

Isolated Children's Parents' Association  
of Australia Incorporated



# Minutes

of the

49<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

**Rural Education**  
**Learn from the Past, Build the Future**

5 and 6 August 2020

Web Conference

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### **Index to Motions by Portfolio Areas**

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)

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

M1(A4), M2(A10), M3(A6), M4(A7), M5(A5), M6(A8),  
M7(A9), M8(S2)

#### **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

M28(A11), M29(A13), M30(A12)

#### **RURAL SCHOOLS/SCHOOL TRAVEL**

M31(A14), M32(A15), M33(A16)

#### **SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS**

M22(A17), M23(A18), M24(A19)

#### **TERTIARY EDUCATION**

M9(A20), M10(S1)

#### **TRAINING**

M11(A21)

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

M34(A22), M35(A23), M36(A24), M37(F1)

#### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

M12(A30), M13(A31), M14(A32), M15(A25), M16(A26),  
M17(A27), M18(A28), M19(A29), M20(A33), M21(S3)

**ICPA Federal Council 2019 - 2020**

**President**

Mrs Alana Moller  
Clermont QLD

**Vice President**

Mrs Sally Sullivan  
Mataranka NT

**Secretary**

Mrs Suzanne Wilson  
Darwin NT

**Assistant Secretary**

Mrs Kate Thompson  
York Plains TAS

**Treasurer**

Mrs Lisa Slade  
Blinman SA

**Publicity Officer** (Aug 19)

Mr Hamish Griffin  
Cloncurry QLD

**Publicity Officer** (Aug 19-Mar 20)

Mrs Nikki Macqueen  
Millmerran QLD

**Publicity Officer** (Mar 20-Aug 20)

Ms Jo Camilleri  
Kimberley WA

**Imm. Past President**

Mrs Wendy Hick  
Camooweal QLD

**Committee**

Mrs Jane Morton  
Clifton QLD

**Committee**

Mrs Christie Goddard  
Bollon QLD

**Committee**

Mrs Kristen Coggan  
Condamine QLD

**Committee**

Ms Jo Camilleri  
Kimberley WA

**Committee**

Mrs Di Skene  
Brookstead QLD

**Committee**

Mrs Briony Sinclair  
Western Downs QLD

**PEDALS Editor**

Mrs Raelene Hall  
Meekatharra WA

**Federal Webmaster**

Mrs Nikki Macqueen  
Millmerran QLD

**ICPA Website Manager**

Mrs Sue Shotton  
Winnellie NT

**ICPA Federal Council 2020 - 2021**

**President**

Mrs Alana Moller  
Clermont QLD

**Vice President**

Mrs Sally Sullivan  
Mataranka NT

**Secretary**

Mrs Suzanne Wilson  
Darwin NT

**Assistant Secretary**

Mrs Kate Thompson  
York Plains TAS

**Treasurer**

Mrs Lisa Slade  
Blinman SA

**Publicity Officer**

Ms Jo Camilleri  
Kimberley WA

**Imm. Past President**

Mrs Wendy Hick  
Camooweal QLD

**Committee**

Mrs Nikki Mahony  
Dawson Valley QLD

**Committee**

Mrs Kristen Coggan  
Condamine QLD

**Committee**

Mrs Nikki Macqueen  
Millmerran QLD

**Committee**

Mrs Jane O'Brien  
Walgett NSW

**Committee**

Mrs Briony Sinclair  
Western Downs QLD

**Committee**

Mrs Kim Hughes  
Richmond QLD

**PEDALS Editor**

Mrs Raelene Hall  
Meekatharra WA

**Federal Webmaster**

Mrs Nikki Macqueen  
Millmerran QLD

**ICPA Website Manager**

Mrs Sue Shotton  
Winnellie NT

## Learn from the Past, Build the Future

### Conference Program Day 1 - Wednesday 5 August 2020

10:30am	<b>National Anthem</b>	The Hutchins School, Hobart 'Pride' Choir
	<b>Official Opening of Conference</b>	Her Excellency Professor the Hon Kate Warner, AC, Governor of Tasmania
	<b>Introduction of Delegates</b>	Mrs Suzanne Wilson
	<b>Confirmation of 2019 Adelaide Conference Minutes</b>	Mrs Sally Sullivan
	<b>Federal ICPA President's Report</b>	Mrs Alana Moller
11:30am	<b>Communications Portfolio Presentation</b> <i>Communications Agenda Motions – Telephone</i>	Mrs Kristen Coggan
11:45am	<b>Presentation – Telstra</b>  <i>Communications Agenda Motions – Internet</i>	Ms Jules Scarlett Government, Regional Affairs and Sustainability Executive
12:20pm	<b>Presentation - nbn™ Update</b>	Gavin Williams Chief Development Officer, Rural and Remote
12:30pm	<b>Break</b>	
1:00pm	<b>Queensland ICPA President's Report</b>	Ms Tammie Irons
	<b>Early Childhood Education Portfolio Presentation</b> <i>Early Childhood Education Agenda Motions</i>	Mrs Jane Morton
	<b>Tasmania ICPA State President's Report</b>	Mrs Kate Thompson
	<b>Rural Schools/School Travel Portfolio Presentation</b> <i>Rural Schools Agenda Motions</i> <i>School Travel Agenda Motions</i>	Ms Jo Camilleri
	<b>Western Australia ICPA President's Report</b>	Mrs Sally Brindal
	<b>Tertiary Portfolio Presentation</b> <i>Tertiary Agenda Motions</i>	Mrs Kate Thompson
	<b>Presentation - Certificate of Appreciation to Julia Materne</b>	Mrs Alana Moller
	<b>Training Portfolio Presentation</b> <i>Training Agenda Motions</i>	Mrs Sally Sullivan
	<b>Curriculum Portfolio Presentation</b>	Mrs Wendy Hick
	<b>Northern Territory ICPA President's Report</b>	Mrs Sarah Cook
	<b>Introduction of candidates for Federal Council</b>	
3.30pm	<b>Close of Business Day 1</b>  <i>Conference Keynote Speaker – 'Happy Hour with Robyn Moore' - 6pm – 7pm AEST</i>	

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### Conference Program Day 2 - Thursday 6 August 2020

<b>10:30am</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting</b>	
<b>12:30pm</b>	<b>Conference resumes</b>	
	<b>Presentation – Dolly’s Dream</b>	Mrs Kate Everett
	<b>New South Wales ICPA President’s Report</b>	Mrs Claire Butler
	<b>Specific Needs Portfolio Presentation</b> <i>Specific Education Needs Agenda Motions</i>	Mrs Briony Sinclair
	<b>Presentation – Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education</b>	Hon Andrew Gee MP
<b>1:35pm</b>	<b>Boarding School/School Term Hostels Portfolio Presentation</b> <i>Boarding School/School Term Hostels Agenda Motions</i>	Mrs Nikki Macqueen
<b>1:45pm</b>	<b>Distance Education Portfolio Presentation</b>	Mrs Alana Moller
	<b>Presentation</b>	Senator Amanda Stoker
	<b>Miscellaneous Agenda Motions</b>	
<b>2:00pm</b>	<i>Floor Motions Due</i>	
	<b>South Australia ICPA President’s Report</b>	Mrs Jill Greenfield
	<b>Floor Motions</b>	
	<b>Presentation to retiring councillors</b>	
	<b>Vote of Thanks</b>	
<b>3:00pm</b>	<b>Close of Conference</b>	

**DAY ONE Wednesday 5 August 2020**

**10:30am Conference commences**

**Welcome by Federal ICPA President**

Mrs Alana Moller

**National Anthem**

Performed by The Hutchins School, Hobart "Pride" Choir

**Official Opening of Conference**

Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AC, Governor of Tasmania

**Introduction of Delegates**

Mrs Suzanne Wilson

**Confirmation of the 2019 Minutes, Adelaide Conference**

"That the 2019 Federal Conference Minutes be accepted."

**Moved:** Sally Sullivan Federal Council

**Seconded:** Jane O'Brien Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**Business arising from the 2019 minutes: NIL**

**Federal ICPA President's Report**

Mrs Alana Moller

**Join Federal Council Video**

**Communications Portfolio Report**

Mrs Kristen Coggan

**Communications Agenda Motions**

**M1 (A4) Queensland State Council (QLD)**

"That ICPA Australia thanks NBN Co, Telstra, BIRRR and other communication suppliers for providing data relief and other initiatives such as SMS over Wi-Fi during the COVID-19 pandemic."

**Moved:** Kelly Ostwald Queensland State Council (QLD)

**Seconded:** Louise Martin Tambo Branch (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Communications - Telephone - Agenda Motions**

**M2 (A10) Queensland State Council (QLD)**

"That ICPA Australia requests that Telstra provide a customer end technology roadmap for the transition from existing mobile phone configurations to country 5G due in 2024."

**Moved:** Kelly Ostwald Queensland State Council (QLD)

**Seconded:** Louise Martin Tambo Branch (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Although 2024 seems a long way off at the moment, it is critical for this transition roadmap be made available as soon as possible.

Educators in rural and remote areas depend upon having the latest information readily available prior to purchasing equipment for future planning and upgrading of facilities due to the difficulties of keeping abreast with the latest technological developments when living in isolated areas.



**Telstra Presentation**

Ms Jules Scarlett

**Communications - Internet Access - Agenda Motions**

**M3 (A6) Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch (QLD)**

“That the Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch ask ICPA (Aust) to pass on thanks to Better Internet for Rural Regional and Remote (BIRRR) for working with NBN Co and all internet providers to allow an increase in internet data allowances for on-line lessons which have had to be undertaken during this COVID-19 pandemic.”

**Moved:** Kate Twist Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch (QLD)

**Seconded:** Louise Martin Tambo Branch (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**M4 (A7) Hay Branch (NSW)**

“ICPA Hay Branch thanks NBN Co for unmetering of Sky Muster data during the COVID-19 and requests the ongoing unmetering of data to ensure education quality for students in rural and remote NSW.”

**Moved:** Monique Watkin Hay Branch (NSW)

**Seconded:** Sandra Ireson Hay Branch (NSW)

**Amendment to the motion** – Proposed by Louise Martin, Tambo Branch (QLD)

Change ‘NSW’ to ‘Australia’

**Conference Permission granted for the amendment and the amendment becomes the motion and voted upon.**

**Tambo Branch (QLD)**

“ICPA Hay Branch thanks NBN Co for unmetering of Sky Muster data during the COVID-19 and requests the ongoing unmetering of data to ensure education quality for students in rural and remote Australia”.

**Moved:** Louise Martin Tambo Branch (QLD)

**Seconded:** Kelly Ostwald Queensland State Council (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The unmetering of video meeting sites such as Zoom, allowed rural and remote students to continue their education during the lockdown conditions. This decision was a significant move towards educational equality.

Results from the Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2019 support the continued unmetering of data beyond the COVID-19 arrangements.

The index provides a national, state and regional level view of digital inclusion in Australia across three dimensions: Access, Affordability and Digital Ability. Scores are 0-100 relative to the perfectly digitally included person.

The Murray and Murrumbidgee Area (in which the Hay Branch falls) has the lowest scores in NSW for Access, Affordability and Digital Ability. With an overall score of just 53, the region has an obvious deficit in comparison to other parts of NSW. The region has the lowest internet data allowance in NSW. This has an impact on the equity for our student’s education. The continued unmetering of

data would be a proactive move towards an increase in the digital inclusion index score for our members.

**M5 (A5) New South Wales State Council (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) thanks NBN Co for supplying families with extra data during COVID-19.”

**Moved:** Claire Butler New South Wales State Council (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Laura Stalley Hillston Branch (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**M6 (A8) Alice Springs Branch (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Education and the Minister for Communications and other relevant Ministers to ask for a National directive stating that ‘geographically isolated students attending schools of distance education have the costs of their internet connections including the Education Port, used for education, reimbursed by the respective State or Territory Government.”

**Moved:** Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)  
**Seconded:** Sarah Cook Northern Territory State Council (NT)

**LOST**

**Explanation:**

Families should not have to pay for their own internet to facilitate their children’s compulsory, ‘free’ education via a public education system such as School of the Air. For many families this is their reality - wearing the costs of high speed internet connections so their children have access to the face-to-face lessons their children receive as part of the daily distance education delivery, a compulsory component, as outlined by the NT Department of Education.

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

We would like to ensure that when families are required to provide their own internet for their children who attend school via distance education, they are remunerated for the full cost of the service. We are concerned that children are not able to access adequate data to cover remote lessons, downloading work, uploading work etc. as this involves more data and in turn more costs to the family. Children being educated via distance education should be able to access enough data without placing financial strain on the family budget. We do not want to see limits placed on download, speed, and capabilities of internet connections that are used for education for isolated students regardless of the service being provided by the school or a private connection provided by the family.

**M7 (A9) Alice Springs Branch (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, and other relevant political figures to work proactively and cooperatively with companies attempting to bring universal broadband internet to Australia,

including alternative satellite-based internet services and technologies, which would improve access to equitable education for all students in rural, regional and remote Australia.”

**Moved:** Sarah Cook Northern Territory State Council (NT)  
**Seconded:** Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Internet woes are always high on the agenda for ICPA members. Cheap, universally accessible fast internet with large download limits could be available in Australia within 2 years. This would be a boon to many remote families who struggle with various aspects of their current internet connection. It would be especially welcome to travelling families, for whom there is no current affordable or practical solution for internet provision.

SpaceX’ Starlink system is the most advanced and promising universal broadband internet system. It is anticipated to provide a 480Mbit/sec connection (10x faster than the new Sky Muster Plus service), with a latency of 35 milliseconds or less for around \$125/month. The download limit is unknown but is anticipated to far exceed Sky Muster’s. The connection equipment will cost around \$500 and should be able to be installed by the end user. Additionally, Starlink could be used for 4G and 5G small cell backhaul, allowing cheaper expansion and upgrade of mobile phone networks into remote areas. All this by the end of 2021.

The ACMA recently included SpaceX on Australia’s Foreign Space Objects Determination. However, SpaceX must still acquire from the ACMA the appropriate Space Apparatus Licences and licences for using part of the radio frequency spectrum before they can offer a service in Australia. It would be a shame if such a beneficial opportunity was lost to remote families due to red tape and political point-scoring.

SpaceX has had resistance from several fronts. Foxtel, a service which is fast becoming obsolete, has voiced concerns to the ACMA over radio spectrum allocations. Astronomers have been worried about the brightness of the Starlink satellites. SpaceX is also worried that the ACMA will limit Starlink services unnecessarily to remote areas, reducing their potential market share.

All of these issues can be addressed satisfactorily if they do not become political battlegrounds. Frequency allocation should be able to be addressed satisfactorily for Foxtel by the ACMA, but if push comes to shove Australia should be considering whether they want to prop up a dying company just because it’s Australian, at the expense of a cutting-edge infrastructure that will benefit the Australian economy and remote education. Astronomers are happy with SpaceX’s commendable collaborative approach, and Starlink satellites are iteratively improving on that front. It is anticipated that Starlink satellites will not impinge on naked-eye views of the night sky. As for astronomy, SpaceX re-usable rockets and low launch costs are opening up the possibility of a Hubble-like space-based astronomy era. And at the end of the day, should Australia be supporting the probing of galaxies millions of light-years away at the expense of Australian children’s education? In terms of limiting SpaceX’s Australian ISP market share, surely Australia can find other ways of getting the foreign company SpaceX to contribute to the economy through taxation, local employment etc.

Starlink satellites already have FAA approval in the USA (FAA is the USA’s ACMA equivalent). This means Starlink satellites will be whizzing over our heads regardless of what Australia decides to do with them. It would be most unfortunate if remote Australian families couldn’t make the most of them for their children’s education. A can-do attitude is needed to ensure we do not miss out.

In the ACMA’s spectrum management consultation paper, April 2020, they state: “Under current law, specific allocation processes depend on ACMA and, in some cases, Ministerial decisions made during the planning and allocation stages, and reflect other relevant government policy considerations about planning priorities. Information from incumbent and prospective spectrum users about the demand for access to specific bands and the timing of any possible allocation will also provide important input to allocation decisions.” The ACMA periodically consults stakeholders on upcoming decisions. It would be great if the ICPA (Aust) could monitor and submit papers into these discussions on behalf of ICPA member families in their quest for affordable and adequate internet. Keeping the perspective of remote families in the ears of politicians and ministers on these matters is also important.

**Communications - Mobile Coverage/Service - Agenda Motions**

**M8 (S2) Namoi Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Ministers to obtain a rebate for rural and remote customers who will need to upgrade equipment (aerials and boosters) to change from 3G to 4G.”

**Conference’s permission for a word change** requested by Wendy Hick, Federal Council on behalf of Namoi, NSW.

**Remove** – ‘who will need’, and the ‘to’ between 3G & 4G,

**Insert** ‘to other technologies’ after 4G,

**Move** ‘rural and remote customers’ to after technologies and

**Insert** ‘who use mobile broadband for education’

**Conference Permission Granted for word changes.**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Ministers to obtain a rebate to upgrade equipment (aerials and boosters) to change from 3G/4G to other technologies for rural and remote customers who use mobile broadband for education”.

**Moved:** Wendy Hick Federal Council on behalf of Namoi Branch (NSW)

**Seconded:** Jane O’Brien Federal Council on behalf of Namoi Branch (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

We feel that with the changing over from 3G to 4G that the cost should not be a further burden on rural and remote customers. In some areas in the North West there are large gaps or distances between towers and some towers have been upgraded to 4G and others are still 3G. If you have old aerials and devices, they do not work on the 4G system. This is not a cheap exercise, and, in some cases, we are doing this just to get some service – not even a great service.

**Presentation - nbn™ Update**

Chief Development Officer, Rural and Remote

Mr Gavin Williams

**Queensland ICPA President’s Report**

Ms Tammie Irons

**Presentation**

Video “Cave Creek COVID Refugee Camp”

Mrs Sally Sullivan

**Tertiary Agenda Motions**

**M9 (A20) Western Downs Branch (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers to review the self-supporting criteria for Independent Youth Allowance for Regional and Remote students impacted by ‘COVID-19’ in 2020. That the 75% of wage Level A earnings be reduced in 2020 to compensate those impacted by being unable to or having reduced work hours, due to Government mandated shutdowns of certain industries.”

**Moved:** Miranda Ronnfeldt Western Downs Branch (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Kelly Ostwald Queensland State Council (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

RE: Independent Youth Allowance 2020 Gap year Students Meeting 75% of National Training Wage Schedule rate due to coronavirus pandemic.

A lot of prospective tertiary students take a gap year and work prior to starting their tertiary studies in order to qualify for independent status to access Independent Youth Allowance. There will be a portion of school leavers on a Gap Year this year (2020) working in hospitality for example, and other industries, who may not meet the threshold of earnings (75% of the National Training Wage schedule rate) to qualify because they could not work during the shutdown period caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

In our case, my daughter took a gap year with the intention of working and earning enough money during this time to qualify for Independent Youth Allowance and attend University in 2021. With both parents PAYG employees she would not qualify for dependent youth allowance as our combined income was above the threshold \*\$51 903. She secured 2 casual jobs in hospitality at the end of February, with the shutdown of hospitality beginning on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. As she had only been employed for around a month, she did not qualify for Job Keeper, nor did she qualify for job seeker based on parental income. Based on a 9-week period of shutdown, she has potentially lost \$8100 income during this period based on \$900 per week earnings. While some venues are beginning to open most are on reduced hours, and as yet my daughter is only getting 1 or 2 shifts per week with one employer and none with the other, so her ability to earn income may continue to be affected for some time.

Possible suggestions could be, a reduction in NTWS rate, annualised and then reduced by the number of weeks of the shutdown, or if a student can prove through payslips their earning capacity just prior to the shutdown, that earning capacity over the period should be added on to the schedule rate on a case by case basis.

The failure of Government to address this issue will have a severe impact on students, in many cases taking away their means to attend University.

**M10 (S1) Western Australia State (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Education Minister, Hon Dan Tehan MP, to review the Government’s recent decision to increase university course fees for humanities, commerce and law.”

**Moved:** Sally Brindal Western Australia State Council (WA)  
**Seconded:** Kym Ross Western Australia State Council (WA)

**LOST**

**Explanation:**

When choosing a university course, it is commonplace for students to choose an area of study that interests them. Increasing the fees of courses will only serve to put students into even more debt.

Students should not be restricted from studying their degree of choice due to increased financial concerns. It is proven that it is easier to learn and excel in a topic if you are interested in that subject. The best outcomes are as a result of matching disciplines and the talents of those who wish to study them.

Minister Tehan is offering cheaper degrees to students in subject areas where jobs are most needed. "What this is about is incentivising people to look at allied health, to look at engineering, to look at IT," he said.

What we need are the best people for the job, the people who are passionate about the job, not the people who chose the degrees because they are the cheapest.

Where will we find the teachers for our high schools if they cannot afford to study their humanities degree, before going into teaching and being that specialised teacher at high school?

The incentives to encourage students to study subjects that are projected to become employment hotspots should not be at the expense of other areas of study.

**Tasmania ICPA President's Report**

Mrs Kate Thompson

**Presentation**

Certificate of Appreciation presented to Julia Materne

Mrs Alana Moller

**Training Agenda Motion**

**M11 (A21) Richmond Branch (Qld)**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to ensure assistance packages/schemes like the Coronavirus Supplement, which are established to support young people through times of specific economic impacts, include rural and remote apprentices and trainees receiving the federal Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA)."

**Moved:** Kim Hughes Richmond Branch (QLD)

**Seconded:** Megan Easton Richmond Branch (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The COVID 19 pandemic has placed a huge amount of financial and emotional strain on rural and remote apprentices and trainees who are living away from home to undertake their chosen career path.

At present, only those eligible for Youth Allowance are entitled to the Coronavirus Supplement. Recipients of the federal Living Away from Home Allowance, which is an allowance for apprentices and trainees to assist with living away from home expenses, are not eligible to receive the Coronavirus Supplement because they are not being paid Youth Allowance. Given that eligibility for LAFHA is an acknowledgement that rural and remote apprentices and trainees have had to move away from home to access their chosen vocation, our branch believes they should also be eligible for the Coronavirus Supplement and other assistance packages and schemes.

In relation to COVID-19, if their employer is not eligible for Job Keeper, these young people face significantly reduced working hours and large wage cuts with no financial support other than what their parents can provide. Apprentice and traineeship wages are already low, and cuts to hours and wages are simply unsustainable when coupled with the living expenses which come with living away from home. An example is a first-year apprentice who had his hours cut from a 38-hour week with

ample opportunity for overtime cut back to a 30-hour week with no overtime. This resulted in a gross wage of \$80.00 per day (or \$400 gross per week) for two months at the height of the pandemic restrictions.

The Australian Government needs to ensure that ALL rural and remote apprentices and trainees who must live away from home to access their vocation are supported when an economic crisis impacts their income and working environment. It cannot simply fall to their parents to support them. Given they are living away from home and are on low wages with high expenses already, these young people are incredibly vulnerable. Apprenticeships and traineeships for rural and remote people are hard to source and even harder to secure, and it is crucial that outside circumstances beyond their control do not derail these valuable career opportunities.

### **Branch Member Case Study**

Our son is 18 and commenced an apprenticeship in January 2020. He relocated to his place of employment, 500 km from his family property. He moved into a rental property, which was obviously costly and included purchasing white goods, furniture and general basic household appliances/utensils etc. On top of this was two weeks rent in advance and a bond. My son's weekly expenses include rent, electricity, food, fuel and general expenses that are necessary to live and take care of himself.

Our son didn't qualify for Dependent Youth Allowance due to the parental income test and the fact our company structure includes a family trust. My husband and myself supplement his living costs where we can to assist with his expenses and he also has a very stringent budget! He also does a lot of overtime when the opportunity is available to increase his wage per week, which, as a first-year apprentice wage is very low.

We were successful in obtaining the Living Away from Home Allowance, which is a federal rent assistance payment for apprentices and trainees who live remote and must move away from home to access their apprenticeship or traineeship.

When COVID-19 hit, our son's hours were cut back from 38 to 30 as the company he works for split the shifts, so they had two teams of mechanics to reduce the risk of infection. Our son therefore couldn't do any overtime because the workshop had to be cleaned in between shifts. Therefore, his \$513 gross wage for 38 hours per week dropped to a gross of \$80 per day for a 6-hour day. Because his employer (a large trucking company) is classified as an essential service, and trucks are still moving, they didn't qualify for the Job Keeper payment given their income hadn't dropped by the specified amount.

As our son does not receive Youth Allowance, he was not eligible for the Coronavirus Supplement, even though he IS eligible for the LAFHA, which is a recognition that he has to move away from home to access his apprenticeship.

He was therefore receiving no income assistance and was forced to survive on an extremely low wage for months. As parents, we did all we could to subsidise his living expenses, however, it seems wrong that this becomes the responsibility of the parent to ensure our son could afford to live away from home and continue his apprenticeship during this pandemic.

Our son very nearly did not continue with his apprenticeship because of the lack of financial assistance. He simply couldn't afford to live in Townsville on \$80 per day with rent, food, fuel, electricity and everything that comes with living away from home, and if we as parents weren't able to carry him through, he would have quit. Comparatively, the other first and second year apprentices at his

workplace had the option to move home with their parents to save on costs during this time of reduced working hours.

**South Australia ICPA President's Report**

Mrs Jill Greenfield

**Introduction of Federal Council Candidates**

**Conference Arrangements**

Arrangements for "Happy Hour with Robyn Moore"

Robyn Moore video clip

**4:38pm Close of Conference Day One**

**DAY TWO Thursday 6 August 2020**

**Annual General Meeting**

AGM declared open at 10:30am

Introduction of Delegates in attendance

Mrs Suzanne Wilson

**Annual General Meeting**

**AGM Motions**

**Constitution and By-Laws Change Motions**

**M12 (A30) ICPA Federal Council**

"That the amended sections of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution as circulated May 2020, be adopted at the 2020 AGM."

**Moved:** Sally Sullivan Federal Council

**Seconded:** Jane O'Brien Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**M13 (A31) ICPA Federal Council**

"That the amended sections of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (Inc) By-Laws as circulated May 2020, be adopted at the 2020 AGM."

**Moved:** Sally Sullivan Federal Council

**Seconded:** Jane O'Brien Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

By-Law 19 was expanded to reiterate the need to focus on rural and remote students' education in conference motions and presents this change for ratification.

**M14 (A32) ICPA Federal Council**

"That the updated Policies of ICPA (Aust), as adopted by Federal Council, June 2020, be ratified."

**Moved:** Sally Sullivan Federal Council

**Seconded:** Jane O'Brien Federal Council

**CARRIED**



**Treasurer's Report**

Mrs Lisa Slade

**Setting of the 2021 Membership Fees**

**M15 (A25) ICPA Federal Council**

"That the Federal membership fee remains at \$22.00 per member family for the 2021 membership year."

**Moved:** Lisa Slade Federal Council  
**Seconded:** Suzanne Wilson Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**M16 (A26) ICPA Federal Council**

"That Corporate Membership be set at \$275.00 per organisation for the 2021 membership year."

**Moved:** Lisa Slade Federal Council  
**Seconded:** Suzanne Wilson Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**M17 (A27) ICPA Federal Council**

"That school corporate membership be set at \$275.00 per school or educational institution for the 2021 membership year."

**Moved:** Lisa Slade Federal Council  
**Seconded:** Suzanne Wilson Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**Appointment of Auditor**

**M18 (A28) ICPA Federal Council**

"That D G Murdock, as consultant for RJC Evans and Co. Adelaide, be appointed as auditor for the 2020 – 2021 financial year."

**Moved:** Lisa Slade Federal Council  
**Seconded:** Suzanne Wilson Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**Adoption of Financial Statements**

**M19 (A29) ICPA Federal Council**

"That the 2019-2020 Audited Report be received and accepted."

**Moved:** Lisa Slade Federal Council  
**Seconded:** Suzanne Wilson Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**Election of Federal Council 2020 - 2021**

All positions declared vacant and the Returning Officer Mrs Judy Sinclair-Newton took the chair for the election of officers.

**President Alana Moller Clermont Branch QLD**  
 Nominated: Nikki Macqueen  
 Seconded: Kate Thompson

Kindon Branch QLD  
 Midlands Branch TAS  
**DULY ELECTED**

## 49<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Sally Sullivan</b> Nominated: Alana Moller Seconded: Nikki Macqueen	<b>Katherine Branch NT</b> Clermont Branch QLD Kindon Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Suzanne Wilson NT Lone Branch NT</b> Nominated: Lisa Slade Seconded: Sarah Cook	Flinders Ranges Branch SA Alice Springs Branch NT <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	<b>Kate Thompson Midlands Branch TAS</b> Nominated: Roxanne Morrissey Seconded: Alana Moller	Yalgoo Branch WA Clermont Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Lisa Slade</b> Nominated: Suzanne Wilson Seconded: Nikki Macqueen	<b>Flinders Ranges Branch SA</b> NT Lone Branch NT Kindon Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Publicity Officer</b>	<b>Jo Camilleri</b> Nominated: Alana Moller Seconded: Nikki Macqueen	<b>Kimberley Air Branch WA</b> Clermont Branch QLD Kindon Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Ex-Officio Immediate Past President</b>	<b>Wendy Hick</b>	
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Jane O'Brien</b> Nominated: Alana Moller Seconded: Wendy Hick	<b>Walgett Branch NSW</b> Clermont Branch QLD Mt Isa BOTA QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
	<b>Nikki Macqueen</b> Nominated: Alana Moller Seconded: Kristen Coggan	<b>Kindon Branch QLD</b> Clermont Branch QLD Western Downs Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
	<b>Nikki Mahony</b> Nominated: Sarah Cox Seconded: Nikki Macqueen	<b>Dawson Valley QLD</b> Dawson Valley Branch QLD Kindon Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
	<b>Kristen Coggan</b> Nominated: Nikki Macqueen Seconded: Briony Sinclair	<b>Western Downs Branch QLD</b> Kindon Branch QLD Western Downs Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
	<b>Briony Sinclair</b> Nominated: Kristen Coggan Seconded: Nikki Macqueen	<b>Western Downs Branch QLD</b> Western Downs Branch QLD Kindon Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
	<b>Kim Hughes</b> Nominated: Susan Bellingham Seconded: Narelle Kelly	<b>Richmond Branch QLD</b> Richmond Branch QLD Richmond Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>

**Vote of thanks to Judy Sinclair-Newton as Returning Officer**

**AGM Motions – continued**

**Conference Venue Agenda Motions**

**M20 (A33) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (WA) hosts the 2022 Federal Conference in Western Australia.”

**Moved:** Sally Brindal Western Australia State Council (WA)  
**Seconded:** Kym Ross Western Australia State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

**M21(S3) Queensland State Council (QLD)**

“That in light of 2021 being a celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> year of ICPA Australia, Federal Conference be held on the 28/29 July in the regional location of Longreach, Queensland to best reflect the grassroots of our organisation for this significant milestone year.”

**Moved:** Wendy Henning Queensland State Council (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**ICPA Web Manager Report**

Mrs Sue Shotton

**Call for any other AGM Business. Nil**

**Vote of thanks to Federal Council for the 2019-2020 year**

Mrs Alana Moller

**12:28pm AGM Closes**  
**1:00pm Conference Resumes**

**Presentation - Dolly’s Dream**

Mrs Kate Everett

**New South Wales ICPA President’s Report**

Mrs Claire Butler

**Specific Needs Agenda Motions**

**M22 (A17) Northern Territory State Council (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) urges the Minister for Health and other relevant Ministers to extend and expand the Allied Health Services delivered by telehealth and covered by the Medicare rebate to include all child health related services, including speech pathology, speech-language pathology, swallowing disorders and autism spectrum disorder, and indeed any service necessary for normal educational development of geographically isolated children.”

**Moved:** Sarah Measey Northern Territory State Council (NT)  
**Seconded:** Moira Lanzarin Northern Territory State Council (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Families living in geographically isolated regions face significant challenges in accessing diagnosis and treatment of children with learning needs due to a medical problem. Challenges include length of waiting lists to see a specialist for assessment and diagnosis, difficulty in accessing allied health professionals due to availability and the distance and expense to travel to centres and the inordinate

expense of these services. One NT family is paying \$8,000/year for speech therapy telehealth sessions, delivered with the assistance of a School of the Air.

During the recent COVID-19 crisis, the Federal Government expedited the inclusion of certain Allied Health Services covered by the Medicare rebate. These have focused to a large degree on mental health services and some autism services. Further there has been an expansion of telehealth in general. ICPA NT State Council would like to thank the Minister for Health for this expansion and request that telehealth be extended past the crisis and expanded to include vital Allied Health Services required for positive educational outcomes of geographically isolated children.

The highly positive correlation between health and education has been well documented in numerous literatures (Grossman and Kaestner (1997). "Health is assumed to affect academic performance. The probability for an individual to pass or fail a grade depends not only on his academic ability but also on his health. (Estimating Interdependence between Health and Education in a Dynamic Model - Li Gan and Guan Gong\* March 2010)<sup>1</sup>.

Internationally there is strong support for a population approach to child health and development. The landmark Canadian Early Years Study states that:

**"Societies and governments have an obligation to the future to devise systems that ensure effective parenting, support good early child development [32]."**<sup>2</sup>

"When health services are available to all children and families in the population (that is, are universal) the range of developmental outcomes narrows and more children approximate the average, that is, more children attain normal development. In contrast, the targeting of additional services and supports for children at or below the vulnerability threshold for normal development leads to a decrease in the number of children not attaining normal development.

**Targeted services focus** on children and families or communities who have *additional needs* or increased likelihood of poor health or *developmental outcomes* limiting opportunities to reach their full potential.

**Specialist or intensive tertiary services** and supports are individually tailored responses to a *particular child* and family situation that often requires high levels of expertise. For example, *specialist allied health and medical services*, paediatric care, mental health, drug and alcohol treatment services or child protection support including adoption and fostering (Adapted from [23, p.19]). "<sup>2</sup>

Further, better health results in more education; healthier students may be more efficient in studying (Perri 1984, Currie and Hyson 1999)

**The introduction of telehealth services (not already covered) covered by the Medicare rebate for Allied Health Services can not only assist individuals with special learning needs but will allow them to reach their highest academic potential and hence independence and productivity in their lives.**

1. <http://people.tamu.edu/~ganli/academic/interdependence-032010.pdf>

\* Gan: Department of Economics, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-4228, and NBER; gan@econmail.tamu.edu. Gong: School of Economics, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics; ggong@mail.shufe.edu.cn.

2. <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/nat-fram-ucfhs-html~background~australia-child>

**M23 (A18) Hillston Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Health and Federal Treasurer, to continue the Medicare rebate that has been introduced during COVID-19 to include patients wishing to access speech pathology appointments through telehealth deliveries after the temporary exceptions end on 30th September 2020.”

**Moved:** Laura Stalley Hillston Branch (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Emma Laird Hillston Branch (NSW)

**AMENDMENT to the motion** Teresa Cobb, Yaraka-Isisford (QLD) proposed an amendment –  
**Insert** ‘rural and remote’ before patients

**Conference Permission granted for the amendment and the amendment becomes the motion and voted upon.**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Health and Federal Treasurer, to continue the Medicare rebate that has been introduced during COVID-19 to include rural and remote patients wishing to access speech pathology appointments through telehealth deliveries after the temporary exceptions end on 30th September 2020.”

**CARRIED**

**Moved:** Teresa Cobb Yaraka-Isisford Branch (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Wendy Sheehan Yaraka-Isisford Branch (QLD)

**Explanation:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Australian Government added several new telehealth services to the Medicare Rebate, this included Speech Pathology to allow people to continue to have access to this service from their own home, allowing them to isolate. This has been great for families who access this service in rural and remote Australia who are already isolated, but as of October this rebate will end.

We would love this rebate to continue after the temporary date ends, so families in rural and remote Australia can continue to receive this service at an affordable rate.

We need to ensure that our children are not being disadvantaged because of where they live.

**Case Study:**

We live approximately 65km from the nearest town and our children are educated through School of the Air. Currently my son and daughter require Speech pathology, we have been using a telehealth service. We have an hour and a 45-minute appointment weekly with their therapist, which we have been able to tailor into their School of the Air program.

Having access to telehealth has meant that we have not missed any school time or had to drive lengthy distances to ensure our children are getting the help they need.

But it comes at a cost! We do get some rebate from Private health insurance, but this runs out quickly when you are doing this weekly. Our son’s lessons cost \$185 per hour and our daughter’s \$155 (45 minutes).

We have only just applied for the Medicare Rebate during the COVID-19 and due to having to take into Medicare, we are unsure of what the rebate will be off the total weekly bill.

**M24 (A19) Queensland State Council (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies relevant Federal government departments to permanently extend the COVID-19 Temporary MBS Telehealth Services to include all telehealth sessions with specialised health services including, but not limited to, Speech Pathologists, Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists.”

**Conferences permission for a Word change** requested by Wendy Henning, Queensland State Council  
**Insert** ‘for rural and remote children’ after Services.

**Conference permission granted for a word change.**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies relevant Federal government departments to permanently extend the COVID-19 Temporary MBS Telehealth Services for rural and remote children to include all telehealth sessions with specialised health services including, but not limited to, Speech Pathologists, Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists.”

**Moved:** Wendy Henning Queensland State Council (QLD)

**Seconded:** Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Rural and remote families have always faced the barrier of distance to access specialist medical services, but the introduction of telehealth services has made access to specialists much easier for rural families as well as allowing for more frequent and consistent sessions. Unfortunately, telehealth services did not attract the Medicare rebate that face-to-face sessions did, further widening the gap between rural and metropolitan families’ access to affordable health services.

**Presentation** – Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education Hon Andrew Gee MP

**Boarding School/School Term Hostels Agenda Motions**

**M25 (A1) Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld (Qld)**

“That the Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch ask ICPA (Aust) to pass on thanks to Boarding Schools through the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) for work undertaken by the schools who worked closely with boarder families to deliver online lessons during the COVID-19 Pandemic which has resulted in their temporary closure.”

**Conference’s permission for a word change** requested by Kate Twist, Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld (Qld)  
**Remove** the word ‘has’

**Conference permission granted for a word change.**

“That the Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch ask ICPA (Aust) to pass on thanks to Boarding Schools through the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) for work undertaken by the schools who worked closely with boarder families to deliver online lessons during the COVID-19 Pandemic which resulted in their temporary closure.”

**Moved:** Kate Twist Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branch (QLD)

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

**CARRIED**

**M26 (A2) New South Wales State Council (NSW)**

“That the ICPA (Aust) requests the relevant authorities to ensure the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) guidelines be adhered to with consistency across all states with regards to rural and remote education.”

**Moved:** Libby McPhee New South Wales State Council (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Laura Stalley Hillston Branch (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

After the first wave of COVID-19 when schools reopened in June, our survey of 517 people resulted in a finding that 55% of boarders had not actually returned to school. It quickly became apparent that the AHPPC guidelines for boarding students are contradictory, for example, the social distancing requirement in a boarding house under the AHPPC is much more restrictive than say, for example if those children were housed in a private house or accommodation or compared to the freedoms of a day student. This was noted by the many parents who had to relocate in motel accommodation to ensure their child could at least go to school as a day student when normally they would board. Parents could have other children stay with them in private accommodation, even sharing rooms. This is also the case for schools who have had to outsource private accommodation to house students. There are also more broad interpretations from State to State, which adds to the confusion. These guidelines really need to be implemented with the assistance and guidance of stakeholders such as ABSA, who know our families and know boarding.

**M27 (A3) Yaraka-Isisford Branch (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) closely monitors the introduction of the Religious Discrimination Bills and ensure that rural and remote students are not disadvantaged.”

**Moved:** Teresa Cobb Yaraka-Isisford Branch (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Wendy Sheehan Yaraka-Isisford Branch (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The second draft of the Religious Discrimination Bill is lengthy and interpretation is not clearly indicated in some areas. Many Boarding Schools and some Residential Colleges are operated as entities of a religious denomination. To ensure the protection of the schools, staff and subsequently students of these bodies it is important ICPA leaves no stone unturned if and when the final draft of this legislation is presented to the Parliament. Any religious body must be able to operate a commercial entity if it so wishes and maintain its identity without fear or favour. Similarly, protection needs to be given to the staff of such facilities who support the religious ethos of the organisation.

**Early Childhood Agenda Motions**

**M28 (A11) Queensland State Council (Qld)**

“That we thank ICPA Federal Council for their work and dedication around the extension of the Transitional Provisions for the Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) qualifications.”

**Moved:** Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Wendy Henning Queensland State Council (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**M29 (A13) Katherine Branch (NT)**

“That the Department of Education amend the In Home Care rules for families in remote areas to allow:

1. An educator to care for children from more than one family at the same time.
2. An educator to care for their own child whilst caring for children from another family(ies) under In Home Care.”

**Conferences permission for a word change** requested by Katie Payne, Katherine NT

**Insert** 'ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Education' and  
**Delete** 'the Department of Education'  
**Conference permission granted for a word change.**

"That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Education amend the In Home Care rules for families in remote areas to allow:

1. An educator to care for children from more than one family at the same time.
2. An educator to care for their own child whilst caring for children from another family(ies) under In Home Care."

**Moved:** Katie Payne

Katherine Branch (NT)

**Seconded:** Amber Driver

Alice Springs Branch (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The reason for this is that there are often multiple families employed by and living in the same location in remote areas (for example pastoral stations, tourism and conservation operations). Due to the remote location all staff and the educator live at the same location. Allowing an educator to care for children from more than one family in these circumstances solves the practical problem of limited accommodation – accommodating more than one educator is likely to be difficult.

It also provides the opportunity for a greater range of people to be employed in these areas (including single parents) who would otherwise be unable to take these jobs as they wouldn't have access to child care. By potentially increasing the number of children living at a location, all children will benefit from the social interaction.

Allowing an educator to care for their own children would also increase the range of people available as In Home Carers in remote areas. It is extremely difficult to find appropriately skilled people willing to live in remote areas. Allowing someone with their own child to be care for other children at the same remote location would be of great benefit.

Example 1: A single mother applies for a station hand position. She is highly qualified and prior to becoming a mother had extensive experience working on remote cattle stations. The owner of the station she has applied to also has a small child and already employs an educator through IHC. There is suitable accommodation for the mother and child but not enough for another educator. By allowing that educator to also care for the station hand's child, the station hand gets a job for which she is qualified for (it is also difficult to find good station hands so expanding the pool of people who could take these jobs is important) and both children have access to good quality child care and a playmate.  
Example 2: a guy applies for a station hand position on a remote cattle station. He and his partner have a toddler. There are no child care facilities within 200km. The managers of the station also have a toddler. By allowing the partner to become the In Home Carer (dependent on obtaining the relevant qualifications etc) the manager's child has access to high quality care, the manager(s) can concentrate on their jobs, the station hand is not separated from his partner and his partner has a fulfilling job.

The rules around Family Day Care provide a starting point for a structure to determine the appropriate number/age of children and how the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) would work in this situation. Further consultation with families living in remote areas with young children would be required to refine these structures to ensure they are practical and suitable for their situation.



**M30 (A12) Northern Territory State Council (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the relevant Federal Government Ministers to initiate a separate In Home Care program for rural and remote families who have to provide board and lodging for their educators which would result in reducing families’ gap payments for In Home Care and also ensuring the unique needs for individual families are addressed.”

**Moved:** Sarah Measey Northern Territory State Council (NT)  
**Seconded:** Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Child care was free for all families during the current pandemic, including IHC families, although In Home Care families also provide educators with board and lodgings! The Early Childhood Education Care subsidy resulted in around 50% less funding for providers during COVID-19. In order for providers to continue paying educators, especially in rural and remote areas where numbers of children receiving child care hasn’t decreased due to COVID-19, specific funding was necessary. Due to the pandemic, the Early Childhood Education Care Relief Package was announced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020. This would not have been needed if IHC did not fall under the usual Child Care subsidy funding scheme.

Families in rural and remote areas who rely on IHC educators for their own jobs and livelihoods were significantly impacted by the funding cuts and passionately express the need for a specific funding model for rural and remote families, on a case by case system.

In Home Care providers are currently not easily accessible in all areas of Australia, for example the north western corner of the NT. In one case study a provider in Sydney (Leor) needed to be contacted to cover the remote location, but the cost of paying the educator through the In Home Care provider was significantly higher than employing someone personally, even with the child care subsidy. In Home Care families also provide educators with board and lodgings on top of In Home Care arrangements.

**Rural Schools/School Travel Agenda Motions**

**M31 (A14) St George Branch (QLD)**

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

**Moved:** Lisa Southern St George Branch (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Louise Martin Queensland State Council (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

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

**M32 (A15) Northern Territory State Council (NT)**

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

**Moved:** Sarah Measey Northern Territory State Council (NT)  
**Seconded:** Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

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

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

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

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

**M33 (A16) South Australia State Council (SA)**

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

**Moved:** Kate Greenfield South Australia State Council (SA)  
**Seconded:** Jill Greenfield South Australia State Council (SA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

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

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

The table above shows the current rebate. Our students living in rural and remote South Australia fall within the \$60 - \$150 rebate. This is an unrealistic contribution given the costs involved for the students to get to Adelaide, let alone Canberra. A trip to Canberra for the older primary students

provides them with a dynamic learning opportunity before going on to secondary school. The cost involved in providing such an opportunity for students lies entirely on the parents so further support through the PACER program would be well received.

### **Miscellaneous Agenda Motions**

#### **M34(A22) Northern Territory State Council (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) highlights to the Minister for Education and all other relevant Ministers, that geographically isolated students require ongoing support, to ensure that the interim measures put in place by the Australian Government during the COVID-19 pandemic to assist families in educating their children, will continue now and into the future for students in rural and remote Australia.”

**Moved:** Sarah Measey Northern Territory State Council (NT)  
**Seconded:** Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

**CARRIED**

#### **Explanation:**

This year has been an extraordinary year for not only our region, our country but the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about many changes to the way in which education has been delivered. The majority of children here in Australia were introduced to Distance Education, a delivery that we live and breathe every day. Throughout the changes nationally to deliver education through remote learning, Governments both State, and Territories as well as nationally put in place measures to assist with this delivery. In order to recognise the ongoing of this delivery of education for our Geographically Isolated students we would like the Ministers to be able to keep in place these measures to ensure the continued success of the delivery of Distance Education for Geographically Isolated students.

#### **M35 (A23) Northern Territory State Council (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the relevant Ministers, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and the Australian Taxation Office to have geographically isolated children acknowledged as ‘in need’ of benevolent assistance for early childhood educational purposes, allowing the Not-For-Profit organisations serving them be considered for Deductible Gift Recipient status.”

**Moved:** Sarah Measey Northern Territory State Council (NT)  
**Seconded:** Amber Driver Alice Springs Branch (NT)

**CARRIED**

#### **Explanation:**

Having Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) will allow organisations to be more sustainable and independent in sourcing their funding and allow them to continue to provide equitable service to all geographically isolated children in need. DGR status gives organisations more sustainable fundraising options, including Philanthropic sources, as opposed to being so heavily reliant on State and Federal Government funding.

An example of such a group that would benefit greatly from this is KICS (Katherine Isolated Children’s Services). KICS is a remote mobile playgroup and parent information service that travels across vast distances in the greater Katherine region to bring the joy of play-based learning to socially and geographically isolated children and families. KICS provides targeted educational opportunities for young children who would otherwise be completely missed by the system until they reached compulsory school years.

Under the DGR table of those eligible, there are very limited options for such a group. See [https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Getting-started/In-detail/Types-of-DGRs/DGR-table/?page=5#Welfare\\_and\\_rights](https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Getting-started/In-detail/Types-of-DGRs/DGR-table/?page=5#Welfare_and_rights).

Organisations might be able to access DGR under “Education” but there is no matching category; likewise, maybe “Family”, again nothing. “Welfare and Rights” offers a possible option under PBI (Public Benevolent Fund). When KICS attempted this in 2018 they were rejected because they serviced BOTH indigenous and non-indigenous children. KICS application for DGR status was not supported “because non-Indigenous children living in isolation are not considered to be a group that has benevolent needs.” (Marion Hopkins ACNC 5/06/2018). Race alone does not determine need.

The decision by the ACNC (which is linked to ATO reasoning) that non-Indigenous children living in isolation are not considered to be at a disadvantage contradicts the most recent Australian Early Development Census National Report 2018 published in March 2019 where it clearly documents significant disadvantage to this whole class of young people.

**M36 (A24) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) investigates the logistics involved in offering Pedals to members in electronic format with the default option being paper format and make provision in the new website development for the ability of other State and Federal publications to be included at a later date.”

**Moved:** Sally Brindal Western Australia State Council (WA)  
**Seconded:** Kym Ross Western Australia State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

We understand that some members may wish to receive paper copies of ICPA publications. We ask that the option of electronic publications is offered to members. Electronic distribution aids timeliness of information, provides convenient access with handheld devices, cuts the cost of publishing and is an environmentally sustainable option. The cost per publication may increase, due to a lesser volume printed, however the overall cost and reduced postage may result in an overall saving.

**Presentation** Senator Amanda Stoker

**Presentation** Shane Webcke

**Floor Motions**

**M37 (F1) New South Wales State Council (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) urge the Minister for Regional Education to establish an Isolated Children’s Pandemic Advisory Group made up of State and Federal Education Ministers and Relevant Authorities, ABSA and ICPA representatives to ensure consistent decisions are made specific to the needs of geographically isolated children who must cross the State borders in order to access education.”

**CONFERENCE AGREED TO ACCEPT MOTION**

**Moved:** Libby McPhee New South Wales State Council (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Gabie Le Lievre New South Wales State Council (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

NSW has been sandwiched between three States during this pandemic and each State has had different rules in terms of quarantining and returning to boarding school. To give one example, when boarding children from NSW and NT were required to quarantine in Qld for 14 days before returning

to school, a combined representation from ICPA resulted in the Qld Chief Health Officer acknowledging that if a student had been on a rural property for 14 days prior to entering Qld from NSW or NT they could go straight back to boarding school without quarantining. A sensible decision that so far has had no negativity. SA on the other hand has been very challenging and difficult, resulting in much fatigue from both parents and ICPA volunteers. ICPA-NSW feels that the only way to give certainty in what is very uncertain times, is to have a Pandemic taskforce at the highest levels of government to ensure isolated children do not miss out on accessing their compulsory education.

**Presentation to retiring Councillor Jane Morton**

Mrs Wendy Hick

**Northern Territory ICPA President's Report**

Mrs Sarah Cook

**Western Australian ICPA President's Report**

Mrs Sally Brindal

**Thank You**

Thank you to the Australian Boarding School Association

Mrs Nikki Macqueen

Thank you to Judy Sinclair-Newton

Mrs Jane O'Brien

Other thank yous

Mrs Alana Moller

**6:24pm Close of Conference**

**CONFERENCE REPORTS**

**FEDERAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Alana Moller

Distinguished guests, Federal Life Members, fellow ICPA members and friends it is with great pleasure and pride that I have the opportunity to present my first Federal President report under the most extraordinary circumstances, not only for ICPA but across our nation and world, regrettably not in person, but nonetheless encouraged by all of you listening today.

Winston Churchill once said, “when we face with a steady eye the difficulties which lie before us we may derive new confidence from remembering those we have already overcome”. As I begin my report and reflect on the past twelve months, this message resonated with me, not only as we continue to face uncertain times in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also as a testament to ICPA and how we have dealt with all that has come before us and all that lies ahead, [perhaps best summed up by our conference theme “learn from the past, build the future”].

Taking on the role of Federal President from the remarkable Wendy Hick in Adelaide last year, I would never have imagined where Federal Council would find ourselves today. Along with myself as the new President, Federal Council welcomed a mixture of experienced Councillors, as well as new faces at the Federal Conference last year, all who have their own strengths, abilities and experiences ensuring that Federal Council can continue to represent our members successfully and effectively.

While the past twelve months seem to have flown by, given what has transpired, it feels as though it may have been much longer. It is very disappointing that we have not been able to physically come together for Conference this year, however with the web conference format, Federal Council has aspired to still provide a platform for our valued members to put forward their stories and points of view, assist us in formulating our policy and have the opportunity to ensure all of you know you are supported. We are a member-based organisation, and it is our members who provide us with the inspiration and motivation to continue our work regardless of circumstances.

Educating our children when we are geographically isolated in the best of times is challenging, whether you have children at early learning, rural schools, distance education students, boarding children or at tertiary and training level and events in the past twelve months have extenuated the already difficult circumstances for our families. Most recently, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have certainly been felt.

From communications through to early childhood, boarding to tertiary and everything in between, ICPA Federal Councillors have been working through a myriad of issues that have arisen during COVID-19 and have been fortunate to have been able to assist members with some of their concerns and issues. It was heartening, to say the least, that out of the crisis have come some exceptional improvements in the area of communications, as well as a recognition of the unique needs of geographically isolated children when it comes to the Assistance for Isolated Children allowance. Unfortunately, though the pandemic has also highlighted and in many instances magnified some of the inequities associated with educating children from geographically isolated contexts at all times, not just during a pandemic and these impacts were felt across all levels of education. While many of these impacts will be expanded upon in individual portfolio reports, all of the obstacles that have arisen for our families and their children have served to reiterate that geographically isolated students are a unique disadvantage group who need specialised and targeted assistance and support to access and attain equitable educational opportunities and outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic is so fluid; it is difficult to predict what is ahead; however, ICPA Australia has been and will continue to ensure our geographically isolated students are remembered and supported.

So to now update you on other activities of Federal Council over the past twelve months, apart from the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

After the 2019 Federal Conference in Adelaide, Federal Council set to work immediately to action the motions that were carried at Conference. We have written letters, attended delegations in Canberra, completed submissions, participated in numerous meetings, webinars and other forums and made every effort to ensure our members' concerns and priorities are heard.

Submissions certainly seem to be the favoured method for the government to gain comment and information on topics across many areas and Federal Council feels it is essential that we make comment wherever possible across all sections of interest and concern for our members.

In 2019, Federal Council compiled sixteen submissions and in 2020 already have completed eight submissions on topics from communications and specific needs, early childhood education through to tertiary and most recently submitted comment to the Inquiry Into Education in Remote and Complex Environments Home Learning and Teaching in COVID-19. These submissions have allowed us to mention many aspects of our advocacy, from longstanding issues to current prevalent concerns.

At times it can be problematic keeping abreast of government, departmental and staff changes to be sure of where we need to direct our inquires, requests and correspondence to for the topics which we work on. In February there were changes made to several of the departments we deal with frequently, including the Department of Human Services becoming Services Australia, the Department of Communications and the Arts transferring to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the new Department of Education, Skills and Employment. With this change, ICPA Australia also welcomed the appointment of a Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education, the Honourable Andrew Gee MP. Over the past months since Minister Gee's appointment, we have had the opportunity to work with his office and meet with the Minister via teleconference. We look forward to our continued relationship with the Minister, his staff and the Department. We are also pleased to have Minister Gee addressing Conference on Day Two.

One of the topics which we have raised with Minister Gee's office recently and has been an ongoing focus of our attention is Early Childhood Education and Care and especially In Home Care and the role it plays for geographically isolated families. With many concerns being raised around the impacts of changes to the In Home Care guidelines since the inception of the new program in July 2018, we were pleased that as a direct result of our advocacy the In Home Care transitional provisions around qualification requirements would be extended for remote families until the end of 2021. However, concerns with the program guidelines for remote families have continued to be raised, and the inception of the Relief Childcare Package during the COVID-19 pandemic did nothing to relieve the challenges faced by remote families using In Home Care. It remains to be seen whether a return to the previous system will see any improvements and Federal Council will most certainly be continuing to highlight complexities of the In Home Care system in a remote environment.

Similarly, issues with the Assistance for Isolated Children or AIC have been at the forefront of Federal Council advocacy, from concerns around the eligibility criteria for the allowance through to the application and renewal processes. The original intent of AIC was to assist with alleviating costs associated with educating geographically isolated students, and we have persisted in highlighting the need for AIC to be retained and maintained for these students and their families. We have continued

to call for a review of the allowance to ensure that the scheme is meeting the needs of geographically isolated families, especially with members raising concerns around this. In pursuing the call for a Review, we have reiterated that the current eligibility criteria for the Assistance for Isolated Children should neither be removed nor diminished.

To ensure members and others are aware of our full range of advocacy, we have recently changed the name of the Boarding and School Term Hostels portfolio to Boarding, Hostels and Second Home. This was put in place after concerns were raised that it did not appear as though we supported Second Home families. Although we have always included Second Home families in our advocacy, a simple name change such as this ensures that our members can see that we advocate on their behalf.

In the area of tertiary education, we continued the longstanding advocacy for a Tertiary Access Allowance and were pleased to see the recommendation in the National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy Final Report, also known as the Napthine report, for this to be put in place. Federal Council welcomed Minister Tehan's reference to this during our October delegations and were elated to receive news in June that a 'Tertiary Access Payment' would be made available for rural and remote students to access a tertiary education. While further details are still to be released, we are buoyed by this announcement. We will continue to monitor this along with the other tertiary reforms announced recently.

Federal Council has also maintained our commitment to supporting and advocating for all in our community suffering challenges and hardships, continuing to pursue the introduction of a Rural Hardship Education Fund to ensure geographically isolated children can continue their education unhindered at any time of rural hardship. It was encouraging to see our call for a Rural Hardship Education Fund put as a motion in the Senate by Senator Pauline Hanson in October and given unanimous support in the Senate. Federal Council continued to build momentum off this, with contact made with Federal Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators and media coverage.

Communications continue to be an area of significance. ICPA has been participating in a range of activities associated with ensuring rural and remote communication and the role it plays in geographically isolated education is recognised and always considered. In what is a tremendous opportunity for ICPA Australia, we have recently been appointed to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, TIO for short, Consumer Panel, allowing us a direct voice on rural and remote education in the communications sphere.

ICPA Australia also maintains relationships with other individuals and groups to enhance our advocacy. We have continued to connect with organisations such as the National Farmers Federation and other agricultural groups, Dolly's Dream, the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA), the Outback Alliance, the Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia team (BIRRR) Telstra, the Australian Curriculum Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA), the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA), the National Broadband Network (NBN) and the Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA) to name a few. We feel privileged to have positive relationships with all of these organisations and others and thank them for their interest in and support of ICPA. It has been especially useful to work with these organisations to be able to raise our specific priorities, such as during the recent Outback Alliance webinar series which I was grateful to participate in.

Federal Council sincerely appreciates the support of other organisations, and with that in mind, I would like to acknowledge our sponsors for the 2020 Conference, Telstra, the Australian Boarding Schools Association, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Philmac, and S. Kidman & Co Pty Ltd. ICPA Australia also feels so fortunate to have recently been approached by the McDonald Family and the Four Seasons Company, owned by the Olsson family with the generous gesture of ICPA



being a beneficiary of a percentage of the sales from ZM nutrition blocks for cattle released in honour of beef industry leader, the late Zanda McDonald. It is with a great sense of pride and humility that we are a part of this initiative. Zanda's family are longstanding supporters and volunteers for ICPA and geographically isolated children. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Federal Council, to express our humblest gratitude and appreciation to the McDonald and Olsson families.

In the past twelve months, Federal Council has also been working closely and cooperatively with state councils across Australia, most recently through the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in a number of other areas. In February, representatives from all State Councils met with Federal Secretary Suzanne Wilson and myself in Melbourne for face-to-face joint council meetings. It is disappointing that this is likely to have been the last opportunity to meet with Tasmania State Council, as a vote was carried by Tasmanian members in late July to dissolve their state council, due to volunteer numbers dwindling to unsustainably low levels. ICPA will, however, continue to support Tasmania and maintain our presence amongst our members there. All Councils have been focussed on working together this year on the development of a new look ICPA website which will hopefully meet members' and ICPA's needs better. The development of this website is well underway, and we look forward to releasing a dynamic new online experience for our members and supporters. I think I speak on behalf of all ICPA Councils when I say that it is imperative that we seek to maintain common ground and support each other across all of Australia and Joint Council meetings are an effective way of facilitating our collective efforts. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate all State Councils for their continued hard work and determination in advocating for our children. It has been immense privilege this year to have worked with you all. In the words of Helen Keller, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much".

ICPA Australia is a member-based organisation, and anything that we can do to assist our members and their families is at the forefront of our mind. We welcome any contact from our members. Our membership base is strong, and it is important that we recognise that ICPA would not be what it is today without our grassroots members. ICPA supports students, where they cannot access equitable education because of geographical isolation, from early childhood and rural schools through to tertiary, no matter what type of schooling they undertake.

Federal Council is acutely aware that the past twelve months have been challenging for many of our members and Federal Councillors are not immune to these pressures and personal tribulations. Due to their extenuating personal circumstances, three Councillors have had to stand down from Council since the 2019 Conference. I wish to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge those Councillors for the time and commitment they have given to Federal Council.

It has been a big year for Federal Council and for those of us who have been learning our roles, we have been so very lucky to have longstanding Councillors to guide and teach us, as well as all those who have continued to support and guide us this past twelve months. As well as the changes that came at the 2019 Federal Conference, in the past twelve months we have welcomed Jo Camilleri into the Publicity Officer role, taking the position on from Nikki Macqueen and we were very pleased to co-opt Nikki Mahony from the Dawson Valley Branch in Queensland onto Federal Council in May.

If I may take the time now to make a personal note to express my gratitude to all of Federal Council for their support, encouragement, hard work, determination, collaboration and genuine care for myself, each other and I can assure you all of our members, but especially to several members of Federal Council, you know who you are, who have been solid rocks in my foundations this past year. I would also be remiss to not show individual gratitude to Wendy Hick for her on ongoing guidance and support for myself; she has certainly dealt with some curly questions from me in her always impeccable and rational way! I also would like to thank those former Councillors who have assisted

me in the past twelve months. I also wish to acknowledge all past ICPA volunteers and offer my thoughts and prayers to the families of those we have lost this year.

And one more thank you and perhaps the most important, to my husband Scott and my three daughters who through a sometimes chaotic year have come out the other end, still on my side and my biggest supporters and helpers, two of my daughters even joining us during conference to help everything run as smoothly as possible.

Well there is not too much more left to be said so let us now move on in our first-ever web conference. I would like to thank all of you for supporting us as we have embarked on the immense task of conducting Conference in this format and a special thank you to the Australian Boarding Schools Association and Townsville Grammar School for allowing use of their facilities for Conference to be presented from and to the families of other councillors who are coming to you from their homes. While we aim to ensure the Conference runs as smoothly and precisely as possible, I do request that attendees bear with us and understand that we may face some problems over the next two days as we work in this new and untested format. Most of all I would like to say that this is an opportunity to hear from a group of likeminded people who understand exactly what you face as the parents of isolated children because they are most often in the same boat. We are all here to support each other, and this is no more obvious than when we come together at Conference, whether face to face or virtual, because as I have said before, being isolated should not mean you are alone.

### **FEDERAL TREASURER'S REPORT**

Lisa Slade

I am pleased to be presenting to you the Treasurer's Report and audited financial statements for the 2019 – 2020 financial year. What a year it has been! It seems no one can escape the ramifications of COVID-19 and ICPA has been no exception.

Federal Council's activities, along with the rest of Australia have been modified, and can be seen reflected in the financial statements. October 2019 was our last face to face gathering as an almost complete Federal Council. Times have certainly changed since then.

We began the year as every other, a joint Council face to face meeting in Melbourne during February. Preparations for State Conferences ensued and as Western Australia and South Australia were in the midst of theirs, whispers of COVID-19 spreading to Australia began and unfortunately for NSW in particular, who were on the cusp of their Conference, we haven't seen another face to face one this year. This effect on our bottom line is noticeable in the \$10,000 drop in the State Conference expense line in comparison to last year. Just to reinforce to you that although we have not been on the road or in the air as we have been in the past, Federal Councillors have remained extremely busy thanks to technology such as the Zoom platform.

As disappointed as we all are to not be in Hobart today, our bottom line is a little less so! Federal Council embarked on the task of convening this year's Conference, which has been a huge undertaking given the new platform and a staggering array of newly pondered 'what if's' in a constantly changing environment. Costs for this, including the Conference App, will be reflected in next year's finances.

We are fortunate yet again to have the support of the Department of Education, Skills and Employment and thank them for again continuing our partnership and investing in our rural and remote children's future. As part of our renewed contract with the Department this year, we are no longer required to present an audit report for this grant funding.

I would like to also thank Telstra for again supporting our Federal Conference this year along with the Australian Boarding Schools Association, Philmac, S. Kidman & Co. and Four Seasons/ZM Nutrition Blocks. We are so incredibly grateful to you all.

Federal Council would like to give a big hearty thank you to the following branches who have kindly donated to Federal Council over the past year: Arcadia Valley, Aramac/Muttaborra, Blackall, Clermont, Katherine, Louth, Mount Isa Branch of the Air, Tambo and Winton.

### Membership

At the end of the 2019-2020 financial year, we had 2316 financial members, 3 corporate members and six school corporate members. This continues the trend of falling memberships, down 96 as compared to last year. Online membership continues to be a favourable way of completing new memberships and renewals. Thank you to Jane O'Brien once again for her unwavering dedication to the role and to all State Treasurer's/Membership Officers and Branch Treasurer's for their efforts in keeping everything running smoothly.

The recent decision regarding the Tasmanian State Council will be reflected in next year's membership data.

### Finances

The audited financial statements for the 2019-2020 financial year covers all Federal Council's financial accounts and includes funds held in trust for the East Coast Branch of Tasmania.

Income is around \$30,000 higher this year. This can be attributed mainly to the profit remitted by the Convening Committee of the 2019 Federal Conference. We are continually amazed each year by the effort that goes into hosting conference on our behalf. A corresponding expense line for the profit split to the South Australian State Council is found under expenses in the Profit and Loss.

Expenses have risen slightly over the past year. Some points to note: the 'Meetings – Face to Face' line is used when we travel for a face to face meeting that is not a delegation. In May 2019 we travelled to Toowoomba as it was election time and the expenses are reflected in the 2019 column. Unfortunately, this financial year we have not met face to face, other than delegation in October, so no amount sits in the 2020 column.

Prior to the 2019 Federal Conference, Federal Council proposed a motion to support branches struggling to send delegates to Conference. We were incredibly pleased to be able to provide assistance to Hillston, Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld, North West Slopes and Western Downs branches and this is shown in the 'Federal Conferences – Branch Sponsorship to Attend' line. We increased our insurance policy with EBM this year to include 'management liability' cover.

There has been an increase in the 'Printing, Stationery and Office' expense line primarily attributable to the purchase of annual subscriptions to Dropbox for Business, which has enabled all councillors to access files above a standard Dropbox data plan. Along with the usual office expenses, this year it also includes the Federal Council/State emails and Mailchimp subscriptions and an increase in printing costs (including councillor ink cartridges).

The 'Meetings – Other – Expenses' expense line includes costs incurred by State and Federal Councils for the Joint Council Face to Face meeting held in February. These expenses have been invoiced to State Councils and will appear in the next financial year as income. We have also attended the ACCAN, RRRCC, ABSA, Dolly's Dream, Policy and Advocacy conferences, meetings and workshops which have been included in this line.

You will also note that under membership expenses a new stand-alone line has been created for 'Corporate Membership – State Magazines' expenses. With our newest Corporate and School Corporate membership categories, we disperse funds collected to the States to cover their

magazine/mail out expenses for these members. Website expenses are significantly lower this year with only charges being hosting and domain fees. As we move toward the new website, we will see a significant spike in this expense line next financial year.

Overall, it is sobering in this current climate of fire, continuing drought, and COVID-19 to be presenting our members with a healthy profit of \$38,868.94. To this end, Federal Council is unanimous in its decision that membership fees remain at \$22 per member family, \$275 per Corporate Member and \$275 per School Corporate Member.

### **SOUTH AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Jill Greenfield

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

This year's State Conference was held on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of March in Port Augusta, unlucky for some but lucky for SA. We were fortunate to be able to hold our conference before the COVID-19 restrictions were enforced and our members felt for those states that weren't able to hold their conferences. I know how much commitment goes into hosting and running a conference.

Chairing the SA ICPA State Conference was a first for myself. To say it was daunting is an understatement. The work that leads up to a conference involves a huge amount of work from many people. I would especially like to thank Edwina Bowie, Joanna Gibson and Jane Gloster for their commitment as I navigated my way around motion debate processes, running sheets and the conference agenda. The saying "many hands make for light work" could not be truer when putting together a conference. Thank you to all the State Councillors that helped out in many ways.

A big thank you to the North East Branch, it was a real pleasure to work with them. Their expertise and the way they nurtured their newer branch members made for a wonderful conference.

We had 21 motions presented on the day and all motions were successfully carried. They came from a wide range of portfolio areas and involved issues such as:

- Increasing the financial assistance to attend face to face events at School of the Air
- Looking at the student/teacher ratio in Distance Education
- Implementing a student airfare
- Contract versus permanent teaching positions in rural and remote schools
- Student Services Officer to be based at Port Augusta SOTA
- AIC allowance extended to 4 year old's with State government support
- Access to government funded child and family health services for remote and isolated families

State Council have been processing the motions, writing letters and following up on discussions had at conference. We are working through what the best pathways are to achieve the greatest outcomes. Delegation won't be held as a face to face event in Adelaide in the foreseeable future but we are planning on other ways to meet with relevant bodies.

The State Council executive remains the same; President - Jill Greenfield; Vice President - Kate Greenfield; Immediate Past President - Kerry Williams; Secretary - Edwina Bowie; Treasurer -Michelle Hilder and Publicity Officer - Petie Rankin.

Joanna Gibson has stepped off State Council after many years. She was first elected to State Council in 2001/2002, then again between 2005-2014 and 2018-19. She has been a wealth of knowledge to myself and Edwina. You can be rest assured that we still have her on speed dial!

Appointed positions for 2020 are; Pipeline Editor - Lynly Kerin and Layout Designer - Mija Reynolds; State Webmaster - Jodie Keogh; E-Newsletter Editor - Penny Rasheed; REVISE rep - Penny Rasheed; OACGC rep - Petie Rankin; Lone Member officer - Jodie Keogh.

We complete our State Council with; Candice Brown, Leisa Breeding, Jess Barry, Hollie Williams, Katrina Morris, Belinda Hatcher, Di Thomas, Stefanie Roeske, Paulaine Vermeulen.

Thank you to those state councillors that have stepped off of State council; Helen Williams, Lisa Slade, Ros Breeding and Lisa McIntosh. Your volunteer time has been much appreciated by all ICPA families. A special mention to Helen Williams who began her ICPA journey in 2007 when she volunteered for the State Secretary position, nothing like jumping in the deep end. She continued on to be State Treasurer and she was always looking after the younger councillors. I recall Helen telling us all once, that we needed a good sturdy pair of shoes for Delegation, she was right!

The news that our State Education Allowance (SEA) had been doubled from \$2149.99 to \$4299.98 was delivered to us at the beginning of conference. This news came with tremendous excitement as it means a great deal to families who have made the difficult choice to either send their child to boarding school or break up the family unit and set up a 2<sup>nd</sup> home for secondary schooling. This increase to the SEA couldn't have come at a better time with many ICPA families feeling the pinch with ongoing dry conditions. With ever-increasing boarding fees, the financial gain may give families who have primary aged children further options for secondary schooling.

In September 2019, SA ICPA organised an online forum to give feedback on Year 7 becoming High School by 2022. This was hosted online by School of the Air (SOTA), with members of the Department for Education review panel in attendance. It was a positive and emotional meeting with many parents from SOTA attending and strongly voicing their opinion. SA ICPA sent a letter supporting the retention of Year 7 at SOTA for the unspecified future, hoping to positively impact future students and families. A copy of the Consultation Report was received by SA ICPA in early October with the welcome decision to include SOTA for the 3-year extension.

SA ICPA have been working closely with Emerging Minds who are dedicated to advancing the mental health and emotional wellbeing of Australian infants, children, adolescents and their families. Emerging Minds were successful in obtaining funding for Podcasts that will support the social and emotional wellbeing of children aged from 0-12 years in drought affected communities. We look forward to these Podcasts being launched shortly.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of November State Councillors came together to have a face to face meeting. We also organised a workshop, presented by Jodie Bouilly (Invest In You) about public speaking and getting your message across. We had 9 councillors attend and from the feel in the room after 2 days it was well worth the trip.

SA ICPA has a new look with the help of Jess Lenehan and Joanna Gibson. We now have business cards, a letter head and a new flyer on its way. We look forward to getting out and about and promoting SA ICPA to the wider community.

State Councillors have attended various meetings and workshops over the year including;

- Face to face State and Territory Presidents and Secretaries meeting
- Spencer Gulf Uni Hub opening

- CaFHS (Child and Family Health Services), RFDS (Royal Flying Doctor Service) and RICE (Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise) roundtable meeting
- Helping to facilitate Emerging Minds- Podcasts
- TAFE SA
- Melbourne Declaration Review

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to these events.

SA ICPA continues to produce two editions of our printed state newsletter, the Pipeline, per year. Our Editor Lynly Kerin always does a wonderful job in begging, pleading and dragging an article out of anyone that may wish to put pen to paper. Thank you to Mija Reynolds who puts her artistic flare to each edition. These publications are complemented by regular Mailchimp emails as another avenue of keeping members up to date.

2021 SA State Conference will be hosted by the Marree Air Branch, in Port Augusta on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> of March.

I would like to wish everyone a safe, healthy and wet 2020 in these uncertain times.

### **TASMANIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Kate Thompson

Madame President, Mrs Alana Moller, Federal Councillors, fellow ICPA members and distinguished guests, it is with a heavy heart that I deliver the 2019-2020 Tasmanian President's Report.

The past year has been quiet issues-wise as ICPA Tas has been relatively inactive for the 2019-20 year. ICPA Tas was looking forward to working with the Federal Council Convening Committee to welcome ICPA Federal Conference delegates and guests to Tasmania but alas that all changed in March 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty when restrictions placed here in Tasmania and on travel throughout Australia would be lifted.

Rural and remote education in Tasmania has certainly not been immune from the effects of COVID-19 with childcare centres, small rural schools, boarding schools and tertiary and training institutions and their students, all having to adapt to temporary closures and restrictions while trying to maintain a high level of service.

In February 2020, I joined the ICPA State presidents and secretaries in Melbourne for the 2020 Joint Councils meeting. These meetings are a great opportunity for states to get together and discuss issues in our states and provide support. Valuable discussion included the website, memberships, Child Safety Policies, conference and the continuation of networking amongst the states.

Despite exhaustive efforts over the last three years, the previous model of ICPA Tas State Council had not been working for ICPA Tas and has faced difficulties in attracting and retaining the required number of state councillors and has had periods where there has not been a constitutional State Council, either through a shortfall of new councillors or executive positions not being filled. Due to this not being sustainable, there have been many discussions centred around strategies to fill positions and have a state council structure that suits the needs of ICPA Tas, its members, purpose and future. One strategy looked at the structure of State Council in the Tasmanian ICPA Constitution and several changes were proposed to give a State Council structure that would be less constrictive and ensure operational practicality and viability for members. It was proposed the State Council executive positions be reduced to President, Secretary and Treasurer and on the 14 November 2019, Federal

Council convened a meeting for ICPA Tas and the changes were discussed, voted and passed and clarification by our Tasmanian regulatory body was received and the constitutional changes were enacted.

At the 2020 AGM on 2 April 2020, a full council was formed: Kate Thompson, President, Rae Dowling, Treasurer, Sarah Fisher, Secretary, and councillors Mandy Burbury, Michelle Loane, Julia Fisher and Emily Gardner. It must be noted that these members have continued on council, some for many, many years, have delayed their resignation from council for the good of ICPA Tas. As recruiting some new blood on council did not occur, regrettably, this situation reached the point where it is felt a State Council is no longer sustainable. The next course of action was the consideration of a proposal to dissolve the ICPA Tas State Council.

I am saddened to report that the Tasmanian State Council is now in the process of dissolution. At an Extraordinary Meeting on 22 July 2020, open to all Tasmanian ICPA members, convened to discuss the future of ICPA Tas State Council, a motion passed to proceed with the Dissolution. At this stage, ICPA Tas is working with ICPA Federal Council to work through the process.

The branches of ICPA Tas: East Coast, Midlands and Lones can continue to be branches of ICPA (Aust), despite the impending dissolution of ICPA Tas State Council and the details are being worked out with Federal Council.

I would like to thank my fellow Tas State Council, Federal Council and the other State Councils for their support and assistance throughout these difficult 12 months.

### **QUEENSLAND PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Tammie irons

Good morning Madam President Mrs Alana Moller, Federal Councillors and Life Members, fellow ICPA members, ladies and gentlemen... it gives me great pleasure to present this report to you in a year which sees us working together and meeting in very different ways to what we are traditionally used to.

In a typical year of ICPA Qld, we would have recently held our own state conference before this time – however 2020 has proven to be anything but typical! We were fortunate enough to have the time to make the decision to postpone our conference from June to October this year in the hope that we will still be able to host face to face. As restrictions ease across the state we are still confident that we will be seeing our state members in Roma in October for our 49<sup>th</sup> State Conference and feel very blessed that we have been able to do this after NSW was faced with such a difficult situation earlier this year with their own conference.

Our new look Council headed to Brisbane soon after Federal Conference last year for our face to face meeting, departmental and parliamentary delegations. Our new councillors always enjoy this baptism of fire where councillors race through the streets and suburbs of Brisbane to meet with stakeholders and departmental representatives about ongoing issues and new policy arising from State Conference motions. Kasie (and our smallest honorary 'councillor', her son Beau) and Sonia both embraced their new roles and relished being a part of making things happen! Our new Treasurer, Amanda, competently took on her role and also took part in some meetings to experience the wheels of change firsthand.

November saw Qld Council heading to the very small community of Glenmorgan (3 hours west of Toowoomba on the Darling Downs) with a population of roughly 150 in the surrounding area for our

mid-year meeting. We were very capably hosted by the Westmar-Inglestone branch (of which myself and Vice-President Wendy Henning are members) at the heritage-listed Myall Park Botanic Garden, home of the hybrid *Grevillea Robyn Gordon*. These meetings are an event that State Council looks forward to every year, giving us the opportunity to meet some of our branch members in their own backyard as well as valuable time as a Council to go over motion progress and plans for the coming year. We were delighted to have a visit from past ICPA Federal President (1999-20030, Mrs Megan McNicholl OAM. Megan is a member of the nearby Western Downs branch of ICPA Qld and it was fantastic to listen to her speak with no less passion for rural and remote education than ever before. Members of Westmar-Inglestone branch joined council for a BBQ dinner Saturday evening and we were spoiled with homemade smoko's and lunches through the weekend.

Kelly and I were fortunate to join other State Presidents and representatives, along with Alana and Suzanne in Melbourne in February this year for our annual Joint Council meeting. This is such a valuable gathering for all involved – we find it such an opportunity to share information and ideas with each other and forge relationships which in turn make it easier to pick up the phone and ask for advice or assistance when needed. Thank you to Federal Council for facilitating this meeting once again this year.

After another gruelling Christmas break dealing with ongoing drought, State Council made the decision to write a heartfelt letter to our Boarding Schools to highlight the impact of the drought conditions on our students physical and mental wellbeing going into the new school year. We felt it was important that this letter was shared with teachers within the day school as often they are unaware of what the life of a boarder looks like over the holidays. We were heartened by the response to our letter with many schools passing it around to all their staff, as well as sending us messages of support. Our letter was also picked up by the media, and we were grateful to be given the opportunity to speak to media at a state level about the realities of drought for our families.

Unfortunately, the second of State Council's delegations to Brisbane in March this year fell at the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown. Meetings were rescheduled or cancelled, moved to teleconference or video conferencing platforms and our Secretary Kelly was kept incredibly busy attempting to keep tabs on everybody's whereabouts from afar! Qld Council had spent a lot of time creating our new look Portfolio Statement to present to Members of Parliament and it was certainly disappointing to have that face to face opportunity slip away. Although things had to be handled differently, it was a proud moment to witness our State Councillors lead the way in teleconference protocol as many MP's had little experience meeting in such a style!

Whilst COVID-19 has certainly had an impact on the way ICPA Qld has lobbied during the past 12 months, it has also served to highlight the day to day life of rural and remote families and the difficulties they face and overcome regularly. Our city cousins have had a slight taste of the trials of "teaching" their own children whilst trying to run a business or work from home, they've had to deal with internet and communication dramas and they've had to face a shortage of desired grocery items when shopping! Queensland State Council was able to share some highly successful "Tips for Home Schooling" across our social media platforms – tips from the experts! Many of our members very kindly sent in some great tips which we were able to share and we all learned something new. We were also fortunate to have the Department of Education facilitate daily teleconference updates which allowed us to keep up to date with the impact of the virus on schools and ask specific questions about our rural and remote students.

Perhaps the biggest part of our ICPA Qld year has been the impact of the virus on our boarding schools and families. Across the country we saw our boarding schools facing stringent restrictions which affected their capacity to offer boarding to our students. The Queensland governments interpretation



of the AHPPC (Australian Health Protection Principal Committee) guidelines meant that it was incredibly difficult for boarding schools to operate and many students across the state had no choice but to stay at home for Term 2 or return as day students at their families own cost. With no information specific to boarding families readily available regarding returning to boarding in Term 3, State Council made the decision to start our #bringourboardersback campaign. We could not have foreseen the success of this campaign, with support flowing not only from our members, but also from other stakeholders, State and Federal politicians, the media and of course our ICPA counterparts at Federal and State level. One thing we have learned through our work this year has been that people need to see the human side of any argument for it to make sense and get real action. Being able to hear from our students directly about the impact of COVID-19 on their emotional and social wellbeing really hit home for many and I feel this was a huge part of the success of our campaign. We also held our first virtual 'rally' which allowed us to gather our members, along with other states, stakeholders and politicians, and come together to highlight the inequities our children and families were facing with no decision regarding boarding in Term 3 being made. It was with great relief that we received news that restrictions were being eased to the point where boarding schools were finally being given the opportunity to manage their own individual boarding situations in conjunction with health advice and students could return in Term 3. Whilst it remains to be seen the impact of the continued restrictions within the boarding houses going forward, we are proud of the ICPA community as a whole and so thankful to all of those who stood up with us and made sure that our voices, however small, were heard loud and clear. I would like to personally thank all the State President's and Alana for their support over the past month, in particular during our campaign. As we all dealt with similar issues in our states it was definitely a time where we could lean on each other and work together to ensure our members were being represented in the best way we could. So, thank you all.

Moving forward State Council will head to Emerald in the Central Highlands in two weeks for a face to face weekend in place of a Brisbane delegation. Postponing our State Conference has led to a few events being rescheduled in our calendar, however having the opportunity to meet in person is so important as a Council, especially in a year such as this one.

On behalf of ICPA Qld State Council, I wish Federal Council all the best with their conference and the year ahead. Alana, it has certainly been a year of firsts with lots of challenges for your first year as President, however you have taken it all in your stride and led admirably! As we move forward into a new year for ICPA, hopefully one with less surprises, I look forward to seeing many of you in Queensland for the celebration of 50 years of ICPA!

### **WESTERN AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Sally Brindal

Madam President, distinguished guests, Federal Councillors, ICPA members and friends. It is with great pleasure I present my first report as President of ICPA WA for the 2019/2020 year. Not quite the format I had envisaged for my first report; 2020 is certainly the year to be celebrating our adaptability, resilience, tenacity, and determination in all matters relating to education.

Throughout 2019, the WA State Council continued to build on community awareness for our organisation by attending all three major field days for the second year in a row. The Mingenew Midwest Expo, Dowerin Field Day and the Newdegate Machinery Field Day are the three largest in Western Australia. With the successful reversal of the decision to close Moora Residential College WA State Council also attended the Moora Show, cementing our support. All field days resulted in some new memberships but just as important was the exposure to promote ICPA to members of the community and increase the awareness of all aspects of ICPA in advocating for the equity of access to

an equitable education. The comment, 'oh, we didn't realise ICPA can assist with that' was commonplace. I would like to thank Kym Ross, Bianca James, Amanda Nixon, Naomi Obst, and the Midwest Branch for the organisation, planning and running of these events. The new display equipment purchased the previous year through the Federal Volunteers Grant looked fantastic.

WA State Council were involved in a review into the disparity between the fees students pay to attend a Residential College, in regional WA, with students from independent schools paying up to \$8692 more than their public-school counterparts. At some facilities this resulted in the cost of boarding at a regional Residential College for non-government students being very close to the cost of boarding in Perth. ICPA WA were seeking the same fee for all students, emphasising the importance of keeping rural families in rural areas, requesting a decision before the end of term 3, as many families are making their final decisions on where to send their children for boarding around that time. ICPA WA welcomed the announcement, on August 9<sup>th</sup>, by the Minister for Education, Hon. Sue Ellery MLC that from 2020 non-government school students will no longer pay more to board at Residential Colleges in regional Western Australia. To have a decision so early was a great result for regional families in WA.

The issue of the First Home Owners Grant (FHOG) creating ineligibility for the Assistance for Isolated Children's allowance (AIC) was brought to State Council's attention by a member whose application had been rejected on these grounds. Contact with Federal Council highlighted this has previously been an issue, although not one WA State Council had been aware of. On the AIC form, it is clearly there in black and white. A home cannot be two things – the first home to be eligible for the FHOG and a second home to qualify for AIC.

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) reduction from \$2105 to \$1320 by 2022, continues to be a concern for our members. The Minister for Education has made it quite clear that there is no intention to reverse their decision but may review the structure at the end of the reduction period in 2022. The WA Nationals have committed to more than double the BAHA if they form Government and index it in line with consumer price index (CPI) annually. With a WA election in March 2021 watch this space!

As part of the WA Student Travel Subsidy Scheme families may be eligible for a Road Travel Subsidy for eight return trips transporting their children to and from boarding school, provided they reside at least 56km from the nearest appropriate Government school with boarding facilities or regular transport hub. Members who previously received the Road Travel Subsidy (RTS) have had their 2019 applications rejected. In October WA State Council met with the Department of Transport On-demand Services to clarify the criteria and application process. Although technically the eligibility criteria has not changed, the way it is being applied is causing applications to be rejected. Families are being deemed ineligible if they are less than 56km to the nearest transport hub, irrespective of whether that transport travels to their closest school, in many cases it actually goes in the opposite direction. This remains an issue that ICPA WA are continuing to help resolve.

In February I attended the Joint Councils meeting in Melbourne with the then President Tash Johns. It is such a valuable opportunity to learn of the accomplishments and issues experienced by the other States and to connect with Federal Council and fellow inter-state councillors.

Meekatharra Air Branch convened the 2020 WA State Conference, "Building a Better World, One Student at a Time" with the theme focussed on the whole well-being of our children. The calm waters of the Indian Ocean backdrop was simply perfect for setting the scene. The date was Friday 13<sup>th</sup>, lucky for some, and we feel so privileged at having been able to hold our State Conference. In the words of one local reporter, 'as the world prepares to isolate the isolated parents come together!' We

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

The Minister for Education Hon. Sue Ellery MLC addressed conference providing an update on several issues including the WA Education Department's action plan regarding the COVID-19 crisis. We were very appreciative of the Minister giving her time to attend during such an unprecedented situation.

Motions presented by members were in relation to: -

- Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) reduction and asking for the Government to increase the allowance in line with the consumer price index (CPI).
- Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA).
- Telecommunications mobile call dropouts and restoration times on mobile tower back up batteries.
- Support Teacher of Learning (STL) and ensuring that the role and funding for the position in Schools of the Air (SOTA) continues past 2020.
- Station assignments and placements to count towards a Bachelor of Education practical placement.
- Loss of services to rural schools, such as dental vans.
- Camp school concerns with regards to condition, health and hygiene and future quality of services delivered.
- Student Travel Subsidy Scheme – Road Travel Subsidy (STSS-RTS) application criteria.
- Increase to the STSS Conveyance Allowance for the purpose of travelling to pick up and drop off students at school.
- Access to additional discounted fares for children in the Defined Remote Area (DRA) of Western Australia for mid-term breaks.
- Refunds for airfares under the STSS to be processed up until 31<sup>st</sup> December, as is the case for the STSS Road Travel Subsidy, not within one month of travel.
- Special circumstance provisions under the STSS Fares Allowance as to the location a student is flying to and/or from, for example due to flooding.
- STSS eligibility criteria for families in receipt of the Assistance for Isolated Children's (AIC) Second Home Allowance.
- Option for ICPA publications to be delivered in electronic format.
- A recurring payment option for membership.

At the conference we said goodbye to three Councillors: Amanda Nixon, Elyce Donaghy and Bianca James. Thank you to these ladies for their contribution whilst on council. We also saw a change in the Executive due to these councillors retiring and Tash Johns stepping down as President. I am so grateful that Tash is remaining as the Immediate Past President for twelve months as she is such a great support. We were fortunate to welcome two new Councillors: Sam Greay – Hyden Branch and Michelle Abbott – Midwest Branch, who has taken up the position of State Treasurer.

I would like to thank Federal President Alana Moller and Federal Webmaster Nikki McQueen for attending on behalf of Federal Council and presenting the Federal Report. WA put on glorious sunset across the ocean for them both.

Immediately after the conference our world as we know it went into lockdown. It certainly was a baptism of fire as I entered my new role as President. I quickly became adept at radio interviews and surprised myself on many occasions at how much ICPA knowledge was lurking there in the back of my mind. Tash, you must have trained me well! As the whole country navigated its way through the ever

changing COVID-19 pandemic, education and boarding were at the forefront of concerns for parents and families Australia wide. With term 2 now at an end in Western Australia, on the most part, education has returned to normal. Although many decisions regarding access to education and boarding restrictions initially caused a great deal of anxiety to parents and students, ICPA WA would like to thank the WA Government, the Department of Education and relevant representatives for listening. ICPA WA raised a number of concerns highlighting the ramifications of some of the decisions that had been made resulting in some adjustments.

In week three of term 2, ICPA WA was invited by the Department of Education to be involved in a stakeholder review of the return to education in term 2. A number of organisations were represented and ICPA WA ensured the issues that had been created around boarding restrictions, self-isolating requirements and the logistical return to school were clearly understood.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the Retired Educator Volunteers for Isolated Students Education (REVISE WA) postponed all placements for a period but ICPA WA are pleased to announce this most valuable service has been resumed.

WA State Council meet for three face to meetings, usually in Perth, during the year and monthly via the ZOOM online platform.

The WA State Council met for their first face to face meeting since conference on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> July in Perth. During these two days the Director General of Education, Lisa Rodgers met with State Council. Lisa is extremely appreciative of the work undertaken by ICPA and highly values the quality of knowledge and ability of the organisation. As the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated so many decisions had to be made, changing daily. There are many lessons to be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and Lisa would like to maintain contact with ICPA WA on these issues. Lisa also confirmed that many of the online resources that were introduced to help families with online learning during COVID-19 will remain, which is great news.

ICPA has gone international! The ICPA Midwest Branch were contact by a family from Bristol in the UK interested in learning more about us and how we get the support we need to enable our kids to be educated. Their school has 2500 students and are finding the challenges of remote teaching tricky in this new COVID world. After 12 weeks they had just started occasional online lessons. They were keen to learn: -

- Methods to improve their educational access and experience to inform the educational positions schools in the UK have taken.
- Do we have a weekly structure, is there a timetable? What methods do the schools use? How is pastoral care organised? How is engagement measured? IT accessibility? Safeguarding best practice? Working practices?

Whilst I believe they do not actually understand the exact role of ICPA, it is nevertheless heart-warming to think our organisation is offering hope world-wide. The Midwest Branch contacted a Perth school in relation to this matter and they were going to invite the family to join an online lesson. It will be interesting to see what develops.

COVID-19 has certainly highlighted how important the advocacy of ICPA has been over the years. Although at times it seems that we have been advocating for some of the same issues for nearly 50 years, without the continued lobbying and advocacy of ICPA, Australia would not have been as well placed to continue with educating our children during this COVID pandemic. So, thank you to all past and present volunteers.

Membership renewals continue to be of a concern in Western Australia, with membership down slightly on last year. There seems to be a correlation between branch issues and membership, with memberships spiking when there is an issue of particular concern. The challenge for our organisation is to retain those members thereafter.

I would like to acknowledge the support ICPA WA receives from our generous sponsors including Telstra and the various schools and businesses. Also, thank you to the WA Department of Education who through the support of a grant, support us in advocating for the equity of access to an appropriate education for rural and remote students.

Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow WA State Council. We are a smaller council this year and without their hard work and commitment we could not continue. I would like to thank them for volunteering their time and knowledge to such a worthy organisation, that is so well-respected Australia wide. In closing, during this COVID-19 pandemic each State and Territory has faced its own unique challenges in accessing an equitable education with guidelines being implemented differently by each different department. But through all of this, ICPA has remained constant. Each State has supported each other with every hurdle that has had to be overcome. So, thank you. Thank you everyone for your contribution and support. Thank you for being the united voice during a time of great uncertainty. Thank you ICPA.

### **NORTHERN TERRITORY PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Sarah Cook

In 2018–19 the Northern Territory Government spent \$1.029 billion on education, an increase of \$9 million from last year, to 33,500 students and 153 government schools across the Territory.

It is staggering that for a small jurisdiction with over a billion bucks in the education budget, some Territory families are still carrying a huge financial responsibility when it comes to delivering education in the bush, and we have seen this come through in our motions, year after year.

ICPA NT continues to advocate on state-based issues around access and the delivery of education - including internet, hardware and software.

While we wait for the Territory Government to finalise an internet trial that has so far taken five years, with possibly another two years ahead of us, an increasing number of families are paying the lion's share of internet plans to ensure they have adequate and consistent internet necessary for access to, and delivery of, education.

While the NT Department of Education answered our calls in term 3/2019, by way of a small subsidy to help towards these costs, we believe the situation at present is contrary to the NT Education Act and we hope to see it resolved as soon as possible.

On matters of special needs, we have found it difficult to get traction around our lack of access to early childhood identification, diagnosis and management of special learning needs, including access to specialists, Medicare rebates, telehealth services and education advisors; mostly because of the complexities involved in getting two government agencies, health and education, on the same page and working together at the coal face, for our children.

We continue to advocate for mobile playgroups for geographically isolated children (five years and under), in addition to those services available in remote aboriginal communities. While the top end of the Territory has access to a very good service, albeit a service that is continually worried about access to and continuity of funding; the central region has no such service.

Despite this, neither the Territory Government nor the Commonwealth Government can find any money for a Mobile Play Group Service to reach our members in central Australia, a situation which is both astounding and frustrating, considering the year-on-year expansion of similar programs into other remote communities in the NT.

We've made very little progress on gaining a Living Away From Home Allowance for boarding students, and in my opinion, we may have even taken a step backwards, as the criteria for the Interstate Boarding Allowance (\$2000), introduced in 2018, has mysteriously changed once again, and many families who received the allowance last year, have been denied this year.

Nevertheless, people who live in the bush are notoriously good at getting the job done, regardless of the barriers; and families living in the bush take exactly the same approach to education. Perhaps that is why, for many many years, families in rural and remote Australia, including the Northern Territory, have been providing the compulsory supervision of students in their home school rooms, which leads me to the Distance Education Teaching Allowance.

Earlier this year, in a joint meeting attended by ICPA State and Federal Council Presidents and Secretaries, Federal Council advised that the Federal Minister for Education had made a clear statement that it is a State responsibility to provide what is required for distance education, including compulsory supervision.

In the Northern Territory, and I quote from a Territory Government website: *'It is the expectation that all school aged students on School of the Air or NT School of Distance Education have a supervisor or tutor to oversee their studies'*.

Yes, government schools are free for Australian citizens and permanent residents, but in the Northern Territory at least, government schools are not actually free for families enrolled in schools of the air or distance education. That is because you must also provide, at your own cost, a supervisor; which we all know either costs the family directly (as the parent who can't work because of this responsibility), or indirectly - via an employment package for a governess.

Can you imagine any government asking a suburban mainstream family to provide full-time supervision for their student? I certainly can't, and I'm not sure why governments think it's reasonable to ask it of distance education families, either.

We've all heard the ignorant argument "you choose to live where you live" - meanwhile governments on all levels are investing billions, literally billions, into regional development strategies.

Let's be clear. We choose to live in rural and remote Australia because *'around two thirds of Australia's export earnings come from regional industries such as agriculture, tourism, retail, services and manufacturing. Australia's regions are ... integral to our values and sense of identity, which come from our unique and diverse culture, landscape, history and people'* <https://www.regional.gov.au/regional/> .

Or this, from one of the many national strategies, *'It is only logical that we should invest in Australia's regions because Australia's regions power Australia's economy. Investing in our regions pays massive dividends for our nation—strong regions are the foundation of a strong Australia'*. (*Regions 2030—Unlocking Opportunity*).

At our state conference in March, a motion was passed asking State Council to lobby the NT Government to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role the home tutor plays in educating geographically isolated students via distance education.

Given the dearth of support we receive from the Territory Government at this stage, it's improbable our calls for a DETA will be realised any time soon. In the meantime the NT encourages and applauds

Federal Council for continuing its DETA advocacy and we encourage ICPA members across Australia to consider DETA for what it is - the cost of delivering a public service. I think COVID went some way to showing the world what a commitment and impost that service can be on students, families and livelihoods.

There are economic reasons why education is compulsory and why governments *supply* public education to all Australian citizens, in return for taxes. We, rural and remote families, should not be financially penalised for where we live.

Following the Christmas break, and just as we were starting to fire-up for 2020, COVID took the ear and time of every education stakeholder in our world, no doubt in your world too. It's been hard for me as President, knowing there is so much to do but also, it's been hard for our Council finding enough time to commit to ICPA.

The Territory is a small jurisdiction so it's not unusual for State Councillors to also be involved in keeping our communities strong and vibrant. This year though, perhaps due to COVID or the fact that drought conditions are still prevalent across parts of the Territory, many of us have struggled to find time for our portfolio and associated ICPA commitments.

So, as I write this, I look forward to more rain, less COVID and more opportunities with my fellow ICPA Councillors to advocate on our motions. I also hope, following our state government election in August, that ICPA NT will be reinvigorated, working with a government who appreciates the value geographically isolated families bring to our regions, our communities and our future.

I close by expressing my sincere appreciation and thanks to ICPA NT State Councillors Suzanne Wilson, Katie Payne, Rebecca Cadzow, Moira Lanzarin, Amanda Murphy, Amber Driver, Heidi Millership, Sarah Measey, Bianca Brown and Kerrie Scott.

I also warmly acknowledge our Down the Track magazine Editor Annika Bell who has produced some amazing work in her first year, and welcome our new Patron, Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AO, Administrator of the Northern Territory, following Mrs Jan Heaslip OAM who spent many years in this role.

Very importantly, I wish to thank all ICPA branch members in the Northern Territory; you are our whole reason for being.

This year I have felt especially grateful to all ICPA Members, Branches, State and Federal Councils, for being a united, well connected and clever bunch of committed people who advocate for equity in education for all rural and remote students, Australia wide.

ICPA is indeed a magnificent organisation.

### **NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Claire Butler

It is with great pleasure I present the President's report on behalf of ICPA-NSW.

#### **State Conference 2020**

The ICPA-NSW State Conference was scheduled to be held on 18 and 19 March in Moree, with the theme "Education, Heart of Communities". This was also the week that COVID-19 restrictions were unfolding and whilst our State Councillors had travelled to Moree with every intention of continuing with the conference, it quickly became very apparent that a decision needed to be made to cancel.

The Moree Convening Committee is to be commended for all their efforts and hard work in the months of work they put into organising the conference - it was a tough week for us all and as this was unfolding we were also dealing with the news that our children's schools were closing - being away from home making these decisions when clearly we needed to be home with our families was certainly a resilience building experience.

We have also had to find a way to work around our Constitution which does restrict us from voting on conference motions via postal or electronic means. We have asked our branches to advise us, in writing, if they consider their new matter to be urgent and based on that advice we will raise it as an 'issue' for their area, instead of a 'motion' for our State. This way, we can still represent our members with politicians and stakeholders.

Despite having to cancel our Conference, whilst we were in Moree, we took the opportunity to hold the AGM via teleconference. This ensured that we remained constitutional and also gave us the opportunity to present Caroline McDonald with a Certificate of Appreciation for all her hard work that she has done for State Council.

We would like to acknowledge the generosity of FRRR, who in the spirit of 'tackling tough times' allowed the \$46,000 grant received by Moree branch to be used to pay expenses relating to the cancelled conference - it ensured that local businesses such as caterers and motels were not financially burdened from the cancellation. Moree, like most of NSW in recent years, has been through a tough time with the drought and FRRR really helped out. This assistance then allowed for all conference registrations to be reimbursed. The State Conference for 2021 has been set for Hay in the Southern Riverina on 10 and 11 March and we sincerely hope that we will all be face to face in Hay. Thanks again to the FRRR for offering to transfer left over funds from the Moree conference to Hay. Hay branch theme is "Thrive in Isolation."

### **Mini Deputation 2020**

We have had no face to face meetings, but we have embraced Zoom!

Instead of mini deputation to Sydney this year, there have been letters written and more online meetings, in particular State Council has met with NSW Education Standards Authority on the Curriculum review, The NSW Department of Education on the Rural and Remote Survey and Transport for NSW on the school drive subsidy (very pleasing to see ICPA-NSW quoted and a recommendation on the need for a preschool drive subsidy in the recent NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Drought). We have worked on two more submissions for NSW Parliamentary inquiries – the review into the NSW Curriculum and the review into Future Development of the NSW Tertiary Education Sector.

We have, of course, also dealt with the ongoing issues that COVID-19 throws at us on a daily basis. This has been particularly challenging to manage as we find ourselves catching policy on the run. NSW is a State sandwiched by three other States, who, in the past few months have closed their borders and this has had a huge impact on the ability for children to access their education, not to mention the children who also attend boarding school within NSW.

State Council has been very focused on writing and telephoning interstate Ministers and Health Departments. We find ourselves averaging two radio interviews a week, constantly updating our Facebook page and emailing members updates as we find things out. It was very pleasing to see Queensland relax quarantine rules on NSW children who reside on rural and remote properties as they return to boarding. The Chief Medical Officer of Qld said that "refusal of entry into Queensland would cause disproportionate hardship to these children given the importance of education in our community". We have been working hard to ensure that remote NSW children boarding in South Australia can be allowed back in without quarantining. South Australia has been particularly



challenging but we won't give up on these children who are our most geographically isolated in the Far West of NSW. We are also monitoring the Victorian situation closely and thank the NSW Government for listening to us by placing a permit criteria for boarding families. It is wonderful to see so many organisations advocating for rural and remote children and I would like to make special mention of Richard Stokes and the team at ABSA for all that they do for schools and our children. I would like to also thank NT Territory President Sarah Cook, whom we did a joint letter with, Qld President Tammie Irons for all her knowledge and for arranging that wonderful online rally, SA President Jill Greenfield, who we shared a South Australian Country Hour radio interview with, and Federal President Alana Moller who has been advocating at a federal level, these women are a true inspiration. The silver lining in COVID-19 is the opportunity to be in such remarkable company and working collaboratively under extraordinary circumstances. It is quite apparent that we will be dealing with this for some time and it is indeed a worrying time for many of our families.

The NSW Minister for Education was extremely quick to assist when we raised the issue of social distancing capacity in the State boarding schools and they found ways to get all children back to those schools in a very timely manner.

ICPA-NSW conducted a survey of boarding school families during the COVID-19 closures and overwhelmingly, we had 517 responses. In early June, 55% of boarders were not back in their boarding houses. The survey provided us with an insight into the struggles of many members and we thank everyone for participating, we also gave each State Council and Federal Council the results so that they could utilise the information. Our current membership numbers are 783 and whilst the survey did capture 40 new members Australia wide, we still need to look at ways to encourage more memberships. For NSW, our challenge is finding ways to keep members staying on whilst new ones join.

State Council is scheduled to have our first face to face meeting in late August where we will plan what our main deputation will look like as it doesn't look very promising that we will be in Sydney for face to face meetings in October. More Zoom meetings!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the remarkable team of Councillors on ICPA-NSW State Council. Despite their own challenges with Drought, Bushfires and family commitments, they continue to inspire me every day with their willingness to volunteer to help our members. The life of a State Councillor means that every single day you do something for ICPA-NSW. Every. Single. Day. It might be whilst in the sheep yards hanging off one bar of phone service, in the car, late at night whilst everyone is asleep, or during family events, on the tractor, on Mothers or Father day, it doesn't matter what day it is, every day there is a team of people doing something selfless for our members.

Thank you also to Alana Moller and her Federal team for being supportive mentors to us throughout what has been a very interesting year. The unwavering support from ICPA (Aust) has been such an incredible strength to us in NSW.

I will leave you with a wonderful little quote from the letter written to us recently by our Patron, Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC QC Governor of New South Wales ***“take care of yourselves and thank you again for living the challenge of being in isolated communities with such good humour and such big hearts”***.

### ICPA WEBSITE MANAGER'S REPORT

Sue Shotton

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

2020 has been the year of a massive take-up of technology due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19 and what upheaval this pandemic has caused to everyone's lives. 2020 has proven to be a year of unknowns and everyone having the ability to adjust quickly to change and to be extremely adaptable. This alone brings challenges to most people as some people have to devise mechanisms to cope with the ever-changing life environment and the uncertainty of what will be in the future.

ICPA is not immune to this and members have coped as rural and remote people usually do. At last year's Federal Conference, in my report, I explained that due to the age and type of the platform our current ICPA websites run on, that these websites would have to be retired by December 2020. Our relationship with our webhost and developer, Clear Pixel, would be coming to an end as the Breeze platform they built over 15 years ago was going into retirement. Clear Pixel granted us an extended timeframe to find another platform and build new websites, database, and an online platform system. They have been extremely helpful and will give 100% assistance to ensure we have an easy transition from one to the other. ICPA would like to thank Clear Pixel for their continual support over the past 12 + years where they have hosted and developed our existing web presence.

Now came the big challenge for me as the Website Manager and my team which now consisted of representatives from each state along with their Presidents. All of us being coordinated and kept on track by Nikki Macqueen who took on the role of the leader of the web development group.

Firstly, we needed to recommend a platform that would meet our needs. The platform needed to be able to move from one host to another if we required it to, and not be a specialty platform that can only be used with one host, which is what we currently have. Basically, we whittled it down to two platforms, WordPress and Drupal. Both of these platforms are good platforms and had many pros and cons for their use. I had some user experience with the back-of-house with each and my requirement here was a system that had to be very user friendly to encourage members to take on website roles for their States. After much deliberation it was recommended and accepted that the new platform ICPA would use would be Drupal.

During January and February, I was working with developers from all states looking for the right provider to work with ICPA and received many quotes to deliver what was required and these quotes ranged from \$10,000 to \$160,000 and had great variance in the ongoing cost commitments. Finally, a provider was chosen, and Nikki and I have now been working with Enrega from Tasmania creating the backbone of the websites. It has been very exciting with the knowledge that this website will, hopefully, provide exactly what members have been asking for. The States have provided many lists of things they would like to see on the website and the main thing was that each State wanted to have ownership of their site.

This is one of the reasons Enrega and Drupal were chosen as once the backbone of the websites are created then it will be the State web representatives who will create the front-of-house look of the website. They will gain onsite training through the development which will give each State pride in what they are creating and also give each State their own individualised look. As I said previously, exciting times ahead.

The database and online memberships have been highlighted as having areas that need to be improved upon. With Drupal it appears these concerns can be addressed. The Membership Officers and Treasurers have done a remarkable job with the existing system but sometimes obtaining relevant information about members is not instant. It is hoped with Drupal that state membership officers/treasurers and branch treasurers will be able to log in with their ICPA email address and view their current members and export the list.

ICPA email addresses have been created for every branch of ICPA so this email address can be the log in for the branch. These email addresses will only be virtual email addresses and will be redirected to whatever branch email address is being used by the branch. There is possibly the opportunity for the branch to log in with their ICPA email address and edit their own branch page under the guidance of the state web person or the web manager. This ability has not been confirmed yet by our new developer.

With online membership payments, it has been asked that life memberships can be paid online as well as other membership types such as Friends, Corporate and School. This is a possibility and the developer is currently working on this. Likewise, it was requested that recurring payments are also offered if a member wished to utilise this payment. This is also a possibility but will only be available during November to March when most people renew their memberships.

The merchant facility on the website will enable a member to be able to make a donation at any tier of ICPA whether it is branch, state or Federal, as well as any other product a state would like to sell, such as merchandise. This facility can also be used for conference registrations as well.

The website will allow pop-up forms to be created which can be used for states and branches to get more information regarding their members. These forms, once filled out, can be emailed to one or more people. Likewise, when a member joins or renews, an email can be sent to all three tiers so everyone from the branch up to the Federal Membership Officer are aware of what is happening. Surveys are another tool that can be used through the website as well as having logged in members making instant comments on an issue. These facilities will help ICPA gain instant feedback on current issues which will help with any lobbying.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the state representatives and all my Webmasters for their help over the past 12 months. Special thanks to our Federal President, Alana and Federal Webmaster, Nikki for their support during this COVID-19 time.

### **PEDALS REPORT**

Raelene Hall

Greetings, and welcome, to everyone, on this beautiful winter's day in Hobart. Oh.... Sorry rewind. We were meant to be in Hobart, but COVID-19 put paid to that. Still, never let it be said that any pandemic stopped ICPA from holding their annual Federal Conference.

So, instead of listening to me talk from the podium, you can read this Pedals report online.

The past 12 months has seen another 4 issues of Pedals magazine published for our members and other interested readers. I do hope you have all been enjoying the content of the magazine when, or if, you find time to read it.

Whilst you may not think of it this way, Pedals is actually a collaboration between the contributors, the editor and the publisher. Without one of those core roles there would be no magazine, so never doubt the importance of the contributions that you make to Pedals.

I know you probably get really, really tired of emails turning up telling you another Pedals magazine is about to be put together and your contributions would really be welcomed, which actually means, 'please, please, please send the editor some material'!

It never ceases to amaze me, as editor, the range of articles I receive from contributors, the majority of them ICPA members. The challenges that are overcome, the innovative ideas trialled, the achievements of our rural, regional and remote people across this vast land and the support to others who may be in similar situations to some of our contributors.

The most recent issue, published in July, was an incredible journey across Australia, learning how people were dealing with COVID-19, the impact, or not, that it's having on their lives and businesses and how they see the future. I believe that this issue of Pedals, July 2020, will be just one of many ways the history of 2020 and the pandemic will be recorded for posterity.

Likewise, the journey of Pedals over the years is very much a history of ICPA and, its journey, over the years since the first magazine was printed. Our thanks must go to the ICPA Federal archivist Julia Materne, for maintaining the full compilation of Pedals magazine, among other archiving duties. It's a very big job.

My thanks go to Alana Moller, our Federal President, Nikki Macqueen, past Publicity Officer and Jo Camilleri, current Publicity Officer, for their input to each issue. It is never easy, especially when circumstances are constantly changing, as has been the case in 2020.

I would also like to congratulate and thank Nikki Macqueen for her work in ensuring each cover and a selection of articles from each issue of Pedals is put up on the website.

I consider it a privilege to be the Editor of our national magazine and I thank all of Federal Council for entrusting me with this role. I look forward to bringing you more fabulous reading in future Pedals magazines.

Hopefully, I will see many of you, face to face, at the 2021 conference.

### **PORTFOLIO REPORTS**

#### **BOARDING/HOSTELS/SECOND HOME REPORT**

Nikki Macqueen

As I write this report all ICPA State Councils across Australia continue to work hard to ensure their state and interstate boarders are able to return to school during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Frustrations have run high with families desperate to see their children return to their boarding facility and back into their classrooms.

Federal Council actioned twenty-one Boarding/Hostels/Second Home motions from the 2019 Federal Conference held in Adelaide. A total of 53 letters were sent to the relevant Ministers and Senators from ICPA (Aust) regarding those 21 motions which were then followed up at delegations held in Canberra during October 2019. During the COVID-19 period it was advised that the Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education Hon

Andrew Gee MP, would undertake issues related to Boarding/Hostels/Second Home. ICPA Federal President Alana Moller has met with Minister Gee to discuss these issues and we look forward to continuing that relationship into the future.

During Term 1 when students were beginning to be sent home from Boarding Schools due to the COVID restrictions, there was talk of continued school shut downs in Term 2 and members became concerned about the payment of the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance. Some Boarding Schools ceased fees while students were not in the boarding house while others did not, so a one rule applies did not fit every scenario. After some anxious moments it was announced that the AIC would remain intact and unaltered for all of Term 2 and we are pleased to see this continuing for Term 3. We thank the Federal Government and Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston for considering our rural and remote families in such a stressful time.

At the end of 2019 ICPA (Aust) was informed that an AIC online application/renewal system was forecast to be rolled out sometime from mid-2020 to mid-2022. Due to the current crisis situation ICPA (Aust) has contacted Services Australia to appeal to fast-track the delivery of this system as self-isolation restrictions may stay in place as we near the end of the 2020 year.

Work is continuing to raise awareness that the removal of Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) on contributions to employees' children's compulsory education expenses would potentially encourage families to stay in rural and remote Australia, improve recruitment and retention of staff while encouraging employers to contribute to the increasingly high costs associated with educating rural and remote children. The Government has stated that employers currently benefit from existing FBT concessions for certain housing related benefits such as electricity, gas or other residential fuel and holiday travel for employees and their families living and working in remote areas. In the Government's opinion any further concessions, including education expenses, would come at a cost to revenue and would need to be balanced against other Government priorities. We shall continue to bring this issue to the forefront whenever possible.

Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP replied to our letter requesting the Federal Government provide mental health resources which will ensure rural and remote children have the capability to cope with dire situations and to address increasing mental health issues in boarding schools. We were alerted to the Government's investment programs including Empowering our Communities, Reachout and the expansion of Telehealth access to psychological therapies which are all available to boarding school students from rural and remote areas. Interestingly, \$98.6 million has been committed to Beyond Blue to deliver a school-based mental health initiative called Be You which assists early learning educators and teachers to teach children and young people skills for good social and emotional development and recognise mental health difficulties. Boarding schools are eligible to access Be You at no cost and currently there are over 85,300 individual users registered and 6202 schools participating. Federal Council encourages families to make contact with their respective boarding schools to ask about their individual programs.

ICPA (Aust) has met with the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) to discuss what can be done by boarding schools in regard to the mental health of students impacted by drought and it was also mentioned during a meeting with Dolly's Dream in November 2019. Federal Council appreciates the work of several State Councils who have sent out letters to boarding schools in their states reiterating the mental health concerns of their rural and remote students, hoping to raise awareness of the situation many of these children have been dealing with during the drought, in turn supporting our advocacy.

Another concerning topic for members is the Socio-Economic Status Score Methodology proposed by the National School Resourcing Board Review. This comprehensive review in 2018 saw the Government accept all six recommendations made by that Board. This includes that from 2020 the capacity to contribute of a school should be determined based on a direct measure of median income for parents and guardians of the students at a school.

A Technical Working Group has been established by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment to provide advice on refinement and implementation of the direct measure of the capacity to contribute with particular focus on the impact the new measure has on regional, rural and remote families including boarding schools. The Government believes that the use of parent and/or guardian income in a direct measure is likely to reduce the need for schools to appeal their Capacity to Contribute scores as these scores are based on actual data collected rather than an average for an area.

ICPA (Aust) has raised concern regarding this measure directly with the Minister's office during our delegations in October 2019. Federal Council completed a submission into the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee Inquiry - Australian Education Amendment (Direct Measure of Income) Bill 2020 [Provisions] to highlight the impacts this new funding arrangement may have on the schools our member families rely upon to educate their children. We also requested that appropriate provisions be put in place to limit these impacts. We continue to hold conversations with the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA), and Federal Council participated in the Direct Measure of Capacity to Contribute Consultative Reference Group Forum on Tuesday 17 March held by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Skill and Employment in Canberra. ICPA (Aust) will continue to raise this issue wherever we can, as we are concerned about the impact it may have on our rural and remote boarders. We have been working collaboratively with ICPA State Councils and have asked for feedback and information they may have regarding the impact on schools and ICPA families. We would appreciate any further information any State Council or branch may have at this time to help us further this discussion.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow portfolio holders Lisa Slade, Briony Sinclair, Kristen Coggan and Nikki Mahony for their support over the past year. Congratulations and thank you to President Alana Moller for a job well done in her first year at the helm. It certainly has not been an easy year especially in the boarding sphere however Alana has handled every situation with her trademark determination and grace.

### **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

Kristen Coggan

This year in Communications we have seen many improvements and concessions made. COVID-19 very quickly identified the downfalls of regional communications in Australia and accelerated some solutions needed to help improve and enhance rural, regional, and remote connectivity services and usage.

The Federal Government, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications Australia, the Regional Rural and Remote Communication Coalition (RRRCC), the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN), Better Internet for Regional, Rural and Remote (BIRRR), the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO), the National Broadband Network (NBN Co), Telstra and many retail service providers collaborated quickly and effectively to resolve several communications challenges which were raised in motions from the 2019 conference.

ICPA (Aust) continues to work 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. Federal Council continues to be a part of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC) and we take forward our members' issues to be discussed in the RRRCC forums. ICPA (Aust) also participates in the RRRCC delegations to speak with those in government and this provides opportunity to raise concerns in an additional capacity. As a member of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) and more recently selected to have a representative on the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) Consumer Panel we hope to further increase awareness of communication challenges for rural and remote students and their families. ICPA (Aust) sat on two weekly NBN Co roundtables during the COVID-19 peak, the "Education COVID-19" group and the "NBN Co COVID-19 Response Regional Roundtable". These groups worked through solutions for students and rural families at the onset of the restrictions, children home from school and we continue those discussions as required now. I welcome any feedback from members, good or bad regarding their connectivity experience during this time so I can pass on to NBN Co.

### **INTERNET**

ICPA members continue to be concerned with internet and seeking appropriate, affordable, and adequate internet services for students.

The COVID-19 virus has seen much discussion of how education will be delivered if/when schools need to close. While a serious situation, it also has highlighted some of the issues already facing rural and remote students such as data restrictions, resourcing and supervision in the classroom for Distance Education students as mainstream schooling families encountered the same considerations when their children required schooling from home for a period.

Sky Muster Plus, has the ability to greatly assist regional, rural, and remote students, including tertiary, boarding and rural school students, by providing unmetered download capacity for educational sites, as well unmetering of anything other than streaming sites and VPN usage. This proved itself during the COVID-19 lockdown where many students were home, working on many different platforms successfully at once. For customers, ordering or changing to Sky Muster Plus is a much quicker and easier process than applying for an education port and Sky Muster Plus offers greater download capacity. ICPA (Aust) was incredibly pleased to see the recent enhancements added to the Sky Muster Plus product. Lower price points added unmetered data and the ability to purchase extra data blocks has seen many families and students able to study in ways that have not been possible before for satellite customers. ICPA (Aust) continues to analyse the costing and services of the Sky Muster Plus product, as this could be a viable alternative to an Education Service (ed port) for many of our members. The unlimited content with Sky Muster Plus is now quite extensive and NBN Co have been working with ICPA (Aust) to identify further educational sites for unmetering, which we hope may eventually include some educational video sources, therefore allowing greater download ability and better affordability than the traditional Education Port. We are in constant communication with NBN Co regarding developments and look forward to any further improvements to assist rural and remote students.

ICPA (Aust) have been in contact with Telstra regarding unmetering of educational sites for mobile broadband users and hope to have some further discussions with them in this area. Also, Telstra are collaborating with us regarding alternative voice options, timely maintenance and fault rectification processes and suitable temporary alternatives.

Federal Council continues to be part of the discussion around the cessation of 3G and keep the needs and experiences of our members in the fore of this issue.

### **NBN Co and Telstra assistance packages**

With many schools returning to face-to-face teaching, NBN Co and Telstra are continuing to help connect and support families. To help Australians respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, NBN Co is providing up to \$50 million to assist phone and internet providers to support low-income family households with school-aged children who do not currently have an active nbn™ connection at home. This funding helped phone and internet providers create more affordable offers to connect eligible families during term two of school. More than 20 phone and internet providers have agreed to participate in this program. More details can be found at the following links

<https://www.telstra.com.au/covid19/supporting-you-during-covid-19>

<https://www.nbnco.com.au/campaigns/covid-19/education-assistance-package>

<https://www.nbnco.com.au/campaigns/covid-19>

ICPA (Aust) would like to reiterate again that if you are experiencing problems with your connection, no matter what type, please do not put up with it. Communications should, and can, work very well. The first port of call is to contact your provider. Keep track of any dates of calls, case numbers, etc. If you continue to experience problems, please let ICPA (Aust) know by emailing me with the relevant details, and I will try to assist where I can. My email address is [kristen@icpafc.org.au](mailto:kristen@icpafc.org.au)

Federal Council would also like to advise members that in areas where ADSL remains, it is possible for consumers to have both ADSL and either nbn™ fixed wireless or Sky Muster internet services.

The need for a transportable Sky Muster service solution for families who do not have a permanent address or location for distance education schooling, i.e. in stock camps, fencing camps, droving, etc. has once again been brought forward. Federal Council has been made aware of several distance education families facing further isolation as their students are unable to participate in online lessons due to unavailability of Sky Muster when a family does not have a permanent address or dwelling to affix it to. A transportable means of delivering internet is needed for these types of families to ensure that their students can join in online lessons, interact with classmates, and keep up with schoolwork. ICPA (Aust) is currently raising this situation with the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government, the Minister for Regional Education and Decentralisation and the Distance Education Broadband Working Group.

ICPA (Aust) continues to work with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and NBN Co to ascertain rural and remote student requirements and seek expansion to include additional cohorts such as tertiary students.

The new Statutory Infrastructure Provider (SIP) regime requires NBN Co and equivalent companies to provide a download speed of at least 25 megabits per second and an upload speed of 5Mbps during peak hours.

From 1 July that speed is to be available to all whether they live in the city or the outback.

This is part of an expanded Universal Service Obligation, which previously related to just phone lines, but now includes broadband, including Sky Muster and Fixed Wireless services.



### **TELEPHONE**

Motions around telephone services at the 2019 conference highlighted many concerns for members regarding fault restoration and repairs. The Government has assured ICPA (Aust) that it continues to have consumer safeguards in place in relation to telecommunication services. These safeguards include the Customer Ombudsman (TIO). Members who are experiencing protracted difficulties getting service faults resolved should seek advice from the TIO if they are dissatisfied with their service provider.

ICPA (Aust) continues to maintain contact with Telstra to raise members' issues. We can inform members that copper phone lines will not be disconnected in rural and remote areas where no other alternative voice service is available. Federal Council can also confirm that battery backup and replacement batteries can be provided by Telstra and Telstra can advise options for Universal Power Supply (UPS) and other systems with backup capabilities.

ICPA (Aust) has contributed to the discussion for Mobile Blackspot Program (MBSP) Round 5A. We continue to support the expansion of the Mobile Network and increased solutions to mobile black spots. Our members tend to live in the 1% of Australia that does not have mobile coverage. Depending on where our families live, mobile coverage ranges from somewhat available (often through antennae and boosters that families pay to have installed themselves) to non-existent. ICPA's main concern for our members through the MBSP has been to seek the priority of rural schools to be included in future MBSP rounds, for a few reasons - safety, particularly at one teacher schools, as well as the ability to contact parents enroute to and from the school if a situation changes at a small school and parents need to be notified (teacher being sick for example and needing to leave the school). It is also a matter for community safety as rural schools are often an evacuation point or gathering area for shelter in many small rural towns. ICPA welcomed then Minister for Regional Communications, Senator Bridget McKenzie's assurance that schools would be a priority under future rounds, and we advocate that this remains the case.

Our members also seek expansion of the MBSP into rural and remote areas to offer them a second service option for voice and internet at their places of school, work and home. This ensures that schooling (most notably for students enrolled in Schools of Distance Education or Schools of the Air) can continue if the main service (often a landline phone and satellite internet) is down. Again, having mobile service is also beneficial for safety, especially for families who may live quite a distance from their nearest neighbour or point of assistance.

There are a number of rural students whose families travel due to the type of work they are involved in (stock camps, fencing contractors, prawn/fishing trawlers) and they find it very difficult to participate in their school lessons when outside of internet or voice service. Having larger areas covered by mobile service also assists these students to keep up with their lessons and interact with classmates. Having increased access to handheld antennae devices and external mobile coverage would also greatly assist these students.

ICPA has previously also commented on MBSP 5A Key Design Point 6 that Mobile Services need to continue for a significant amount of time after any Asset Completion in a geographically isolated area, it is very difficult for these areas to try to get other options in place or things going again if services are short term.

### **ALTERNATIVE VOICE SERVICES**

ICPA (Aust) continues to consult with the relevant stakeholders and bodies on alternative voice services and trials. Please find our submission here -

<https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1238/federal-submissions/icpa-aust-submission-into-alternative-voice-trials.pdf>

ICPA (Aust) has offered the department and stakeholders the possibility to provide test cases for these trials when they are required.

### **DIGITAL TECH HUB**

As I write this, tenders for the creation and implementation of a digital tech hub close in the next 3 days. This initiative has come about upon recommendation from the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review that was completed in 2018 and its report presented in 2019. Following on from the announcement by then Minister for Regional Communications, Bridget McKenzie, that this would become a reality, ICPA (Aust) is working closely with Minister Fletcher, Minister Coulton, the Department and other stakeholders including Better Internet for Regional Rural and Remote (BIRRR) and the Regional Rural and Remote Communication Coalition (RRRCC) to ensure education is included in the guidelines for the content of the hub.

ICPA (Aust) has been well supported in our telecommunications issues by the State Councils, our Branches and members and we will continue to raise these concerns wherever it is possible to have them addressed. Thank you to my fellow Communications councillors: Wendy Hick, Sally Sullivan and Jane Morton for their support and encouragement over this last year. This portfolio is truly a joint effort by all involved, and I have appreciated the assistance and discussion provided to me.

### **CURRICULUM REPORT**

Wendy Hick

Curriculum motions at the 2019 ICPA Federal Conference revolved around the inclusion of Primary Production and the processes to provide food and fibre in the Australian Curriculum along with recognition of how important it is to have correct understanding of these topics.

Federal Council made contact with various Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators to request that Agricultural Production studies are embedded in the Australian Curriculum, including the actual “where, why and how” of producing food and fibre and that this be taught to all students in schools across Australia to create a better opportunity for understanding. As part of this correspondence, ICPA (Aust) highlighted the critical part Agriculture plays in the Australian economy and the importance of dispelling apparent misconceptions and misunderstandings around agricultural production in Australia. In our October delegation meetings with the Senior Adviser to then Agriculture Minister Bridget McKenzie, we were informed of \$5 million in funding being made available to state-based farming organisations to implement agricultural-related subject matter in schools. This funding has been made available for three years beginning in 2020 through the Educating Kids about Agriculture: Kids to Farms Grant Program (Community Grants Hub).

<https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants/educatingkidsaboutagriculturekidstofarms>

Applications for these grants closed on 26 February 2020.

In addition to our meetings with those in government, Federal Council has also discussed with groups such as Primary Industries Education Foundation of Australia (PIEFA), Agforce Qld and National Farmers’ Federation the importance of ensuring food and fibre production is part of schools’ curriculum and how we can support and further its implementation. ICPA (Aust) is now an Associate Member of PIEFA and also has a representative on the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Peak Parents Stakeholder group where we have been able to include in

discussions the need for better inclusion of food and fibre into the Australian Curriculum.

As part of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Peak Parents Stakeholder Group, ICPA (Aust) also has the opportunity to represent rural and remote families throughout many elements of the Australian Curriculum which ACARA manages.

### **NAPLAN**

NAPLAN testing has remained a focus of the curriculum sphere for ACARA in 2019 and 2020, with commitment made to a review of NAPLAN testing “to identify what a standardised testing regime in Australian schools should deliver, assess how well NAPLAN achieves this, and identify potential short and longer-term improvements.” Federal Council welcomed the opportunity to make a submission to this review to ensure the key issues associated with the delivery, implementation and use of results from NAPLAN for rural and remote students were identified. One of the key components of the Review of NAPLAN has been to identify shortfalls of the current reporting of NAPLAN results, especially to limit the availability of comparison information between schools, with a focus more on individual student results. Consultations with key stakeholders in the Review of NAPLAN were delayed as schools and education systems responded to changes in educational delivery due to the impact of COVID-19. As a result, the timeframe for the NAPLAN Review has been extended, and Stage 2 will now report to Education Council in September 2020. Stage One of the NAPLAN Review is completed, and the Interim Report can be found at

[https://naplanreview.com.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/1158420/NAPLAN\\_Review\\_Interim\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://naplanreview.com.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1158420/NAPLAN_Review_Interim_Report_Final.pdf)

With the onset and subsequent impacts of COVID-19, the Education Council which consists of State and Federal Education Ministers made the decision to cancel NAPLAN testing of students as well as the scheduled testing of the NAPLAN Online platform for 2020. The communique on this decision can be found at:

<http://www.educationcouncil.edu.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/EC%20Communique%20and%20media%20releases/Education%20Council%20Communique%20-%202020%20March%202020.pdf>

At this stage, NAPLAN testing will re-commence in 2021, however on the 02 June 2020, the Education Ministers made the decision to defer full transition to NAPLAN Online from 2021 to 2022. With issues arising with NAPLAN Online in 2019, this delay will allow for refinement of the program, which would otherwise have been conducted this year, to be completed next year. It remains to be seen in 2021 exactly how NAPLAN testing will look.

### **The Australian Curriculum**

An ongoing call to declutter the current Australian Curriculum has been addressed recently by the Federal Government, with the announcement in June that a commitment has been made to review the Australian Curriculum by 2021 for all eight Key Learning Areas from Foundation to Year 10, except Languages. Languages will be reviewed and reported on by the end of 2021. The purpose of the Review of the Australian Curriculum Foundation to Year 10 will be to ensure the Australian Curriculum is still meeting the needs of students and providing clear guidance for teachers and it will be overseen by ACARA, who aims to work with stakeholders throughout the process. ICPA (Aust) will continue to monitor the progress of the review and put forward the needs of rural and remote students where possible. More information on the Curriculum Review can be found here: <https://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/curriculum-review>

ACARA has been working to develop closer relationships with key stakeholders over the past twelve months. ICPA (Aust) had the opportunity to participate in a survey in late 2019 to provide feedback

on ACARA's interaction and engagement with key stakeholders. Following on from this survey, ACARA has focused on improving and strengthening stakeholder interactions and engagement. As part of this engagement, Federal Council has had the opportunity to participate in collaboration and information sharing across topics. ACARA has been providing ICPA (Aust) with regular updates for our members which we have shared in our Branch Bulletins. ACARA also provides resources and information specifically for parents through their website portfolio, and Federal Council encourages members to look at the content and information available to them from ACARA.

Members may wish to know that the Australian Curriculum website has a separate section with information specifically for parents [https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/parent-information/?mc\\_cid=be42ba9715&mc\\_eid=39a00b9dc1](https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/parent-information/?mc_cid=be42ba9715&mc_eid=39a00b9dc1) and there is also an overview for parents to learn about how the Australian Curriculum is organised, including information about the learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. [https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/6517/the\\_australian\\_curriculum\\_an\\_overview\\_for\\_parents.pdf](https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/6517/the_australian_curriculum_an_overview_for_parents.pdf)

Recently, ACARA has been seeking to identify constructive changes which would improve their website resources for parents. ICPA (Aust) was contacted seeking feedback to assist in improving the access and usability of these resources, and this request was shared across our social media to give members the opportunity to give feedback.

ICPA (Aust) continues to ensure that rural and remote students and educational contexts are recognised and considered in all aspects of curriculum design and implementation. Through engagement with key national curriculum stakeholders and the Federal Government we have had the opportunity to put forward the concerns of our members and will

### **DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT**

Alana Moller

ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate for recognition and support for those families who must educate their children by distance education or School of the Air because of being geographically isolated.

Following on from the 2019 Federal Conference, Federal Council has focused on our advocacy for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance, along with continuing to raise the necessity for Distance Education and School of the Air schools to be based in rural and remote locations and requesting a separate category for geographically isolated students in the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme in recognition of the unique needs of these students.

#### **Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA)**

Seeking the establishment of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance continues to be one of Federal Council's major points of advocacy. ICPA Federal Council has and will continue to advocate strongly for the establishment of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA).

The DETA topic was raised in a motion letter sent to the Federal Minister for Education, Minister Tehan and other relevant Ministers, members and senators shortly after the 2019 Federal Conference. The topic has also been comprehensively covered in Federal Council delegation Briefing Papers and during delegation meetings and further raised in correspondence with the Minister in a letter in December. Federal Council received correspondence from Minister Tehan's office indicating that the topic should be taken to State Education Ministers citing that "the delivery of school education is the responsibility

of the relevant State or Territory. Distance education in government schools is a matter for State and Territory education authorities who have provision for distance education of their students in specific circumstances.” This was raised with representatives from all State Councils at the Joint Councils meeting in February along with discussion on how to approach the DETA advocacy. We continue to see many branches and state councils across Australia requesting for Federal Council to pursue a DETA at a federal level and this reaffirms our commitment to continuing to seek the establishment of a DETA by the federal government and members can be assured we will do so.

Federal Council utilises every opportunity to raise the request for a DETA within submissions, meetings, delegations and other avenues, along with raising the profile of the distance education tutor and the extensive and essential role they play in achieving distance education success. A short video played at Federal Conference last year was released across our social media platforms showcasing the distance education tutor in distance education schoolrooms across Australia. The necessity for a distance education supervisor was thoroughly expounded in our submission to the Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments and we used this opportunity to highlight how fundamental the distance education tutor is to distance education success in remote educational environments. Most recently, the topic has been raised in recent conversations with the Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education, Hon Andrew Gee MP.

One of the greatest impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic felt across education in Australia, was the inception of the majority of students having to learn from home with their families required to supervise, support and implement online lesson delivery. ICPA (Aust) was able to provide advice and guidance to families across Australia faced with managing this challenging and unprecedented situation. This also gave rise to an opportunity to draw attention to the insights and experiences and tell the stories of the difficulties faced by, and the tenacity and resilience, of geographically isolated families who always must educate their children at home and provide resources and a distance education tutor for their students as a matter of course, not just in the midst of a crisis. There is an opportunity to build on this newfound insight and appreciation of the challenges for geographically isolated families educating children at home that has occurred across Australia as a result of COVID-19. ICPA Australia has every intention of continuing to raise, advocate for and pursue the DETA at every opportunity.

### **Location of Schools of the Air/Schools of Distance Education**

Federal Council continues to maintain the position that Schools of the Air and Schools of Distance Education should remain in rural and remote communities and we have reiterated this to the Federal Minister for Education, Minister Tehan and other members and senators. We thoroughly understand the importance of this and while decisions of this nature are principally state-based, Federal Council will support States however we can to ensure Schools of the Air and Schools of Distance Education remain in rural and remote communities and maintain the resources and support provided for geographically isolated students who have no choice but to be educated via these schools.

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

With the changing nature of distance education schools, the request for a separate category for geographically isolated students to be established within the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) scheme was raised with the Minister for Families and Social Services, Minister Ruston to ensure that adequate support and assistance is maintained for these students. Federal Council has emphasised that increasing financial assistance needs to be provided to help with the costs associated with educating geographically isolated students who do not have daily access to face-to-face appropriate schooling due to distance, as per the original intent of the AIC scheme. Further to this, in our Briefing Papers we suggested a review is needed to ensure the AIC allowance is adequately meeting the needs of geographically isolated students. Within submissions, meetings and delegations and most

recently in our submission to the Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments, Federal Council has highlighted that geographically isolated students need to be recognised as a unique disadvantage group who require specialised support and assistance in order to allow them to achieve equitable educational outcomes. Federal Council aims to use every opportunity to highlight and promote the unique needs of geographically isolated students.

Most recently, Federal Council wrote to Minister Ruston and other Members of Parliament in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, requesting assurance that with a move to schooling at home across the much of the community that the AIC–DE allowance would not be eroded noting that more families may become eligible for this allowance and the fact that our members do not have access to local schooling because of where they live at any time, not just in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis would not be overlooked. We welcomed reassurance in a reply from the Minister that stated, “AIC Distance Education Allowance will not be payable where the student's only reason for not being able to attend an appropriate state school is because their local school has been temporarily closed, or has encouraged students to study from home, in order to manage an outbreak of COVID-19, as this is outside the scope of the AIC Scheme.”

This response is encouraging as it shows a distinct recognition of the unique circumstances of those rural and remote students who receive the Distance Education allowance, not only through the COVID-19 crisis, as well as a commitment to ensuring the intended scope of the AIC scheme is maintained.

As always, Federal Council encourages all ICPA members to actively participate in opportunities to raise the profile of the nature of geographically isolated distance education and the importance and value of providing adequate resources and support for geographically isolated students who have no other options to access their compulsory education.

I would like to take this opportunity to show my appreciation to Christie Goddard, for leading the Distance Education Portfolio for part of the Federal Council year and to my fellow distance education portfolio members, as well as all of Federal Council for their support this year.

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC) REPORT**

Jane Morton

ICPA (Aust) is working hard to ensure rural and remote families can and will access high quality, affordable early childhood learning and child care, whether that be through Preschool or Kindergarten, Long Day Care in rural and remote areas, Mobile Early Childhood Services including Mobile Playgroups or In Home Care.

#### **AIC Distance Education Allowance for Pre-Compulsory School Students and Universal Access to Early Childhood Education**

ICPA (Aust) is continuing to advocate the Federal Government for the extension of the AIC Distance Education allowance to pre-compulsory distance education students and increased access to Preschool/Kindergarten in rural and remote areas, particularly as the Federal Government has provided \$449.5 million to states and territories in 2020 and committed \$452.3 million for 2021 under the National Partnership Agreement to provide Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. This funding should ensure that all children have access to 600 hours of early childhood education prior to formal schooling.

Federal Council met with relevant Ministers, Senators and Members of Parliament with an interest in rural and remote education on delegations in Canberra last November where the need for an Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Review which would include the extension of AIC to those pre-



compulsory distance education students studying a recognised program, was discussed along with all the other early childhood education and care concerns.

### **Long Day Care in Rural and Remote Areas**

Concerns regarding the plight of Long Day Care (LDC) services during the prolonged drought were brought to the fore at the last Federal Conference. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment informed child care services including In Home Care in rural and regional areas that they can still apply for a one-off Special Circumstances grant under the Community Child Care Fund to address any current viability or natural disaster issues such as drought and then bushfires, however this closed on 3 April 2020. Federal Council expressed our members' concerns in the recent Universal Access National Partnership Review and the National Quality Framework consultation. It was good to see that the transitional provisions for Early Childhood Teachers have been extended for 2 or 4 years depending on the state or territory.

### **In Home Care (IHC)**

Federal Council continues to advocate for flexibility within the new Home Care model since its inception in July 2018. Many letters have been written to the Minister for Education, rural politicians and the Department of Education, Skills and Employment and we have followed up with this on delegations and whenever the opportunity arose. Federal Council was pleased to hear the announcement just before Christmas that the Transitional Provisions for IHC have been extended for two years until December 2021. However, some service providers have been slow to accept this and there has been confusion over the definition of 'remote and very remote areas' where families reside. According to the [IHC Handbook](#) on page 25, "IHC Support Agencies will use the Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+) (2016) as a measure to guide the consideration of remoteness and isolation from approved child care services. Families that live in a location designated as Very Remote, Remote, or Moderately Accessible (Outer Regional) in the ARIA+ (2016) measure may be able to demonstrate that they are isolated from approved child care services primarily based on the distance from their home to the nearest available, appropriate approved child care service."

ICPA (Aust) has also been seeking government assistance regarding the plight of two or more families on a single large remote property who require child care, as one IHC educator is unable to care for more than one family's children at one time and having more than one educator accommodated on a property proves very expensive and is not feasible. Family Day Care has been suggested by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment but this would still be difficult to set up in the circumstances.

Since seeking clarity in the issue of IHC educators supervising distance education, the Education Minister has reinforced the legislation from the Family Assistance Law citing that only caring for children completing their homework and regular child care, but not supervising formal schooling, is permissible in order for the family to receive the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The Department of Education, Skills and Employment has recommended that a private arrangement between a family and the IHC educator be made to ensure continued care during those 'formal schooling hours' but families will not be able to claim the CCS during that time.

**And then the COVID-19 pandemic hit!** The ECEC Relief Package announced on 9 April 2020 with its provision of about 50% funding for services, really affected IHC and Family Day Care services in rural and remote areas where there was not a reduction in educators and children requiring child care, so providers had to look elsewhere for extra funding in order to pay their current educators properly. JobKeeper or the Exceptional Circumstances supplementary payment became available for eligible providers and educators but there was much confusion and applications took a long time to be processed with some being rejected with others requiring reapplication and providers would not employ extra or replace much needed educators for rural and remote families during that time.

Families were not allowed to supplement the educators either, so despite back payments being promised, some educators saw a reduction in their income to only 20% of their regular wages during this time.

By late May the ECEC Relief Package 4 Week Review Report recognised that Family Day Care and IHC services required extra funding, so \$12 million was provided for child care services that had more than 30 per cent of full-time equivalent staff ineligible for JobKeeper payments and \$800,000 provided to IHC services to increase their level of funding. However, some families were still unable to access a replacement or new educator due to lack of funding from the providers in early June as payments were either rejected or had to be applied for several times.

The ECEC Relief Package concluded on 12 July with JobKeeper payments for services and sole traders finishing on 20 July 2020. The Child Care and Additional Child Care Subsidies returned on 13 July, however a Transition Payment was also provided to child care services from 13 July and runs until 27 September 2020 on top of the Child Care Subsidy, amounting to 25% of the fees received in the reference fortnight in February. For the period of the transition, there are several conditions, as per media release:

- “Child care fees will be capped at the level of the reference period (17 February to 1 March).
- Services will need to guarantee employment levels to protect staff who will move off the JobKeeper Payment.

The Government will also ease the activity test until 4 October to support eligible families whose employment has been impacted as a result of COVID-19. These families will receive up to 100 hours per fortnight of subsidised care during this period.

This will assist families to return to the level of work, study or training they were undertaking before COVID-19.” See <https://ministers.dese.gov.au/tehan/return-child-care-subsidy>.

ICPA (Aust) recently discussed the unique needs of IHC in rural and remote areas along with other educational issues with the new Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education, the Hon Andrew Gee MP; hopefully he will address these concerns and the need for IHC families in rural and remote areas being regarded as a separate entity from other child care services.

### **Mobile Early Childhood Services**

Federal Council has recently received assurance from the Federal Government that funding for ex-Budget Based Funded Early Childhood Services such as Mobile Playgroups is ongoing. Future funding arrangements are being considered and the department is committed to ensuring service providers are forewarned. Future grant opportunities will be announced as they come available at [www.communitygrants.gov.au](http://www.communitygrants.gov.au) and [www.grants.gov.au](http://www.grants.gov.au). Federal Council will continue to advocate for the funding to expand the Katherine Isolated Children’s Service (KICS) and other Mobile Early Childhood Services into geographically isolated areas and communities where there is no Early Childhood service at all and for the continuation of opportunities for future funding for their current services.

### **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 is working on this, but it will take some time to complete due to the different rules and regulations of states and territories. Unfortunately, we have received no further news regarding a national certification at this stage, even though an announcement is due, but we will forward any information as it comes available.



### **Working Holiday Maker Visas**

Despite not receiving any motions last year (but there have been in previous years) changes have been made in regard to [Working Holiday Maker Visas](#), which were announced on 17 February 2020 following the bushfire crisis. This ensured that paid or 'bushfire recovery volunteer work' would qualify as 'specified work' for overseas workers and the visa would be increased to 12 months.

Unfortunately, these changes still do not apply to nannies and distance education tutors, though the Minister has indicated that the government will see how recent developments pan out before considering any more changes.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to work with the Federal Government and other bodies available to us to further ECEC concerns and we will share any more developments with you. I would also like to thank my portfolio members for their support during the year.

### **RURAL SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL TRAVEL REPORT**

Jo Camilleri

It is a privilege to be able to deliver this report for the first time as leader of the Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio. Despite many challenges across the past year, ICPA (Aust) has continued to advocate for access and equity in educational outcomes for families whose children attend rural schools and those with travel requirements for attending their places of education.

The 2019 Federal conference established four main areas of focus for Federal Council's attention in this portfolio:

- Supporting the implementation of the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE) recommendations
- maintaining the chaplaincy program in schools
- advocating for the establishment of student concessional fares
- advancing the residential fares scheme in air travel.

These areas have remained a focus for Federal Council as well as the other areas of advocacy that remain in policy for the Rural Schools and School Travel portfolio. An outline of all areas of advocacy can be found in the current ICPA (Aust) advocacy document

<https://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1241/federal-current-issues/current-icpa-aust-advocacy.pdf>

### **RURAL SCHOOLS**

Remote and isolated locations in Australia provide great challenges for improving delivery of education options and pathways for children and their families. The options for educating children in rural and remote locations continue to diminish and can be attributed to many leaving these areas.

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 time holding relevant governments to account to address inequities in rural schools.

Recommendations highlighting the need to focus on inequities in the educational outcomes of students in rural schools have been presented for many years, however little change to policy in this

area has been forthcoming. Federal Council was thrilled when the government response to the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE) included direct recommendations made by ICPA (Aust). The Australian Government response to the IRRRRE saw regional, rural and remote areas at the forefront of the outcomes presented <https://www.education.gov.au/independent-review-regional-rural-and-remote-education>

### **Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE) – Final Report**

Following on from the motion presented in 2019 requesting that ICPA (Aust) supports states to lobby to implement the recommendation “to reduce the impact of administration on workloads to create more time for teaching and leading learning” (Halsey, 2018, p.37), Federal Council has ensured all State and Territory Rural Schools portfolio leaders have received a copy of the final report. An invitation has also been extended to contact Federal Council if there are suggestions of ways we can support implementation of this initiative at a state level and to share real-life scenarios and case studies to help us to present the reality of what rural schools are facing in a meaningful and robust way and arm us with the pictures that will keep things relevant.

If any member, Branch or State Council has any further information or case studies that they can share with us, we welcome the information. Federal Council will continue to look at ways to support State and Territory Councils in addressing this concern.

### **Chaplaincy Program in Schools**

Federal Council welcomed the announcement that the Australian Government is investing \$247 million over four years (2019-2022) to renew the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP). Federal Council wrote to Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Education and other relevant shadow ministers, passing on ICPA (Aust)’s appreciation for the announcement of further continued funding for the Chaplaincy program and reinforced the importance of and the need for ongoing funding for the Chaplaincy Program in rural and remote schools. ICPA (Aust) is heartened that funding will continue to support approximately 3000 schools per year to access the services of a qualified chaplain including providing access to these services in our nation’s most remote or very isolated areas. During our delegation meeting in October 2019 with Minister Tehan, Federal Council reinforced the necessity of the ongoing provision of the Chaplaincy Program for our rural and remote students.

### **SCHOOL TRAVEL**

Regional airfares should be affordable and services adequate, consistent and reliable to better assist regional residents trying to provide equitable educational opportunities for their children. 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 recognition of this. Road safety for students also remains an ongoing concern.

Federal Council has taken forward member requests that rural and remote students should receive a Student Fare Allowance that reflects the actual costs involved to get students from their home to their place of education within Australia. The inequity that exists for school travel across Australia is to the detriment of rural and remote students, particularly given the limited options for education where they live.

Currently there are inequities in Student Travel Allowances offered by the Commonwealth. Whilst the 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 access.

### **Student Concessional Fares**

Federal Council has raised the need for student concessional fares directly with relevant airlines as well as in discussions during delegations to Parliament. Given airlines and relevant transport authorities are reluctant to provide student concessions across the board, to date we have had little traction. We do however recognise the genuine need for a solution and will continue to raise this issue wherever possible. Further opportunities for negotiations regarding discounted regional fares directly with airlines have not been possible this year due to continued travel bans and restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic that have placed considerable direct pressure on airline operations.

### **Resident Fares Scheme**

Federal Council has continued our discussions with QANTAS in relation to their Residents Fares Scheme. We welcomed the announcement in August 2019 that QANTAS will invest up to \$10 million each year in providing flight discounts for residents in 16 towns across Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia.

The improvements to the program include the removal of the \$99 flight change fee for new bookings made through the resident fare website. While this does not yet allow for one way fares to be booked within the scheme, it is hoped that the flexibility provided in being able to change bookings without penalty will allow for trips for boarders' weekends and end of term breaks to be made in advance. We recognise that although this goes part of the way to help address this issue, it does not provide a solution for families who cannot afford to purchase advance fares. A further improvement is the capping of fares at some locations so that the maximum residents will pay will be approximately \$400 per sector when booking return journeys.

The initial rollout of the program expansion happened in Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Longreach, Barcaldine, Blackall, Karratha, and Kalgoorlie. Regional airports and councils in these towns committed to reducing the fees they charge each passenger, which are built into airfares.

QANTAS is consulting with local airports and councils in the other towns in the program: Moranbah, Roma, Charleville, Broome, Port Hedland, Newman, Paraburdoo, Alice Springs and Yulara (Ayers Rock) and has called on these regional airports and councils to implement similar fee reductions for residents.

Following concerns that some privately owned airports were not taking on board capping of airfares, at the Joint Councils meeting in February, Federal President Alana Moller spoke with State Presidents on the possibility of State Councils approaching the relevant entities in their state to encourage them to consider capping.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable effect on both the ability to travel and the availability of flights. With airlines initiating a major wind back of services, redundancies and cost cutting exercises, many are unable to provide certainty of future viability. The ongoing ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still quite unknown however Federal Council are maintaining our contact with QANTAS and regional airlines, and we will continue to raise issues wherever possible.

### **SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS REPORT**

Briony Sinclair

The past 12 months has been an incredibly busy and enlightening time for ICPA both at Federal and State level. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about so many changes to

communication, health, travel, boarding and education as a whole. There were times when it was incredibly difficult to keep up and that was just from a personal point of view, not from the perspective of someone tracking legislative changes which were happening by the day and sometimes by the minute.

Those who serve as volunteers for any community organisation deserve mention in this space as so much has fallen to them over the past 6 months which has affected and driven many decisions by families and business in rural areas. I would like to say a particular thank you to those who serve as representatives for ICPA at all levels, without your ongoing resilience and dare I say stubbornness, rural Australia would be a much poorer place.

### **Medicare Rebate**

So, to my actual portfolio report, there was one Specific Education Portfolio Motion presented to the 2019 Federal Conference in Adelaide last year by Kindon Branch.

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

The singularity of the one motion does not do justice to the sometimes-insurmountable challenges families who are raising children with Specific Needs face in educating those children in rural and remote areas of Australia.

ICPA (Aust) corresponded with several Ministers and departments to raise this issue and received a reply from the office of then Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government the Hon Mark Coulton MP. He outlined the plans the government has for the future of telehealth, mentioning that the Government has a 10-year plan focusing on primary healthcare in the short term, and in the longer term, aimed at reforming the system so that primary health providers are better equipped to assist those in rural and remote areas. He also explained that the Government’s Australian National Digital Health Strategy has highlighted the importance of digital health in the clinical setting and that under the Strategy, the Australian National Digital Health Agency is developing options to harmonise telehealth models by reviewing current use and addressing barriers to embedding telehealth services into clinical settings. Federal Council was also informed that applications for new or amended medical services to receive public funding can be made to the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) which advises the Government about what services need to be on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS). No mention was made however, of possibilities of real impact for rural and remote families raising children with specific health and education needs.

### **Telehealth**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic has arisen there has been increased access to Telehealth for certain disorders, especially mental health, and Medicare rebates have expanded to cover these services. This increase was much needed and appreciated however it still did not cater to the needs of all students and pre-schoolers in remote and rural locations with specific health issues affecting their learning. These changes have a limited lifespan and are currently due to expire in September.

ICPA (Aust) is determined that there should be an extension/expansion of a Medicare rebate for telehealth services for a range of allied health services for all remote students who rarely/never have access to specialist support due to their geographic location, not just in times of crisis. This issue was mentioned in our most recent submission to the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training’s “Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments - Home Learning and Teaching in COVID-19”. The request for the addition of an MBS number for telehealth appointments specifically related to a child’s educational success will remain in policy and Federal Council will continue to advocate for this on behalf of our members.

### **National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA)**

Part of my role is to liaise with the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA). They are a body of 44 national organisations representing health consumers, health care professionals, service providers, health educators, students and the Indigenous health sector which make up the Alliance. The Alliance collects and shares information, determines key issues that affect health and wellbeing in rural and remote areas, and provides advice and evidence to governments, educational and research institutions, and other professional bodies.

ICPA (Aust) were pleased to meet with the driving force behind the NRHA, Dr Gabrielle O’Kane during our face-to-face meetings in Canberra in October last year. We were able to discuss with Dr O’Kane our members’ concerns regarding healthcare access in rural and remote areas and pass on individual stories which always gives credence to our discussions.

The NRHA has also set up a subcommittee for Rural Digital Health. The main focus of this group is

1. Connectivity
2. Interoperability
3. Funding Models
4. Digital Health Literacy

I have joined this subcommittee with a hope to give input which may assist our members in the long term.

### **National Rural Health Commissioner**

The National Rural Health Commissioner role will continue for another term. The National Rural Health Commissioner role is a world first and Emeritus Professor Paul Worley has used his time since Nov 2017 to comb through 20 years of documentation, discussing issues with stakeholders both local and professional, finishing by writing a report for Minister Coulton regarding Allied Health Delivery in Rural Australia. If you would like to read his findings and the ensuing recommendations you can do so here [https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/815AFEED0337CF95CA2581D30076D095/\\$File/National%20Rural%20Health%20Commissioner's%20Allied%20Health%20Report%20to%20the%20Minister%20June%202020.pdf](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/815AFEED0337CF95CA2581D30076D095/$File/National%20Rural%20Health%20Commissioner's%20Allied%20Health%20Report%20to%20the%20Minister%20June%202020.pdf).

Professor Worley is stepping down from this role and Associate Professor Ruth Stewart has been appointed to the role which has been expanded along with the offices. Associate Professor Stewart’s Office will include Deputy Commissioners who will support the Commissioner and provide expertise across a range of vital rural health disciplines such as nursing, allied health and Indigenous Health. The Office will contribute to significant health reforms already under way, including in primary health care reforms, workforce and training. The Professor will drive innovation, with a clear focus on supporting on-the-ground improvements.

The expansion of the role and offices of the National Rural Health Commissioner is a major boon for those living in rural locations. Having a specific office which looks to our communities and their health service requirements is very exciting and I look to the future of this appointment with hope that there will be measurable and practical improvements for our members’ families and their health and learning.

### **Delphi Study**

ICPA (Aust) also recently participated in the Delphi Study which looked at ways to improve delivery of health services to children in diverse settings including rural and remote regions. The study was conducted by a PhD candidate working in the healthcare sector. Our participation in these types of studies helps to guide researchers and healthcare workers to providing better service delivery to clients and their families in the long term.

### **Digital Health for the Bush**

ICPA (Aust) was represented on a panel at a 'Digital Health for the Bush' workshop in the Northern Territory last year. The workshop was presented by the Australian Digital Health Agency, Asia Pacific College of Business and Law, CDU and organisers of Broadband for the Bush. The main aim of the workshop was to gain a better understanding of stakeholder's experiences of digital health and telehealth in the Northern Territory and how improved access could benefit regional and remote communities. ICPA (Aust) was able to give important feedback to the leaders of digital health provision in Australia on behalf of our members.

It remains to be seen if the developments of the past twelve months and especially those that have come with COVID-19 will be maintained, however ICPA (Aust) will continue to ensure that the needs of our rural and remote children with specific learning needs are raised. Despite the pandemic and all of its challenges for ourselves and our students it has been a productive 12 months and I look forward to the next 12.

### **TERTIARY REPORT**

Kate Thompson

2020 has certainly been different for many across Australia and our rural and remote tertiary students have not been immune. The tertiary portfolio continued their advocacy for these students with renewed vigour as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded and issues were brought to our attention. If a rural and remote student's future direction requires a tertiary education, they must be afforded the necessary assistance to achieve their goals.

Rural and remote students continue to be under-represented at tertiary level and this disparity in participation and attainment adversely impacts these individuals and their communities. The myriad of issues resulting in this disparity include financial, cultural, personal, educational and social support factors and the Australian tertiary system must strive to deliver excellence and equal opportunity for all Australian students. The rural and remote cohort is more likely to be willing to return to their rural and remote communities ensuring viability, economic development and resilience of these communities.

Despite the restrictions and uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, there have been some positive happenings for rural and remote tertiary students in the last 12 months.

### **COVID-19**

While not only benefiting rural and remote tertiary students, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was pleasing to note that Australian tertiary students and apprentices in receipt of a student payment through Centrelink may have been eligible for extra payments: Economic Support Payment and Coronavirus Supplement. During the pandemic, if students remained enrolled and plan to return to study even if self-isolating at home or their education provider temporarily closes or reduces their study load they still receive their payments. As is the case at any time, students were reminded to call the Students Line (**132490**) if any of their circumstances change.

For prospective students who are planning to apply for a Centrelink payment during the COVID-19 pandemic, provisions have been made to facilitate the application process. An applicant can use their myGov account to confirm their identity, receive a Centrelink Reference Number (CRN), create a Centrelink online account, link their Centrelink online account to myGov and make their claim online. Additionally, the personal assets test has been removed for Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY and Austudy and the liquid assets test waiting period has been removed for Youth Allowance and Austudy.

Federal Council wrote to the Minister for Families and Social Services in April 2020, asking the government to consider geographically isolated students who have embarked on a gap year in 2020 in preparation to commence tertiary studies in 2021. These students are working to qualify for Youth Allowance as an independent under the workforce participation criteria. There is concern that as a result of COVID-19, job losses and decreased employment opportunities particularly in hospitality, these students may be impacted in their capacity to earn the required 75% of the National Training Wage in their nominated 14-month period. To date, we have not received a reply to our correspondence.

### **NATIONAL REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE EDUCATION STRATEGY**

ICPA (Aust) welcomed the *National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy – Final Report* (Naphine Report) on 28 August 2019 which brings rural and remote tertiary students' issues with accessing, participating and attaining a tertiary education, to the forefront of governments' minds. The Government has indicated they accept the aims of the recommendations and the specific actions would be considered. The measures will most likely require a policy change, sector reform, budgetary allocation and collaboration between state and territory governments and the Federal Government.

The report contains 7 recommendations: Improve access to study options; improve financial support; improve other student supports; provide better career advice and strengthen regional, rural and remote schools; enhance support for equity groups; develop regional communities and establish national mechanisms to support the Strategy. There are 33 actions which include expanding Regional Study Hubs; improve internet access; introduce a new tertiary education access payment; reduce earnings requirements of Concessional Workforce criteria; improve information on financial support and improving career advice in schools; all very positive for our rural and remote students.

Of particular note:

**Tertiary Education Access Payment** of \$5000 for all school leavers who relocate for full-time higher-level tertiary education of at least one-year duration from an outer regional or remote area at an institution at least 90 minutes by public transport from their home.

**Independent Youth Allowance** - allowing greater flexibility in pathways to qualify for independent Youth Allowance. This recommendation enables rural and remote students who successfully undertake their first year of tertiary study externally, including at a Regional Study Hub, to access independent Youth Allowance or independent ABSTUDY if they then relocate their place of study for a minimum of one further year and are 90 minutes by public transport from home.

**Independent Youth Allowance Concessional Workforce test** - recommends reducing the earnings requirements and a review of the recent changes to the parental means test cut-offs.

**Practicums** - recommends an Away from Base payment for students who have to travel to complete parts of their course and are studying externally either at home or a Regional Study Hub.

**Fares Allowance** - recommends expansion of the Fares Allowance to enable students who have relocated to return home during their first year of study.

ICPA (Aust) welcomed the announcement by Minister for Education the Hon Dan Tehan MP on 19 June 2020, outlining the implementation of measures from the *National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy* to assist students from rural, regional and remote Australia to participate in and attain a tertiary education. The announcement included the provision of the tertiary education access payment, additional Regional University Centres and improvements to Fares Allowance, to make it easier for relocated students to travel home during their first year of study.

The full media release on the reforms announced by Minister Tehan can be found [here](#).

<https://ministers.dese.gov.au/tehan/tertiary-reforms-unleash-potential-regional-australia>. ICPA will continue to advocate for the implementation of the recommendations in the final report not announced including reviewing the earning requirements under the workforce participation criteria for independent Youth Allowance and the recent changes of the parental income cut-off.

### **TERTIARY ACCESS ALLOWANCE (TAA)**

The introduction of a [TAA](#) remains a high priority and ICPA (Aust) has continued to highlight this long-standing motion as opportunities present including through correspondence to Government, during our delegation to Canberra in October 2019 and in the submission, *National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy*. The Tertiary Access Allowance amounts are aligned with the Relocation Scholarship payments, and ICPA (Aust) has strongly advocated for the Tertiary Access Allowance for rural and remote students irrespective of eligibility for Youth Allowance. ICPA will closely follow the tertiary education access payment announcement and its passage through legislation and will respond to ensure it is akin to the Tertiary Access Allowance.

### **YOUTH ALLOWANCE (YA)**

**Liquid Assets Waiting Period** – The Department of Families and Social Services reinforced that the Liquid Assets Waiting Period is applied if liquid assets are over \$5,500 for a single student and is tapered up to \$11,500 meaning there is a maximum 13-week waiting period. Under Youth Allowance rules, a tertiary student's liquid assets may be reduced by allowable deductions either incurred or likely to be incurred relating to their course including up-front course fees, HECS-HELP payments, student union fees, textbook costs and tools or equipment required to undertake the course.

**Youth Allowance Overview 2020** - The Youth Allowance Overview document, created as a guide to YA eligibility and application, has been updated in consultation with Services Australia and is available in the January 2020 Pedals and on the ICPA (Aust) website. This document aims to summarise the lengthy YA website information for rural and remote students planning to study full-time and intend to apply for Youth Allowance. **It is a guide only.** For more information, advice, clarification and further assistance, please phone **132490** (dedicated Youth Allowance phone number) or visit [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-allowance](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-allowance).

**Centrelink** - ICPA (Aust) has collaborated with Services Australia and sent correspondence to the Minister for Government Services concerning issues that members are reporting when applying for Youth Allowance. Reports of issues when contacting Centrelink are still coming in from members including inconsistent and incorrect information from Centrelink staff, staff's lack of knowledge of current criteria and failing to escalate the enquiry to informed staff and long-wait-times on the 132490 support line.

**Wait time on 132490 phone line** - the Minister reinforced that the Department is aiming to streamline services to provide services that allow better access to face-to-face, telephone and online service and reduce the need for customers to call.

**Centrelink staff and misinformation** - ICPA (Aust) has been assured once again that Centrelink staff manning the 132490 phone line have extensive training, have the resources to answer all queries efficiently and where a Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY or Austudy enquiry is complex, staff have access to specialist staff. We emphasised to the Minister for Families and Social Services that this does not always occur. For our members, this misinformation can have devastating consequences including rejection of a claim, a claim not being submitted because they believe they are not eligible, delayed payment or a payment being cancelled.

Any member who has contact with the 132490 phone service or attends a Centrelink office, Access Point or Agent is encouraged to obtain a reference number for their visit or call which can be used later in the event of misinformation. While ICPA (Aust) cannot contact Centrelink on behalf of a member because of Privacy Laws, we can contact them with the issue generally. Federal Council will



forward information and present suggestions to the Department concerning the Youth Allowance application online process and the current website as they are brought to our attention.

**Call Back Service** - The Department has trialled and implemented a call back service for other services, but this is not in their plans to implement for youth and student services including AIC and YA. The service overall is continuously under review with respect to efficiency and customer service.

**Proof of Identity** - ICPA (Aust) has been told the reason a student is required to present to a Centrelink office, access point or agent to prove their identity is to protect individuals from identity theft and other forms of identity fraud. In the instance of a claimant having “genuine difficulty” in attending a rural and remote Access Point or Agent to meet the identity requirements, alternative identity provisions can be applied and other channels used to lodge identity documents.

With the current provisions in place for proof of identity during the COVID-19 pandemic, ICPA (Aust) believes this provision should be able to be applied to rural and remote applicants who are unable to attend a service centre potentially resulting in a delay in the submission of their application. ICPA (Aust) would like to see an application commence with an online proof of identity, the applicant then presents at a service centre for confirmation of identity documents once relocated to their place of study which would be most likely be prior to their commencement date and therefore before the commencement of Youth Allowance payments.

**Relocation Scholarship** - While on delegation, the Department of Social Services again reinforced that the Relocation Scholarship is an adjunct payment and not available as a standalone payment. ICPA (Aust) is continuing to push for the Relocation Scholarship to extend to independent Youth Allowance recipients to address the continued disparity in the level of financial assistance provided to help with relocation costs for rural students who have qualified for independent Youth Allowance compared to dependent Youth Allowance assistance. Aligning the TAA with the Relocation Scholarship amounts will benefit the youth allowance students qualifying as an independent as well as students’ ineligible for Youth Allowance.

### **RURAL AND REGIONAL ENTERPRISE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (RRESP)**

The Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships Program (RRESP) has supported students in rural, regional and remote areas with the costs of studying at university or a vocational education and training institution. During delegation, in October 2019, Federal Council discussed the RRESP with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment. At that time, round 3 was being administered, and further rounds being funded depended on the acquittal of the program to date.

Excitingly the RRESP Round 4 was announced and applications opened 20 January 2020 for applicants that have commenced the first year of their eligible Course of Study in Semester 1, 2020, continuing in Semester 2 or be starting in Semester 2 of 2020 and further consideration to students affected by drought and bushfire. Applications will remain open throughout 2020 with offers being made on an ongoing basis through the academic year or until available scholarships are fully allocated.

The scholarships which remain valued at up to \$18,000, are available to support regional and remote students studying in any discipline from Certificate IV to PhD level with an eligible higher education provider or vocational education and training institution, with a duration of six months full-time and up to 8 years part-time, delivered on campus, or through online and distance education. There is an additional \$500 to support an internship.

Applicants who are unsuccessful for one round, can get feedback on their application and may be able to submit a new application in a future scholarship round.

In terms of untimely payments being experienced, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment assured us that there had been issues identified with the timing of payments and they were working with QTAC to rectify the delays. Recipients of the scholarships have obligations within

their Scholarship agreement, and the prompt return of these throughout their scholarship assists in part to ensure their payments are timely.

### **TEACHER EDUCATION TRAINING IN SPECIFIC LEARNING NEEDS**

ICPA (Aust) contacted the Australian Councils of Deans of Education (ACDE) urging them to encourage education providers to recognise the unique circumstances surrounding the learning context of rural and remote students and ensure all teachers preparing to work in geographically isolated schools, are trained in specific learning needs including Autism Spectrum Disorder. To date, we have not had a reply. In previous years, ACDE has responded positively stating they would take this request to their Board, but ultimately university course content is up to the individual university, and ACDE can only make recommendations.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank the State Tertiary Portfolios, my fellow Tertiary Portfolio members, Nikki Macqueen, Jane O'Brien, Suzanne Wilson, and Nikki Mahony and all of Federal Council for their continuing support, knowledge and assistance. To our members, thank you for raising your issues. We will continue to raise your new and ongoing issues at every opportunity through all avenues available to us, to achieve the changes and measures needed to ensure our rural and remote students have the opportunity to complete a tertiary education commensurate with their aspirations and career plans.

### **TRAINING REPORT**

Sally Sullivan

ICPA (Aust) continues to address the unique considerations associated with rural and remote training and endeavours to support states with the specific issues identified in their respective jurisdictions. At the 2019 Federal Conference, a motion requesting Federal Council support the states in their efforts to stop the impending closure of Agricultural Colleges, following the decision to close Agricultural colleges in Queensland in 2019, was actioned.

#### **Closure of Agricultural Colleges**

The closure of Queensland's Emerald and Longreach Agricultural Colleges and the attempted closure of Moora Residential College in Western Australia has been of concern to rural people across the nation.

Federal Council has been in contact with Queensland ICPA Tertiary, Trade and Training Portfolio leader, Louise Winten to follow up on the situation in that state and offer our support. ICPA Qld was hopeful of a resolution such that facilities and accommodation will continue to be used for education and training and be available for use by the local community. ICPA Queensland are continuing talks with TAFE and universities.

In February 2020, an agreement was signed that would see the Longreach campus utilised for community events, training and commercial interests and retain the former College's memorabilia and other historical elements through to November 2020. This agreement, reached in consultation with a stakeholder committee and local community is the first stage of what will become a more permanent arrangement. Negotiations on the future of the Emerald facility are continuing.

The full media statement can be found at:

<http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2020/2/19/agreement-on-future-of-longreach-agricultural-training-college> .

Work is continuing with the state government to transition the college into a local entity in the next five years and there is confidence that not only will agricultural training will be part of the future for the site but training and education will go wider than just agriculture.

Concern has been expressed regarding the short time frame (until November 2020) of the occupancy agreement the loss of teachers and resources from the district already since the closure and the lack of progress to continue agricultural education in western Queensland. Unfortunately, COVID-19 restrictions has halted all proposed activities and will most likely not occur at all in 2020, with the focus now on 2021 and beyond.

In Western Australia, Moora Residential College's largely federally-funded building upgrade is progressing and on 19 February 2020, the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon Michael McCormack MP, visited to view the progress with several colleagues.

Federal Council are committed to ensuring that agricultural colleges and agricultural training opportunities are maintained and expanded and will continue to follow the developments across states and assist wherever possible.

### **Assistance for rural and remote apprentices and trainees**

In October 2019, Federal Council met with advisors to the Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships (VET) Hon Steve Irons MP. Discussions centred around the challenges faced by rural and remote apprentices such as accessing study or assessment blocks where travel and accommodation costs are incurred, servicing of rural and remote trainees by training organisations and the costs and challenges of moving away from home in order to participate in apprenticeship or training programs. The Assistant Minister's advisors agreed the rural and remote space also provides challenges from their perspective because of the costs and logistics of servicing training needs in rural and remote areas and the difficulties of disseminating information to rural and remote cohorts or prospects. One suggestion to come out of the meeting was to find rural and remote alumni within the Australian Apprenticeship Alumni Network to mentor rural and remote apprentices and trainees and promote those pathways. A request was made for suggestions of any rural/remote alumni who could be ambassadors for and promote/mentor rural and remote apprenticeships. Federal Council is currently following this up. The Assistant Minister's office also advised they could send information to distribute for rural and remote apprentices.

Assistant Minister Irons' office drew our attention to the National Careers Institute <https://nci.dese.gov.au/> established in 2019 to ensure Australians have access to high quality career information and support regardless of their age and stage. The Commonwealth Government hopes this site will assist the engagement of, among others, rural and remote people in training opportunities.

In recent conversations with the Assistant Minister's office, discussions were also had regarding Centrelink staff and improvements to the website to assist navigation by apprentices and trainees. Support for rural and remote apprentices who are ineligible for Youth Allowance was discussed, including the Commonwealth Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA).

The opportunity was also taken to raise the issue of recipients of the federal LAFHA not being on the list of eligible existing payment recipients' Income Support Payments for the Economic Support payment or Coronavirus Supplement. Federal Council will continue discussions regarding whether LAFHA should or could be included with other Social Income support payments for the purposes of assistance measures such as those available during the COVID-19 pandemic. One suggestion from the Assistant Minister's office was for apprentices requiring support to take out a Trade Support loan, however this would need to be repaid in time like Higher Education Contribution Scheme - Higher

Education Loan Program (HECS-HELP) loans. Trade Support Loans are available to apprentices at any time, regardless of hardship.

The *National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy: Final Report* contained promising recommendations and actions to assist the rural and remote training cohort access to high quality programs including:

- Further expand Regional Study Hubs and to include VET students.
- Improve service provision and access to high quality VET programs and ensure consistent regulations between jurisdictions.
- Ensure the VET sector focuses ‘more on practical learning and technical and professional skills development’.
- Support states and territories to improve access to VET and improve choices for rural, regional and remote students by
  - reducing barriers for RTOs from providing training places across states and territories,
  - expand access to courses and qualifications relevant to rural and remote industry and
  - increase the availability of subsidised places for VET courses in rural and remote areas based on demand including employment opportunities.
- Ensure availability and consistency of support programs for rural and remote VET students including improving transport services for rural and remote students travelling to VET programs and study hubs.
- Build aspiration, improve career advice and assist rural and remote schools to prepare their students for post-school success by establishing aspiration-raising initiatives targeted at students and families - an ambassador program and local alumni networks similar to or build on the Australian VET Alumni program which incorporates the Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors program.
- Ensure consistency of delivery and improve access to high quality VET in Schools programs based on successful VET models delivered in conjunction with RTOs and school-community partnerships that have shown to improve local employment outcomes.
- Improve career advice and work experience for rural and remote students delivered by professional career advisors conversant with schools, tertiary education providers including VET, industry and local community knowledge and improve online career information and advice and virtual work experience.
- Incorporate work integrated learning (WIL) placements including internships, mentorships, practicums, research, teaching and tutoring placements to enhance the skills and employability of students and attract and retain students in rural and remote areas.

ICPA (Aust) welcomed the announcement by Minister for Education the Hon Dan Tehan MP on 19 June 2020, that the Federal Government would be implementing measures from the *National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy* to assist students from rural, regional and remote Australia. At the time Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Sen the Hon Michaela Cash said these measures would complement the Government’s reforms in vocational education and training, through the \$585.3 million *Skills Package Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow*, developed off the back of the [Expert review of Australia's vocational education and training system](#), which incorporated specific detail on supporting VET in rural and remote Australia:

- There is a strong need to adapt or create policies to support rural and remote students engaged in VET. To address this, flexible and innovative delivery models need to be considered for these areas. One potential solution lies in the regional study hub model, which provides infrastructure and academic support for students studying via distance at partner universities
- The Commonwealth Government to expand the university-based regional study hub model to provide funding to VET providers to participate in regional study hubs.

- To ensure the model's viability, dedicated funding grants could be provided, in addition to the national rural and remote subsidy loading proposed earlier.

The Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System: A Regional Education Expert Advisory Group has been established to advise Government on the ongoing education and training needs of regional, rural and remote communities which has explored how to improve access, opportunity and choice in tertiary education for regional, rural and remote learners, including exploring the expansion of the regional study hub model.

Further information can be found at

<https://www.employment.gov.au/delivering-skills-today-and-tomorrow>

<https://ministers.dese.gov.au/cash/inaugural-report-national-skills-commission-australian-labour-market-and-covid-19>

[https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/strengthening-skills-independent-review-australia-vets\\_1.pdf](https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/strengthening-skills-independent-review-australia-vets_1.pdf)

The circumstances of rural and remote trainees and apprentices are unique in nature and ICPA (Aust) will continue to advocate on their behalf to ensure they receive adequate support to reach their aspirations and full potential through various training settings and contexts.

### Speeches

#### **President's Welcome 2020**

Alana Moller

Federal ICPA Life Members, fellow ICPA members and distinguished guests including Her Excellency, Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AC Governor of Tasmania and Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AO, Administrator of the Northern Territory and Patron of the Isolated Children's Parent's Association Northern Territory Branch, welcome to the 2020 ICPA Australia Web Conference coming to you virtually from all corners of Australia, with Federal Councillors participating from every state other than Victoria.

We are delighted to have you taking part in the proceedings today and we hope that the sessions are informative, compelling and enjoyable for members and guests. Presenting our conference in this format is very new to all of us and though there may be glitches along the way, please bear with us as we aim to bring conference in to your homes, offices, schools and dare I say the middle of nowhere for many of you!

Several housekeeping points to make prior to commencing, you may receive a message in your chat box from Jane O'Brien our Federal Membership Officer clarification on your name, branch or organisation, this is to assist with our records and we would appreciate a prompt response to these questions. If you have technical questions, please use the [troubleshoot@icpa.com.au](mailto:troubleshoot@icpa.com.au) email address or alternatively place a message in the Q and A section on Zoom, not in the chat box.

In uncertain and unprecedented times, ICPA Australia continues to advocate on behalf of all geographically isolated children across the entirety of Australia. While this year we should have been enjoying our conference in Hobart, Tasmania, it was regrettably not meant to be.

However, it is my pleasure to have the "Pride" Choir from The Hutchins School, home to geographically isolated Tasmanian Boarding school students and the school at which Kate Thompson, our Federal Assistant Secretary's son is a teacher to come to us virtually from Hobart to sing the National Anthem.

Please stand for the National Anthem.

**Opening Address**

Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AC,  
Governor of Tasmania

Thank you so much for inviting me to open the 49th ICPA Federal Conference. I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and yet who continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

Can I also acknowledge the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AO, Administrator of the Northern Territory and Patron of the Isolated Children's Parents Association Northern Territory Branch.

I am sorry that you are not all here in Tasmania meeting face-to-face. If you were, you would be looking out a refreshingly chilly Hobart with kunanyi-Mount Wellington blanketed in snow. The snow has in fact caused a number of school closures today including country schools in Bothwell, Campbell Town, Oatlands, Franklin and Lilydale.

In preparing for this opening, I have looked with interest at your ICPA website to gain a better understanding of the activities and advocacy role of ICPA. In the Tasmanian section, I read the report of the Tasmanian President, Emily Gardner to the National Conference a few years ago and was surprised to learn that at the state conference you were "entertained" by my daughter Meg, who sang and talked about her experiences of rural life as a child and a dairy farmer's wife. I am sorry to say I won't be nearly as entertaining as Meg.

I want to start with two quotes:

*Education and training play a critical role in building the social fabric of communities, but also in developing social capital for economic prosperity.*

&

*Education, perhaps more than anything, is the passport to a better life.*

The first quote is from Dr John Halsey's Final Report of the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education, published in 2018, which I understand the Australian Government responded to later that year.

The second is a quote from Peter Underwood, my predecessor as Governor of Tasmania, and it summarises the vision of the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment, for which I chair the Advisory Committee.

I will touch on each of these: the Halsey Report and the Peter Underwood Centre. The Halsey Report begins with differences in educational achievement reminding us that the outcomes for RRR students have in the main lagged behind urban students for decades as exemplified by NAPLAN, Year 12 completion and transition to University. From major cities, to inner regional, outer regional, and remote locations, there is decreasing attainment with increasing remoteness. For successful completion of Year 12 or Cert III by age 19, for example, there is a decline from 78% for major cities to 43% for Very Remote.

It occurred to me that one of the things that is masked by mean scale scores in measures such as NAPLAN is the diversity of attainment or distribution of students in achievement bands. In some schools there is a wide range of attainment within a particular age group which presents particular challenges for teachers. This is a feature which is more common in rural, regional and remote schools which often have a cross-section of SES families. In speaking to a Primary School Maths and Science teacher in a regional semi-rural school here in Tasmania, I heard that he needed to prepare five lesson plans for each Maths class to cater for the diversity of children in the class – with some students years ahead in attainment and others years behind. And I did wonder how many teachers are equipped to do this effectively to keep all students engaged and achieving their potential.

The Halsey Report has many recommendations and I cannot do them all justice in this opening speech. Two of the priorities include addressing the patchiness of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in RRR communities. I'm sure we would all agree with Professor Halsey that ICT will only grow to be more integral to education and life-long learning. Let us hope that Covid-19 will have a long-term effect of improving ICT access in RRR communities as schools and education departments are forced to embrace the technology during lockdowns to a much greater extent than before.

Covid-19 has made us face-up to the inequality of ICT access and devise ways to overcome this for lower SES groups. Home-schooling during the lockdown has confronted us with the fact while mobile phones are ubiquitous, some families, including those in metropolitan areas do not have reliable internet access. I have read that one Queensland school in a metropolitan area estimated that 60% of families did not have regular internet access.

Efforts to confront the digital divide highlighted by Covid-19 should have a flow-on effect on RRR communities. Clearly this was an area of concern and advocacy for ICPA long before the pandemic when an independent RRR Communications Help/Service Hub was suggested to assist with troubleshooting, identifying suitable products for situations and areas, and providing technology upskilling to enable those living in rural and remote areas to fully utilise available communications.

I can see from the motions in the agenda for your meeting that communications and the internet feature prominently and there are motions, for example, to continue the unmetering of data beyond the Covid-19 arrangements, which I understand end on 30 September. As the explanation for one of the motions stated, "Internet woes are always high on the agenda for ICPA members".

Professor Halsey's fourth priority, to quote:

... focuses directly on transitioning into and out of school. There is still work that needs to be done to ensure all young children start school healthy and well prepared. As well, work needs to be done to drastically shorten the time it takes to have a child with a potential learning difficulty properly assessed and a specific program designed for them.

Ensuring young children start school healthy and well prepared and the issue of assessments and programs for children with learning differences were goals which resonated with me it. I want to say something about the first. It is the goal of the "Channel Basics", one of the projects that is being supported by the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment, to which I have already referred.

It is known that 80% of brain development occurs in the first three years of life. Research has shown that reading to babies as young as 6 months of age leads to larger vocabularies and better early literacy skills four years later, just as a child is getting ready for school. "Even though children may not be

talking yet, that doesn't mean they are not learning."<sup>1</sup> How often (quantity) and how vividly (quality) toddlers and adults engage in books together is related to early reading and writing skills.

And children's literacy skills when they start school correlate to later reading success. These findings fit in with what we know about early language development. Reading aloud is a form of conversation and conversing with children is important.

In 2018, two teachers from Margate School in Tasmania attended a course at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in Boston and learnt about a program called the Boston Basics. The Boston Basics are five evidence-based care-giving principles that encompass much of what experts find is important for children from birth to age three. The tenet is that every child from every background can benefit from the five principles. They embody simple messages that can be adopted by the whole community and publicised through posters in prominent places, on buses, with videos and so on.

The messages are:

- Maximise love, manage stress
- Talk, sing and point
- Count, group and compare
- Explore through movement and play
- Read and discuss stories.

The teachers, Kate Slater and Maree Thompson, were inspired to introduce this program to their district in the light of 2018 data for the area showing that an increasing proportion of children were starting school with developmental delays and developmental vulnerability, and that, according to PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) data there were increases in the proportion of children achieving below the expected grade level in reading. It is also of concern that the gap between Tasmania and Australia in terms of the percentage of at-risk and vulnerable children on the language and cognitive skills domain is widening.<sup>2</sup>

The Basics (Tasmania) has attracted AEDC (Australian Early Development Census) funding and with a steering committee and partnerships with the Underwood Centre and the Department of Education, was launched in December. It is described as a "collective impact project" designed to ensure that the community (the local community in the channel including Bruny Island and the wider community) understand the critical importance of the basics for a child's development in the first three years of life. It has produced posters, handouts and videos all directed at reinforcing and explaining this message to everyone who has contact with children and their families.

This seems to be such a promising pilot with a strong evidence base. It may well be a project of interest to ICPA as an organisation which has such strong roots in local communities. You can access the materials online: <https://www.thebasicstasmania.com/about>

I promised to tell you a little bit more about the Peter Underwood Centre for educational attainment. The centre is a partnership between the University and the State Government, with the Governor

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<sup>1</sup> Carolyn Cates, cited by Lydia Denworth, "The Magic of Reading Aloud to Babies", *Psychology Today*, 5 May 2017

<sup>2</sup> Peter Underwood Centre, 'Early Childhood Development' Fact Sheet (2019), [https://www.utas.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/1263572/Underwood-Centre-Fact-Sheet-One.pdf](https://www.utas.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1263572/Underwood-Centre-Fact-Sheet-One.pdf)  
[https://www.utas.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/1263572/Underwood-Centre-Fact-Sheet-One.pdf](https://www.utas.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1263572/Underwood-Centre-Fact-Sheet-One.pdf) accessed 4 November 2019.



having a role as the Chair of the Centre's Advisory Committee. This is a role which I have very much enjoyed. The focus of the centre is on research partnerships and initiatives that contribute to a positive and sustained change in educational outcomes for children and you people.

An example of the Centre's research is the report completed by the Centre, "*Learning at home during COVID-19: Effects on vulnerable young Tasmanians*", published in April. This report has a chapter (chapter 4), 'New ways of learning in the COVID-19 era', which elaborates on the issues of online learning I spoke of earlier – explaining for me the Australian Digital Inclusion Index with its three elements of access, affordability and digital ability – the latter element highlighting that computers and internet are not enough for digital inclusion. The report notes the steep learning curve that was required to bring all staff up to speed with CANVAS and emphasises the time and resources needed for designing quality online materials for primary and secondary students.

UCTV Alive for Kids is a new engagement program developed by the Peter Underwood Centre to provide children and young people (9-13yrs) with fun, homebased extra-curricular learning opportunities.

As a response to children learning from home the Underwood Centre put together this 9-part series of interactive broadcasts for children. Topics delivered ranged from Handfish, volcanoes, sea birds, waste plastics to a tour of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery's "This Too Shall Pass".

The technical solutions developed for UCTV Alive will be utilized to deliver a 5-part Science Week program this month.

I started with acknowledging the traditional owners of lutrawita, Tasmania. As Governor of Tasmania, I mourn the fact that there are no living descendants of the muwinina people, who lived where I now live in Hobart, and that there are no living descendants of many of the other Tasmanian Aboriginal tribal groups.

But we can also rejoice in the resilience of the descendants of Mannalargenna and the North East Nation, who have ensured that we have a thriving Tasmanian Aboriginal community and that our island of Tasmania is enriched by their continuing survival. Through them Aboriginal culture is being revived and celebrated. Through initiatives such the Education Department-funded project, the Orb, a wonderful online media resource designed to assist the teaching of Aboriginal histories and culture as a living culture informed by the past but evolving is one of the many local initiatives designed to bury the extinction myth and the concept of Tasmania having only a 200 year history.

Yesterday I attended a screening of a new episode of the animated television programme, "Little J and Big Cuz", which is about a couple of Indigenous Australian kids with episodes such as "Goanna Ate My Homework". This new episode, 'Pilot Bird' is in palawa kani, a revived Tasmanian Aboriginal language, and it's the second episode to be recorded in palawa kani. It was wonderful to meet the caste whose voices were recorded for the episode. The series comes with impressive educational resources attached to each episode.

Thank you for inviting me to open your conference and I wish you every success with it. I can see from the agenda that you have many interesting issues to discuss.

**LNP Senator for Queensland**  
Amanda Stoker (transcript)

Hi, I'm Amanda Stoker, LNP Senator for Queensland. I wish you all the best for the conference you're engaging in online today. I'm sorry I can't be with you but know that I see the fruits of your work, all the time, as I travel through Queensland in the course of my duties. It's interesting that the COVID period has seen so many city and suburban parents have some experience in home-schooling and a new appreciation of the difficulty that many rural families face, as they try to make sure their kids get a great education. It means though, that there is a new respect and a new understanding, for the work that the Isolated Children's Parents' Association does and the sacrifices that all of your families make to make sure that your kids get the very best education they can. Whether that is at home or at boarding school or anything in-between. So, thank you for all that you do in keeping regional communities alive and strong and in making sure your kids get the very best possible start to life. All the best.

### **Certificate of Appreciation presented to Julia Materne**

Alana Moller

Julia Materne became a Federal Councillor in 1986, moving on to the role of Federal Secretary in 1988, after also being the SA Secretary from 1985. She was awarded a Certificate of Merit in 2002 and given life membership in 2003. Most recently she officially opened the 2019 Federal Conference in Adelaide. Julia has been involved in ICPA since the early 1980's and to this day she continues to contribute to the organisation as archivist. Despite retiring from Federal Council in 1998, she has been in the role of archivist for more than 15 years and continues in the position today, not an 'active' role in her own words, however certainly one that requires a significant amount of effort and dedication.

This role is a completely solo effort and requires a commitment to ensuring the archives of the organisation are maintained and continue to be collated. Pedals magazines, Federal Conference Minutes and other Federal Council documents are collected by Julia and archived for future reference, an ongoing history of ICPA being created and kept up to date. This is not to mention the undertaking of storing these archives.

Given the extraordinary commitment, time and dedication that Julia Materne has demonstrated in her assistance of ICPA Australia, as archivist for such a lengthy period of time, I hereby wish to present Julia Materne the Federal Certificate of Appreciation.

### **Dolly's Dream**

Kate Everett



Hi, I'm Kate Everett and I am really proud to speak with you today. As a parent who has lived in some of the NT's most isolated areas, whilst juggling life on a station and all that brings with it to providing an education to 2 young girls, I understand you, I get you and I am deeply honoured to speak to you today.



## About Dolly's Dream

Dolly's Dream was set up in memory of our daughter Dolly, aged 14, who took her own life in February 2018 after an extended period of bullying and cyber bullying.

Dolly's story touched the hearts of communities across Australia.



We remain now focused on using the money kindly donated by the community to help prevent other families from going through the same devastating experience.



For those that don't know our story, Dolly's Dream was set up in honour of our daughter Dolly, who took her own life after troubling times at school.

This is not a journey I ever expected to be on, and whilst initially we set out to achieve a tiny dream of raising some awareness around issues such as bullying, cyber safety and mental health, this has definitely exploded into something so much more. And none of this would have been achieved without the support of so many rural communities.

## Our impact so far...

- EDUCATING**  
Providing bullying and cyber bullying resources for parents via [parenthub.dollysdream.org.au](http://parenthub.dollysdream.org.au)
- REACHING**  
8 million+ Australians have heard Dolly's story
- INSPIRING**  
350+ fundraising activities
- FUNDRAISING**  
\$2.2 million generated in support
- LOBBYING**  
Introduction of new laws that impose tougher penalties for cyber bullies in both TAS and 'Dolly's Law' in NSW
- DELIVERING**  
Co-funding the NT...

We are extremely proud of the work we have done.

It has been a little over 2 years and we have:

- Reached over 8 million Australians. This means we are starting conversations right across Australia.
- We have lobbied and advocated, not only for strong anti-bullying laws but for promoting kindness in the community.
- We have raised over 2.2 million in fundraising support and held events across Australia
- We have in the last 12-months launched two new initiatives; Parent Hub and DigiPledge (both of which I will talk about later)
- Not only that ...

## Our impact so far...

**HONORARY**  
Kate and Tick awarded 2019 Australian of the Year Local Heroes

**EMPOWERING**  
Encouraging people to stand up to bullying, support those affected and to speak even if their voice shakes

**ADVOCATING**  
Contribution to the policy discussion with all governments

**PRESENTING**  
Delivering cyber safety workshops

*Dolly's Dream*

- We continue to deliver programs in schools and in the community.
- We have recently had over 100 schools participate in kindness activities in schools across Australia.
- We are delivering cyber safety and anti-bullying programs across the country. For example we are currently helping schools in Queensland to review their policies and procedures and provide support to teachers, parents and students.
- And we have delivered a range of workshops – for local communities, parents and students.

## Our reach so far...

Almost 400 community fundraising events.

Reaching 8 million-plus everyday Australians with Dolly's story ... a story that has resonated with them strongly as one that could sadly be their own.

More than \$2.2 million has been raised to date.

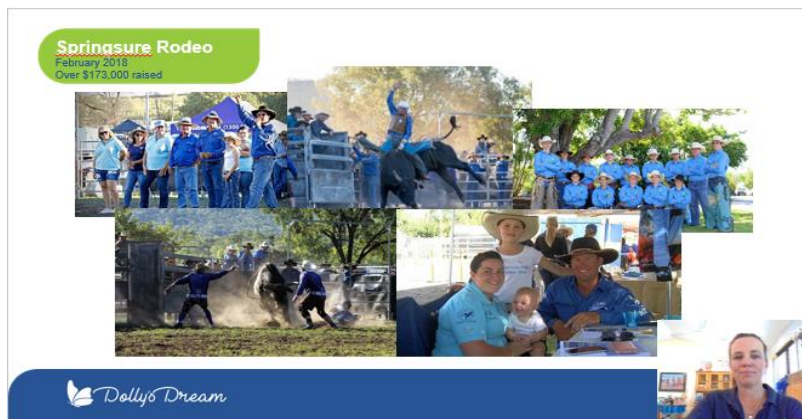


*Dolly's Dream*



What has been so amazing is the community support and so much of that has come from rural and regional Australia.

- Here are a few events that demonstrate this support



This event was held just one month (roughly) after Dolly's passing on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018.



Dreaming Under the Stars, held in Katherine, the brainchild of a few very, very special people. Considering we have a population of around 8,000 people, this is a phenomenal amount to raise.



We have had enormous support from Bairnsdale Horse Centre who provide a range of apparel and merchandise

You may already have some of our products but if not feel free to visit the Bairnsdale Horse Centre website for the full range.

Carlee works so hard to maintain a constant line of good quality merchandise supporting Dolly's Dream, in addition to our polos, t shirts and work shirts, she also keeps our standard and limited edition caps, windscreen stickers and a fabulous range of horse products including saddle pads, horse boots and rugs.

Please if you are looking for a way to show your support please follow our link on our FB page to Bairnsdale Horse Centre.





There have been so many other events. If there is anyone at this conference who has organised an event. Thank you! We really appreciate the support It isn't just the fundraising which is important but the awareness and sense of community that these events bring.

I am always amazed at the uniqueness of our fundraisers, I truly can't describe how inspiring each and every one is.



'Do it For Dolly Day' continues to grow.

Schools and workplaces were awash with blue on Friday 8 May, with a national day of kindness to celebrate the second Do it for Dolly Day.

We asked communities to dress in blue, fundraise and be kind, and they whole heartedly embraced this message.

This was right in the middle of the national lockdown where a day of kindness was exactly what we needed. The response across Australia was amazing. We managed to:

- Achieve media to the value of \$7.3m as T.V, radio and online publications jumped on the messages of kindness
- Reached 2.45 million people on Facebook with 180,000 commenting, liking or sharing our posts.
- Saw a 700% increase in traffic to our website

What we are most proud of is that we again started conversations right across Australia and saw everyday Australians come together to talk about kindness and why it is so important.



## Parent Hub

Dolly's Dream Parent Hub  
[parenthub.dollysdream.org.au](http://parenthub.dollysdream.org.au)

Created for the community with help from the community to provide:

- new ways of thinking about parents behaviour towards devices and their use
- articles, videos and blogs – so they have the very latest info on hot topics when it comes to kids being online
- support and helping parents to understand they are not alone when it comes to the challenges of parenting in the ever-changing online world



The first of our initiatives the Parent Hub

A little while ago we invited our Dolly's Dream community to help us with a survey, asking them what their top concerns are about their kids being online.

From the survey there were two clear top answers:

1. that you don't know enough about being online to have serious and in-depth conversations with your kids about it
2. you worry about what your kids do online

This was a big issue that came up in rural and regional communities. People like you!

People who live close to their school have far more access to information. Schools will regularly host events and parents can attend or speak to their teachers far easier when distance isn't a problem.

Parent Hub on the other hand provides parents with the opportunity regardless of where they live.



One of the unique things about Parent Hub is that it provides advice to all different styles of parenting.

It contains videos, brochures and news articles.

Topics include

[Bullying & cyber bullying](#)

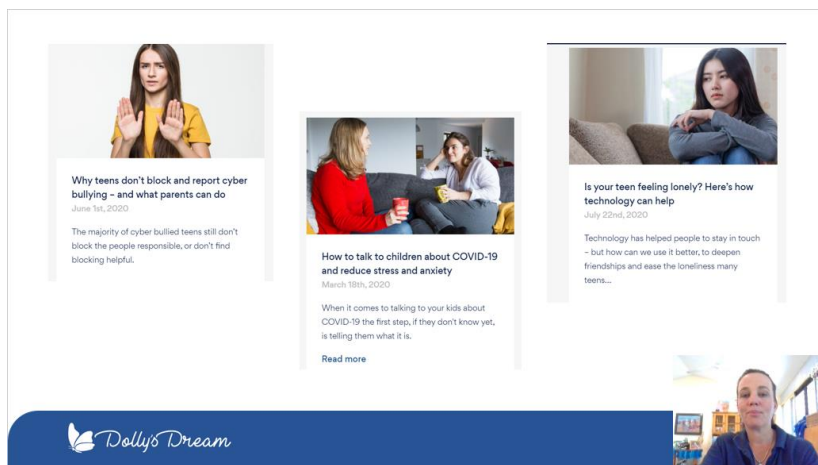
[Communication with teens](#)

[Online stranger danger](#)

[Porn, violence & other](#)

[Social media & sharing](#)

The advice in Parent Hub is also replicated in up to 160 online regional and rural newspapers. This is called 'On a Kinder Note' and you may have seen it in your local online paper.



Here are a few of our more popular articles

- *Why teens don't block and report cyber bullying- and what parents can do* – This is concern for all parents but particularly those who live remotely. In our day if you have a bad day at school you would come home and feel safe, however these days the abuse can follow you around. This article aims to help parents understand more from a teens perspective and provides advice on how they can help.
- *How to talk to children about COVID-19 and reduce stress and anxiety* – One of the great things about Parent Hub is that it is updated regularly which means we can offer relevant advice. This was put together by Dr Charlotte Keating, child psychologist and Dolly's Dream Advisory Board Member and became our most read article in history.
- *Is your teen feeling lonely? Here's how technology can help* – One thing we are really clear with at Dolly's Dream is that technology itself isn't the enemy. This article is about some positives of technology and how it can be helpful.



One of the products I am most proud of is the DigiPledge.

DigiPledge gives you a chance to sit down with your children and learn about the online world.

There are eight modules that you can complete together or separately. These modules contain 10 questions and trust me; few people get 10 out of 10. It will ask you questions about online safety, gaming, social media, privacy, digital reputation and more...

As adults it is a great chance to learn from your children. There is a sense of joy they get in knowing something that you don't know. And children can learn from us as we have real world experiences they don't



At the end of the eight modules, there is a chance to take a pledge as a family to say that “I will be a good digital citizen and pledge to show kindness.”

DigiPledge costs \$10 for a family log-in. It may be worth suggesting it to your school as they often have a budget that allows them to purchase in bulk. We are also finding that some employers are paying for it for their staff and local businesses are offering it to their local communities. If you think this may be of interest please email us at [info@dollysdream.org.au](mailto:info@dollysdream.org.au)

## Are your words doing damage?



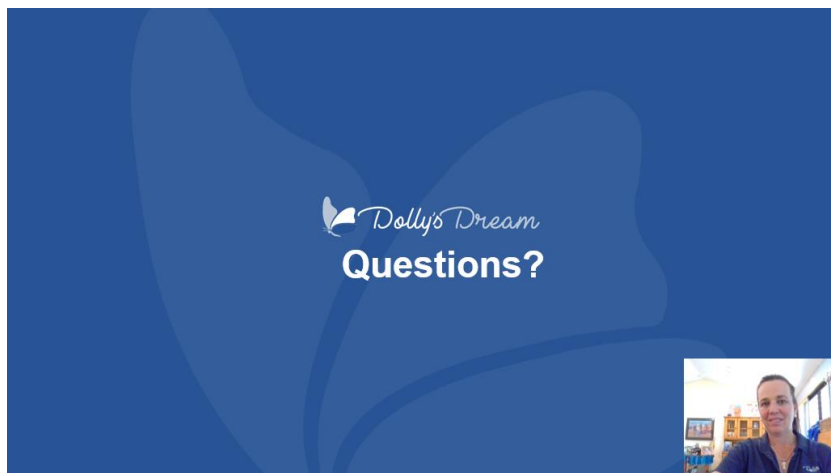
 Dolly's Dream

Finally I want to leave you with video from Dolly's Dream.

Believe it or not, this was directed by 15-year-old Charlotte McLaverty who wanted to show a teens perspective on cyber bullying. You may have seen the ad as every TV station in Australia agreed to play the ad free of charge.

Here it is...

<https://scroll.in/video/937695/watch-are-your-words-doing-damage-a-15-year-old-director-asks-in-her-anti-bullying-short-film>



Thanks everyone. I hope you have enjoyed the presentation.

While I am unable to be there in person. We do have Brad Langoulant, Head of Dolly's Dream, in the audience who can answer any questions you. He would also be happy to talk privately with anyone interested ... just drop him a message.

### Farewell to Jane Morton

Wendy Hick

Saying Farewell to one of our fellow councillors is never easy. This task is even more difficult when the person stepping down has been part of our ICPA family for quite some time. I'm really sorry that we can't all be together this year so that we could say goodbye in person.

Jane Morton has been such a special part of our Federal Council team for a number of years and it will be very hard to attend our first Federal Council meeting without her after she retires from Council at this Conference.

A bit about Jane-

Jane is a proud member of the Boulia - Bedourie – Birdsville Branch and she expressed interest in Federal Council after she attended the Federal Conference in Griffith NSW on 10 August 2012. Jane was co-opted onto council in December that year and she hasn't looked back. This quiet, soft spoken little lady has never ceased to amaze us with her tales of the pommy nurse who went to Birdsville, fell into love with a local and spent the next 35 years living on the Birdsville track, raising children and educating them in her Distance Ed classroom. Jane doesn't do things by half measure, that is for sure and she wasn't just co-opted on to Federal Council in December 2012, but she jumped right in as the Federal Secretary.

Jane not only served the maximum four year term as Secretary but she actually had an extra 10 months in the co-opted position. In her not quite five years, Jane filled the Secretary's role admirably and her contribution as Secretary was greatly appreciated. Jane was a driver for change and was a great support to Judy Sinclair-Newton and myself as Presidents.

When it came time for Jane to step down as the Federal Secretary at our 2017 Conference in Alice Springs, she thankfully put her hand up to become the Federal Assistant Secretary and work alongside of several new councillors and executive that year. Last year, Jane stepped out of the role of Assistant Secretary, although she remained on Council and continued to lead the Early Childhood, Education and Care portfolio. Jane has done an amazing job in keeping up with many changes that have come about in the early childhood areas especially around In Home Care and mobile playgroups and their funding. Jane's no non-sense approach and tenacity has helped her create networks where we had at times had very little communication previously. With quite a bit happening around In Home Care and changes in subsidies at the onset of Covid-19 this year, Jane was constantly emailing, writing and calling her various contacts to be sure that the reality of the situations that families on the ground were facing in rural and remote areas were being heard. Jane has built up quite a good relationship with the section of the Education Minister's office that handles early childhood, so much so that when information was flying thick and fast in light of the Covid-19 crisis and plans changing around In Home Care, that she was in discussion and received a briefing session with people from the Minister's office on Easter Day.

Jane can be described as logical, methodical, inquisitive, IT savvy and down to earth in nature. She certainly has a real "Can Do" attitude. While there is a very professional and serious side to Jane, she is also always up for a bit of fun. There really is no one else like her and she constantly makes those of us on council smile. There are so many fond memories of things you've been a part of Jane (I'm not sure if I should mention Sea Breeze Cocktails at the Wharf in Darwin here or not 😊).

Jane is usually the first one to try something new, quite often before the rest of us have even had a chance to look at, download or open it! Her enthusiasm, attention to detail and ability to remember assigned tasks and due dates along with pushing, prodding and cajoling the rest of council to meet

deadlines served her well when she was our Secretary to help keep our council on track, and she has continued to help in any way she can. Jane is one of the people we count on heavily for proof reading and editing as she is very particular with formatting, grammar and punctuation. As I mentioned before, Jane is very current and she has gone to great lengths to try to bring us into modern times with our writing style. I think she has finally gotten most of us on council used to the new way of writing the date (I hope you noticed Jane that I put it that way round at the start of this), although she is still catching us out on contractions and I do apologise for all of the time you've had to spend Jane on sorting and untangling my "Americanisms".

No matter how much Jane is working on herself, she still constantly offers to help out where it's needed and her reassuring "She'll be right" has often put our minds at ease. Jane has put in some very long hours for ICPA, whether it is registrations that need processed until midnight, documents to be formatted before a deadline or a new banner designed, Jane has always been there for us and willing to help.

Jane has always enjoyed representing ICPA whether she was organising delegations in Parliament House, helping members or attending State Conferences. We want to thank you Jane for all of your time and dedication that you have given to Federal Council and I'd also like to thank David and your family for sharing you with us. I'm not sure exactly how many dinners, family plans or trips with family we have interrupted with ICPA, but I know it's been quite a few and we thank your family for understanding and supporting you. Hopefully David will get to eat a bit more regularly now (especially with the registrations for the conference over).

We are going to miss you immensely on Federal Council Jane but you will always be a part of our ICPA family. We hope to catch up with you again soon, no matter where your travels take you. Thank you for all that you've done.

**Conference Attendance**

**Federal Council**

<b>President</b>	Alana Moller	
<b>Vice President</b>	Sally Sullivan	
<b>Secretary</b>	Suzanne Wilson	
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	Kate Thompson	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Lisa Slade	
<b>Publicity Officer</b>	Jo Camilleri	
<b>Councillors</b>	Jane Morton	Kristen Coggan
	Nikki Macqueen	Briony Sinclair
	Jane O'Brien	Nikki Mahony
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	Wendy Hick	
<b>Federal Web Manager</b>	Sue Shotton	
<b>Pedals Editor</b>	Raelene Hall	

<b>Federal Life Members</b>	Roxanne Morrissey	
	Jane Gloster (2)	
	Julia Materne	
	Trish Mitchell OAM	

**State Council Delegates**

<b>New South Wales</b>	Claire Butler (1)	Libby McPhee (2)
	Gabie Le Lievre (2)	
<b>Northern Territory</b>	Sarah Cook (1)	Moira Lanzarin (2)
	Sarah Measey	
<b>Queensland</b>	Kellie Ostwald (1)	Louise Martin (2)
	Wendy Henning (2)	
<b>South Australia</b>	Jill Greenfield	Edwina Bowie (1)
	Kate Greenfield (2)	
<b>Western Australia</b>	Sally Brindal	Kym Ross

**Branch Delegates**

<b>Alice Springs NT</b>	Amber Driver (1)	Lisa Kimlin (2)
	Danyelle Haigh (1)	
<b>Belyando/Mt Coolon QLD</b>	Goscelyn Sullivan (1)	Natalie Comerford (1)
	Amanda Clark (2)	Kelva Camm (2)
<b>Blackall QLD</b>	Marcelle Chandler (2)	Susie Milson
	Anita Dennis (2)	
<b>Bourke NSW</b>	Tanya Mitchell	Prue Ritchie
<b>Charleville QLD</b>	Louise Winten	
<b>Charters Towers QLD</b>	Kim Donaldson	Sue-Ann Jones
	Sonia Spurdle (2)	
<b>Clermont QLD</b>	Kasie Scott	
<b>Cloncurry QLD</b>	Tara Locke	
<b>Collarenebri-Mungindi QLD</b>	Virginia Parkel Thomas	

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<b>Dawson Valley QLD</b>	Sarah Cox	
<b>Flinders Ranges SA</b>	Linda Haydon	
<b>Hay NSW</b>	Sandra Ireson	Monique Watkin
<b>Hillston NSW</b>	Laura Stalley	Emma Laird
<b>Katherine NT</b>	Katie Payne	
<b>Kimberley Air WA</b>	Barbara McKimmie	
<b>Kindon QLD</b>	Terri-Ann Crothers	Di Skene
<b>Louth NSW</b>	Emma Boede	
<b>Mt Isa Branch of the Air QLD</b>	Sancia Fegan	
<b>Marla Oodnadatta SA</b>	Helen Williams	Paulaine Vermeulen
<b>Midwest WA</b>	Naomi Obst (AGM, 2)	
<b>Mitchell-Tambo/Dunkfield QLD</b>	Sally Campbell	Kate Twist
<b>North East SA</b>	Ros Breeding (1)	Kate Robinson (2)
	Penny Rasheed (2)	
<b>North West SA</b>	Jessica Barry	Petie Rankin
<b>North West Slopes NSW</b>	Juliana Orman	
<b>Pilbara WA</b>	Sandie McCrombie	
<b>Port Augusta SA</b>	Kate Greenfield (1)	
<b>QLD Lone Members</b>	Kristen Sharpe	
<b>Richmond QLD</b>	Kim Hughes	Tamara Bailey (2)
	Megan Easton (1)	
<b>SA Lone Members</b>	Jodie Keogh	
<b>Southern Downs QLD</b>	Kate Gray	Kelly Ostwald (2)
<b>Springsure/Rolleston QLD</b>	Patricia Gretton	Susan McDonald
<b>St George QLD</b>	Brie Boyle (1)	Michelle Freshwater (AGM,2)
	Tracey Armstrong (1)	Lisa Southern (AGM, 2)
<b>Tambo QLD</b>	Louise Martin (1)	Stacey Ryrie
	Melissa Iland	
<b>Walgett NSW</b>	Karen Ricardo	
<b>Wentworth NSW</b>	Bree Wakefield	
<b>Western Downs QLD</b>	Miranda Ronnfeldt	Sharryn Gilmour
<b>Westmar/Inglestone QLD</b>	Jen McCormack	Fiona Hill
<b>Winton QLD</b>	Kate Bradshaw (2)	
<b>Yalgoo WA</b>	Roxanne Morrissey	
<b>Yaraka/Isisford QLD</b>	Teresa Cobb	Wendy Sheehan (2)
	Dianne Pidgeon (1)	

### Branch Observers

<b>Alice Springs NT</b>	Sofia Connellan	
<b>Belyando/Mt Coolon QLD</b>	Goscelyn Sullivan	Natalie Comerford
	Amanda Clark	Kelva Camm
<b>Blackall QLD</b>	Kate Moller	Marcelle Chandler
	Sally Gall	
<b>Charters Towers</b>	Sonia Spurdle	
<b>Cloncurry QLD</b>	Julie McDonald	

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<b>Esperance WA</b>	Kath Fowler	Janine Doney
<b>Hay NSW</b>	Alison McLean	
<b>Hillston NSW</b>	Emma Laird	
<b>Kindon QLD</b>	Andrew Waugh	Bill Macqueen
<b>Longreach QLD</b>	Lou Brown (AGM)	
<b>Louth NSW</b>	Clare Sandford	
<b>Meekatharra WA</b>	Raelene Hall	
<b>Mount Isa BOTA QLD</b>	Tina Barrett	
<b>North East SA</b>	Ros Breeding	
<b>North West SA</b>	Petie Rankin	Megan Henderson
	Joanna Gibson	
<b>North West Slopes NSW</b>	Anna Gayner	
<b>NSW/VIC Lone Members</b>	Stephen Higgs	Adrian Byrne
<b>NT Lone Members NT</b>	Sue Shotton	
<b>Pilbara WA</b>	Robin Pensini	Sandie McCombie
<b>Port Augusta SA</b>	Stefanie Roeske	David Best
<b>Rankins Springs NSW</b>	Monica Molloy	
<b>SA Lone Members</b>	Patricia Ellin	Georgy Ewing
<b>St George QLD</b>	Brie Boyle	Tracey Armstrong
	Michelle Freshwater	Lisa Southern
<b>Tambo QLD</b>	Stacey Ryrie	Melissa Iland
<b>WA Lone Members</b>	Jennifer McGillivray	Joyleen Angwin
<b>Walgett NSW</b>	Judy Sinclair-Newton	
<b>Yaraka/Isisford QLD</b>	Jeff Little	

### ZOOM Hosts

Richard Stokes (ABSA)  
Tom Dunsmore (ABSA)

### Conference Guests

Heather Allen	State President, Country Women's Association of WA (CWA)
Tanya Appleby	Principal, St Ursula's College, Toowoomba (QLD)
Jaye Beutel	Head of Boarding, Townsville Grammar School QLD
Boyd Brown	Regional General Manager- WA Telstra
Tanya Cameron OAM	National President, Country Women's Association of Australia (CWA)
Ben Chadwick	Director of Boarding, The King's School, North Parramatta NSW
Eva Colic	Executive Assistant Telstra
James Couper	Head of Boarding, Marist College, Ashgrove QLD
Carrie Cousar	Director of Admissions, Scotch College, Adelaide SA
Karen Davies	Head of Boarding, Stuartholme School, Brisbane QLD (Day 1)
Stuart Delaney	St Peters Lutheran College, Springfield QLD, Federal ICPA School Corporate Member
Tianee Dohnt	Local Manager NT, Regional & Remote nbn Australia

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Natalie Downes	Rural Education and Communities Research Group, University of Canberra ACT
Marguerite Dunne	Head of Boarding, Fairholme College (QLD)
Tom Dunsmore	Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA)
Mitch Eyles	Business Development Manager, Skymesh Pty Ltd
Jennifer Ganske	Regional Development and Engagement, nbn Australia
Dianne Giblin AM	CEO, Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO)
Kevan Goodworth	Director P & C Associations QLD
Donna Grant	Head of Boarding, The Glennie School, Toowoomba (QLD)
Frances Greene	Head of Boarding, Somerville College, South Brisbane QLD
Elizabeth Grey	Dept. of Training & Workforce Development, WA
Jo Grinham	Registrar, The King's School, North Parramatta NSW
Michael Guerin	CEO, AgForce QLD
Jessica Hackett	Executive Officer, Connellan Airways Trust
Kim Holman	St Peters Lutheran College, Indooroopilly QLD - Federal ICPA School Corporate Member
Sue Kingwill	CEO, Contact Inc
Brad Langoulant	Head, Dolly's Dream
Anne Leahy	State MP for Warrego QLD
Paul Levi	Director - Student Payment Policy Department of Families and Social Services
Philip Mason	Asst Sec, USG Taskforce Dept of Infrastructure, Transport, Reg Development & Comms
Ellen McLean	Asst Head of Boarding, Stuartholme School, Brisbane QLD (Day 2)
Jane McIntyre	Director, In Home Care Department of Education, Skills & Employment
Judy Menary	Executive Principal, Brisbane School of Distance Education (QLD)
Luciano Mesiti	CEO, Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA)
Robyn Moore	Keynote Speaker, Australian Song Actress
Diana Neverauskas	Co-ordinator, The Outback Alliance
Vicki O'Halloran AO	Her Honour the Honourable Administrator for NT and ICPA NT Patron
Mick O'Leary	Asst Director-General, Department Education & Training (DET) QLD
Christian Oneto	Dean of Boarding, St Joseph's College Nudgee, Brisbane QLD
Ray Pearson	Director of Boarding, St Peters College, Adelaide SA
Stacey Pound	Business Manager, Harbour ISP
Anne Rathmell	Head of Campus, Dalby State High School, QLD
Gerard Rennick	Senator for QLD
Kerrie Russell	Principal, Alice Springs SOTA
Natalie Salisbury	Business Development Officer, St Ursula's College, Yeppoon QLD
Jules Scarlett	Executive Govt Relations, Regional Affairs & Sustainability, Telstra
Megan McNicholl OAM	Federal Life Member ICPA Australia
Kristen Sharpe	Principal, Stuartholme School, Brisbane QLD (Day 1)

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Elle Shepherd	Education Projects Officer, Education and Outreach Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
Fiona Simson	President, National Farmers' Federation (NFF)
Gabrielle Sinclair	CEO, Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
Kristy Sparrow	Administrator, Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia (BIRRR)
Richard Stokes	Executive Director, Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) - Federal ICPA Corporate Member
Rod Thiele	Education Adviser, Education and Outreach Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
Marnie Tolcher	Senator Susan McDonald, Senator for QLD
Melyssa Troy	Media & Comms Officer, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)
Rachael Wade	Student Payments Study and Compliance Branch, Dept. of Families & Social Services
Kate Warner	Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Governor of Tasmania
Rosemary White	Assistant Director - Regional Schools Policy Team Department of Education, Skills and Employment
Anne White	Principal, NT School of Distance Education
Leigh Williams	Executive Director, Department of Education QLD
Gavin Williams	Chief Development Officer, Regional and Remote nbn™ Australia
Sharni Wilson	Principal, Katherine School of the Air (KSA)

### Conference Apologies

#### Members

Ros Andrews	Katherine Branch, NT
Liz Bird	Alice Springs Branch, NT
Barbara Clark	Roma Branch, QLD
Jenny and Robert Crichton	Charleville Branch, QLD
Gillian Fennel	Marla Oodnadatta Branch, SA
Jane Gloster	Federal Life Member (Day 1)
Helen Harding	Katherine Branch, NT
Bob and Colleen Harvey	Walgett, Branch, NSW
Tammie Irons	Queensland ICPA President
Jan Heaslip OAM	Alice Springs Branch, NT Life Member
Lynley Kerin	North West Branch, SA
Bruce Paynter	NSW/VIC Lone Members
Greg and Helen Rogers	Hay Branch, NSW
Graeme and Bernadette Stribbles	Hay Branch, NSW

#### Guests

Hon Karen Andrews MP	Federal Minister for Industry, Science & Technology
Senator Wendy Askew	Senator for Tasmania
Dr Ros Baxter	Deputy Secretary - Early Childhood and Child Care,



Andrew Bidwell	Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment
Senator Andrew Bragg	President, Australian Council Of State School Organisations
Belinda Catelli	Senator for New South Wales Branch Manager-Payment Policy Team and Child Care Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment
Tony Cook	Director - General Department of Education, QLD
James D'Castro	Queensland Department of Education
Anne Driscoll	Principal Policy Consultant, Department of Training & Workforce Development, WA
The Hon Sue Ellery MLC	Minister for Education and Training, Western Australia
Trish Ellin	REVISE SA
The Hon Donna Faragher, MLC	Member for East Metropolitan Region, WA
The Hon Paul Fletcher MP	Federal Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts
Alex Gordon	Deputy Secretary Schools, Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment
The Hon Grace Grace	Minister for Education, Queensland
Dr Helen Haines MP	Federal Member for Indi
Senator Susan McDonald	Senator for Queensland
The Hon Annastacia Palaszczuk	Queensland Premier
The Hon Melissa Price	Federal Minister for Defence Industry
Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds	Federal Minister for Defence
The Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP	Minister for Education and Training, Tasmania
The Hon Rita Saffioti, MLA	Minister for Transport; Planning, WA
Senator Dean Smith	Senator for Western Australia
Senator Marielle Smith	Senator for South Australia
Senator Amanda Stoker	Senator for Queensland
Darren West MLC	Member for Agricultural Region, WA
Annette Whitehead	Deputy Director-General, Policy, Performance and Planning, Department of Education, QLD
Sue Wilkinson	Griffith University, QLD

## Financial Statements

**ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.  
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.**

### **Report on the Audit of the Financial Report**

#### **Opinion**

I have audited the financial report of Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc. (the association), which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 31 May 2020, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the association as at 31 May 2020 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act of Western Australia 2015*.

#### **Basis for Opinion**

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report. I am independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110: *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

#### **Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting**

I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act of Western Australia 2015*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

#### **Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report**

The committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act of Western Australia 2015* and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Auditor's name and signature:   
David Grantley Murdock

Name of firm: D G Murdock

Address: 117 Greenhill Road  
UNLEY SA 5061

Dated this 4<sup>th</sup> day of August 2020

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

FINANCIAL REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2020

ITEMS:	PAGE NO:
1.COMMITTEE'S STATEMENT	1
2.COMMITTEE'S REPORT	2
3.AUDIT REPORT	3
4.INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT	5
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6.NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS	8



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ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on the pages.

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC. as at 31 MAY 2020 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

...*Immoeller*.....

...*Glade*.....

Dated this *4th* day of *August*..... 20*20*

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## ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

### COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Your committee members submit the financial report of  
ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.  
for the year ended 31 MAY 2020.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The names of committee members at the date of this report are:

President	Alana Moller
Vice President	Sally Sullivan
Immediate Past President	Wendy Hick
Secretary	Suzanne Wilson
Treasurer	Lisa Slade
Assistant Secretary	Kate Thompson
Publicity Officer	Hamish Griffin (1/8/19 to 19/8/19)
	Nikki Macqueen (Co-opted 9/8/19 to 16/3/2020)
	Jo Camilleri (Co-opted 20/3/2020)
Councillors	Jane O'Brien (Membership Officer)
	Jane Morton
	Kristen Coggan
	Briony Sinclair
	Jo Camilleri (1/8/19 to 20/3/2020)
	Nikki Macqueen (16/3/2020)
	Nikki Mahony (Co-opted 13/5/2020)
	Di Skene (1/8/19 to 4/1/2020)
	Christie Goddard (1/8/19 to 5/1/2020)

#### PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The principal activities of the Association during the financial year were advocating and promoting awareness of the need for equitable access to educational opportunities for families in regional and remote areas in Australia.

#### SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

#### OPERATING RESULT

The profit from ordinary activities after providing for income tax amounted to profit of \$38,748.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee.

...*Alana Moller*.....

...*Lisa Slade*.....

Dated this *4<sup>th</sup>* day of *August*..... 20*20*

## 49<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

#### INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Accommodation Reimbursements	-	94.09
Badges and Pins	172.07	1,104.93
Boarding Parent Handbook Sale	18.18	-
Donations Received		
Donations - Branch	12,400.00	9,200.00
Donations - Other	800.00	50.00
Federal Conferences	42,660.81	13,553.41
Accommodation Reimbursements	2,535.76	-
Government Grants Received	34,000.00	34,000.00
Interest Received	6,790.98	8,177.44
Memberships and Subscriptions		
Membership	52,754.74	54,347.96
Membership - Tas Online Collected	750.00	1,050.00
Sponsorship (Conference)	13,636.36	13,636.36
Sundry Income	159.34	1,231.95
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>166,678.24</b>	<b>136,446.14</b>
<b>LESS: EXPENDITURE</b>		
Accounting & Audit Fees	2,575.00	1,900.00
Badges and Pins Expenses	695.69	1,291.86
Bank Charges	54.98	55.79
Canberra Delegation Expenses	20,409.22	6,803.31
Donations	600.00	600.00
Federal Conferences		
Federal Conferences - Councillor Expenses	31,129.03	34,580.60
Federal Conferences - Convening Committee fwd fund	26,301.36	19,413.63
Federal Conferences - Branch Sponsorship to Attend	7,700.00	-
Federal Conferences - Profit Split to Host State	5,817.38	-
Freight & Cartage	-	592.19
Insurance	2,735.56	1,790.25
Licence Fees	66.18	-
Meetings		
Meetings - Face to Face	-	23,190.36
Meetings - Other - Expenses	12,234.10	4,791.23
Printing, Stationery & Office	5,145.52	1,806.68
Postage	264.66	244.27
Repairs, Replacement & Maintenance	2,018.18	972.27
State Conferences	6,148.07	16,067.74
Subscriptions and Memberships		
Memberships	815.45	910.23
Membership Fees - Tasmania Online Memberships	570.00	935.00

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Corporate Memberships - State		
Magazines	1,922.73	-
Sundries	128.91	1,229.47
Telephone & Internet	-	127.27
Web Page Expenses	598.18	4,999.93
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>127,930.20</b>	<b>122,302.08</b>
<b>PROFIT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>38,748.04</b>	<b>14,144.06</b>

The accompanying notes form part of the financial statements.



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### ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

#### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MAY 2020

	NOTES	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
<b>Cash</b>			
Bank Accounts			
ANZ Credit Card		33.54	33.54
Suncorp Everyday #8011		2,787.72	2,590.98
Suncorp Business Saver #0139		375,716.03	335,678.23
Suncorp Dept. Ed Grant #0112		55.19	54.73
Suncorp General #9912		48,588.68	47,335.19
Suncorp Membership #9963		3,636.00	2,577.00
Suncorp P. Edgley #0066		0.96	0.95
Suncorp East Coast - TAS #5845		2,805.79	2,684.89
<b>Total Cash</b>		<b>433,623.91</b>	<b>390,955.51</b>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>433,623.91</b>	<b>390,955.51</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>433,623.91</b>	<b>390,955.51</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Creditors &amp; Borrowings</b>			
Funds Held - East Coast Branch TAS		2,805.79	2,684.89
GST Paid/Collected			
GST on Sales/Income		(30.00)	17,871.56
GST on Purchases/Expenses		3,810.86	(17,890.16)
<b>Total Creditors &amp; Borrowings</b>		<b>6,586.65</b>	<b>2,666.29</b>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>6,586.65</b>	<b>2,666.29</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>6,586.65</b>	<b>2,666.29</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>427,037.26</b>	<b>388,289.22</b>
<b>MEMBERS FUNDS</b>			
Retained profits	2	427,037.26	388,289.22
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS FUNDS</b>		<b>427,037.26</b>	<b>388,289.22</b>
Auditors Remuneration	3		

The accompanying notes form part of the financial statements.

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2020

**Note 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies**

The financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Constitution and Associations Incorporation Act (WA).

**Reporting Entity**

The committee has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity.

**Accounting Policies**

The financial report has been prepared on a cash basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or except where specifically stated current valuations of non-current assets.

**Revenue Recognition**

Revenue (including Grant Income) is recognised on receipt.

**Plant & Equipment**

Purchases of office equipment are expensed on acquisition.

**Taxation**

The Association is exempt from income tax, however is registered for GST

**Insurance**

Insurance as required pursuant to the Associations Incorporation Act of Western Australia 2015 is maintained

**Mortgages**

There were no Mortgages, Charges or Securities over this Association at the date of this report.

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2020

Note 2.

**RETAINED PROFITS**

Retained profits at beginning of the financial year	388,289.22	374,145.16
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>38,748.04</b>	<b>14,144.06</b>
Total available for appropriation	427,037.26	388,289.22
<b>Retained profits at the end of the financial year</b>	<b>427,037.26</b>	<b>388,289.22</b>

Note 3.

**AUDITOR'S REMUNERATION**

Audit	2,575.00	1,900.00
	<b>2,575.00</b>	<b>1,900.00</b>

**ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.**

**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE  
YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2020**

<b>Note 4.</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Donations - Branch</b>		
Alpha	-	1,500.00
Arcadia Valley	200.00	-
Aramac/Muttaborra	200.00	-
Belyando-Mount Coolon	-	500.00
Blackall	1,000.00	
Clermont	2,000.00	1,500.00
Katherine	5,000.00	-
Lakes District	-	200.00
Louth	500.00	500.00
Mid West	-	2,000.00
Mount Isa	500.00	-
Namoi	1,000.00	1,000.00
Tambo	1,000.00	-
Westmar/Inglestone	-	1,000.00
Winton	1,000.00	1,000.00
	<u>12,400.00</u>	<u>9,200.00</u>

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### Membership as at 31 March 2019

<b>Western Australia</b>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Esperance	25	21	26	27	21	22
Gascoyne	12	16	12	18	11	15
Goldfields Eyre ( <i>Kalgoorlie Air</i> )	16	18	16	12	19	19
Eastern Districts <i>formerly Hyden</i>	31	33	47	46	38	44
Kimberley Air	8	8	10	12	9	9
Kondinin	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Lakes District	48	49	52	44	44	47
Meekatharra Air	20	14	15	16	20	20
Midwest	41	48	51	49	46	52
Pilbara	11	14	18	17	17	20
WA Lone Members	31	34	30	36	24	24
Yalgoo	8	9	10	9	7	7
Central Wheatbelt North <i>formerly Kalannie</i>	22	33	35	29	18	18
	<b>273</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>297</b>

<b>South Australia</b>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Eyre	10	0	0	0	8	8
Far West	1	1	1	0	0	recess
Flinders Ranges	25	23	18	26	24	24
Marla Oodnadatta	7	7	10	10	10	10
Marree Air	13	14	16	13	10	10
North East Districts	17	13	16	18	16	17
North West	8	10	11	11	11	11
Port Augusta	10	9	7	8	9	10
SA Lone Members	9	8	11	16	7	7
	<b>100</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>97</b>

<b>Tasmania</b>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Central Highlands	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
East Coast	14	14	19	18	7	7
Midlands ( <i>Oatlands</i> )	17	17	16	14	9	9
TAS Lone Members	5	5	7	8	7	8
	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>

<b>Northern Territory</b>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alice Springs	43	48	44	51	41	43
Barkly	recess	recess	closed	closed	closed	closed
Katherine	56	52	52	64	52	53
NT Lone Members	11	10	10	14	12	13
	<b>110</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>109</b>

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<b>New South Wales</b>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Balranald	44	54	56	47	39	45
Boomi	18	11	20	19	18	18
Bourke	35	24	28	29	29	32
Brewarrina	18	15	18	19	14	16
Broken Hill	46	37	33	37	33	35
Bullarah <i>amalgamated with Moree</i>	7	14	12	12	closed	closed
Central West Plains ( <i>Tottenham</i> )	92	95	92	92	95	96
Collarenebri-Mungindi	10	16	11	19	15	24
Cobar	7	0	0	recess	recess	recess
Condobolin	10	8	12	13	8	9
Corinella	0	0	0	recess	recess	recess
Goolgowi	14	11	13	13	13	13
Hay	79	80	78	74	57	69
Hillston <i>out of recess</i>	11	11	0	recess	6	8
LR/Goodooga	15	2	8	9	10	10
Lord Howe Island	14	10	11	11	11	11
Louth	14	17	26	24	23	23
Monaro	26	21	31	31	29	30
Moree <i>amalgamated Bullarah</i>	18	23	15	24	33	39
Namoi ( <i>Burren Junction</i> )	54	50	43	48	42	45
NSW Lone Member	97	69	103	122	109	117
Nyngan	27	25	30	25	23	24
Paroo	0	6	recess	recess	recess	recess
Quambone	42	42	39	35	40	41
Rankins Springs	40	36	33	25	26	29
Tibooburra/Milparinka	12	13	11	14	18	18
Tilpa	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Vermont Hill	19	17	18	10	6	6
Walgett	42	39	35	43	35	39
Warrumbungle	23	2	1	recess	recess	recess
Wentworth		17	17	24	26	28
West Wyalong	3	8	2	recess	recess	recess
North West Slopes				8	9	11
	<b>837</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>836</b>

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<b>Queensland</b>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alpha	27	36	28	32	22	28
Aramac-Muttaburra	25	34	30	35	32	32
Arcadia Valley	12	14	16	18	9	12
Auburn-Burrandowan-Cardarga	13	11	13	32	28	28
Augathella	9	8	14	22	17	22
Belyando-Mt Coolon	40	32	43	49	40	42
Blackall	38	33	0	34	29	29
Bollon	15	21	1	16	19	19
Bouli-Bedourie-Birdsville	15	15	16	15	14	15
Capricornia (BOTA)	16	19	21	22	29	33
Channel Country	8	0	0	5	1	1
Charleville	19	20	25	20	24	25
Charleville B.O.T.A.	10	10	9	10	0	closed
Charters Towers	47	58	46	56	55	67
Clarke Creek	12	15	17	18	23	26
Clermont	31	52	44	55	53	54
Cloncurry	12	9	14	10	16	16
Cunnamulla	9	12	22	28	22	24
Dawson Valley	16	15	10	17	13	15
Dirranbandi	26	27	27	29	32	32
Dunkeld with <i>Mitchell-Tomoo</i>	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Far North QLD ( <i>Cairns Radio</i> )	1	31	0	32	9	14
Hughenden	31	27	16	16	17	17
Julia Creek	26	25	19	32	27	28
Kindon	26	29	28	31	30	32
Longreach	41	34	22	38	16	28
McKinlay	0	11	0	0	4	5
Mitchell Toomoo-Dunkeld	37	43	38	34	34	40
Moonie	29	29	26	25	24	26
Mt Isa B.O.T.A	27	30	37	35	30	36
Nebo	13	14	0	9	20	22
North Burnett ( <i>Eidsvold-Cracow</i> )	0	7	13	18	13	13
QLD Lone Members	26	24	15	25	20	22
Quilpie	20	39	29	32	14	14
Richmond	23	13	18	17	19	20
Roma	27	21	23	30	28	33
Southern Downs ( <i>Stanthorpe District</i> )	36	33	36	31	30	32
Springsure-Rolleston	10	0	0	21	17	21
St George	39	37	41	49	46	52
Talwood	33	22	4	9	23	24
Tambo	32	30	24	27	27	41
Taroom Wandoan	33	33	42	39	43	44
Thargomindah	6	8	0	1	0	5
Western Downs ( <i>Condamine-WD</i> )	34	33	34	37	40	41
Westmar Inglestone	52	58	64	53	53	55
Winton	37	33	33	40	29	29
Yaraka-Isisford	30	30	34	31	32	34
	<b>1069</b>	<b>1135</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>1235</b>	<b>1123</b>	<b>1248</b>

## 49<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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<b>Australia Wide Membership Totals</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
New South Wales	837	773	796	827	767	836
Northern Territory	110	110	106	129	105	109
Queensland	1069	1135	992	1235	1123	1248
South Australia	100	85	90	102	95	97
Tasmania	36	34	42	40	23	24
Western Australia	273	297	322	315	274	297
	<b><u>2425</u></b>	<b><u>2434</u></b>	<b><u>2348</u></b>	<b><u>2648</u></b>	<b><u>2387</u></b>	<b><u>2611</u></b>
Corporate				<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
School Corporate						<b>5</b>

<b>Financial Branches 31/05/2020</b>	
New South Wales	26
Northern Territory	3
Queensland	45
South Australia	8
Tasmania	3
Western Australia	12
	<b>97</b>