of the AIC Second Home Allowance, as well as requests to improve the way the allowance is administered and delivered in future. A Communications motion requested that pre-school students studying e-Kindy have access to the NBN Skymuster Education Port. We have since found that these students are able to access the port. Two motions asking that Port Augusta SOTA be reinstated as a stand-alone school attracted a lot of discussion and media interest on the day. Increased funding for SOTA camps and face to face events, concessional student airfares and travel allowances were also raised by members, as well as travel costs for families seeking allied health services such as Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy. Concerns around the new child care funding arrangements for services delivered by the Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise (RICE) were also raised, and although Federal Member for Grey, Rowan Ramsey, allayed fears on the day with the announcement of a continued funding assurance, we are yet to see how the new

model will be played out on the ground over the coming months. There is concern that many of the excellent services offered by RICE in SA may be discontinued under the new model, such as remote community play days and drop-in style crèches at race days and community events. We have since written to the RICE management committee requesting that SA ICPA work closely with them to ensure we are fully informed of any developments and our families are kept updated. Finally, a motion highlighting the need for post-secondary agricultural training, targeting the Pastoral areas of SA was also carried.

Some highlights of the day were our Communications panel and our Boarding panel, where industry leaders were available on each topic to take questions from the floor. The Communications Q&A panel was presented by Lalla MacKenzie, Senior National Stakeholder Relations Manager NBN Co Limited, Mark Bolton, Telstra SA Area General Manager and Mike Hayes from IT remote solutions company, IN2IT. In the afternoon we covered all things boarding with Richard Stokes from the Australian Boarding Schools Association, joined by representatives from Westminster College, Pembroke College and tertiary accommodation provider Lincoln College. We really appreciated these representatives taking the time to bring their expertise to us in Port Augusta and supporting our members through this panel.

We also enjoyed a presentation from Professor John Halsey, sharing with us his perspective on the outcome of the Independent Review into Rural, Regional and Remote Education (IRRRRE). Country music star Adam Harvey had everyone in stitches at the conference dinner. Thank you to our Convenor, Belinda Hatcher and the Flinders Ranges Branch as well as our many sponsors and guests who supported this annual event.

It was with sadness that we farewelled our State Secretary Frances Frahn after conference. During her two years in the role, Frances was always professional and reliable. This year we were once again faced with no nominations for Secretary, so Frances generously agreed to tie up loose ends from conference and submit our Federal Conference motions. Since then, former Federal and State Councillor Joanna Gibson has agreed to take the Secretary role and, as you can imagine, the offer was met with joyous relief!

Since conference, our state council has been busy actioning motions, including attending a delegation to Adelaide. We met with the Open Access College Principal Julie Taylor to discuss motions relating to SOTA, then with Karen Humphries, the Assistant Director of Business Services at the Department for Education. Karen had attended our conference and had already addressed many of our requests prior to the meeting. Our final meeting was with Education Minister John Gardner, his Chief Assistant Cheryl Bauer and our local Member for Stuart and Minister for Energy and Mining Dan Van Holst Pellekaan. Minister Dan has been an ongoing ICPA advocate and supporter over many years. Following the meetings, he had his driver chauffeur us to Parliament House where we enjoyed a delicious lunch – a great way to end our delegation.

The last few years have been quite positive for SA ICPA, with an increase to the State Education Allowance, followed by an extension of the Allowance to those claiming the AIC Second Home Allowance. SA ICPA has also recently been offered a further \$30,000 over the next three years by the newly elected Education Minister, John Gardner. The Outback Communities Authority also provide an annual grant for executive support, meaning amongst other things, we can outsource some jobs where possible. We were also able to offer our members with school-aged children a \$50 Target voucher thanks to the FRRR Back to School grant.

SA ICPA continue to keep members updated with twice-yearly printed newsletters, The Pipeline, and more regular email updates. Thanks to Editor Lynly Kerin and our Publicity

Officer and graphic designer Mija Reynolds, who have been doing a stellar job with the Newsletter during the year.

We were pleased to see our Immediate Past President, Lisa Slade, step on to Federal Council at the last conference. Lisa has continued her active involvement at a State level while also working as Federal Treasurer. We are proud of Lisa's ongoing commitment to ICPA and in awe of her ability to juggle everything! Thanks to all the hard-working members of council and local branches who keep the cogs of ICPA turning. I'd also particularly like to thank our Treasurer, Jill Greenfield, for negotiating through the changes to membership payments and keeping abreast of the various grants over the year.

Although we have a comparatively small membership in SA, there are many passionate advocates and bright, motivated community members. We are very much looking forward to hosting the Federal Conference in Adelaide next year, under the lead of Katrina Morris and a great convening team.

Finally, we are grateful for the advocacy and support of Federal Council over the past twelve months, keeping us informed and building greater bonds between the Federal and State Councils.

TASMANIAN PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Emily Gardner

AGM

It has been a pretty rough year for ICPA in Tasmania, as you would know, we currently, according to the Federal Constitution, need to have 3 branches to have a State Council. East Coast Branch at their AGM decided that they would be unable to go forward due to the lack of support from members (currently they have 17) and they have requested to go into recess. Consequently, we are unable to have a constitutional State Council. We are, however working on getting that 3rd branch reinstated as they do have 17 members and a couple of these members are happy to be contacts for the branch.

It is worth mentioning at this stage that there does need to be changes to the Federal Constitution in relation to the number of active branches needed to have a State Council. Currently this rule is very inflexible for the smaller states who do not have problems finding members, rather problems finding people who are willing to fill the administrative roles at a state and branch level. It is putting much pressure on a small group of active ICPA members.

STATE COUNCIL

The 2018 ICPA State Council, even though inactive have a number of members who have pledged their support and are happy to remain until the State Council is reinstated, these people are as follows:

Emily Gardner, Kate Thompson, Rae Dowling, Sarah Fisher, Mandy Burbury , Michelle Loane

STATE FORUM – Milton Vineyard, Friday 15th September 2017

The ICPA Tasmanian State Forum, organised by the ICPA East Coast Branch, was a great success. The forum was held at the beautiful Milton Vineyard and we were treated to the most delicious canapes and showcased the best the East Coast has to offer. The evening was mainly focused around socialising and discussing our local issues. We did however, have Kate Travers as our main speaker for the night and she entertained us with her stories as a Governess, teaching Distance Education to two outback families. We were also entertained by Madeline Scott who is running the Year 11 and 12 Agriculture Program at Scotch Oakburn College. The program is a recent initiative on the Tasmanian Certificate

of Education (TCE) pre-tertiary program. Both of these speakers left us feeling very positive for the future for our rural and remote kids in Tasmania. Overall the evening was a great success as it was aim of our council to keep our major get togethers a bit more informal, so as to attract a broader audience. Consequently, the decision was made in the middle of this year to move the motions for our ICPA State Council to the AGM in March, that way we can separate the formal and informal occasions for ICPA Tas.

MEETINGS

ICPA State Council Delegation

Kate Thompson, Leanne Dann and Emily Gardner attended our annual delegation in the State Parliament House in Hobart on the 19th October. We met with Minister for Education and Training, Jeremy Rockliff and Shadow Minister for Education Michelle O'Byrne and discussions were around the AIC (Assistance for Isolated Children) and the impacts of State Government decisions into the future, the quality of new graduate teachers and the issues with the Bachelor of Education at University of Tasmania (UTAS) and the new Agriculture Faculty at UTAS and plans for development. We also discussed many of our long-standing issues from our motions. Overall, we felt it was an extremely productive day with some great contacts that were made, and we agreed on some positive common goals for rural and remote kids into the future.

ICPA States' Meeting, February 2018

I represented Tassie State Council at the ICPA States' Meeting in Sydney on the 13th and 14th February 2018. As usual this was a very productive time for state councils and the opportunity for information sharing amongst councils was very valuable. The meetings were held at the nbn building (thanks to them for having us) and with this, we had a fabulous opportunity to look at their nbn centre and all the latest developments that impact on rural and remote families.

We are happy to say that our membership numbers are still increasing for the state, indicating to us that rural Tasmanians still can see the value of ICPA in Tasmania and want representation at a State level going forward. We are hoping over the next few months our State Council can be reinstated, and we can continue on with what ICPA Tas does best and that is represent our Tasmanian rural and remote kids to our state government and other relevant organisations.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Natasha Johns

Madam President, distinguished guests, ICPA members and friends, it is with great pleasure I present my report on behalf of ICPA WA for the 2017/2018 year.

The 2017/2018 year will certainly go down in the ICPA history pages as the year WA regional families were hit hard by a newly elected WA Labor Government's education cuts.

Members of State Council met with the Education Minister, Hon. Sue Ellery in early August 2017 to discuss issues raised at the 2017 State Conference. The Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) was one of the main topics on the agenda. We stressed to the Minister that this much relied upon allowance needed to be increased, to bring it into line with the Consumer Price Index and to close the ever-widening gap between what parents receive in allowances from both the State and Federal Governments and the boarding fees parents must pay to access a suitable education for their children.

The Minister was quite firm and pointed in her responses, she ended the meeting quite promptly within 15 minutes saying that there would certainly be no increase to the BAHA,

due to the financial woes they had inherited from the previous Government, a statement we didn't realise at the time would be reiterated time and time again.

It was only a couple of weeks shortly after that meeting with the Minister, that she personally phoned WA State Vice President Liz Sudlow, saying that there would be an announcement on the Royalties for Regions component of the BAHA and that it would start to reduce from \$2105 at the end of 2017 to \$1320 in 2022, the amount it was back in 2010.

After meeting with the Minister only 2 weeks previously, State Council could not believe this decision had been made within two weeks of meeting with the Minister and had, most certainly been in the pipeline prior to our meeting. State Council set to work immediately to stop this decision going ahead. Petitions were set up; the media were notified, and State Council began to campaign against this severe decision. In the Government's eyes, this reduction would be minimal and that families would only feel a decrease of around \$150 per year over five years.

The Minister tried to turn it into a Public/Private school issue, saying that most of the recipients of the BAHA were students from wealthy farms whose parents were able to afford to send them to rich city private schools and could quite easily afford to do so. As many of us can attest to, this is certainly not the case and for many families throughout WA, parents work incredibly hard to send their children away to either a Government Residential College or an Independent school. For most families this can be a struggle, but as is most often the case with regional families, they find a way.

As a parent and I know this myself, we put our children's education above most things in our lives, to provide them with an education and opportunities they deserve and are entitled to no matter where they come from.

In February this year, ICPA WA sent a submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs in need of an inquiry into the BAHA cuts. This has come about from the petition presented by the National Party to the Legislative Council in December 2017. We are awaiting the findings from this.

December 13th, 2017, the Minister for Education Sue Ellery, announced without notice or consultation, closures and funding cuts to areas of regional education across Western Australia.

These included:

- Five Schools of the Air to close at the end of the 2018 school year. Minister Ellery cited a 'duplication of services' between the regional and remote located Schools of the Air and the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) based in suburban Perth.
- Six regional camp schools to cease operating - institutions considered 'not core business of education' even though they have filled educational needs for many years.
- Residential colleges at Moora and Northam to shut. The closures will impact on the Central Midlands SHS and Northam SHS as many students come from remote locations.
- Vacation swimming lessons to cost more.
- Level 3 classroom teacher program intake on hold until 2020.
- Gifted and Talented programs to have reduced funding for some.

These closures came on the back of other changes to regional education:

- The loss of twenty-three Aboriginal Liaison Officers from the regions.
- Five Agricultural colleges and Esperance Farm School to lose 20% of the revenue generated from the profits of their farm enterprises.

Families across Western Australia were left reeling from this news and were left shocked, disappointed and outraged by these decisions. Then on January 11th the Premier announced a backflip and reversed the decision on some of the cuts. These included:

- Schools of the Air would remain open in regional Western Australia
- Funding for the Gifted and Talented Program in schools to be maintained
- The intake into the Level 3 classroom teacher program would not be put on hold
- Accommodation at Northam Residential College would remain open

ICPA members and people throughout regional WA could not believe that a newly elected Government would take such drastic measures without the consultation from parents, school communities and our own organisation. This was seen by many as an attack on country WA by a Government who was unprepared to listen and understand the needs of regional students. The fight to reverse these cuts has been enormous. It highlighted that our city friends were just as outraged as their country counterparts when it came to these cuts.

While many were on Christmas holidays, we were fighting a battle which seemed overwhelming.

ICPA WA continued to be the lead organisation in this people-power campaign, by encouraging people to contact their local MPs, calling talkback radio or posting about regional students on social media.

Reading the many letters of support daily in the newspaper was enormously encouraging. The support regional WA received by our friends in the metro area was astounding. It truly showed there most certainly was no country/city divide.

WA State Council are disappointed that the Moora Residential College is still set to close. As Moora expands to become a regional food bowl, this college and school are vital. When we met with Minister Ellery on the 17th January, she stood quite firm in her decision not to keep Moora open.

The Government's commandeering of funds from an existing trust set aside for agricultural education is deeply disappointing.

Our agricultural colleges successfully prepare students who wish to pursue practical educational experiences, enabling them to pursue careers in the sector. When the colleges make a profit from their farm enterprises, 40% of the profit is placed in a trust with monies redirected back into agricultural education. The government is taking 20% from the trust that will go back to the state, and will not be earmarked for education, eroding agricultural programs in WA schools. The success of the agricultural colleges is due to the knowledge imparted by industry experts who volunteer on farm advisory committees for the betterment of agriculture and education.

WA State Council have met with both the Minister for Education and the Minister for Agriculture and Regional Development to discuss these issues and advocate for changes to these cuts. The arrogance shown by this Government highlights the fact they do not want to listen to the issues and concerns of regional WA and it seems that their focus is predominately directed towards the metro area and in particular the strong Labor seats. It

seems that Regional WA is being punished, with the Government cutting funding from the bush to pay for their election promises.

The 46th Annual State Conference was held in Fremantle at the Esplanade Hotel 16th March 2018 and convened by the Goldfields Eyre Branch. The attendance by members was outstanding with representation from all branches in WA. This attendance was in part due to the education cuts, with over forty motions being passed on issues mainly pertaining to the cuts.

We saw a record number of politicians attend from all political parties, including the Education Minister, Hon. Sue Ellery who was invited to speak.

Current Pedals Editor and Publisher, Raelene Hall was awarded WA Life Membership for her tireless effort and commitment to ICPA and her continued dedication and hard work campaigning against the education cuts.

Wendy Duncan, former Nationals politician and Jane Marwick a freelance journalist were both awarded with Certificates of Appreciation for their tireless work during the height of the campaign against the regional education cuts.

Sadly, we saw past State President, Liz Sudlow and former State Treasurer Elaine Egan step down from Council.

We welcomed two members onto State Council, Sally Brindal (Midwest Branch) and Kym Ross (Lakes District). In a time where WA are finding it increasingly difficult to co-opt members onto State Council, this was a wonderful result.

And lastly, I would like to thank my fellow WA State Councillors. Without their hard work and commitment, we certainly could not continue. In a time where we are all “time poor”, our State Councillors always make the time for ICPA and for the betterment of our organisation in advocating for regional, rural and remote education. I would encourage you all here today to seriously consider giving back to an organisation that each of us gains so much from.

ICPA WEB MANAGER'S REPORT

Sue Shotton

Madam President, Distinguished Guests, ICPA members, I am pleased to present my 2018 website report to conference.

What an exciting year we have had with the introduction of the online payment system which is an enhancement of our current manual renewal system. Many members, both old and new, have taken advantage of this method of payment which allows payment by utilising either credit card or their PayPal account.

At the time of payment, a member can also update their contact details, ensuring their email address is correct. This automatically updates the Federal Mailchimp database and helps to reduce human error when manually updating the database.

There have been some minor issues which have occurred, and most have been remedied when they come to light with minor changes in the back of house area on the websites. Other issues that have occurred have been the result of user error and these will occur less and less as members become more familiar with the process. These issues have been:

- The wrong membership amount is being displayed for a branch. This occurs when, during setup, the wrong information was supplied, or the branch has had an AGM and has not notified the Fed Membership Officer or even the State Treasurer that this has happened. *It is very important that if this information is changed that it is passed on to the Web Manager, so it can be changed on the website.*
- The member has trouble logging in as password is unknown. This has occurred on numerous occasions as the member does not know their password as previously this information was not required. *Solution – click on forget password. This usually resolves the issue.*
- The member has trouble logging in as my username (email) is not recognised. This also occurred on numerous occasions as previously members didn't need to log in and sometimes the email on the database is an old one so not recognised. *Solution: ensure member's details are current and if there is a change in the email then let the Fed Membership Officer know or Web Manager so it can be updated.*
- Some members renewed their membership online but instead of logging in and renewing they created a new member profile. This occurred due to the person either having a different email or changing who goes first (husband or wife) on their profile. There would have been about a dozen of these double data entries. This was picked up when 2017 non-renewing members had dropped off the current members in Mailchimp. *Solution: the information on the two datafiles are merged. This probably won't happen as much next year as people will be more familiar with the system and will log in.*

This year we have also encountered more minor developmental hiccups with the website that is easily rectified. It is very hard for the webmasters and myself to be continually monitoring the pages on the website for errors so if you find anything unusual is occurring which you may feel is not correct please email your state webmaster or the web manager, so this can be corrected. These Issues can include things such as links being broken or pages not loading correctly.

Email Hosting - All State treasurers now have dedicated email boxes as part of the security measures ICPA has put in place for the transmission of member's information. NSW have also taken on more icpa.com.au emails for their portfolios by using a different start to the email. Traditionally the emails are nswpresident@icpa.com.au but these new portfolio emails are distance.education.nsw@icpa.com.au At the current time Federal Council are paying for the physical mailboxes but this will be reviewed and will be dependent on how many of these mailboxes are required by the State Councils. Physical mailboxes cost \$2.50 / month each but an email address which is forwarded to another email account does not attract any cost.

Scams - We all know the organisation has been getting its fair share of spamming and fraudulent exposure. Recently we received a very elaborate scam using our own domain and email. The reason this happened was that our email host is not our domain host. Both the email host and the domain host have been really co-operative, and the email host supplied the information (SPF record) that had to go into DNS record with our domain host and this has now been put in place. Hopefully this type of traffic will now be reduced for State and Federal Executives.

It is extremely important to be suspicious of any email you have received. DO NOT click on any link unless you are 100% certain it is legitimate, even if a phone call is necessary. It is always better to be safe than sorry. This is also relevant for phone calls. If you have a pre-recorded message asking you to press "1" for instance, DO NOT do it as it could be a scam as you really don't know who is actually ringing you.

State and Federal Websites - These need to be updated all the time to make certain that the information is relevant and fresh. This is also a huge job for all concerned due to not having enough hours in the day to keep searching all the websites. If you are surfing the webpages and see something that needs updating or broken links please email me and the webmaster of the relevant State and between us we might be able to rectify it. Training is ongoing for new and old webmasters and hopefully everyone is gaining valuable IT knowledge with their volunteering work on the websites.

I would like to thank all councils and especially my webmasters, past and present, for their understanding when I might not be instantly available to correct issues and give assistance. We are all volunteers and most of us also have a full personal workload and of course we all need holidays at some point in time. If anything is of an urgent nature, especially if the websites are down, PLEASE ring and leave a message on my answering service.

PEDALS REPORT

Raelene Hall

Federal Councillors, ICPA members and guests, it is with pleasure I present to you my Pedals report for 2018. It was at the first Federal Conference held in Canberra, and convened by the Northern Territory State Council, that I took on the role of Pedals Editor. Little did I know I'd be standing here 13 years down the track!

Pedals has come a long way since its inception and January 2019 will see a milestone 150th issue published. This might not be a big deal for many publications, but I certainly think it is for a voluntary organisation's magazine.

With 148 issues of Pedals done and dusted, the story of education in rural, regional and remote Australia has been told by ICPA members. We've read about the highs and lows, the branch events, the conferences, the heartaches and the successes, all illustrated by an incredible array of photos. Pedals has acknowledged those past and present who have worked so hard on behalf of this incredible organisation.

Pedals is still produced as a hard copy magazine. Sometimes people request online copies but, as yet, these are not available although PDF versions can be sent via email. However, I believe the majority of our members still enjoy receiving the magazine as a hard copy. Do you consider Pedals, as a hard copy, is still relevant today given the amount of information that is shared via Social Media? I'd be interested to hear the thoughts of members on this issue.

The cover photo of Pedals is always special. It's something I find hard to put into words. Yes, it has to be in portrait format and high resolution. It has to have room at the top for the heading. More than this though is that it has to have a special "something". I've received some lovely photos at times that meet the requirements of a cover photo but, for whatever reason, they just don't have what I call the "Wow" factor. It's always exciting to find that "one" photo that will make a terrific cover.

Pedals is not just a magazine for members and supporters of ICPA, it is a magazine by ICPA members. Without the continued contributions from our members across the country the magazine would not exist. Some people are happy to contribute regularly, whilst others may nervously send in a contribution and apologise that it may not fit the brief. Let me tell you all our members' articles generally fit the brief. The only time an article would not be run is if it went against ICPA policy or was politically biased.

Whether you have contributed lots or once I want to thank you because you make the magazine. Without your contributions it is a series of blank pages and I'm not sure anyone would be impressed with that!! If you haven't contributed to Pedals before I'd love you to do so. As with everything in this world many hands make light work. If you would like to contribute to Pedals, but don't feel confident, just drop me an email or give me a call. I can guarantee you, between us, we will get your story out there.

Something that has dropped off over the years has been contributions from State Councils to Pedals. Whilst members are hearing from their State Council, via their State newsletter, I think it is important that this is also shared with other states. The same applies with State conferences - please share your stories and photos with the rest of ICPA. Whenever possible it is always preferable to have a different article and photos for Pedals as to that in the state newsletter.

I must acknowledge the Federal Council for their faith in me, to continue as your Pedals Editor and, for the support I receive from them. I'd especially like to thank the Federal Publicity Officer, Nikki Macqueen, for her fantastic support and the wonderful photos she takes on Federal delegations and other events Federal Councilors are involved in.

Members never forget this magazine is your magazine. What goes into it is decided by the contributions you make. Please continue to assist me in making Pedals the best magazine we possibly can, and I look forward to celebrating the 150th issue with you all.

Portfolio Reports

BOARDING SCHOOLS/SCHOOL TERM HOSTELS REPORT (Tabled)

Caroline Robinson

The greatest disadvantage faced by boarding families is the lack of access to an appropriate education where they live when compared to urban families who can access a wide variety of educational alternatives, sometimes at little or no cost. ICPA Federal Conference 2017 motions continued to request that this disparity be addressed despite growing governmental awareness in regional, rural and remote education.

Federal Council thanked the Federal Government for supporting families who need to board their children away from home with the 50% increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Additional Boarding Allowance, which began in 2017. However, we continue to remind the government of the ever-increasing cost of boarding school education and that more needs to be done to assist all students who must live away from home to access schooling.

Other motions requested the Department of Human Services (DHS) implement an online AIC application option and streamline the processing of the AIC application and renewal. Once again Federal Council was alerted about difficulties families were experiencing in AIC Boarding and Second Home Allowances applications. Our members' situations were referred directly to the Department of Human Services, who were able to assist with many specific cases. The Department has informed Federal Council that while the online option for AIC is in the pipeline, it is still a few years from fruition.

In response to the difficulties reported by members with the AIC application process, Federal Council completed a survey of members to better understand the issues of the AIC application/renewal process and the phone and service centre assistance. The survey was publicised through the Branch Bulletin, Facebook as well as State and Federal websites and was well subscribed with 331 responses. The survey results and a cross-section of the 750 comments were presented to the Minister for Human Services' office and the Department of Human Services at the delegation trip to Canberra. They were extremely impressed at the survey response and

grateful for the feedback which should identify opportunities to improve their processes going forth. ICPA (Aust) has offered some suggestions to the Department of Human Services to hopefully see improvement in the promptness and efficiency of the AIC payment as well as communication with families. We urge members to contact Federal Council if they have problems with their AIC applications or renewals so that these situations can be referred to the Department of Human Services for investigation. Federal Council will continue the positive collaboration with the Department and have thanked the DHS for their prompt and timely assistance whenever a query from ICPA is made.

In response to motions regarding the Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT), Federal Council has had discussions with other stakeholder groups, such as the National Farmers' Federation and Australian Boarding Schools Association. Federal Council asked for their support in advocating to have FBT removed from employers who assist employee families with the huge out-of-pocket boarding school costs. The FBT issue was further raised in the Pre-Budget Submission 2018-19 lodged late last year and during delegation to Government.

The Boarding Schools/School Hostels portfolio has continued to investigate strategies to raise a better awareness of the necessity of boarding school for a quality secondary education for rural and remote students, who do not have daily access to an appropriate government school because of geographic isolation. The portfolio is in the early stages of a project aiming to highlight the multitude of reasons why rural and remote students need to board.

Despite continued lobbying for an increase to the AIC Boarding and Second Home allowance through submissions, letters to Government and delegation, at times we have not been able to gain much traction due to misconceptions around why our rural and remote families pick the boarding schools that they do. Geographically isolated families choose the boarding schools their children attend for a variety of reasons, some of which can include: closeness to home, cost, transport links, availability of enrolments, family support and lack of availability of a school term hostel place. Families living in rural and remote areas need to be able to make these choices around where their children attend in order to ensure they can access schooling that meets their needs when they do not have an appropriate school nearby.

Federal Council has been pleased to see the government showing a significant focus on rural and remote education. An election promise from the 2016 federal election which was made by the former Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Barnaby Joyce, pledged funding for geographically isolated families to help them access education. It also saw the announcement of the Review into Regional Rural and Remote Education lead by Professor John Halsey. In our submission to the Review, ICPA (Aust) stressed the widening gap between the allowances available to families and the actual cost of boarding for their students and how unsustainable this is for rural families. We also provided a link to our ICPA *Boarding School Access Research for Geographically Isolated Students* paper, which can be found on the ICPA website:

<https://www.icpa.com.au/page/attachment/94/final-boarding-school-survey-icpa-aust-with-comments-2016>, which highlights many of the challenges our boarding students face when trying to access an education. While there are no specific recommendations from the Review with regards to boarding or AIC allowances, Federal Council is hopeful that with the Government accepting all of the recommendations put forward by Professor Halsey that more equitable opportunities are on the horizon for geographically isolated children who must live away from home in order to access schooling.

The cost of obtaining and education is felt even more intensely by families when they are dealing with difficulties such as drought. With large parts of Australia currently undergoing one of the worst droughts remembered, ICPA (Aust) continues to call for the immediate creation of a Rural Hardship Education Fund to assist rural families with the cost of their children's education in times of long-term drought, periods of recovery and other rural hardship. Such a fund may be provisioned for under the current Federal Drought Package or a special circumstances criterion

within the AIC Scheme. Drought declarations are not made in every state, despite properties experiencing extremely dry conditions. This assistance, however it is distributed, must be available to all of those being affected by extreme rain deficiency events over a period of time.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Wendy Hick and my fellow Boarding School Portfolio Councillors Kate Thompson, and Judy Sinclair-Newton for their instrumental and considerable support, guidance and patience as we work towards better opportunities for boarding school families and improving the AIC process. I cannot thank these ladies enough for being there whenever they were needed.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT (tabled)

Wendy Hick

With 28 Communications motions presented at the 2017 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 educational outcomes.

ICPA (Aust) is a member of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC) <http://accan.org.au/rrrc-coalition> and our members' issues are often discussed in the RRRCC forums. ICPA (Aust) participates in the RRRCC delegations to speak with those in government and this also affords opportunity to raise our members' concerns in an additional capacity.

INTERNET

Once again at the 2017 ICPA Federal Conference, members brought forward numerous motions seeking an improved internet experience and two main areas comprised the majority of the motions: fault reporting/repairs, as well as expansion of the Education Port to include all rural students, especially those studying at the tertiary level.

ICPA (Aust) has discussed and continues to raise these issues by email, phone, written submission and in meetings with the Regional Minister for Communications, other members of government and nbn.

One Sky Muster RSP in particular has recognised the need for additional data when students are home for school breaks and now offers increased Sky Muster data amounts during school holidays. ICPA (Aust) would like to encourage other Sky Muster providers to also offer their customers this service.

Faults - With regards to internet fault reporting and repair, we have noted the confusion and difficulty in reporting faults and Federal Council continues to advocate for a simpler, direct process along with the necessity for the creation of a Rural and Remote Communications Help Centre that understands rural and remote customers' needs and can assist them with troubleshooting problems in addition to providing correct information for securing communications products and services. Federal Council will be expressing the need for a dedicated Regional, Rural and Remote Telecommunications Help Centre in our submission to the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC).

In an attempt to ensure customer's problems are tended to and resolved as quickly as possible, nbn has created "nbn Local" which allows stakeholder groups to escalate reports of nbn service difficulties on behalf of their members directly to a nbn Local area representative if the regular channels of reporting are not resolving the problem. ICPA is now able to facilitate for our members

contact with the nbn Local representative for their area to assist if nbn service problems are unresolved after being reported to their RSP. Members are encouraged to contact either their State Council or Federal Council if they are experiencing difficulty in resolving their internet issues.

Education Port - ICPA (Aust) continues to strongly advocate for the nbn Sky Muster Education Port Service to be available to all rural and remote students with a Sky Muster 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. We have spoken to a number of other groups who now also support this request. At this time, we have not had any progress in seeing the Education Port expansion come to fruition however we have had interest in the issue from a number of people in government and nbn has been open to conversations on expansion of the Education Service. As the Sky Muster service has finite capacity, being able to identify quantitative figures showing the number of possible users if the Education Service was expanded would be very beneficial. ICPA (Aust) will keep the issue in discussions wherever possible.

ICPA - nbn Survey - In January, ICPA (Aust) undertook a survey with nbn regarding customers' internet experience as well as the Education Port. We were encouraged by the number of survey completions and a number of respondents commented that they are not able to access the Education Service. Federal Council is hopeful that eventually the service can be opened up to more students who have Sky Muster internet service at home to help them with their educational needs.

ICPA (Aust) has also recently been made aware that some preschool age children relying on online portions to their early years programs have been unable to order the Education Service and Federal Council has raised this situation with the nbn Sky Muster Education Service team who acted quickly to try to resolve this situation.

Multicast Trial - The outcomes are yet to be finalised regarding the NBN Sky Muster multicasting trial undertaken with Schools of the Air in the Northern Territory. The trial finished in late April and the NT Government is currently preparing a report. It is expected that the Distance Education Broadband Working Group, of which ICPA (Aust) is a member, will reconvene to discuss the trial soon after the Department of Communications receives the Multicast Trial report sometime in July 2018.

TELEPHONE

ICPA (Aust) has had regular discussion with Telstra Country Wide (TCW) since the Federal Conference around the issues raised by the motions and other topics. ICPA members' issues around communications faults will be put forward in the upcoming Consumer Safeguard Review.

Faults - Telstra Country Wide (TCW) want to ensure that issues regarding phone line installation for Distance Education schoolrooms as well as for our members are attended to in a reasonable timeframe. ICPA can assist and take cases directly to Telstra Country Wide if any members are having difficulty with landline installation. Members can contact Federal Council to have their cases followed up with TCW. TCW has also provided ICPA with a list of their Area Managers and problems or questions with faults, installation etc. can be taken to them by members if they have attempted regular fault reporting without success. To try to improve the fault reporting process and outcomes for rural customers, in late 2017 TCW expanded the capacity of the RRADIO support team for those on radio system phones with more agents who are trained on these services and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The RRADIO team can be contacted by either phone (1800 RRADIO) or email radio@team.telstra.com. TCW has also relaunched their defined range of network extension devices as well as conducting additional training in their regional stores on these products including how staff can help customers identify, purchase and install the right device for their needs.

Next G Wireless Link (NGWL) - NGWL customers are asked to get in contact with Telstra to discuss their current NGWL plans including options for accessing the current range of HomeLine plans (<https://www.telstra.com.au/home-phone/plans-rates>). There are also options for NGWL customers with an existing broadband plan to move onto a 25GB BigPond Mobile Broadband plan for 12 or 24 months with a \$70 monthly credit (data for use in Australia). Customers, if interested, can call the dedicated team on 1800 696 495 (1800-MY-NGWL) option3 (sales, accounts and payments) to find out more.

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 our Telstra Country Wide page on Telstra.com, additionally you can contact:

Platinum Technical Support This subscription service can provide assistance for any non-network issues. Telstra experts are available 24x7 over the phone (13 75 87) support and online to help get technology working.

Universal Service Obligation - Since the release of the Productivity Commission's Report following a review of the Universal Service Obligation (USO), a key concern of members has been the retention of landline phone services. On 20 December 2017 the Federal Government announced that they will be implementing a new Universal Service Guarantee (USG), "which will ensure all Australians have access to voice and broadband services, regardless of where they live." The USG will cover both voice and data. The Federal Government expressed a commitment to ensuring that those living in regional and remote areas continue to have guaranteed access to voice and broadband services. <https://www.communications.gov.au/documents/australian-government-response-productivity-commissions-inquiry-telecommunications-universal-service>.

ICPA (Aust) and RRRCC have met with numerous government representatives and strongly voiced our members' concerns over a potential loss of landlines and the possibility of landlines being replaced by VoIP services which do not adequately meet the need of those living in rural and remote Australia. ICPA (Aust) also maintains that Australians living outside of large metropolitan centres must have at least two methods of accessing communications (ie landline and satellite internet) due to distance to other means of communication and the implications for safety when one service fails. This message seems to have been understood and supported by many in government and we are hopeful that this consideration for voice services for those in regional, rural and remote areas will continue to be upheld.

ICPA (Aust) met with the Minister for Communications office during our May delegations and were given the Minister's position that the new USG when put into place will need to ensure all premises have access to both voice *and* broadband services; be complemented by a new consumer safeguards framework; and be more cost effective. We were also reassured to be told that the current USO arrangements will remain in place unless and until robust and workable alternatives

that are more cost-effective are identified, proven and are able to be implemented.

MOBILE

The need for expanded mobile coverage in mobile black spot areas, and recognition of areas which are outside mobile coverage where a rural school is located, requiring either an additional loading or a variance of eligibility criteria in any future Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP) funding rounds has been mentioned by ICPA (Aust) in numerous forums including meetings with the Regional Communications Minister, members of government, ACCC and Department of Communications. At the 2017 Federal Conference, Telstra Country Wide offered to investigate mobile possibilities in areas containing a rural school and they asked ICPA to provide information on rural schools outside the mobile service footprint. ICPA State Councils assisted in providing lists where possible of these schools and the lists have been passed on to TCW and we continue to have discussions with them on this.

Members also asked ICPA to request the Minister for Communications to investigate speeds being offered by mobile network suppliers. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is currently running a broadband monitoring program and are seeking volunteers whose service can be monitored <https://www.accc.gov.au/consumers/internet-phone/monitoring-broadband-performance>. ICPA (Aust) has advocated for satellite broadband, which is not part of the monitoring, to be included. On 17 February 2018, the ACCC published guidance principals to help ensure RSPs do not mislead customers. The ACCC will publish a best-practice broadband speeds advertising guide for providers in the coming months. <https://www.lifehacker.com.au/2017/02/the-days-of-dodgy-broadband-speed-claims-could-be-numbered/>. The ACCC is also in discussion with the Federal government about the possible introduction of a fixed broadband performance monitoring and reporting (BPMR) program in Australia.

Round 4 of the Mobile Black Spot Program was announced by Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, Minister for Regional Communications on 8 June 2018. ICPA (Aust) continues to ask that rural schools that do not have mobile service be considered as priorities under this and any future MBSP rounds.

A reminder that the “Blue Tick” still applies to Telstra mobile phones for identifying handsets that offer the best possible voice coverage in regional and rural locations. A list of mobile phones with the “blue tick” can be found on the TCW website <https://www.telstra.com.au/telstra-country-wide>.

Discounts on Antennae and Boosters/Repeaters for ICPA Members

Telstra Country Wide offers ICPA members a discount for Telstra Mobile Smart Antennae, Yagi Antennae and their recently released Telstra Go Repeaters and Boosters (<https://exchange.telstra.com.au/new-telstra-go-repeaters-bring-mobile-coverage-to-more-places/>) ICPA members can call 132200 or go in store and place their order as per normal. Once members have placed the order, they will get a follow up call, where they need to proactively identify yourself as an ICPA member and possibly provide an email copy of their Annual Membership receipt as proof of membership in order to receive the discount. The following discounts apply for ICPA Members only:

- Telstra Mobile Smart Antenna \$50 discount.
- Yagi Antenna \$10 discount.
- Combined order (TMSA + Yagi) \$60 discount.
- Telstra Go Repeater or Booster \$50 discount.

Both Telstra Country Wide and nbn have launched “Regional” Website pages for their customers to hopefully provide information more suited to those living outside of city centres. ICPA (Aust) will pass on any suggestions of what can be added or changed on these regional pages to better assist members and we welcome feedback from members.

ICPA (Aust) welcomed at the end of April, the announcement of the Regional Telecommunications Review which reviews telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote areas every three years and has encouraged members and ICPA Councils to attend any consultations held in their area.

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.

CURRICULUM REPORT (tabled)

Judy Sinclair-Newton

I am pleased to once again report on curriculum related matters and highlight areas of interest for families educating children living in rural and remote locations. In recent years ICPA (Aust) has welcomed a number of changes to the National Curriculum which have and will benefit rural students, many of which were highlighted in the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education.

CURRICULUM

Phonics: The use of phonics is well supported by many of our families who teach via distance education, so the news that the new curriculum would also mandate the use of phonics to teach children to sound out words and syllables, instead of making them learn by rote or guess words through the contentious “whole language” was most welcome. This year, Minister Birmingham announced the introduction of the assessment of phonological awareness in Year 1 to enable early identification of potential learning difficulties. Support for teachers to do this is most welcomed by rural and remote families who often struggle to get suspected difficulties recognised, especially in the distance education setting and small schools.

Agriculture in Education: In 2016, ICPA (Aust) welcomed the Australian Government’s commitment to investing \$2 million into developing Agriculture in Education. The materials were to showcase the diversity and economic importance of food and fibre production in Australia. The online teaching and learning resources are aligned to the Australian Curriculum learning areas including science and geography. However, despite these resources now being available, some parents working in the industry feel that what is being taught is not truly reflective (particularly in the early years) of the industry and are calling for more industry input on matters such as, where does our food come from.

Further expansion of learning areas for high school students: At the 2017 Federal Conference members supported the idea of including topics essential to safe driving practice in the high school curriculum. Stating that, *“The spotlight has been put on the increase of deaths on our rural roads. We believe that with correct training and making our new, young drivers aware of the perils found on rural roads. Rural students often have difficulty organising this education on their own because of boarding commitments or no services being available in rural towns.”* This issue was raised in the IRRRE submission and discussed at a number of meetings. To date no progress has been made, however, the matter will continue to be raised when the opportunity arises.

NAPLAN

NAPLAN Assessment: After a decade, Australia’s first national test of literacy and numeracy continues to be a powerful tool in measuring students’ achievement in core literacy and numeracy skills. The report produced in 2016 by the Grattan Institute (VIC), “Widening gaps: what NAPLAN tells us about student progress”, outlines a number of concerns for rural and remote students and how changes might be implemented.

Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools: This year the Turnbull Government established the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools, to be chaired by Mr David Gonski AC, to provide advice on how additional Commonwealth funding should be used by Australian schools and school systems to improve school performance and student achievement.

The review will examine evidence and make recommendations on the most effective teaching and learning strategies and initiatives to be deployed. In particular the Review will focus on the effective and efficient use of funding to: Improve student outcomes and Australia's national performance, as measured by national and international assessments of student achievement; improve the preparedness of school leavers to succeed in employment, further training or higher education; improve outcomes across all cohorts of students, including disadvantaged and vulnerable students and academically-advanced students ("gifted" students). At the end of March, the final report was sent to the Prime Minister and Commonwealth Minister for Education and Training.

ICPA (Aust) lodged a submission into this review and took part in a panel via teleconference. The submission can be found on our website:

<https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1112/federal-submissions/federal-submissions-2017/review-to-achieve-educational-excellence-in-australian-schools.pdf>

NAPLAN Online: ICPA has welcomed consultations with ACARA throughout the development, trialing and implementation associated with NAPLAN going online. While problems around connectivity are a major concern for many of our members, we believe these concerns have been taken seriously and every effort is being made to overcome them. The fact that students will receive results to their tailored test in a matter of weeks, compared to the current process which can take months, should benefit students enormously. The test window for NAPLAN Online has been extended from three days to nine, to provide flexibility in scheduling and to accommodate schools that may have fewer devices.

In transitioning to NAPLAN Online, education systems have considered the appropriateness of utilising certain technologies, including automated essay scoring. Automated essay scoring allows for writing scripts to be assessed using sophisticated computer programming. In December 2017, the Education Council determined that automated essay scoring will not be used for the marking of NAPLAN writing scripts. Any change to this position in the future will be informed by further research into automated essay scoring and be made as a decision of the Education Council.

Autoscoring explained here:

http://www.nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/20151130_automated_essay_scoring_infographic.pdf

State/territory education authorities make decisions about the logistics and timing to move NAPLAN online for their state/territory. These groups also lead implementation of NAPLAN Online in their state/territory. Federal Council would like to encourage members to ask their school when and how they plan to rollover to NAPLAN online.

At the June Education Council meeting, Ministers received an update on the recent NAPLAN Online program held in May. This year, a number of students in schools in the ACT, NSW, Qld, SA, Vic and WA completed NAPLAN assessments online for the first time. In participating schools, Years 5, 7 and 9 students completed online assessments in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy, while Year 3 students completed assessments in reading, language conventions and numeracy. Year 3 writing was undertaken as a paper-based assessment.

NAPLAN online testing was a success with students participating in 668,529 NAPLAN Online

assessments during the nine-day testing program, with 99.9 per cent of students able to complete the assessment online. Local internet connectivity and device issues saw a very small number of tests diverted to complete on paper. Schools in all states and territories will continue to transition from paper-based to online assessments over the coming years.

Review of NAPLAN data: The Education Council has agreed to a review of NAPLAN data presentation. A number of state and territory ministers advocated support for a broader review of NAPLAN and noted the review of NAPLAN currently underway in Queensland.

Federal Council looks forward to contributing to discussions that now sees the government focused on improving testing, reporting and streamlining the curriculum. Our advocacy continues to draw attention to the issues of “access and delivery” for geographically isolated students, making certain they are not forgotten during this new era in education reform.

DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT

Alana Moller

ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate and support its distance education members by emphasising wherever possible the distinctive nature of distance education and the major issues affecting its success. This year in the Distance Education Portfolio, six motions were raised at the Federal Conference in Alice Springs, four of which pertained to the establishment of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA), with two others referring to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education (DE) Allowance and Volunteers for Isolated Students' Education (VISE).

Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA)

The longstanding lobby for a DETA has certainly not taken a back seat for Federal Council. On the back of the immense campaigning and publicity undertaken over the past several years, ICPA Federal Council continues to lobby the government for the establishment of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) at every opportunity. The topic was raised in a motion letter sent to Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training and other relevant ministers and rural senators and members with an interest in rural and remote education. The topic was also comprehensively raised in the submission to the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education which was completed following the 2017 Federal Conference. Although the inception of a DETA was not actually acknowledged in Professor Halsey's report, one of his recommendations was “to formally recognise using Recognition of Prior Learning processes or similar the expertise and contributions of distance education home tutors.” Federal Council has, in several other submissions highlighted the extensive and essential role the distance education tutor plays in achieving distance education success.

Federal Council will continue to advocate for and pursue the DETA through delegations and submissions, along with endeavouring to action further measures to raise the profile of the role of the distance education tutor. Since Federal Council compiled the Distance Education video offering an insight into the commitment and dedication of families undertaking distance education, it has been widely shown and has proven to provide a greater understanding of this mode of education and in particular the role of the tasks required by the home tutor. The momentum from the DE video and other actions must be continued and built upon. I urge all distance education home tutors to take every effort to highlight to whomever will listen, just how big your job is and what you have to do every day in your schoolroom. Until ICPA is able to get the message across just how immense the job is, Distance Education Tutors will continue to miss out on the support and recognition they deserve.

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

Aussie Helpers Volunteers for Isolated Student's Education (AHVISE) is now up and running and Federal Council congratulates Lyn French and Aussie Helpers for getting this program off the ground. With the announcement of the wind down of the Volunteers for Isolated Student's Education (VISE) program, disappointment was shared across Australia. AHVISE offering a lifeline to the many families who have benefited over the years from the program is a tremendous outcome. Although the program operates slightly differently to the old program, AHVISE will continue to bring valued support to distance education families. ICPA has offered any assistance and support we can to AHVISE, both now and into the future and will continue to pass on any further developments/information to members.

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

The issue of streamlining the AIC DE allowance application process was raised in a motion letter to the Minister for Human Services early this year. The topic has also been discussed in conversations with the Department of Human Services. Federal Council has been given some positive feedback on the future of this lobby and believes that it is likely there may be some changes seen in the future. Further to this, in order to highlight the many difficulties faced by those in receipt of AIC (DE/Boarding/Second Home Allowance), Federal Council recently conducted a survey to gauge the experiences of those who receive AIC. The findings of this survey highlighted a range of issues both with the initial application process for AIC and ongoing issues with AIC renewal each year. These findings and relevant case studies were discussed with the Department of Human Services. The Department appreciated the case studies and the direct insight from past, present and potentially future AIC recipients and will use the data to find opportunities to improve the AIC application/renewal process.

Other work in the DE Portfolio

- Late in 2017, the DE Portfolio put together a "Go-to" fact sheet for families who may be new to DE with information surrounding how to access a DE tutor/governess. Often when families begin distance education and are searching for a tutor/governess it can be difficult to know where to turn for assistance or information. This document also aims to assist those who may wish to be a home tutor/governess to find the correct avenues for seeking a position. <https://www.icpa.com.au/page/attachment/76/distance-education-tutoring-document>
- The Federal DE Portfolio is working with the State DE portfolios to put together a snapshot of distance education across Australia and specifically geographically isolated student numbers. The aim of this is to provide federal and state councils with information to assist in advocacy around distance education resourcing, funding and other factors.
- Few members would not have heard about the situation in WA when the State Government announced a decision to close Schools of the Air (SOTA) in the state and centralise distance education services from a single metropolitan facility. Off the back of this announcement, Federal Council supported the WA ICPA team and other interested parties through a huge initiative and campaign against the closures which resonated across the country. Fortunately, the WA decision was reversed. Federal Council congratulates WA ICPA on their tireless efforts to gain this outcome for their School of the Air families. This situation arising has highlighted the importance of ICPA advocating for the SOTA and DE schools to remain in regional and rural communities. Federal Council is committed to ensuring this occurs.

- Federal Council keenly observed the multicast trials with nbn Sky Muster in the Northern Territory and will be interested in the outcomes of the report into these trials to be released in the near future.
- We are currently working with Central Station around a series of blogs focused on DE/SOTA families and situations. The aim would be to raise the profile of our DE/SOTA families and their unique educational experience. It will give families the chance to highlight the distinctive nature of geographically isolated DE/SOTA and further emphasise the role of the distance education tutor. Watch this space later in the year.

It has been a privilege to have the opportunity to be involved in Federal Council this year and I have especially appreciated the chance to work in the Distance Education Portfolio. We need to build upon past momentum around the major issues faced in the distance education community, by continuing to highlight the unique way in which we have to educate our children and how this needs to be supported and maintained.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION and CARE REPORT

Jane Morton

I am pleased to be able to deliver my first Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Report here at our Federal Conference in Canberra. It has been a busy year, with the New Child Care Package commencing on 2 July which includes In Home Care and the previously Budget Based Funded (BBF) Mobile Early Childhood Services transitioning to either accessing funding from the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF), Department of Social Services or through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS).

Early Learning

Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) for 4-year-olds

One of Professor Halsey's recommendations in his Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE) report states, "Ensure Regional, Rural and Remote children start school with a strong foundation for learning." Participation in preschool enables this to happen and in order to assist the small number of students, of which there are only 189 at present who engage in preschool by distance education, the AIC Distance Education (DE) allowance must be extended to include this cohort. We included this extension to the AIC DE allowance in the breakdown of the Election Funding Commitment AIC proposal that we presented as a response to the announcement that the former Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce gave on 22 June 2016 and we will continue to advocate for this. We have received positive comments from those in government around this, but it has yet to occur. In seeking an extension of the AIC for 4-year-olds, ICPA (Aust) has consulted with the states to clarify the number of preschoolers studying via a distance education program to update federal politicians.

Universal Access to Early Childhood Education and the National Partnership Agreement

Universal access ensures that a quality preschool program is available for all children in the year before fulltime schooling. States and Territories are responsible for the provision of preschool with the Commonwealth funding a "top-up" contribution to these arrangements.

On 3 February 2018, the Federal Government announced a further \$440 million for preschool education in 2019, in order to help provide 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year for a quality preschool program for all children in the year before full-time formal schooling. This is in addition to the Government's \$428 million investment for preschool in 2018. This will benefit over an estimated 348,000 children in 2019 across all preschool settings and brings the total Commonwealth investment in preschool to \$3.7 billion since

2008. Importantly, it will provide funding certainty for preschools and long day care centres as the government implements school and child care reforms this year.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to highlight the need for increased access to preschool in rural and remote areas where we can, especially as preschool is seen to be such a vital part of a child's education with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and the recent Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) program becoming parts of it. If our children miss out at this early stage, they will definitely not be school-ready and lag further behind their urban peers when they start school. We have also emphasised the need and support for play-based learning during the preschool year.

National Quality Standard

The Australian, state and territory education ministers agreed to changes to the National Quality Framework (NQF) to ensure quality education and care in Australia continues to improve in the most efficient and effective way. Most changes commenced 1 October 2017 in all states and territories (except Western Australia, which will commence by 1 October 2018). The 2018 National Quality Standard (NQS) and some related changes commenced 1 February 2018 (including in Western Australia). Under the National Quality Framework an early childhood teacher is required to be always in attendance at preschool, however, this is not always possible in small rural towns. Unfortunately, we have not had success with requests of qualified teachers or Diploma qualified educators as alternatives so far.

Mobile Early Childhood Services

Early childhood education and child care services in rural and remote areas which were previously provided by Budget Based Funding (BBF), have been assisted and supported in their transition to the New Child Care Package by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) through the Department of Education and Training. Some of these services have been able to access some of the \$61 million non-competitive restricted grant funding from the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) which was available to BBF Services who provided a fair proportion of child care to rural and remote areas. This has been a great help, although some services have had to also access funds from other sources.

Mobile Playgroups, despite being a vital resource in geographically isolated areas have also been supported by PwC in their transition to new funding either through the Department of Social Services, the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) through the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC) and/or their states as they did not fit the New Child Care Package requirements. Although we have been given assurance that their new funding will continue for a limited time, these services face uncertainty for future funding and may have to look elsewhere. Federal Council would appreciate any further feedback regarding these Playgroups as they move into their new arrangements.

Child Care

The New In Home Care (IHC) Model

ICPA (Aust) has attended several workshops, conducted an IHC Survey and participated in teleconferences to try to ensure that the Department of Education and Training have listened to us in preparation for the new model which commenced 2 July 2018. The Department has collated information from their Nanny Pilot Program trial and from the IHC Review and noted results from our IHC Survey. ICPA (Aust) has been able to provide comment on the IHC National Guidelines and the updated IHC Handbook. We have also encouraged our families to transition to the New Child Care Package, updating their details and applying for the new Child Care Subsidy by 2 July 2018, so hopefully those families concerned, or their Service Providers, are now receiving it on their behalf. Unfortunately, we are hearing that IHC member families are having many teething problems with the new system and unexpected large fee increases, contrary to what was expected.

The Department of Education and Training has employed In Home Care Support Agencies in each state to work with families and Service Providers to help prevent IHC being too expensive and provide more places for IHC educators, a total of 3000. The Activity Test has been widened to enable unpaid workers in the family business, volunteers, those studying /training or looking for work may also qualify to receive the new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) or the Service Providers on their behalf. The National IHC Guidelines, the IHC Handbook and various Minister's Rules and other relevant information have now been finalised and the IHC from 2 July 2018 webpage has been updated providing helpful information in all aspects of IHC. <https://www.education.gov.au/in-home-care>

ICPA (Aust) has been informed by the Department of Education and Training that IHC educators may continue to supervise DE students outside of "formal school hours" when they complete their "homework" but as this is not clearly defined and is a very grey area in the distance education schoolroom, many families have been unsure as to whether or not to engage an IHC educator. This has been very concerning for them. The Department has recommended that a private arrangement between a family and the IHC educator be made to ensure continued care during those 'formal school hours' but families will not be able to claim the CCS during that time.

ICPA (Aust) has also written to the relevant ministers regarding the introduction of IHC educators turning 18-years-old through the year, instead of the minimal age being 18, as is the case with some gap-year students. As IHC educators will need to have a relevant Certificate III qualification or working towards one, this is problematic. The Department has now provided two ways for families in rural and remote areas where IHC educators can be exempt from having their Certificate III in ECEC, but only up to 18 months from 2 July 2018 until January 2020.

1. 20% of the time is spent with a suitably qualified person i.e. by emailing, Skyping or through phone calls
2. If having had 15 years' prior experience in Child Care

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 working on this and the *Australian Government Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Part Two: Working with Children Checks Report includes the following:*

"The Australian Government supports an approach that ensures greater national consistency of working with children check schemes and has adopted a leadership role to assist jurisdictions to progress nationally consistent standards. Significant progress has been made through the Australian Government chaired working group. It is anticipated that the standards will be put to relevant State and Territory Ministers in 2018."

Working Holiday Maker Visa

The requirement for the extension from six months to twelve months being spent on one property of the 417 "Working Holiday Maker" visa to other remote areas besides Northern Australia as well as the need for distance education tutors and nannies to be included in the "specified work" list, has been highlighted to numerous federal politicians and we have had a couple who have supported us in this. Unfortunately, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, feels that the shortage of workers in rural and remote areas has been addressed. We will continue to promote this when we can, especially as the bush is so short of willing tutors in the schoolroom.

Federal Council will continue to work with the Federal Government and other bodies available to us to further your concerns and share developments with you.

RURAL SCHOOLS /TRAVEL REPORT (tabled)

Di Skene

I feel very fortunate to be able to deliver you this report for the first time as leader of the Rural Schools and Travel Portfolio here in Canberra for 2018. It has been a productive year for advocating Rural Schools and Travel which has seen Federal Council submit many submissions, send letters and have a great many discussions with regards to current and previous motions. The 2017 motion updates can be viewed from the following link on the ICPA website. <https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1124/federal-conference-motion-updates/federal-conference-motion-update-2017.pdf>

RURAL SCHOOLS

Remote and isolated locations in Australia provide the greatest challenges for improving provision of education options and pathways for children and families. The financial cost to families educating children in rural and remote locations continues to rise and can be attributed to many leaving these areas. An increasing number of rural and remote families are separating, with the mother and children relocating to larger cities and towns during the years of schooling. A drastic measure such as this by families to reduce educational expenses, negatively impacts the family unit, small communities and rural schools.

While all Australian governments recognise the social and economic benefits of a high quality and equitable school education system, ICPA (Aust) continues to devote an enormous amount of volunteer hours holding relevant governments to account to address inequities.

Recommendations highlighting the need to focus on inequities in the educational outcomes of rural students which report them to be at least one and a half years behind their metropolitan peers can be found in documents dating back many years. They mention the endemic problems facing rural and remote education, including significant studies providing guidance and direction to those formulating policy. Despite this, very little action has followed to ensure improvement in educational outcomes for all students in rural and remote Australia. Consequently, Federal Council was thrilled when government called for the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE), led by Emeritus Professor Halsey.

Federal Council met with Professor Halsey during the 2017 conference in Alice Springs, attended many forums around Australia and lodged a comprehensive submission which can be viewed on the ICPA website or the link below. However, the following report details what opportunities that could assist rural and remote students to be able to access high quality education, addressing low enrolments and access pathways for students without separating families, moving from small communities to improved access whilst also being affordable.

<https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1130/federal-submissions-1/irrrre-final-report.pdf>

The Australian Government response into the IRRRE saw regional, rural and remote areas at the forefront of the following outcomes: <https://www.education.gov.au/independent-review-regional-rural-and-remote-education>

The Australian Government recognises that it generally costs more to educate students going to school in regional, rural and remote areas than it does for students in city-based schools. That is why the Quality Schools package increases Commonwealth funding for those students from \$3.9 billion in 2017 to \$6.8 billion in 2027 - an increase of 74.6 per cent. This will mean per student funding for students in these areas will grow by 4.9 per cent per year over that period.

With the above excerpt from Federal Government and the IRRRE, Professor Halsey's eleven

recommendations have been accepted and with hope this review will see improved outcomes for regional Australia once implemented.

TRAVEL

Currently there are inequities in Student Travel Allowances offered by the Commonwealth. Whilst Federal Government has in place Fares Allowances to assist with student travel under the ABSTUDY and Youth Allowance Schemes, there is no provision for travel in the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme which is the assistance a large number of geographically isolated children fall under.

AIR TRAVEL

Numerous letters, emails and telephone conversations with airlines have taken place over the year in order to action travel motions through Federal Council. Members are also benefitting from the efforts of our State Councils, who are also working with airlines to make travel between home and boarding school more affordable.

Congratulations to Northern Territory ICPA who in recent times have successfully met with some of the major airlines and been able to sit around the same table to discuss travel. Let us hope their discussion opens many more doors. Currently, Federal Council are pleased that QANTAS has two state trials in place for the public with one in Queensland and the other in Western Australia that offer a 30% variable discount. Rex Airlines have the 'Bush to Boarding' scheme available in North Queensland between any Gulf port and Cairns and Brisbane to Mt Isa via Toowoomba, Charleville, Quilpie, Windorah, Birdsville, Bedourie and Boulia in western Queensland.

Local residential fares in regions such as Charleville and Longreach in Qld where local government has worked with state government and airlines to offer residents reduced fares. Patient Assisted Travel Schemes (PATs) in WA, SA, NT and Qld and similarly named schemes in NSW and Tasmania provide financial assistance with travel and accommodation where rural and remote patients need to seek medical specialists. Although this does not include specific needs consultations with allied health professionals, Federal Council recognise that these schemes are being utilised by our members where possible but need a much wider concessional scheme to include all geographically isolated boarding children from all over Australia to ease the monetary pressures that compulsory education has on families.

Queensland Senator Barry O'Sullivan, as Chair of the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, instigated an inquiry into the operation, regulation and funding of air route service delivery to rural, regional and remote communities in the final months of 2017. Federal Council provided a submission and was fortunate to receive an invitation to address this panel, allowing the opportunity to express the social and economic impacts that lack of supply, dependability and costs involved in living in rural and remote areas has on many families. The implications this has for travelling to and from boarding school include, access to medical assistance, travel for rural/remote school students for camps and learning activities, inequities in Commonwealth student travel allowances is just a broad overview. The full submission can be viewed on the ICPA website.

<https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1118/federal-submissions-1/regional-air-fare-inquiry-submission-feb-2018.pdf>

Recently, Senator O'Sullivan indicated that 'ongoing concerns regarding the impact of high airfare prices on bush families was a major factor in his decision to initiate this inquiry'. He went on to say 'while he cannot anticipate the outcomes of the final report as there are still public hearings planned in the future, the contributions from groups such as ICPA would play a significant role in the final recommendations.

ROADS

Many families in rural and remote areas travel large distances on roads that are in disrepair. Motions carried last year raised concerns for many who must travel on such roads to access educational opportunities (some of which are compulsory). As some roads in rural and remote Australia are funded by the Commonwealth, Federal Council have voiced concerns regarding the deterioration and appalling conditions that remote residents face daily to be able to access education, schools, boarding, health appointments and general everyday travel needs. This issue was highlighted in the ICPA (Aust) submission to the Economics References Committee Inquiry into Regional Inequality in Australia in April of this year. ICPA sought urgent commitment from the Australian Government to a long-term maintenance strategy with adequate funding to bring national roads back to all weather and safe trafficable surface. Federal Council welcomed the Turnbull Government's 2018 Budget which brought about a promise of \$3.5 billion dollars to upgrade regional roads which is very encouraging for our members and their future road safety.

Regional airfares should be affordable and services adequate, consistent and reliable to better assist regional residents and strengthen regional communities. Air and road travel are essential modes of travel for rural and remote living as long distances are not avoidable and most times difficult with current challenges for families and Federal Council continues to lobby for these services.

SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS REPORT (tabled)

Sally Sullivan

At the 2017 Federal ICPA Conference, two specific education needs motions were presented:

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Education and Training to ensure all rural and remote students have access to early identification and intervention for learning difficulties."

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Health and the Minister for Education and Training to collaborate for equitable subsidies nationally for accommodation and travel for children with specific or special learning needs to attend appointments with qualified specialists."

The number of motions is not a true reflection of the magnitude of the challenges of educating children with specific needs in rural and remote areas. 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 2017/18. While successful in raising awareness of these issues, much work remains to be done.

A teleconference was held between Federal and State Specific Education Needs portfolio holders in November 2017. The meeting served to reinforce the view that the issues above are nation-wide and very serious for affected students and their families.

Early Intervention

Students in rural and remote areas often have little or no access to early intervention services and therefore families have no indication of why their child continues to struggle at school. For Distance Education (DE) students, undiagnosed learning difficulties lead to stress and frustration in the DE schoolroom. Through submissions and further correspondence, ICPA (Aust) will continue to advocate for screening of phonological awareness by teachers to identify at risk students to be done in their first term at school and to stress that the single most important factor and predictor of successful literacy acquisition is phonological awareness.

In May 2016, the Australian Government released Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes (QSQO), an evidence-based approach to school reform to improve learning outcomes for all Australian students. As part of this reform, a national Year 1 check of all children in the areas of reading,

phonics and numeracy was announced. This reform aims to ensure that students who are behind in their schooling are identified early and can receive the extra support they need. QSQO stated: *Reforms such as assessing children in reading, phonics and numeracy during Year 1 and reporting annually to parents against agreed national literacy and numeracy standards for every year of schooling, will ensure students who are behind are identified early and can be targeted with interventions before the achievement gap grows.*

The Federal Government indicated it is looking at working towards implementing that recommendation. Many states implement early years' assessments. For distance education students, access to testing, timeliness and then management if required, can be problematic.

Travel and accommodation assistance for students with specific learning needs

Rural and remote families can incur considerable costs accessing face-to-face consultations with allied health and other professionals for the diagnosis and management of specific learning needs. Telehealth enables remote consultations in some instances. Medicare rebates are now available for video-conferences with mental health professionals and occupational physicians but not for speech therapists. The NDIS does not even cover travel and accommodation for NDIS-qualifying students. State health departments may assist with travel and accommodation for medical issues but not learning issues. State education departments may assist with travel and accommodation to access education but not for learning difficulty related travel. This issue highlights a glaring inequity for which ICPA (Aust) will continue to seek redress.

Specific Education Needs and the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE)

Please find following some excerpts from the IRRRRE Final Report, Halsey (2018), relating to specific education needs. The recommendation and actions are well-aligned with ICPA (Aust) policy.

Students with specific learning needs (p49)

Responding to RRR students who have specific learning needs and interests continues to be a very topical and often problematic issue. Government, the community and community organisations play a very important role in this. Notwithstanding efforts made by governments to provide a strong foundation for at-risk students when they commence schooling, consultations confirm that more needs to be done.

Of particular concern is obtaining timely, appropriate and affordable early identification of potential learning difficulties, and disabilities, as well as exceptional talents and abilities. Some of the forums held in small towns stated that it could take 12 months or more from the time a school lodged a request for advice to receiving a first visit and a report on how to meet a specific learning need. As is well known, the early years are especially critical in terms of a child's cognitive and emotional development. It is unacceptable that a 6-year-old, for example, has to wait a year or more for an initial diagnosis so that targeted learning and support can commence.

Related to ensuring that individual situations are addressed in a timely and affordable way, so students can optimise their learning and experience success from a young age, issues around 'readiness for school' were often raised during consultations. There is quite widespread concern about the level of readiness of some school commencers, particularly in relation to children starting school with undiagnosed 'basic' health issue problems like vision, hearing and poor nutrition, and the impact these have on 'getting the grounding' needed to enjoy life and be successful.

[Consultations found health services where nurses worked with families and] helped link families into specialist services such as occupational therapists and speech therapists. Such services were dedicated to working very pro-actively with families, often in partnership with pre-schools, schools and volunteer community support groups run by churches and others, to ensure children were

healthy and well prepared to start school. As one person commented, “investment in the early years is really building the foundations for life.”

Recommendation: Ensure RRR children start school with a strong foundation for learning.

Actions to progress this recommendation:

Ensure that early intervention trained personnel and programs are in place to help families and to connect them to relevant support agencies substantially reduce the waiting time (say to a maximum of three months) for specialist assessments of students with learning difficulties and disabilities and the subsequent development of specific learning plans for them. The full IRRRE Final Report can be found at <https://www.education.gov.au/independent-review-regional-rural-and-remote-education>

Specific learning needs and mental health

ICPA (Aust) made a submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Accessibility and Quality of Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Australia. The ICPA submission provided information under the following headings:

- A National Rural Mental Health Strategy
- Mental health and rural and remote boarding school students (including student hostels)
- Bullying, cyber-bullying and mental health
- Special Learning Needs and mental health
- Medicare rebate item number attached to relevant Telehealth providers
- Rural hardship and mental health – Education perspective

In relation to specific education needs, ICPA (Aust) stated:

Students with special learning needs, including gifted children, are especially vulnerable to mental health problems, and those in rural and remote areas even more so because access to diagnostic and management support services is notoriously difficult. Difficulties obtaining a diagnosis is probably due to a shortage of staff in rural and remote areas and bureaucratic processes. Families who can find the resources will often end up seeking help in major centres from private consultants, at considerable cost to the family. Once a diagnosis has been obtained, access to ongoing consultations for management is likewise difficult.

The full submission can be found on the ICPA Federal website under <https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/browse/96/federal-submissions>

TERTIARY REPORT

Kate Thompson

ICPA (Aust)’s persistence and continued lobbying for equity of access to an appropriate and continuing education for rural and remote tertiary students is paying off, albeit slowly, with some further positive outcomes. Federal Council and the Tertiary Portfolio have addressed the motions presented at the Federal Conference in August 2017 and unresolved motions from previous years, on a number of fronts: correspondence to government, delegation, submissions and meetings.

COMPONENTS OF THE 2016 ELECTION PROMISE

The three election announcements in mid-2016 impacting our tertiary cohort have been implemented and are assisting in improving educational opportunities for regional and remote students and addressing the under-representation of rural and remote students at tertiary level.

- a) On 1 January 2018, the time regional and remote students need to be employed under the self-supporting criteria (Part time work or earnings for rural and remote students) under Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY living allowance, changed to 14 months. This change allows students who meet the relevant earnings and associated criteria to prove their independence within one gap year, do not have to further delay commencement of university.

- b) Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships for undergraduate, post graduate and vocational education students to undertake STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) studies including agricultural and health fields commenced with the first round of scholarships up to a value of \$18,000 allocated in 2018 and the next round for 2019 will be advertised towards the end of 2018.
- c) The *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE)* – this review enabled ICPA (Aust) to put at the forefront, the issues facing our tertiary cohort when accessing higher education: Tertiary Access Allowance, Youth allowance changes (Relocation Scholarship, qualifying criteria including age, parental income limits) and financial assistance for relocation costs to complete compulsory work experience. In January 2018, Professor Halsey, Chair of the IRRRRE delivered the final report to Government and at the end of May 2018 the Government's response accepted all the recommendations, many which aligned with the ICPA (Aust) submission, in relation to tertiary. Recommendations from the IRRRRE specific to our tertiary cohort include: reviewing current income support and arrangements for rural and remote students who have to move away from home to pursue a higher education or training to ensure they are able to commence immediately following school completion, provision of high quality career information and advice, provision of additional financial support to students for travel between university and home, in particular in a student's first year of study, requirement of universities to prioritise beds for rural and remote students, especially those coming from remote areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and improve the provision of accommodation and income support information for RRR students.

BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENTS 2018-2019

In the 2018-2019 Budget, the Australian Government announced some significant initiatives to address the outcomes of the IRRRRE, which will further address the inequity faced by students from regional, rural and remote areas accessing tertiary education.

- Youth Allowance - Improved access to regional and remote students who must relocate to study by increasing the regional workforce independence criterion parental income limit from \$150,000 to \$160,000, an additional \$10,000 to the income limit for each additional child in the family and allowing students to use the financial year prior to their gap year as the year when parental income is assessed to provide additional certainty about whether they will meet the parental income limit before taking a gap year. It's expected 75 per cent more regional students will qualify under this criterion for Youth Allowance. This will take effect from 1 January 2019, subject to the passage of legislation.
- Expand accessibility of sub-bachelor programs (including enabling), with additional places at higher education providers in regional areas, which will give students a better opportunity to obtain a relevant and recognised qualification more quickly.
- Expand accessibility for bachelor students at regional study hubs, for young people in regional, rural and remote communities to transition to further education, training and employment.

TERTIARY ACCESS ALLOWANCE (TAA)

The introduction of a TAA recognises the economic barrier that all rural and remote students, who have to leave home, face when accessing a higher education; the high up-front set-up and ongoing costs associated with relocation: travel, securing accommodation set-up costs (rental bond, electricity connection or residential college fees), communication (telephone, internet) along with the rising costs of ongoing, basic living expenses (rent, food). The TAA will also alleviate the continued disparity in the level of financial assistance provided for relocation to rural students who have qualified for independent Youth Allowance compared to dependent Youth Allowance recipients.

FARES ALLOWANCE

In the IRRRRE report, Professor Halsey identified that in order for rural and remote students living

away from home to study, to make a successful transition from school to university, the fares allowance is vitally important to allow students to travel home and be with family and friends especially during the early stages when home-sickness can be a factor. Fares allowance for Youth Allowance recipients must be aligned with the ABSTUDY criteria in relation to the Fares Allowance 3 month eligibility criteria for the first return trip. Federal Council has brought this issue to the attention of the Minister for Social Services and Department of Social Services.

YOUTH ALLOWANCE

ICPA Federal Council has continued to address further aspects of Youth Allowance (YA) including: all rural and remote students being classified as independent, reduction of the age threshold for automatic eligibility for YA, relocation scholarships, removal of the independent YA parental income limit, raising the parental income limit for dependent YA, reinstatement of the HECS-HELP upfront and HELP voluntary repayments and financial assistance for students who need to relocate for compulsory course practicums. ICPA (Aust) has had no further commitment for change but will continue lobbying and pursuing these issues.

RENT ASSISTANCE

Federal Council consulted with the Department of Human Services in relation to the 2017 motions relating to rent assistance. The advice was:

- The circumstances when Rent Assistance (RA) can be paid to YA students varies depending on whether the student is dependent or independent and what their living arrangements are.
- The most common reason RA would **not** be paid for the duration of a rental agreement is where the student moves away from home before they are eligible for the Away from Home (AFH) rate e.g. they move 4 weeks prior to the commencement of their course. As the student is not eligible for the AFH rate they will not be eligible for RA until they commence study on the first day of classes.
- For YA students being paid the independent rate, RA is generally paid from the date they start living outside of the parental home.
- Student eligibility for RA over semester breaks depends on whether the student is maintaining their term accommodation during this period. If a student maintains their term accommodation or college residence, that is, they are still paying rent and still have access to the property, they may still qualify for the AFH rate and therefore, RA.

CENTRELINK

ICPA (Aust) has continued collaborating with the Department of Human Services in relation to the issues that members are reporting when applying for Youth Allowance. In November 2017 and May 2018, Federal Council met with the Department of Human Services, Department of Social Services and Department of Education and Training in Canberra and many Youth Allowance issues were discussed. In May 2018, Federal Council presented numerous suggestions to the Department of Human Services in relation to the Youth Allowance application online process and the current website. The Departments assured us that efficiency measures are reviewed constantly and improvements to the application platform implemented. The Department is keen to be informed of any issues as part of their quality and improvement processes and appreciate comments and advice from members.

TEACHER EDUCATION

The importance of high quality teachers in rural and remote schools is apparent, with more than 4,000 schools located in rural, regional and remote locations educating almost 30% of all students in Australia. Federal Council has continued to raise the inclusion of rural and remote education majors and modules such as Autistic Spectrum Disorders in teaching courses with Government, in the IRRRE and at every opportunity highlighting the uniqueness and challenges faced when educating students in the rural and remote context. It has been identified that specific rural training

aids in the recruitment and retention of teachers and assists in the sustainability and resilience of these rural communities.

Professor Halsey in the IRRRE report, recommended the provision of funding and opportunities for teacher education students to undertake placements and the introduction of a unit on teaching and living in rural and remote schools and communities to attract and retain high quality teachers for rural and remote Australia.

TRANSPARENCY OF HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS PROCESSES

The decision to apply for a university course can be a daunting process with a plethora of information which in the past, has not been consistent in its presentation. By the end of 2019, the reform of the 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 a national admissions information platform.

These recommendations have been agreed to by all registered Australian higher education providers and will deliver to students, parents, teachers and career advisors, the knowledge and capacity to more easily navigate higher education admissions policies and processes. The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) will continue to monitor and report on admissions transparency in the higher education sector and in 2020 will complete a comprehensive review and evaluation of the recommendations and implementation.

REGIONAL HUBS

The Australian Government has committed to assist in the establishment and maintenance of up to eight community-owned, regional study hubs with infrastructure including study spaces, video-conferencing, computing facilities and internet access as well as pastoral and academic support for students studying via distance at partner universities, to improve access to higher education for regional, rural and remote students. In May 2018, applications opened for the next stage with the release of the “Regional Study Hub Application Guide May 2018”. The application process has commenced with the closing date 27 July 2018.

INDEPENDENCE CRITERIA

We continue to lobby the Federal Government on behalf of students who have to relocate in order to access the most appropriate tertiary course for their needs and aspirations, be recognised as a separate disadvantaged group and be considered financially independent of their parents for the purpose of accessing financial assistance on course enrolment. In the IRRRE report, it was identified that *“consideration needs to be given to investigating how a bona fide post-secondary offer to undertake higher education and/or further training to a student could be used to qualify for direct financial support for the student...reviewing the parental income test rules in terms of whether they accurately reflect the ability of parents to provide support to their children who have moved away to study”* strengthening our policy.

ACCOMMODATION

Further to the motions from 2015 concerning the affordability and accessibility of accommodation for rural and remote students, the IRRRE report recommended universities be required to prioritise beds for rural and remote students, the establishment of dedicated accommodation advisers and brokers, and improve the provision of accommodation and income support information for rural, regional and remote students.

In February 2018, the Department of Education and Training, commissioned Urbis to complete the *Regional Student Accommodation Assessment*, on the supply of affordable accommodation for regional, rural and remote students. This report highlighted the issues facing regional, rural and remote students: high rental prices for on-campus accommodation, lack of availability due to

high demand and difficulty in the private rental market due to the students' age and lack of rental history and recommended the provision a 'one-stop-shop' information platform to better inform students while making choices for their university studies and address some of the challenges including timing of offers, accessing private rental and accessing government support.

YOUTH ALLOWANCE DOCUMENT

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 2017, aims to be complimentary to the Youth Allowance website and can be viewed on the ICPA (Aust) website - *Youth Allowance Overview*. <https://www.icpa.com.au/page/attachment/61/youth-allowance-overview-2018>

As responses to our lobbying has proven over the years, some very positive changes in the last 12 months which, off the back of the previous changes especially with Youth Allowance, have progressed some long-standing issues and motions. Along with following up on issues we have not yet had a response to, ICPA (Aust) will continue to lobby and raise the profile of our members' issues through the avenues available to us to see the implementation of changes and measures beneficial to our tertiary cohort and to ensure rural and remote students who aspire to a tertiary education, can do so.

TRAINING REPORT (tabled)

Jane O'Brien

It is with great pleasure I present my third report as leader of the Federal Training Portfolio.

While not a high volume of motions were presented at Federal Conference 2017, the Portfolio remained firmly committed to ensuring students who choose traineeships or apprenticeships, have equitable opportunity to access tertiary training. The number of motions is not necessarily reflective of the difficulties this cohort faces in accessing tertiary education.

Financial assistance for students who relocate to complete compulsory work experience remains a high priority lobby.

The Government has reiterated commitment to maintaining a high-quality Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector and growing the number of apprenticeships in Australia. Once again, steps have been taken to promote the VET sector in the Australian community as a real and positive choice for Australians with around \$3 billion committed towards the VET sector in 2018-2019.

The release of *Apprentices and trainees 2017: December quarter* shows that at the end of last year there were 256 140 apprentices and trainees in-training across Australia. (Source: Assistant Minister Andrews Press Release 5 June 2018) www.ncver.edu.au/publications.

The Skilling Australians Fund, (SAF) is a major commitment between the Government and states and territories working together to create an additional 300 000 apprenticeships throughout Australia. The Skilling Australians Fund is a \$1.5 billion commitment from 2017 - 2022 with traineeships and apprenticeships in rural and remote areas amongst the priority projects, ensuring the needs of rural and regional Australia are met. "The Government is making sure the needs of rural and regional Australia are addressed." (Source Assistant Minister Andrews. Joint doorstep 30 May 2018). States and territories signing onto the new SAF National Partnership Agreement will also meet the Government's commitment dollar for dollar.

The Government's Revised National Standards for Group Training Organisations (GTO) introduced in 2017, ensures apprentices, trainees and host employers receive consistent, quality support from GTOs Australia-wide.

The Government's VET Student Loans (VSL) program which replaced the VET FEE-HELP program has shown early promising results. Since July 2017 only fully-approved providers are allowed to offer VET Student Loans with the Government introducing student progression measures and the VET Student Loans Ombudsman. The three loan caps for 2018 have increased in line with CPI to \$5 075, \$10 150 or \$15 225 with the Government monitoring the program to ensure it continues to meet the needs of students and industry.

The list of VSL eligible courses are updated in line with requirements: they must be current, on at least two state or territory skills lists, or are science, technology, engineering or mathematics related or are tied to a licenced occupation requirement. Follow the link to access VSL eligible courses.

https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/20180604_-_vsl_approved_course_providers_list.pdf

Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships which include vocational education students undertaking STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) studies including agricultural and health fields commenced with the first round of scholarships up to a value of \$18 000 allocated in 2018. The 2019 round of scholarships will be advertised towards the end of 2018.

Youth Allowance. Apprentices and trainees may be eligible to claim Youth Allowance for Australian Apprentices provided they meet the criteria which includes proving they are registered with the Australian Apprenticeship scheme, enrolled in a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship and are aged between aged 16 – 24. Australian Apprentices, providing they meet eligible criteria, may be able to claim Austudy if aged 25 and over or ABSTUDY if Indigenous Australians. Please do not self-assess. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/payments-and-services-australian-apprentices>

“Regional kids deserve the same opportunities as kids in the cities”. (Source Hon Michael McCormack joint doorstep 30 May 2018)

VET Review

In June 2017 The Hon Karen Andrews MP, Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills announced a major review of the framework which governs the regulation of Australia's VET sector.

The report from this Review was released on Friday 15 June. The Australian Government will progress 10 recommendations and support in-principle a further 11 recommendations.

Grouped into 5 key areas the Australian Government has responded that they will continue to liaise with key stakeholders as they work towards implementing the review recommendations.

The 5 key themes: engagement between the regulator and the sector; strengthening registration requirements of RTOs; teaching excellence; improving the collection and the sharing of data; and information and protection for students.

The report aims to strengthen the Australian Skills Quality Authority's (ASQA) regulatory approach and improve the quality of the VET sector.

<https://www.education.gov.au/nvetr-act-review>

https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/australian_government_response_to_the_nvetr_act_review_0.pdf

Trade Support Loans

Trade Support Loans offer loans up to \$20 420, paid in instalments, throughout the

apprenticeship, to assist apprentices cover daily expenses including equipment purchases associated with completing an apprenticeship. Similar to the HECS system, the loan is repaid through the tax system once the minimum income threshold is reached. In 2017-2018 the minimum threshold is \$55 874. As an added incentive, a 20 percent discount on the loan amount is offered to apprentices who have successfully completed their apprenticeship.

Useful websites include:

- **My Skills** website provides information on training providers, courses, campus facilities and services. www.myskills.gov.au
- **Australian Apprenticeships** provides up to date information including a comprehensive FAQ section. <https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/>
- **Australian Apprenticeships Referral** Phone: Line 13 38 73
- **The Australian Apprenticeship Support Network** website lists a state by state guide to some financial incentives and benefits for apprenticeships. www.apprenticeshipsupport.com.au
- <https://www.education.gov.au/skills-and-training>
- **Australian Skills Quality Authority** <https://www.asqa.gov.au/>
- <https://ministers.education.gov.au/birmingham/joint-doorstop-review-rural-regional-and-remote-education> the full joint doorstep interview with Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham MP, The Hon Michael McCormack MP, The Hon Karen Andrews MP and The Hon Dan Tehan MP.

The Tertiary and Training Portfolios work closely together during the year with joint teleconferences and collaboration with our Reports. Thank you to Kate Thompson and the Tertiary Portfolio.

The Portfolio looks forward to listening to members concerns in the coming year and continuing to raise the profile of these concerns to ensure this cohort has equal opportunity to follow their chosen career.

Thank you to the States who have raised issues during the year.

Thank you is also due to Wendy for her constant support and encouragement and my fellow Training Portfolio Councillors, Sally Sullivan, Kate Thompson and Suzanne Wilson for their support and advice.

Speeches

President's Welcome 2018

Mrs Wendy Hick

Good morning everyone. For those who don't 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 Member Mrs Roxanne Morrissey, ICPA guests, delegates and observers, welcome to our 47th annual, Federal Conference.

This year's conference theme is "COUNTRY KIDS in CAPITALS". And here we are, in Canberra. We have brought the Country Kids to the Capital, or at least their call for equity

in access of education. We are here to be their voices, to let those, not only in government but also other organisations and the wider community, know who they are and where they live. Thank you for attending and being a part of being their voice.

With severe drought affecting rural families in a number of states, we know that many who wanted to be here, simply couldn't be, due to feeding stock 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.

We also have mums and dads who have had to stay home to continue caring for or teaching their children. As much as we like to think it might, Distance Education doesn't wait for ICPA: and the pick up from the local school or bus run can't wait either. Even though they can't be here, all of these families are part of our big ICPA family and we are thinking of them, and we are here to be their voices as well. (and on a side note, some of the fathers that would like to be here instead are at home looking after the children to allow some of the mothers to be here, and that there are dads filling in in the Distance Ed classrooms this week so that some of you can be here, hats off to them –they are very brave indeed!)

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 each of our member states and to have so many branches in attendance at our 47th 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.

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. We have quite a few motions again this year, which indicates 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, so talk to a Federal Councillor, or you can write down what you have to say and give it to us. We are fortunate that being in Canberra, there are many 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 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 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'm still learning the ropes a bit too.

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 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.

This year a feedback survey will be sent to you after conference and we appreciate everyone who takes the time to fill these in.

Also, 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 Training and Telstra Country Wide for once again being major sponsors of ICPA and our Federal Conference. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. In addition to these platinum sponsors, we have also received support from other companies and organisations. All the sponsors can be found on the ICPA website 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 ABSA for sponsorship of the Pre-Conference function last night, hope you all enjoyed it and it was tremendous of ABSA to assist us with that.

We thank our hosts, New South Wales State Council, and the convenors, Caroline McDonald, Lindy Kitto and Sue Gordon who have been working very hard to get things ready. For those who don't know, this same group of ladies, as part of the NSW/VIC Lones Branch, also helped convene the NSW State Conference in March. They have done a marvellous job in convening not one, but two ICPA conferences this year. Our congratulations to all involved in bringing us together for the Federal Conference.

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 for our rural and remote children's future.

Opening Address Mrs Fiona Nash

Ladies and gentlemen, people often underestimate, or don't even acknowledge, the massive contribution the regions make to the nation's economy, and social fabric. Strong regions mean a strong nation.

One third of population lives outside of the cities. If we want people to live, work and invest in the regions, to stay in the regions, to move to the regions, we need to ensure that it is a very positive message that gets out there. Too often all people hear about the regions is a negative story. About floods, fires, droughts, pestilence.

This is not a Pollyanna moment, thinking everything is wonderful. Of course, there are challenges. Constantly. At the moment, we are in the grip of a shocking drought. My sons both farm out in central west NSW so I feel it every day.

Can I just take a moment to acknowledge both the Federal and State Governments for making drought response a priority? Both the Federal Minister for Agriculture, David Littleproud and the NSW Primary Industries Minister, Niall Blair, understand how devastating this drought is.

But back to the issue of being positive. I had some work done in my previous role, looking at a six month period of regional stories in the two major metropolitan newspapers in Sydney and Melbourne. It showed this:

- In Melbourne, 80% of the regional stories were negative, 15% were neutral, and just 5% were positive.
- In Sydney, around 75% were negative and only 25% were positive.

When this is what people in the cities are reading, it's no wonder they don't understand what's really going on in the regions.

Absolutely there are challenges. But if we want people to stay in the regions, or move to the regions, we need to make sure that, across the nation, there is a recognition of the very positive aspects of regional Australia, and that the regions do have a very bright future indeed.

The regions make an enormous contribution to nation's economy and social fabric. Regional Australia responsible for around 67% of our exports, 45% of domestic tourism. The contribution of agriculture is enormous. It directly employs over 304,000 people. The complete ag supply chain, including food and fibre industries, provides over 1.6m jobs, and is worth \$47.1b to the Australian economy.

Mining makes a massive contribution. It employs around 226,000 people – many of these jobs are based in regional Australia. Resource and energy exports are forecast to reach highest level on record in 17-18, \$230 billion.

Regional Australia clothes the cities, feeds the cities, powers the cities.

Every morning when city people wake up they should thank regional Australia for their way of life.

Regional Australia is the small business engine room of the nation. You don't need to live in a city to run a hugely successful business. There are great success stories of businesses in the regions:

- Jane Cay with Birdsnest. An on-line fashion business, run out of Cooma in NSW. She employs over 100 people.
- Gerard Hines with Delta Agribusiness. A private and independent agribusiness in NSW. In 2006 he had 2 locations, 15 staff. He now has 28 locations, 230 staff, 64 shareholders.
- And Jillian Kilby, an engineer and infrastructure entrepreneur. She founded The Infrastructure Collective in 2009 while living in Walgett. She is now Dubbo based and services clients across Australia and the United States. She is the winner of the 2018 Agriculture NSW Rural Women's Award.

The social fabric of the nation is made up of city and country. It's who we are. Not everyone can live in the cities. And not everyone wants to! There is a hugely positive future for regional Australia.

In the regions, you can afford to buy a house. It's a fantastic lifestyle. A wonderful place to bring up children. People care. You just can't understand the wonderful sense of community until you've actually lived in the regions.

Some people think cities are better than the regions, they're not. They're just different. Some people say they like the cities because they're fast-paced. Last time I looked people who live in the cities seem to be forever stuck in traffic jams going nowhere.

What I have seen so often in recent years out in the regions, is what I'm calling the "go home phenomenon". Young people, who grew up in a regional community but then moved away, are now wanting to go home, back to the region where they used to live. It's happening everywhere.

As I said, strong regions mean a strong nation. And confidence builds strong regions. Education is a huge contributor to having that confidence. Understandable that access to education is an absolute priority for those living in rural, regional and remote Australia. So important that those making policy decisions have a real understanding of the challenges being faced in rural Australia, that simply don't exist in our cities, such as the tyranny of distance and higher costs associated with educating children.

I'd like to congratulate ICPA on your call for a Commissioner. I noted in your submission to the Halsey review that *"rural and remote education to be placed on a separate register when delivering and funding education for rural and remote students. ICPA (Aust) believes a National Rural Education Alliance, which would bring together all interested national organisations, led by a Commissioner, would ensure the focus remains on educating students living in rural and remote Australia."*

One size fits all policy doesn't work. Cities are incredibly different to regional Australia – indeed, rural, regional and remote communities often have different needs to one another.

CSU makes a significant contribution to growing stronger regions. Leadership is so important in instilling confidence in our regions. And CSU is educating the regional leaders of the future. CSU – and great credit to the Vice-Chancellor, Andy Vann, for leading the way on this – has a real belief that CSU has a responsibility to help build stronger regions, and that is one of the main reasons I took up the position with them.

We are already doing a lot, but we're going to do even more. We have a huge footprint in the regions, with our main campuses in Port Macquarie, Dubbo, Bathurst, Orange, Wagga and Albury-Wodonga. We have 17,000 regional and remote students. There is a huge economic contribution generated by CSU in the regions. We have 2000 FTE staff, receiving \$409m in income. And across northern, central and southern regions, we generate \$653m in Gross Regional Product. Our graduates are going to regional communities. Around 80% of our students from our regions stay and work in our regions.

CSU has strategic intent to develop a course profile that reflects student demand and meets workforce needs. We are especially focused on identifying and meeting workforce needs in the regions.

We have a large course profile, approximately 253 courses; 448 programs including specialisations. It is a course profile that is weighted towards 'the professions' with emphasis on critical labour shortages in rural/regional Australia, for example veterinary, dentistry, nursing, physiotherapy, pharmacy, accounting and teaching.

Student profile is weighted towards rural and regional students, with the view to retaining students in the regions where there are shortages in tertiary qualified professionals.

Around 80% of regional, rural and remote students who study on a CSU campus are employed within regional Australia; online regional student numbers are slightly less at around 75%.

We are actively involved in establishing productive and collaborative partnerships with employers to identify workforce shortages and industry requirements and have ongoing partnerships that are sustained through regular contact – for example we are involved in the collaborative committees of Local Health, and also have connections with Agriculture, Business Management, Accounting, Wine Science, Environmental Science and Veterinary Science.

Approximately 80 percent of on-campus and 73 percent of online graduates from the regions were employed in the regions four months after graduation from Charles Sturt University.

Out of pharmacy which is based in Orange, 92 percent of on-campus regional origin students who were employed were employed in the regions.

We now have a medical school as a result of the Murray Darling Medical Network, partnering with UWS. CSU led the way on this, recognising training students in the regions means they are far more likely to practice their profession in the regions!

We are building partnerships with regional communities. CSU is building strong partnerships, which will help build stronger regions. For example, with Royal Far West. CSU and RFW share a mutual interest in truly integrated health and education outcomes for children, family wellbeing and capability, and sustainability of rural workforces.

To this aim, we are setting the foundations of a co-branded National Paediatric Telecare Centre that will deliver world-class, technology assisted paediatric health, education and social care services to children living in rural and remote Australia.

CSU is identifying and responding to regional community need. A great example is our engineering course, purpose built to provide engineers to regional communities where they are needed.

We have a great track record in Indigenous achievement - CSU graduates the most indigenous students of any university.

CSU plays a significant role in educating people from low SES background, many of whom are first in family.

Latest Good Universities Guide states that 22% of domestic students who commence study at CSU come from a low socio-economic background. It found no other Australian university serves as many low SES students.

As I said earlier cities aren't better than the regions, they're just different.

I often say the same about universities. City universities aren't better than regional universities, they're just different.

Ladies and gentlemen, I was very honoured to be asked to open your conference and am delighted to be here this morning. In spite of challenges, need to be positive about the future of rural, regional and remote Australia. We must never let the contribution the regions make to the nation be forgotten. Strong regions need a strong nation, and those regions need a strong voice.

Congratulations to the ICPA for being such a strong voice. Your sound consideration of the issues that are important, the professional way you conduct your advocacy, and your in-depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing regional Australia is extensive.

Never underestimate how important your role is in shaping the future of our rural, regional and remote communities.

I wish you all the very best for your deliberations here and have a great conference.

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham (transcript)

Hello and welcome to the 47th Annual conference of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association. I'm very sorry that I'm unable to be there with you but I do want to extend my thanks and gratitude for the advocacy and work that ICPA as a family does on behalf of isolated children and isolated families right around Australia.

Your work extends in terms of its benefits not just to the children living in our most remotest circumstances, but to families across rural and regional Australia who benefit from your advocacy for better access to quality education because the Turnbull government believes that every single Australian child deserves the best possible opportunity to be and fulfil their potential regardless of where they live.

That's why we've implemented a number of reforms over the last few years. To extend support for rural and regional education; to make sure that in relation to childcare we

provide the fairest possible system that gives the greatest possible support to those in need and additional support to families in regional, rural and isolated circumstances around the country. To provide greater investment in relation to preschool support and particularly in terms of our schools funding reforms, to deliver a growing sum of funds that's available to Australians right across the country but that has additional loadings and support to recognise that people, in remote settings; in small rural schools deserve extra support and that there is assistance there that's required. That's why we've also undertaken and developed a process of greater scholarships for rural students and undertook the Halsey Review looking at rural, regional and remote schools and the educational opportunities that are available to children.

Our response to the Halsey Review has been:

- to increase and enhance access to Youth Allowance
- to create more pathway places into universities
- to ensure that our regional study hubs have additional places attached to them so that we can make sure universities are not only offering places to remote or regional students but that they're doing more in regional and remote communities in terms of providing training and opportunities, right there, in those communities.

We're committed to continuing to work with you, the ICPA family, to make sure we give the best possible support to your children, to your families, so that they can be their best to fulfil their dreams and potential and get the education that they deserve.

I wish you every success with your conference and look forward to our continued engagement over the next year.

Memorial - Eric Charles (Bunny) Powne MBE

Wendy Hick and Carmel Elliott

Sadly, on Monday 26th February 2018 one of our Federal ICPA Life Members who was one of the original Isolated Children's Parents' Association founders passed away in Toowoomba.

Eric, better known as "Bunny", Powne was a part of ICPA from the very beginning and to many of us, he epitomised what ICPA is all about. His drive and passion for rural and remote students' education saw him held with the highest regard and a tremendous amount of respect.

Bunny was our second Federal ICPA President and he served on the Federal Council from Oct 1971 until he stepped down in Alice Springs in July 1982. During this time, he held the position of Federal Vice President from 2nd Oct 1971 until 19th Jul 1974 when he nominated for Federal President at the Federal Conference. Bunny held this position until 14th Jun 1977 when he stepped down into the role of Immediate Past President. Bunny then remained on the Federal Committee until the 29th Jul 1982.

Bunny attended an unsurmountable number of meetings and opportunities in his time with ICPA and he received numerous recognitions. These are only a small list of some of the things Bunny participated in, but it doesn't go close to covering all that he has done on behalf of ICPA.

I'd now like to ask Mrs. Carmel Elliott, a former Federal Councillor, as well as Qld State Councillor, to share some words about Bunny with us.

I first met Bunny at the Cunnamulla Qld State Conference which was my first year as a State Councillor in 2003. There we were standing in a crowd of people with me not sure what I should be doing! He took the time to stop and talk and find out about me and how I was doing my first year on council. It may have been years since he served on a council for ICPA but his interest in the organisation, its members and the progress or not of our fight for educational equity for our bush kids was still an issue that he followed keenly.

Bunny was one of our founding members and he often talked about the early days of ICPA. One of the first motions to be put at the first meeting held at Bourke on 2nd October 1971 was moved by Bunny Powne. This motion read: "That an allowance be sought of \$10 per week for primary children and \$15 per week for secondary children with annual review for all children forced to live away from home to attend school – No means test."

These days we have a multitude of ways to fundraise to cover ICPA's running costs. Back in the early days our founding members covered these costs themselves. Bunny told the story of how coming home from a delegation they looked down and realized that they were low on fuel. Not one of them had any spare cash to pull up to a bowser and refuel. They worked out if they drove slowly enough they would be able to get to one of the councillors' properties where they could fill up from the home tank! Toni Ridge had a big stew on the stove when they arrived and as they hadn't eaten all day they were starving! Bunny reckoned it was the best stew he had ever eaten!

Bunny was part of a deputation that met with the Honourable Mr Kim Beazley Snr, then Federal Education Minister, to discuss the aims and objectives of ICPA. It was not long after this deputation that ICPA received the news that the Federal Government would implement a payment for isolated children to help with the financial cost of educating an isolated child. This was announced on 17th January 1973 and this payment is known as Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme.

Bunny once told me that when the organisation was just starting up, a department official told him that for a volunteer organisation to last 10 years it would be considered a milestone as from his experience many had folded within this timeframe. For the organisation now to be celebrating its 47th year is truly a reflection of the ground work laid by our founding members. Bunny had a knack of communicating with people from all walks of life and it was this ability that opened the doors of communication with those in power allowing the voices of the bush to be heard.

A planning seminar held in Melbourne in Dec 1974 and organised by the National Telecommunications Planning Branch saw Bunny as Federal President represent ICPA. The seminar was organised to update educational bodies on what the usage via a Satellite system could be available in the not too distant future. Four years later Bunny as part of the Federal Executive attended the Task Force inquiry into the "Feasibility of a Domestic Satellite for Australia" and presented evidence and answered questions to the Task Force. I was speaking with Bunny's son Peter the other day and he said that Bunny put in a huge amount of time and research around this, as he knew the potential benefits this would afford rural and remote communities into the future. Fast forward to the present day with the launch of the nbn satellites and we are now able to experience what Bunny had envisioned. The benefits these satellites have to offer not only for educational purposes but for businesses and social interaction in our isolated and rural communities is a start to bridging the gap in communication.

In the 14th Edition of our Pedals magazine October 1984, it was written:

"Bunny's foresight into the satellite scene drew ICPA into the forum on the ground floor. Today we are recognised as the body which knows more about the potential use and benefits of a communication's satellite than any other in Australia; and that's how it should

be. But, only for Bunny in those early days, we would have been floundering and swallowing whatever the politicians and technocrats served up. Instead, we are able to argue our case, and put before the 'powers that be' a coherent plan of priorities and educational services that we see necessary and possible for isolated families."

Bunny was honoured in the Queens New Year's List for 1977 with being awarded the Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE), for "Dedicated and valuable service to the Community and Local Government".

When Bunny along with his wife Eileen received the honour of Qld ICPA Life Membership in 1978, Sir Alan Fletcher who was the ICPA Qld Patron presented his award and at that time he said, "We owe more to this man than we can repay – this little bit may be recognition of some of it; but it doesn't pay for half of it". His son Peter said that when he received this award it was the first time that he saw his father a little bit emotional. Not for receiving the award for himself but that recognition was also given to his wife for the role she played alongside him.

Anyone who has served at branch, state or federal level will understand that to be able to do the volunteer work that is required, it cannot be completed without the full support and encouragement from your family. They are the ones who remain at home, running the business and taking care of the family. Bunny received ICPA Federal Life Membership in 1984 and Branch Life Membership of Bollon Branch in 1987. At that time, he was the first person in ICPA to have been awarded Life Membership at Branch, State and Federal level.

Bunny was a great record keeper. I was sitting in his office one day and he came out and showed me this huge scrap book, measuring 500mm x 400mm x 90mm. He explained he was in Sydney one day and had some time to kill in the morning before meetings. He wandered into this book store and spotted this scrap book and thought that it was a great find at a great price. That was until he had to lug it around the city for most of the day! In it he has kept every newspaper article he has read relating to ICPA at both the Federal and State level. A treasure trove of information for any historian! Out of curiosity I weighed the now full scrapbook and it came in at 9.5kgs!

The first ICPA booklet printed on the History of ICPA and its Aims and Policy was compiled by Bunny. This booklet contained photos of the people involved in ICPA from the beginning and information about the programs that were there to assist isolated children throughout Australia. Bunny worked with Toni Ridge to produce the first edition of our association's quarterly magazine - PEDALS. They met at the Cunnamulla R.S.L. Club and spent the day nutting out the content and layout. Both these publications are a fantastic record that documents the associations humble beginnings.

Bunny Powne lived his life, giving back to the communities in which he lived. He has set a great example for us all to follow. It is worth noting that while he was serving on Federal Council he also held the following positions at various times of Qld President, Qld Executive Officer, Qld State Councillor and Qld Vice-President over that same time period whilst also sitting on his local government council and running his own business. I often hear people say, "Oh I haven't got the time to do this or to do that, as I'm so busy". Imagine where we would be today if our founding members had that same reply.

I was lucky to have known Bunny throughout my time as a State and Federal Councillor but more so to have known him as a friend over these last 12 years. Many an afternoon we would sit in his office working out his computer issues and sharing our interest in family history. He had a wonderful sense of humor. At a conference once, a Deputy Director of Education asked if he too owned a station, to which Bunny replied, "Yes... a service station in Bollon!"

It is with sadness that we farewelled Bunny this year. The Isolated Children's Parents' Association will be forever indebted to Bunny for his dedication and commitment in ICPA.

ICPA Federal President speaks:

I would like to ask everyone to please stand for a moment's silence for ICPA Federal Life Member and Past Federal President, Mr. Bunny Powne.

E.C. (Bunny) Powne MBE
22nd August 1929 ~ 26th February 2018

Royal Far West
Ms Lindsay Cane

About Royal Far West

- A private "for purpose" **charity AND health** service
- Specialists in **health, education and disability** services for children living in rural and remote Australia. Leaders in **allied, mental & medical** health services for remote children & families
- Committed to **build capacity** of local teachers, health professionals, carers
- RFW's Windmill Disability program won the 2017 NDS Innovation Award and 2018 Dept of Industries scale up grant

Our Services

Children 0-12 with complex needs:

- Global development delay
- Intellectual disability
- Mental health disorders
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Learning disorders
- Speech and language disorders
- Anxiety and depression
- Behavioural and conduct disorders
- Regulation, movement and sensory processing disorders
- Disorders arising from complex trauma
- Oral health problems

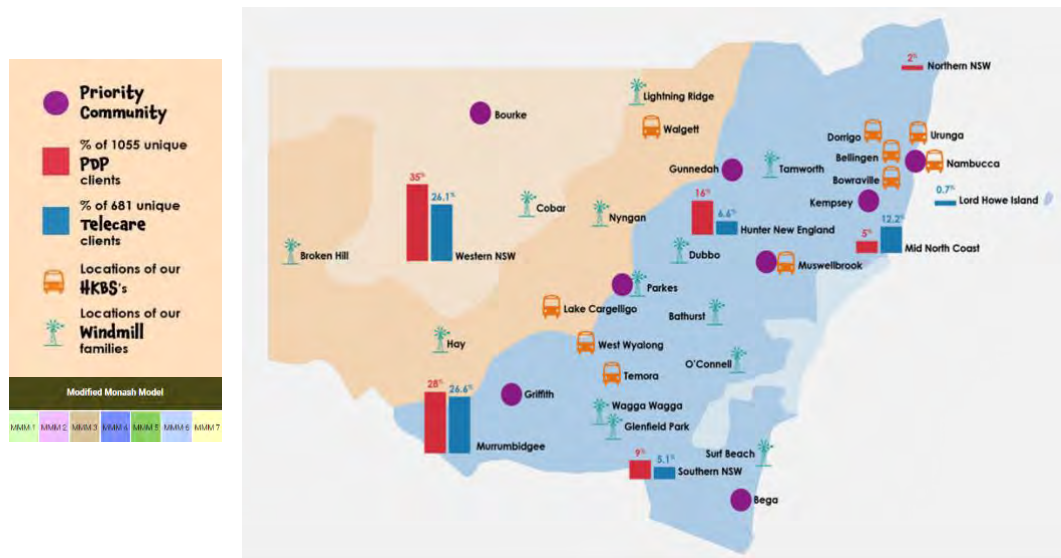
Our Team – RFW and RFW School

Our team comprises over 100 FTE to run our guest house, health service and social support functions. Within this team, we have 65+ specialised clinicians and support staff, including:

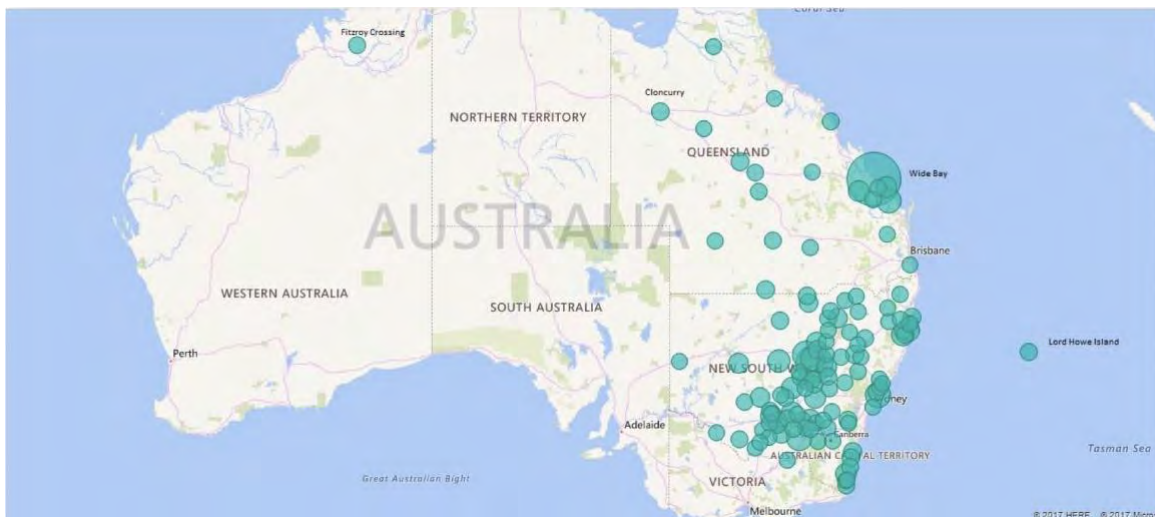
- 3 paediatricians
- 3 child psychiatrists
- 2 clinic nurses
- 17 speech pathologists
- 7 occupational therapists
- 11 clinical psychologists
- 6 social workers
- 3 care coordinators
- 1 dietitian
- 1 orthoptist

- 3 dentists/ orthodontists
- 2 dental assistants
- 1 special educator
- 20 RFWS school staff

Service Footprint in NSW 2016/17



Reaching Vulnerable Children Nationally



RFW integrated Health and Learning Centre

Centre for Child Health & Learning

- \$37m development
- Due for completion December 2018
- Centre of Excellence

Our Success Lies in Measurable Outcomes:

- **Improved mental, physical and emotional health, speech, language and learning** of rural kids and families
- **Improved access and choice** for rural children with disabilities, learning and conduct disorders, health issues
- **Stronger capacity and resilience** of teachers, families and health workers in rural Australia
- **Accessible professional development and peer support** for isolated teachers, AHPs
- **RFW's virtual workforce** fills local workforce gaps eg DOE school counselling
- **All children can access services** no matter where they live
- **Reduced impact of trauma** on children's health and learning
- **Enhanced national service delivery** for all country kids

Our Focus:

1. National Childhood Vulnerability rate = 22%
2. Rural Australia Vulnerability rate = 3-5 times higher

When children start school, one quarter of them, on average, are vulnerable.

- ⇒ Physical health
- ⇒ Social competence
- ⇒ Emotional maturity
- ⇒ Speech/language
- ⇒ Communication

The evidence is compelling - vulnerable children have:

- poorer educational outcomes
- higher levels of functional disability
- chronic mental health problems
- higher risk of unemployment
- difficulty establishing relationships
- contact with the criminal justice system
- higher risk of homelessness.

DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE CHILDREN (% by Region – national vs city vs country)							
REGION	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL	EMOTIONAL	LANGUAGE	COMMUNICATION	VULNERABLE 1 OR MORE DOMAINS	VULNERABLE 2 OR MORE DOMAINS
AUSTRALIA	9.7	9.9	8.4	6.5	8.5	22.0	11.1
COONAMBLE NSW	26.8	28.6	19.6	16.1	8.9	41.1	33.9
TENNANT CREEK NT	19.0	38.6	27.6	49.2	44.1	58.6	51.7
MANLY NSW	5.4	4.1	4.2	1.3	2.0	11.4	3.9

The Problem:

....Vulnerable children grow up to be vulnerable adults So, what are we doing at Royal Far West?

Call to Action for ALL Leaders

1. Enable all rural, regional and remote primary schools to access Telecare Services for mental health, movement and speech disorders.
2. Make Australia's childhood vulnerability rate a regional development priority and a nation-building imperative.

Revise the National Regional Development Agenda 2018

1. Invest in road, rail, physical infrastructure **and human capital**
2. Cut tax
3. Remove red and green tape
4. Develop Northern Australia
5. **Reduce National Childhood Vulnerability from 22% to 10% (by 2030)**

Telecare for Kids

- Connects country children with health services without having to leave town.
- Provides assessment and therapy for children and capacity building for schools, pre-schools, parents and carers
- Access to high quality services in:
 - Speech Pathology
 - Occupational therapy
 - Psychology
 - Paediatrics
 - 85% of children meet or exceed their therapy goals
 - 93% of parents recommend Telecare for Kids to other parents

RFW Telecare Schools 2017-18

Reach	
Total Schools (NSW & QLD)	102
• No. in NSW	81
• No. in QLD	20
• No. in WA	1
School Type	
• Government	53
• Catholic	36
• Independent	2
• Early Learning Centres	11
Number of LHDs	9

Windmill Disability Program

- Children have access to:
- Speech pathology
- Occupational therapy
- Psychology
- Special education
- Social work

- Oral health
- Parent support
- Recreational programs

Where is it based?

- Run in Manly at RFW, delivered via telecare or a combination.
- Families stay onsite at our Drummond House Guesthouse

Healthy Kids Bus Stop

- A comprehensive health screening program for children 3-5 years of age, run in partnership with local communities.
- Using the RHMC Care Mobile, a specialist team of health professionals comes to your community.

Our goal: “No child should start school without having his/ her developmental health needs assessed and potentially addressed.”

HKBS 2017 Outcomes

Location	# Children Seen	# Children Referred
West Wyalong	64	40
Walgett	48	30
Nambucca/Valla Beach/Bowraville	55	49
Lake Cargelligo	77	50
Temora	74	55
Muswellbrook	83	65
Kempsey/SWR	73	62
Bourke	39	32
Walgett/Collarenebri	49	40
Yass	70	53
Glen Innes (Mini Bustop)	50	40

2017 Summary

- 11 trips – each 1 week long
- 14 locations
- 33 communities
- 682 children were seen
- 30% were Indigenous
- 2,953 assessments conducted
- 516 (76%) were referred, some for multiple interventions including:
 - Speech (41%)
 - Auditory (40%)
 - OT (30%)

ICPA and RFW Strong friends, working together

- ICPA – friend and advisor to RFW (pulse check / guide us to where the gaps are)
- Joint support for and promotion of school partnerships for telecare services
- Joint venture partnerships/shared funders for common purpose
- Joint advocacy – State and National – reduce the national childhood vulnerability rate and strengthen rural Australia’s human capital and workforce of the future

A Journey with Isolation (transcript)

Nathan Kitto

Good afternoon and thank you very much for inviting me here today. Some of you may remember me from the New South Wales ICPA conference held in Mudgee earlier this year and it’s really because of that opportunity that I’m here today. I’d just like to say that since speaking at the conference in Mudgee, it’s been really overwhelming, and I’ve been blown away by the support and encouragement that I’ve received, none so much as when your very own Wendy approached me and asked if I’d like to speak at the federal conference here today.

As it was then and is today, it is an honour and a privilege to be able to take up some of your time and share with you some of the things that I’ve lived and learnt.

So.... “Who am I?” and “What am I doing here?”

I’ve given the Who part of that question a bit of thought since I was last here and I think my original answer still sums it up. I’m just a nobody from nowhere. I was privileged to have grown up in one of our many rural communities. Mum and Dad owned and operated a mixed farming enterprise that has already been mentioned in central west New South Wales. A little place called Naradhan.

It was there, my brother and I, did all of the things that boys will do if you give them the time, the toys and the space to do it. We were lucky enough to have all of those in spades. As mentioned in the introduction I grew up in an ICPA household. My mother has been involved in New South Wales ICPA for many years. I hear rumours and murmurings every year that she’s retiring but there’s always one last event she’s got to do so we’ll see!

At home we become accustomed to the flurry of activity that accompanies state and federal conferences. The late nights, the hours of preparation. What it taught me, was that if something matters – act like it matters. If it’s important - treat it like it’s important. That’s a lesson that’s meant more to me over recent years. So that is the “Who”.

“What am I doing here?” Good question. I’ve been giving it a bit of thought as well and apart from the fact that I’ve been invited which is always very nice, I think all I’m really doing is sharing something that I’ve learnt along the pathway of my life. And if you can relate to it and it works for you that’s really just a bonus for me. If it doesn’t well the coffees alright, so...

I’d like to start by talking about isolation. It’s in the name of your organisation. Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association. Isolated. In preparation for today a memory came to me of when I was in primary school. I did my primary school at Naradhan Public School. They call it a small school while I think it could be more accurately be described as a nano or micro school. The number of students fluctuating from four to a massive ten during my time. Needless to say, that sprawl and congestion are not hot button topics at Naradhan!

I remember this day a relief teacher (not an uncommon occurrence of finding and retaining quality teachers that want to relocate to isolated areas isn’t an easy task). But this teacher made this comment that we were in fact isolated. I remember as the non-argumentative seven or eight-year-old that I was, disagreeing quite passionately and arguing that well we weren’t isolated, we only lived half an hour away from a major highway. The great midwestern highway. According to my seven or eight-year-old self, if you lived anywhere near a highway, where the most regular thing to cross it was tumble weeds and kangaroos - you weren’t isolated. But it does raise the idea that there are certain negative connotations that come with the word “isolated” and they are without merit. There is a reason why solitary confinement is a punishment. We’re social creatures and isolation certainly in the longer term is not optimal for healthy outcomes. And so, this brings me to what isolation means to me.

Isolation means to me difficulty of access. Difficulty of access to education. Difficulty of access to health. Difficulty of access to communications. Difficulty of access to utilities and infrastructure. Difficulty of access to all the things that the bulk of the population take for granted.

Yes, I grew up as an isolated child. I faced all these difficulty of access issues. It doesn’t make me a victim. It’s all part of the moulding process that you see here today. If you spend time in some of these isolated communities, which many of you of course do, you will find some of the most resilient people who are part of the most tight-knit communities in the country. But they don’t do it alone. And really that’s why it’s an honour for me to be

here today because organisations like ICPA and the people that are involved in them, that represent and give voice to the difficulty of access issues that many living in isolation face. This is not to be sniffed at because at the end of the day, many of those living in isolated areas do so bearing the cost of it, so that those of us who don't, don't have to.

So, here are three things that I've learnt growing up as an isolated child. Number one - Independence. The distance caused by isolation is only reduced by the constant progress on an independent mind. If you can give your children nothing else give them legs to stand on and feet to walk with. Upon finishing my primary school, I was promptly shipped off to boarding school to complete the secondary stage of my education at Yanco Agricultural Highschool. Certainly, one of the ways of dealing with the issues of teenagers is to export the problem!

Now I know Mum and Dad copped a bit of flack for this, sending that poor boy off to boarding school. Pity me at your own peril I say! And I'm grateful they did. Yanco Ag was an education that is for sure! At Yanco I learnt the wonders of the capitalist system! I found I could turn a thirty pack of coke into \$30 in less than an hour! That's not a bad hourly rate for a high school kid! And for those of you who are interested I can tell you that regardless of what you stock, coke will sell out first all year round. If you wanted something else, you could pay \$1.30 at the vending machine! I learnt that chasing debtors, the blight of the small business community was one of the most irritating things of the capitalist system. And if you don't pay your suppliers you can make 200% profit! Thanks Mum and Dad!

On a more serious note, one of the things I've proven time and again comes from the school motto, "As you sow, so shall you reap". I can attest, the times I have failed in life are the times I have tried to reap what I have not sown. And the successes in my life come partly from reaping what I have sown.

There are no shortcuts in life. Those looking for the easy way aren't looking at all. When we witness someone experiencing great success is most likely they would have paid the price in secret. Everything has a cost. The kicker is you get to choose what you pay. But don't expect to pay nothing because if you do you'll get nothing.

Aside from this and aside from a fine education in maths, science, history and english that I received at Yanco Ag, the thing I learnt that I most value today, is "independence". Having the knowledge that you are able to deal with the challenges that life will throw at you, without needing the approval or input from others, is independence. That's not to say that those who we surround ourselves with isn't important - it really is. But at the end of the day, the pivotal choices that we must make in life are our responsibility. No-one can make them for us. Independence goes a long way to enabling us to make those decisions.

There are those in the world that would look at me and see a cripple. But I have seen people far more crippled than I by lack of independence when it comes to making decisions that really matter in their life. Do not underestimate the power of independence.

Number two - Face your fears. In the silence of isolation fears chatter loudly. You might notice that what I've said up until now isn't particularly original and that is because these things really just bare repeating to every generation. Facing your fears in just one of those things that need repeating. Fears like anything grow stronger with exercise. Think of it like this. If I want to get better at running, I practice running. Right. The irony of this example is I often tell people, I don't run, I don't hurry so if you're looking for that guy you're looking at the wrong one! But anyway, the point is, if you want to get better at something you practice it. After a week of agony, you wonder why on earth you even started. But you have to push through that. After a month the pain will subside and in six to eight weeks you'll notice you'll be running faster and further and stronger and better than when you

started. Fears are the same. And this goes for problems as well. You can run from them and in the beginning, it will feel like you're getting away. That's just because they're not good at running yet. Soon the soft pitter patter of weak footed fears turns to thundering pounds and the faster you run, the faster they run.

And this is your destiny, until you face your fears. And what I have proven when I have faced my fears is that it's not a monster, it's a kitten and a bass drum and a torch playing trickery with light. One of the best ways to face your fears is to get out of your comfort zone. Life happens outside your comfort zone. Do you think I'm comfortable up here today? You're missing out of you don't get out of your comfort zone.

Something I've often told people who are afraid of what others might think or say of them is, "Do you think I don't have these same fears about what people might think or what they might say?" I'm acutely aware of that some people see and judge me. It's human. I'm no different. I do the same thing. But if I have those fears, let those fears take place in my life, I wouldn't get out of bed in the morning. I wouldn't walk down the street much less cross it. Face your fears least kittens turn to lions and you become paralysed.

Number three - You don't matter, and you don't count. You can add to that you're not owed anything. You don't deserve half as much as what you have. You don't have as many rights as you think you do. In isolation you are made aware of insignificance of self. Now this is not to be taken negatively. It's just that we live in a world, and I belong to a generation of social media. A world that tells us that likes, shares and views matter. And the more of these things we have, the more you count. These things are reported in the news. You should take note of what is reported in the news. Not because it means it should be important but it's a good indicator of what society thinks is important. Just because something is doesn't mean it should be. How often has it been reported that something is trending? Has some stupendous number of views or has gone viral? You know things have changed when I can say something has gone viral in a room full of people like this and you don't all immediately jump up and run for the exit.

A while back I joined yet another of these social media platforms and as I was wading through the endless pictures a thought came to me that, you know the majority of this is just a cesspool of indulgent, pretentious twaddle. If I believed everything I saw, everyone's life is perfect. Everyone's always happy and the world operates through an art studio. Oh, and no-one works and everyone's always on holidays. If you believe this to be true I suggest you need to stay away from the cool aid.

So, in comparison, my life seems really ordinary. And yet the reality is, that never has a generation less lived in so well chronicled. All these social media platforms are geared around likes, shares and views. It's these likes, shares and views that dictate to us how we feel, what we think, do and say. There are those out there that believe that there's some sort of magical, positive correlation between their likes, shares and views and their self-worth whether they admit it or not. There are those that live, breathe (and this is no laughing matter), die by the power given to likes, shares and views.

This is what happens when feelings take precedent over fact. Because the fact is no matter how many likes, shares and views you have, it doesn't matter, and it won't count to your actual life. It strikes me as an incredible irony that there are so many young people in our community today who suffer from anxiety and depression, all the while living in a world that has never been more connected than it is today. It would seem that isolation is no longer the exclusion realm of those living in rural and regional parts of our country. I'm not saying it's all bad because there's some great stuff to come from it. We've had a little glimpse into the future already today about what technology can do for us. It's not all bad. But what I am saying is, pout down your device, log off once in a while, join the real world.

Make real meaningful connections with real people because the moment you realise you don't matter, and you don't count is the moment you're able to do something with your life that can matter and can count.

So, in closing. Encourage those around you to be independent. Get out of your comfort zone so that you can put yourself into a position that could matter and could count. I'm an example before you today of what happens when you do that. I'm just a nobody from nowhere who's been encouraged to be independent. Who's been invited somewhere outside my comfort zone, to say something that might matter and might count. And really that's probably the best we can all hope for in life.

Thank you very much.

Year 12 - What's next?

Kellie McInnes - Higher Education

Wendy Walker – Skills and Training

Australian Government Department of Education and Training

Improving career education

- Parents play a big role in helping their child make career decisions
- Career education starts during the schooling years
- The National Career Education Strategy is part of the Australian Government's \$3 million commitment, under the *Quality Schools* package, to ensure students are 'work ready' and prepared for life beyond school
- The *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education* includes a recommendation to 'support regional, rural and remote students to make successful transitions from school to university, training, employment and combinations of them'

<https://www.education.gov.au/independent-review-regional-rural-and-remote-education>

Learning potential

- The Learning Potential app and website aims to support parent engagement in learning
- The app is available for download on the app store and Google play, and all of the content is also available on the Learning Potential website (www.learningpotential.gov.au)
- Learning Potential is currently being enhanced to include a career education toolkit for parents – expected to be ready for the 2019 school year!

The options

- There are many options available to your child after they finish school, however these are the most common ones:
 - Australian Apprenticeships
 - Study a vocational education and training (VET) course
 - Study at university
 - Find a job.

Where to find help?

- **My Skills** (<https://www.myskills.gov.au/>) includes information about vocational education and training (VET) options

- **QILT** (<https://www.qilt.edu.au/>) helps students compare university or higher education institutions and different coursework, student experience and graduate employment
- **Study Assist** (<https://www.studyassist.gov.au/>) provides information for students about government assistance for financing tertiary study
- **Job Outlook** (<https://joboutlook.gov.au/>) can help you make decisions about study and training, your first job, or the next step in your career
- **Preparing Secondary Students for Work** (<http://www.pssfw.myskills.gov.au/>) includes a range of resources which aim to help secondary students to successfully transition to post-school destinations.

Beyond School Study Guide

- Printable online resource for prospective tertiary students and career advisers.
- A “one-stop-shop” with information about post-school study options and government assistance.
- Released in 2017 – currently being updated to include new fact sheets and options for ‘digitising’.
- Opportunities and support for students in rural, regional and remote communities
- Includes information on Regional Study Hubs, Remote Area Allowance, scholarships, rent assistance and travel concessions
- Feedback welcome.

Raising the status of VET: real skills for real careers

- I. Real skills for real careers is a long term, communications strategy by the Australian government to raise the status of VET as an equal choice career pathway.
- II. Its implementation includes communication initiatives centred around the united tagline for the VET sector, real skills for real careers, which all VET stakeholders are encouraged to adopt on their communication products and websites.
- III. My Skills has been enhanced to serve as a first-stop-shop for VET information, including targeted career and industry pages.
- IV. A number of free communication resources are available on My Skills for anyone to use in helping to promote vet including videos, podcasts, posters, web and social media tiles and other information productions.
- V. At the heart of real skills for real careers is the Australian VET Alumni; whose success stories feature throughout the communication initiatives.

Australian VET Alumni Program

- The VET Alumni program was launched by Assistant Minister Andrews in 2016.
- It's a national community of VET graduates, registered training organisations, VET practitioners and businesses dedicated to sharing their

VET journey with Australians to encourage greater participation in VET – “real skills for real careers” and best practice in VET.

- Some Alumni members are also Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors – internationally recognised in 2016 by the United Nations.

Its purpose is to share:

- ✓ the benefits of a VET qualification with Australians of all ages looking to start, upskill or change careers
- ✓ examples of best practice in the delivery of high quality industry focused training
- ✓ achievements possible through employing VET graduates.

Thank you and questions...

Better Internet for Rural, Regional Remote Australia (BIRRR)

Kristy Sparrow and Kristen Coggan

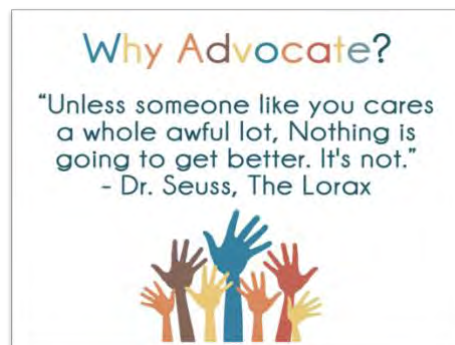
BUILDING BETTER BRIDGES SHOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

WHO & WHAT IS BIRRR?

A volunteer support, information, advisory & advocacy group for all things bush telecommunications.

Started as a Facebook Group in 2014

- 11,000 Members
- Troubleshoot hundreds of individual cases per month
- 250,000 + Website Hits
- 2,700 + Tweets
- Over 25,000 volunteer hours



No one can do EVERYTHING
But EVERYONE can do SOMETHING

WHY DO WE ADVOCATE?

Advocacy 101

- RESEARCH** - Whatever the issue is ~ research, survey & own it!
SHARE - Then go and share it with your community ~ both online & in person
CONNECT - Get to know the people who can make a difference. Make sure they know who YOU are.

USING FACEBOOK GROUPS EFFECTIVELY

* **KEY POINT:** Establish *rules* & *enforce* them!

Use **FB Group tools:**

- ✓ **Mute** a member
- ✓ **Boot** a member
- ✓ **Pin** a post
- ✓ Turn off **commenting**
- ✓ Ask new members **questions**
- ✓ Post **approval**
- ✓ **Polls** / Surveys



- ✓ **Welcome** new members
- ✓ **Schedule** Posts
- ✓ **Search** function

- Provide a **safe space**.
- Allow **community building**.
- Assist others to **help themselves**.
- Ask for **volunteers, delegate**.

We also use a *secret* Facebook group for Admin only.

TEAMWORK

- Work out your **strengths and weaknesses**.
- **Communicate with your team**: Behind the scenes discussions - via messenger & FB group
- Ask for **volunteers** - especially those with journalism, government, technical expertise or submission writing skills.
- Share **contacts & resources**.
- Make a **database** of contacts.
- **Join together** for lobby trips & advocacy with other groups e.g. AgForce, ICPA, CWA. RRRCC.

LOBBYING

- Be nice but passionate.
- Take printouts of your top talking points.
- Share stories & survey facts that support your views.
- Know your issue inside out & hold your ground.
- Get to know the people who can make a difference, including advisors & media reps.
- Contact all political parties & relevant stakeholders to spread your message.
- Participate in submissions & reviews.

RESPECT, RESPECT, RESPECT\

AWARDS

- ✓ Awards are advocacy '**currency**'.
- ✓ Plug your group in the **media**.
- ✓ Harness your **passion**, awards help give you **influence**.
- ✓ **Award recognition** helps legitimise your cause.

USING THE MEDIA

- ✓ Develop a memorable #hashtag.
#DATADROUGHT
#FIXBUSHINTERNET
#BETTERBUSHCOMMS
- ✓ Use the media as a resource.
- ✓ Educate Journalists - Keep It Simple!
- ✓ Connect with the media on Twitter.
- ✓ Develop press releases & a file of images.
- ✓ Be readily available for interviews ~ have a pool of talent ready for media enquiries.

Advocacy Toolbox

- **Crowd Funding** – we used the **CHUFFED** platform after extensive research & legal advice. Crowd Funding is how we fund travel, web hosting fees, mapping programs etc.
- **Surveys** – we have used **QUALTRICS & SURVEY MONKEY** & are very fortunate to have a data analyst – Rachel Hay on our team.
- **Social Media** – we use **FACEBOOK, TWITTER & LINKEDIN**
- **Website** – designed by Admin Amanda on a **WORDPRESS** site, I have also used **WIX**.
- **Dropbox** – for file sharing & storage of documents.
- **Vistaprint** – printing business cards & flyers cheaply.
- **Publishing**– **CANVA** is a great online publishing program –for infographics, presentations, social media cover images etc
- **Mapping** – we use **ZEE MAPS** & have interactive maps for things like technicians that auto update via a google form.
- **Email**– our most useful tool is **GMAIL**, having a Gmail account gives us access to **GOOGLE FORMS** and **DRIVE**
- **Live Polling** – Facebook has a great polling option, but for presentations we use **POLL EVERYWHERE**

Our actions create a **ripple effect**, whether we see it or not.

What kind of ripple are **YOU** making?

I Am An **ADVOCATE**

Award of Merit - Mrs Sue Shotton

Sue Shotton served on the ICPA Federal Council for 6 years, from 2008 until 2014, and held the position of Treasurer for 2 years.

Since retiring from Federal Council, Sue Shotton has been instrumental in the establishment and maintaining of the ICPA website and has for a number of years assisted Federal Council, State Councils and branches to establish a website that reflects those groups' individual needs but also remains uniform and consistent with ICPA goals. Sue has worked tirelessly to ensure the website is secure, modern and utilises as many tools as possible to engage ICPA members.

Recently, Sue has committed herself to assisting with the development of an online membership system to offer ICPA members a method to renew their memberships or join ICPA directly from the website, as well as to allow for more efficient, quicker and smoother membership transactions. Sue has gone above and beyond the expectations of Federal Council in her role as Web Manager and she has continuously made herself available to Federal Council, State Councils, Branches and members who have had questions regarding the new online process. Sue has provided numerous documents, explanations and information to create an understanding at all levels of ICPA regarding the online membership. She has spent many hours in the process of explanation and exploration of ideas so that no stone has been left unturned as Federal Council worked towards online membership being available for members.

Sue has also made herself openly available to all State and the Federal Web Masters and assists them frequently with their work on the various areas of the website.

In addition to her work around the website and online membership, Sue has also volunteered her time at Federal Conferences and assisted Federal Council. At the 2017 Federal Conference, Sue took on an AV assistant role and set up AV for presentations, motions and portfolio reports and assisted the AV person at the conference with the numerous PowerPoint presentations, slides, videos and other technological wonders that helped make Federal Conference more engaging. She is also doing so again at this year's conference.

Given the extraordinary commitment, time and dedication that Sue Shotton has demonstrated in her assistance of Federal Council as well as State Councils, branches and members, it is with great pleasure that we present Sue Shotton with the Federal Award of Merit.

Explanation of Conjoined Motions

Wendy Hick

There was a motion at last year's conference asking us to trial conjoined motions, which is a process of, actually a head of time, combining motions that were exactly the same and presenting them on a united front but without losing that show of strength of how many branches that that effects or feel that the issue is important. In the past if motions were similar we would quite often deem them covered. This year we have two motions that we will be trialing on the conjoined motion process. This has already been done and noted in your booklets as conjoined motions.

Certificate of Appreciation Presentation

Wendy Hick

It gives Federal Council great pleasure to awarding the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) the ICPA Australia Certificate of Appreciation.

This award is in appreciation of the long standing and ongoing support shown to ICPA Australia. ABSA through representation of boarding schools nationally continues to build relationships and support ICPA members in sharing information and raising the awareness of the challenges many rural and remote children experience when leaving home. A home which can be countless hours away.

ABSA are nearly always represented by Richard Stokes and Tom Dunsmore at all state conferences as well as the federal conference, contributing to debate and conversations both on and off the floor.

ICPA Federal Council have worked with ABSA on a number of projects to promote high standards in accommodation and staff training, including the writing of the Australian Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences.

In 2017 ICPA Australia introduced the new corporate membership category for national organisations. ABSA was the first organisation to join ICPA Australia as a corporate member.

ABSA has supported ICPA through their sponsorship of the pre-conference event at all of our conferences, both state and federal levels this year.

ICPA Australia would like to express our appreciation for the tremendous support ABSA provides our ICPA families and Councils by presenting them with this Certificate of Appreciation.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

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	Caroline Robinson
	Alana Moller	Kate Thompson
	Jane O'Brien	
Federal Life Member	Roxanne Morrissey	
Federal Web Manager	Sue Shotton	
Pedals Editor	Raelene Hall	

State Council Delegates

New South Wales	Bruce Paynter	Helen Ponder
Northern Territory	Sarah Cook	Sarah Measey
Queensland	Tammie Irons	Louise Martin
South Australia	Mija Reynolds	Joanna Gibson
Tasmania	Emily Gardner	
Western Australia	Tash Johns	Bianca James

Branch Delegates

Alice Springs NT	Emma Chalmers	Amber Driver
Alpha QLD	Anna Appleton	Loretta Goodwin
Belyando - Mt Coolon QLD	Amanda Clark	Goscelyn Sullivan
Bollon QLD	Fiona Cameron	Christie Goddard
Bourke NSW	Tanya Mitchell	Scott Mitchell
Broken Hill NSW	Sally Nevill	David Shrimpton
Central West Plains NSW	Judith Bryant	
Charters Towers QLD	Juila Broad	Tracy Frohloff
Clermont QLD	Christy Moller	Kasie Scott
Flinders Ranges SA	Emilee Warnest	
Goldfields Eyre WA	Elyce Donaghy	
Hyden WA	Samantha Greay	
Kimberley Air WA	Constance Wood	
Kindon QLD	Suzie Killen	
Lakes District WA	Kym Ross	
Lone Members NSW/VIC	Irene Lund	Gordon Dunlop – Day 1
Lone Members WA	Linda Bouckaert	
Lone Members NT	Michael Wilson	
Maree Air SA	Jodie Keogh	
Marla/Oodnadatta SA	Helen Williams	Kirsty Williams
Midwest WA	Sally Brindal	

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Branch Delegates cont.

Monaro NSW	Tim Fleycher	
Mt Isa BOTA QLD	Sancia Fegan	
North West SA	Lynly Kerin	Jill Greenfield
Pilbara WA	Sandie McCrombie	
Port Augusta SA	Katrina Morris	
Rankins Springs NSW	Ellen Walker	Geoff Walker Day 2
Southern Downs QLD	Bernadette Walker	
Tambo QLD	Heather Turnbull	Donna Doyle
Wentworth NSW	Bree Wakefield	Nerida Healy
Western Downs QLD	Kristen Coggan	
Westmar/Inglestone QLD	Fiona Brown	
Winton QLD	Kate Bradshaw	
Yalgoo WA	Roxanne Morrissey	
Yaraka/Isisford QLD	Ingrid Miller	

State Observers

NSW State Council	Skye Bragg
QLD Council ICT Adviser	Jeff Little

Branch Observers

North West SA	Josephine Drennan
Alice Springs NT	Vikki McGlynn
Southern Downs QLD	Carmel Elliott

Convening Committee

Convenor	Caroline McDonald	
Secretary	Lindy Kitto	
Treasurer	Sue Gordon	
Committee	Jesse Donohoe	Dennis Kitto
	Shennah Joiner	
Sound Technician	Brian Cox	
Tour Guide	Des Cannon	

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Conference Guests

Australian Government	Senator the Hon James McGrath Asst Minister to the Prime Minister
NSW Government	The Honourable Sarah Mitchell MLC Asst Minister for Education, Minister for Early Childhood, Education & Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA)	Richard Stokes Thomas Dunsmore
Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)	Una Lawrence
C'wealth Department of Education & Training -MAJOR SPONSOR	Rosemary White Belinda Catelli Nina Downes Christine Wanjura Sue Kingwill Phillip Mason Melinda Parrett Guy Mathews Damian Kim Matthew Ferguson Andrew Stojanovski Rachael Wade Mike Tom Sylvia Pope Lalla Mackenzie Sam Dimarco Wendy Duncan Philip Smurthwaite Kylie Stretton Kristy Sparrow Lindsay Cane Greg Boon Chris Taylor Libby Dalton Matt Luff Ann Jackle Jenny West Marnie McKew Victoria Rennie Ian Anderson Ian Walton Daniel Rattigan Bernie Dean Marianne Paynter
Catholic Schools Parents Association Contact Inc Department of Communications & the Arts	
Department of Human Services	
Department of Social Services	
Education NSW	
NBN Co - SPONSOR Regional Telecommunications Review Independent Committee (RTRIC) Better Internet for Regional, Rural & Remote Australia (BIRRR)	
Royal Far West Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Assoc.	
Telstra -MAJOR SPONSOR	
Abbotsleigh NSW Fairholme College QLD	
Finigan School of DE NSW Immanuel College SA Knox Grammar School NSW	

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

New England Girls School NSW

Kelly Smitham

Stephanie Thomas

Southport School QLD

Tony Watt

St Ignatius College NSW

John Newey

St Joseph's Nudgee College QLD

Peter Fullager

Susan Shakespear

St Peters Lutheran College SA

Stuart Delaney

Kim Holman

Stuartholme School QLD

Kristen Sharpe

Kate Reddan

The Kings Schools NSW

Malcolm Powys

Peter Rueben

Tudor House NSW

Tim Jenkinson

CONFERENCE APOLOGIES

Conference Apologies

Members

Mrs Teresa Cobb	Federal Life Member
Mrs Julia Materne	Federal Life Member
Ms Judy Sinclair-Newton	Immediate Past Federal President
Mrs Kerry Williams	SA ICPA State President
Mrs Tiani Cook	NT ICPA State President
Mrs Gillian Semple	Qld ICPA Inc. Secretary
Mrs Lynelle Urquart	Qld ICPA Inc. Webmaster
Mrs Yvonne Bauer	Lone Member NT
Mrs Jeanette De Landgraft	Lakes District Branch WA
Mrs Margaret Duncombe	Hughenden Branch, Qld
Mrs Colleen Harvey	Walgett Branch, NSW
Mrs Jo Murphy	Hughenden Branch, Qld
Ms Beck Smith	Channel Country Branch Qld
Moonie Branch	Moonie Branch, Qld

Guests

Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP	Prime Minister for Australia
Hon Michael McCormack MP	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham	Minister for Education and Training
Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield	Minister for Communications and the Arts
Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie	Minister for Regional Communications, Health and Sport
Hon John McVeigh MP	Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government
Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion	Minister for Indigenous Affairs
Hon Dan Tehan MP	Minister for Social Services
Hon Karen Andrews MP	Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills
Hon Mark Coulton MP	Assistant Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment
Ms Jane Prentice MP	Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability
Hon Linda Burney MP	Shadow Minister for Human Services
Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP	Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Mr Stephen Jones MP	Shadow Minister for Regional Comms & Services, Territories & Local Govt
Hon Amanda Rishworth MP	Shadow Minister for Early Childhood & Development
Ms Gai Brodtmann MP	Shadow Assistant Minister for Cyber Security and Defence
Hon Terri Butler MP	Shadow Asst Minister for Young Australians, Youth Affairs, Unis & Equality

CONFERENCE APOLOGIES

Hon Bob Katter MP	Federal Member for Kennedy, QLD
Hon Luke Hartsuyker MP	Federal Member for Cowper NSW
Hon Michelle Landry MP	Federal Member for Capricornia, QLD
Ms Ann Sumalis MP	Federal Member for Gilmore NSW
Senator Eric Abetz	Senator for Tasmania
Senator Slade Brockman	Senator for WA
Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck	Senator for Tasmania
Senator Di Natale	Senator for Tasmania
Senator Pauline Hanson	Senator for QLD
Senator Sarah Hanson-Young	Senator for SA
Senator Kristina Keneally	Senator for NSW
Senator Hanisha Kitching	Senator for Victoria
Senator Jennifer McAllister	Senator for NSW
Senator Malanrdirri McCarthy	Senator for NT
Senator Nick McKim	Senator for Tasmania
Senator Jim Molan	Senator for NSW
Senator the Hon Arthur Sinodinos AO	Senator for NSW
Senator John Williams	Senator for NSW
Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk MP	Premier of QLD and Minister for Trade
Hon Donna Faragher MLC	Member for East Metropolitan Region WA
Hon Adele Farina BA, LLB, MLC	Member for SW Region WA
Ms Bronnie Taylor MLC	Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Premier and Southern NSW
Hon Dan van Holst Pellekaan MP	Member for Stuart SA
Mr Tony Cook	Director-General for Aust Govt Dept of Education and Training
Ms Patrea Walton	Deputy Director-General, State Schools Division, Dept of Ed, Qld
Mr Mark Scott	Secretary to the Department of Education, NSW
Mr Allan Blagaich	ED, School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Dept of Education, WA
Jan & Ray Blick	Managers for Boarding, Allison House, Broken Hill NSW 2880
Matt Curran	Director of Boarding, Kinross Wolaroi School, Orange, NSW
Ms Ros Curtis	Principal, St Margaret's College, Brisbane, Qld
Mr Nigel Fairburn	Principal, Blackheath & Thornburgh College, Charters Towers, QLD
Dr Geoff Newcombe AM	Chief Executive Officer, Association of Independent Schools of NSW
Mr Tom Alegounarias	Chairperson of NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Board
Ms Roslyn Schumann	State President, SA Country Women's Association Inc.
Mr Bjorn Christie-Johnston	Project Manager, Remote Indigenous Parents' Association (RIPA) National
Ms Fleur McDonald	Australian Author

Financial Statements

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc. (the association) which comprises the balance sheet as at 31 May 2018, and the income statement, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the management committee.

Management Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The management committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and have determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial report, are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The management committee's responsibilities also include establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies, and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report 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 entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluation the overall presentation of the financial report.

The financial report has been prepared to distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the committee's financial reporting under the Associations Incorporation Act. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence

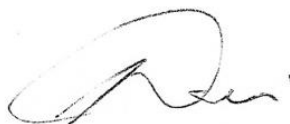
In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

Qualification

As is common for organisations of this type, it is not practicable for the association to maintain an effective system of internal control over receipts and other fund raising activities until their initial entry in the accounting records. Accordingly, our audit in relation to receipts was limited to amounts recorded.

Qualified Audit Opinion

In our opinion, except for the effects of such adjustments, if any, that might have been determined to be necessary had the limitation referred to in the qualification paragraph not existed, the financial report of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc presents fairly, in all material respects the financial position of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc as of 31 May 2018 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.



T. P DAVIS FCA

Horizon Accounting Group
21 Russell Street
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

9 July 2018

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2018

2017		2018
	INCOME	
154.55	Badges / Pins	533.42
5,095.87	Interest Received	6,246.56
8,983.00	Donations - Branch	21,800.00
6,319.76	Donations - Other	26.35
4,271.82	Federal Conference	48,688.22
34,000.00	Government Grants	34,000.00
53,100.00	Membership	63,612.81
-	Membership - Tas Online collected	525.00
1,947.05	Sundry Income	1,472.41
5,134.71	Accommodation Reimbursement	1,493.64
10,750.00	Sponsorship (Conference)	10,750.00
<u>129,756.76</u>		<u>189,148.41</u>
	EXPENDITURE	
1,680.00	Audit Fees	1,850.00
997.07	Badges, Pins, Flags etc	981.45
114.34	Bank Fees	104.00
24,025.04	Canberra Delegation Expenses	14,614.66
200.00	Computer Software	200.00
-	Donations	600.00
34,320.53	Federal Conference - Councillor Expenses	35,794.88
27,727.27	Federal Conference Convening Committee	30,909.09
1,630.25	Insurance	1,738.76
3,615.90	Mini Delegation	-
9,107.29	Meetings Face to Face	28,012.08
6,245.94	Meetings Other Expenses	3,692.45
719.45	Memberships	580.26
-	Membership Fees - Tasmania Online Membership disbursement	525.00
31.23	Postage	543.34
466.36	Repairs	454.55
6,795.51	State Conferences	3,705.27
2,113.66	Stationery and Office Supplies	1,992.58
2,600.57	Sundry Expenses	6,885.25
434.50	Telephone/Fax/Internet	-
657.27	Web Page Expenses	3,217.17
-	Website Online Membership	6,542.73
<u>123,482.18</u>		<u>142,943.52</u>
<u>6,274.58</u>	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR	<u>46,204.89</u>

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MAY 2018

2017		2018
	CURRENT ASSETS	
487.78	ANZ Business Extra	-
-	Suncorp Business Everyday	3,573.12
311,032.72	Suncorp Business Saver	340,776.21
12.93	Suncorp Dept Ed Grant	23,351.85
6,456.60	Suncorp General	4,999.59
7,048.00	Suncorp Membership	-
2,349.08	Suncorp Pat Edgley Memorial	0.93
2,109.56	GST Receivable	1,414.92
-	ANZ Credit Card	33.54
<u>329,496.67</u>	TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>374,150.16</u>
	NON CURRENT ASSETS	
<u>-</u>	TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	<u>-</u>
329,496.67	TOTAL ASSETS	374,150.16
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
1,556.40	ANZ Credit Card	-
-	Suncorp Membership	5.00
<u>1,556.40</u>	TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>5.00</u>
	NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	
<u>-</u>	TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>-</u>
1,556.40	TOTAL LIABILITIES	5.00
<u>327,940.27</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>374,145.16</u>
	ACCUMULATED FUNDS	
321,665.69	Balance at beginning of year	327,940.27
6,274.58	Net Surplus / (Deficit) for year	46,204.89
<u>327,940.27</u>	Total Accumulated Funds	<u>374,145.16</u>

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2018

NOTE 1 - STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is a special purpose financial report 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 and 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 (WA) 1987 is maintained.

Mortgages

There were no Mortgages, Charges or Securities over this Association at the date of this report.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2018

NOTE 2 - BRANCH DONATIONS

	2018	2017
Alpha	3,000.00	-
Arcadia Valley	200.00	200.00
Belyando-Mount Coolon	500.00	-
Bourke	100.00	100.00
Charters Towers	1,000.00	-
Clermont	1,500.00	3,000.00
Cloncurry	5,000.00	2,000.00
Hughenden	-	283.00
Hyden	1,000.00	-
Katherine	5,000.00	-
Kindon	-	500.00
Lakes District	500.00	-
Longreach	-	1,000.00
Louth	500.00	500.00
Mount Isa	500.00	-
Richmond	-	400.00
Tambo	2,000.00	-
Winton	1,000.00	1,000.00
	<u>21,800.00</u>	<u>8,983.00</u>

NOTE 3 - UNSPENT GRANT MONEY

In accordance with the accounting policies grants are recognised as revenue when received.

The committee advised that the following grants were unspent at year end

Pat Edgley Memorial	0.93	2,349.08
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FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE 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 2018

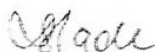
In our opinion

- a) The accompanying financial report presents fairly the state of affairs of the Project as at 31 May 2018 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 account of the Association.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Committee



President
Wendy Hick



Treasurer
Lisa Slade

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	Kate Thompson
	Jean Cashmore (resigned Nov 2017)
	Di Skene
	Alana Moller
	Caroline Robinson
	Jane O'Brien (Membership Officer)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC
REGIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016-2019
GRANT ACQUITTAL
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2018

2017		2018
	INCOME	
34,000.00	Grants Received	34,000.00
87.18	Interest Received	141.31
3,400.00	GST Received	3,400.00
37,487.18		37,541.31
	EXPENDITURE	
6.00	Bank Charges	0
5,682.73	Canberra Delegation Expenses	6,936.09
16,277.03	Federal Conference Expenses	13,152.90
7,183.42	Meetings	7,568.71
2,697.60	State Conferences	6,618.06
3,428.85	GST Paid	3,118.88
569.45	Membership	0.00
1,630.25	Insurance	0.00
37,475.33		37,394.64
11.85	SURPLUS FOR YEAR	146.67

BANK RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

1.08	Opening Balance	12.93
37,487.18	Plus Receipts	37,541.31
-37,475.33	Less Payments	-37,394.64
12.93	Closing Balance	159.60

Balance per Bank Statement at 31/05/2018	23,351.85
Outstanding Reimbursement to General Account	-
	23,192.25
	159.60

THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC
REGIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
GRANT ACQUITTAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2018

Auditors Certification

I have audited the attached Grant Acquittal – Income Statement for the period 1 June 2017 – 31 May 2018.

In my opinion that Statement has been drawn to present fairly the relevant financial transactions for the period 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2018.

A qualified audit opinion was issued on the 2017/2018 annual financial statement 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.



T. P DAVIS FCA

Horizon Accounting Group
21 Russell Street
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

9 July 2018

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Membership as at 31st May 2018

NEW SOUTH WALES	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
BALRANALD	38	44	54	56	47
BOOMI	12	18	11	20	19
BOURKE	36	35	24	28	29
BREWARRINA	14	18	15	18	19
BROKEN HILL	41	46	37	33	37
BULLARAH	18	7	14	12	12
CENTRAL WEST PLAINS (FORMERLY TOTTENHAM)	98	92	95	92	92
COBAR	6	7	0	0	Recess
COLLARENEBRI-MUNGINDI	13	10	16	11	19
CONDOBOLIN	8	10	8	12	13
CORINELLA	7	0	0	0	Recess
GOOLGOWI	15	14	11	13	13
HAY	86	79	80	78	74
HILLSTON	14	11	11	0	Recess
LIGHTNING RIDGE-GOODDOGA	15	15	2	8	9
LONE MEMBERS NSW	97	97	69	103	122
LORD HOWE ISLAND	10	14	10	11	11
LOUTH	17	14	17	26	24
MONARO	30	26	21	31	31
MOREE	17	18	23	15	24
NAMOI (FORMERLY BURREN JUNCTION)	59	54	50	43	48
NORTH WEST SLOPES					8
NYNGAN	33	27	25	30	25
PAROO	0	0	6	Recess	Recess
QUAMBONE	50	42	42	39	35
RANKINS SPRINGS	42	40	36	33	25
TIBOOBURRA-MILPARINKA	14	12	13	11	14
TILPA	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
VERMONT HILL	18	19	17	18	10
WALGETT	52	42	39	35	43
WARRUMBUNGLE	0	23	2	1	Recess
WENTWORTH	recess	recess	17	17	24
WEST WYALONG	6	3	8	2	Recess
TOTAL	866	837	773	796	827

NORTHERN TERRITORY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
ALICE SPRINGS	39	43	48	44	51
BARKLY	recess	recess	recess	closed	closed
KATHERINE	55	56	52	52	64
LONE MEMBERS NT	9	11	10	10	14
TOTAL	103	110	110	106	129

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

QUEENSLAND	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
ALPHA	20	27	36	28	32
ARAMAC-MUTTABURRA	28	25	34	30	35
ARCADIA VALLEY	14	12	14	16	18
AUBURN-BURRANDOWAN-CADARGA	37	13	11	13	32
AUGATHELLA	7	9	8	14	22
BELYANDO-MT COOLON	41	40	32	43	49
BLACKALL	30	38	33	0	34
BOLLON	19	15	21	1	16
BOULIA-BEDOURIE-BIRDSVILLE	11	15	15	16	15
CAPRICORNIA B.O.T.A.	20	16	19	21	22
CHANNEL COUNTRY	5	8	0	0	5
CHARLEVILLE	21	19	20	25	20
CHARLEVILLE B.O.T.A.	11	10	10	9	10
CHARTERS TOWERS	44	47	58	46	56
CLARKE CREEK	13	12	15	17	18
CLERMONT	53	31	52	44	55
CLONCURRY	8	12	9	14	10
CUNNAMULLA	14	9	12	22	28
DAWSON VALLEY	18	16	15	10	17
DIRRANBANDI	29	26	27	27	29
DUNKELD	0	closed	closed	closed	closed
FAR NORTH QLD (FORMERLY CAIRNS RADIO)	26	1	31	0	32
HUGHENDEN	31	31	27	16	16
JULIA CREEK	28	26	25	19	32
KINDON	25	26	29	28	31
LONE MEMBERS QLD	24	26	24	15	38
LONGREACH	40	41	34	22	0
McKINLAY	9	0	11	0	34
MITCHELL-TOMOO	33	37	43	38	25
MOONIE	29	29	29	26	35
MT ISA B.O.T.A.	24	27	30	37	9
NEBO	0	13	14	0	18
NORTH BURNETT (FORMERLY EIDSVOLD-CRACOW)	7	0	7	13	25
QUILPIE	17	20	39	29	32
RICHMOND	22	23	13	18	17
ROMA	24	27	21	23	30
SOUTHERN DOWNS (FORMERLY STANTHORPE)	27	36	33	36	31
SPRINGSURE/ROLLESTON	18	10	0	0	21
ST GEORGE	41	39	37	41	49
TALWOOD	27	33	22	4	9
TAMBO	27	32	30	24	27
TAROOM-WANDOAN	35	33	33	42	39
THARGOMINDAH	11	6	8	0	1
WESTERN DOWNS (FORMERLY CONDOMINE-WESTERN DOWNS)	29	34	33	34	37
WESTMAR-INGLESTONE	50	52	58	64	53
WINTON	37	37	33	33	40
YARAKA-ISISFORD	26	30	30	34	31
TOTAL	1110	1069	1135	992	1235

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

SOUTH AUSTRALIA	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
EYRE	7	10	0	aw	0
FAR WEST	12	1	1	1	0
FLINDERS RANGES	20	25	23	18	26
LONE MEMBERS SA	11	9	8	10	10
MARLA-ODNADATTA	6	7	7	16	13
MARREE AIR	13	13	14	16	18
NORTH EAST DISTRICTS	17	17	13	11	11
NORTH WEST	8	8	10	7	8
PORT AUGUSTA	15	10	9	11	16
TOTAL	109	100	85	90	102

TASMANIA	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CENTRAL HIGHLANDS	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
EAST COAST	19	14	18	19	18
LONE MEMBERS TAS	8	5	5	16	14
MIDLANDS (FORMERLY KNOWN AS OATLANDS)	9	17	11	7	8
TOTAL	36	36	34	42	40

WESTERN AUSTRALIA	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CENTRAL WHEATBELT NORTH (FORMERLY KALANNIE)	23	22	33	35	29
ESPERANCE	18	25	21	26	27
GASCOYNE	10	12	16	12	18
GOLDFIELDS EYRE (FORMERLY KALGOORLIE AIR)	18	16	18	16	12
HYDEN	40	31	33	47	46
KIMBERLEY AIR	10	8	8	10	12
KONDININ - closed March 2014	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
LAKES DISTRICT	48	48	49	52	44
LONE MEMBERS WA	32	31	34	30	36
MEEKATHARRA AIR	17	20	14	15	16
MIDWEST	58	41	48	51	49
PILBARA	16	11	14	18	17
YALGOO	7	8	9	10	9
TOTAL	297	273	297	322	315

AUSTRALIA WIDE MEMBERSHIP TOTALS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
New South Wales	866	837	773	796	827
Northern Territory	103	110	110	106	129
Queensland	1110	1069	1135	992	1235
South Australia	109	100	85	90	102
Tasmania	36	36	34	42	40
Western Australia	297	273	297	322	315
TOTAL	2521	2425	2434	2348	2648

FINANCIAL BRANCHES 31st May 2018

New South Wales	26
Northern Territory	3
Queensland	44
South Australia	7
Tasmania	3
Western Australia	12
TOTAL	95