

Isolated Children's Parents' Association
of Australia Incorporated



Minutes

of the

50th Annual Conference

'Stronger Together'

3 and 4 November 2021

Longreach Civic and Cultural Centre
Longreach, Queensland

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50th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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/HOSTELS/SECOND HOME

M1(A1), M2(A2), M3(A3), M4(A4), M5(A5), M6(A6),
M7(A7), M8(S1), M9(S2), M80(F1)

COMMUNICATIONS

M49(A8), M50(A9), M51(A10), M52(A11), M53(A12),
M54(A13), M55(A14), M56(A15), M57(A16), M58(A17),
M59(A18), M60(A19), M61(A20), M62(A21), M63(A22),
M64(A23), M65(A24), M66(S3), M67(S4)

DISTANCE EDUCATION

M10(A25), M11(A26), M12(A27), M13(A28), M14(A29)

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

M25(A30), M26(A31), M27(S6), M28(S7), M29(A32),
M30(A33), M31(A34), M32(A35), M33(A36), M34(S5),
M35(S8)

RURAL SCHOOLS/SCHOOL TRAVEL

M21(A37), M22(A38), M23(S9), M24(A39)

SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS

M71(A40), M72(A41), M73(A42), M74(A43), M75(A44)

TERTIARY

M15(A45), M16(A46), M17(S10), M18(S11), M19(S12),
M20(S13)

TRAINING

M68(A47), M69(A48), M70(A49)

MISCELLANEOUS

M76(S14), M77(A50), M78(A51), M79(A52)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

M36(A53), M37(A54), M38(A55), M39(A56), M40(A57),
M41(A58), M42(A59), M43(A60), M44(A61), M45(A62),
M46(A63), M47(A64), M48(A65)

ICPA Federal Council 2020 - 2021

President

Mrs Alana Moller
Clermont QLD

Assistant Secretary

Mrs Kate Thompson
York Plains TAS

Immediate Past President

Mrs Wendy Hick
Camooweal QLD

Committee

Mrs Nikki Macqueen
Millmerran QLD

Committee

Mrs Kim Hughes
Richmond QLD

Pedals Editor

Mrs Raelene Hall
Meekatharra WA

Vice President

Mrs Sally Sullivan
Mataranka NT

Treasurer

Mrs Lisa Slade
Blinman SA

Committee

Mrs Nikki Mahony
Dawson Valley QLD

Committee

Mrs Jane O'Brien
Walgett NSW

Committee

Mrs Julia Broad
Pentland QLD
(co-opted 27/07/2021)

Federal Webmaster

Mrs Nikki Macqueen
Millmerran QLD

Secretary

Mrs Suzanne Wilson
Darwin NT

Publicity Officer

Ms Jo Camilleri
Kimberley WA

Committee

Mrs Kristen Coggan
Condamine QLD

Committee

Mrs Briony Sinclair
Western Downs QLD

Archivist

Julia Materne
Keith SA

ICPA Website Manager

Mrs Sue Shotton
Winnellie NT

ICPA Federal Council 2021 - 2022

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Assistant Secretary

Mrs Kate Thompson
York Plains TAS

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Camooweal QLD

Committee

Mrs Julia Broad
Pentland QLD

Committee

Mrs Anna McCorkle
Bourke NSW

Pedals Editor

Mrs Raelene Hall
Meekatharra WA

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Julia Materne
Keith SA

Vice President

Mrs Lisa Slade
Bangor SA

Treasurer

Mrs Nikki Mahony
Dawson Valley QLD

Committee

Mrs Sally Sullivan
Mataranka NT

Committee

Mrs Wendy Henning
Glenmorgan QLD

Committee

Mrs Naomi Obst
Mingenew WA

Federal Webmaster

Mrs Nikki Macqueen
Millmerran QLD

Secretary

Mrs Kim Hughes
Richmond QLD

Publicity Officer

Mrs Suzanne Wilson
Darwin NT

Committee

Mrs Jane O'Brien
Walgett NSW

Committee

Mrs Ali Allison
Broken Hill NSW

Committee

Mrs Laura Stalley
Hillston NSW

ICPA Website Manager

Mrs Sue Shotton
Winnellie NT

Stronger Together

Conference Program Day 1 - Wednesday 3 November 2021

Session 1

9:00am	National Anthem	Longreach State School Choir
	Welcome	Mrs Alana Moller
	Conference Convenor	Mrs Wendy Henning
	Introduction of Delegates and Guests	Mrs Suzanne Wilson
	Official Opening of Conference	Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM Mr Wally Mitchell AM
	Presentation – Minister for Regional Education	Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie
	Federal ICPA President’s Report	Mrs Alana Moller

10:00am *Morning Tea*

Session 2

10:30am	Presentation	His Excellency, General the Hon David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)
	Confirmation of 2020 Web Conference Minutes	Mrs Sally Sullivan
	Queensland ICPA President’s Report	Mrs Louise Martin
	Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Presentation	Mrs Nikki Macqueen
	<i>Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Motions</i>	
	<i>Distance Education Motions</i>	
	Presentation Sue Shotton - Federal Life Membership	Mrs Nikki Macqueen

12.30pm *Lunch*

Session 3

1:30pm	Western Australia ICPA President’s Report	Mrs Sally Brindal
	Tertiary Portfolio Presentation	Mrs Kate Thompson
	<i>Tertiary Portfolio Motions</i>	
	<i>Rural Schools/School Travel Portfolio Motions</i>	
	<i>Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Motions</i>	
	Presentation Jane Morton – Certificate of Appreciation	Mrs Kate Thompson

3:30pm *Afternoon tea*

Session 4

4:00pm	Northern Territory ICPA President’s Report	Mrs Sarah Cook
	Introduction of candidates for Federal Council	
	Presentation “A Special Presentation to celebrate 50 years of ICPA”	Mr Rupert McCall OAM
	Presentation “Alumni of ICPA Q&A”	Mrs Jayne Cuddihy Mrs Judy Terry Mrs Jane Gloster Mr Jack Beach Mrs Sue Shotton

5:00pm **Close of Business Day 1**

Conference dinner – “Fifty & Fabulous” - On the banks of the Thomson River

50th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Conference Program Day 2 - Thursday 4 November 2021

Session 1

9:00am **Conference Resumes**

“Talking Communications” Introduction

Telstra Update

Mr Michael Ackland
Group Executive,
Consumer & Small Business
Mr Gavin Williams
Chief Development Officer,
Regional & Remote

nbn Update

10:00am ***Morning tea***

Session 2

10:30am **Annual General Meeting**

11:30am **Conference resumes**

Communications Portfolio Motions

1:00pm ***Lunch***

Session 3

1:30pm **New South Wales ICPA President’s Report
Training Portfolio Presentation**

Training Portfolio Motions

Specific Education Needs Portfolio Motions

South Australia ICPA President’s Report

Miscellaneous Motions

Conference Motions cont.

Floor motions

Mrs Kate Warby
Mrs Kim Hughes

Mrs Jill Greenfield

3:30pm ***Afternoon tea***

Session 4

4:00pm **Presentations**

Farewell to retiring Councillors

Votes of Thanks and Acknowledgements

5:00pm **Close of Conference**

Post-Conference Dinner – “The Branch”

The 2021 Conference was a hybrid Conference. Delegates that attended virtually are indicated by (V).

DAY ONE Wednesday 3 November 2021

9:00am Conference commences

Welcome by Federal ICPA President

Mrs Alana Moller

National Anthem

Performed by the Longreach State School Choir

Conference Arrangements

Mrs Wendy Henning

Introduction of Delegates and Guests

Mrs Suzanne Wilson

Official Opening of Conference

Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM and Mr Wally Mitchell AM

Presentation

Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie

Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education

Federal ICPA President's Report

Mrs Alana Moller

Join Federal Council Video

Presentation

His Excellency, General the Hon David Hurley AC SC (Retd) and Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley

Confirmation of the 2020 Minutes, Web Conference

"That the 2020 Federal Conference Minutes be accepted."

Moved: Sally Sullivan Federal Council

Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

Business arising from the 2020 minutes: NIL

Queensland ICPA President's Report

Mrs Louise Martin

Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Report

Mrs Nikki Macqueen

Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Motions

M1 (A1) Western Australia State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Education, Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education and the Minister for Families and Social Services for an increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance, to help alleviate financial pressures incurred as a result of increased fees by boarding schools and hostels."

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA) (V)

Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

WA members have had a severe reduction in the State allowance Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) and any increases to the AIC in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) is being eroded by the continued increase to boarding fees.

An increase in the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance would relieve some of the financial burden placed on families to pay for their children's education.

WA State Council would like to thank Federal Council for their continued work lobbying the Federal Government for an increase to the Basic Boarding Allowance.

M2 (A2) Western Australia State Council (WA)

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

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA) (V)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

There are examples where rural and remote students need to board away from home to access gifted and talented programs or a language other than English (LOTE). These students do not qualify for AIC due to the proximity of a government high school even though it does not offer these specialised programs.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance and advantage of face-to-face teaching across all educational programs.

M3 (A3) Wentworth Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government and relevant Departments to separate Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) into two categories – Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) and Assistance for Geographically Isolated Children (AGIC)."

Moved: Nerida Healy Wentworth (NSW) (V)
Seconded: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

For many years ICPA have been campaigning for an increase to the AIC in line with the astronomical increases associated with the need to send students to boarding school. Unfortunately, a sympathetic ear is offered but not much else.

Part of the uphill battle we face is that whilst we are all acutely aware that rural student numbers continue to fall the number of students accessing AIC continues to increase. So, when we ask for an increase to AIC to match boarding fees it actually means a significantly larger increase in the budget than we would perceive.

We need AGIC to become a completely separate payment so that an increase to this allowance does not represent such a large increase. Those isolated due to medical reason would still be able to access AIC at the standard rate. A separation of these categories would make it easier for government to justify an increase to AGIC at a lower cost.

M4 (A4) North West Branch (SA)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies relevant Ministers to support the removal of the Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) for businesses who assist their employees residing in geographically isolated areas, by providing financial assistance to enable their children to attend boarding school.”

Moved: Joanna Gibson North West (SA) (V)

Seconded: Lynly Kerin North West (SA) (V)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently many businesses across remote Australia are faced with the financial challenge of helping to fund the education of employee’s children. Financial assistance is essential to support families employed in remote areas of Australia as they are unable to afford the exorbitant expenses of sending their children to board for secondary schooling. Families who have no choice but to leave their homes and place of employment to continue their child’s education, simply because they cannot afford the costs of boarding, leaves employers with a hard to fill gap in the remote workplace. These remote and rural workplaces struggle to fill vacancies.

Businesses able to provide financial assistance for boarding and secondary school retain their valuable employees. However, it is these businesses able to offer financial aid that are struck with the added costs of paying Fringe Benefits Tax on the assistance provided. For example, a business who offers to cover 50% of a boarding school fee that totals \$50 000, will pay \$22 170 in tax on top of the \$25 000 of assistance. A total cost of \$47 170 to that employer, almost doubling the costs of their financial support. A significant deterrent for any business thinking of offering assistance.

It is most likely that more employers would be able to offer financial assistance to their employees if the FBT was removed. This would help stabilise a rural workforce and keep valuable families in rural and remote Australia.

M5 (A5) Hay Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) continue to lobby the Australian government with its ‘No borders for boarders’ campaign for rural and remote students.”

Moved: Michelle Spence Hay (NSW) (V)

Seconded: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

There needs to be a special exemption for all rural and remote students to cross any state border enabling them to travel to and from their homes to their respective boarding schools via their most direct route. This is to ensure students are returned home and back to school safely should there be another occurrence causing state border closures such as the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.

M6 (A6) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers to grant, due to COVID-19, the same level of travel exemption to geographically isolated children who attend interstate educational boarding facilities as those persons considered essential workers and allow the children permission to quarantine at home.”

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA) (V)

Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Throughout COVID-19 we have witnessed an ad hoc approach to the treatment of children who attend educational boarding facilities interstate. There has been a great deal of anxiety caused to both parents and children with the inconsistent approach as each state has applied its own set of rules.

It is unacceptable that children have been unable to return home for weeks, have had to endure periods of self-isolation away from family and have had their education impacted. By the very nature of their geographical location, many students are already 'self-isolating' when they are at their principal place of residence.

M7 (A7) Western Australia State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) works with the relevant departments to encourage detailed and cohesive understanding and application of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) guidelines to avoid future confusion and misinterpretation which impacts geographically isolated boarding students."

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA) (V)

Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The AHPPC guidelines introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have caused a great deal of confusion and anxiety to both students and parents in their application. The broad nature of the guidelines has been interpreted and applied differently by boarding school facilities. Some are applied differently even within separate boarding houses on the same school grounds.

Parents are also experiencing the AHPPC guidelines being applied differently to their children simply because they attend separate schools where each schools' interpretation of the guidelines differed.

M8 (S1) Western Australia State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) investigates the impact the Federal governments new 'Direct Measure of Income' funding model has on geographically isolated students who attend boarding schools."

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA) (V)

Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

From 2020, the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) of capacity to contribute (CTC) replaced the previous area-based socio-economic status (SES) score measure to determine the capacity to contribute (CTC) for most non-government schools. The new direct measure will apply to all schools by 2022.

A CTC score is a measure of a non-government school community's capacity to contribute to the ongoing costs of running the school. A school's CTC percentage affects the amount of base recurrent funding the school attracts from the Commonwealth Government under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act).

For most non-government schools, their government funding primarily depends on how much their per-student base funding is discounted.

The discount is determined by the school's SES score. Schools with well-off parents have higher SES scores and received lower base funding per student; schools with less-well-off parents have lower

SES scores and receive more. The average SES score is 100, and 97% of scores fall between 85 and 125.

SES scores were calculated every five years using census data about the average income, education and occupation level in the area where each family lives.

The DMI is based on the median income of parents or guardians at the school (that is, the family income that sits in the middle of the range of incomes at a school). The median family income is translated into a DMI score by comparing the median family income of a school against the median family income of other non-government schools. The data are standardised to a mean of 103 and a standard deviation of 13, weighted by enrolments.

The DMI uses parent and guardian names and addresses linked to data within the [Multi Agency Data Integration Project \(MADIP\)](#). There is an 18-month delay in the availability of income data through MADIP. Parent and guardian names and addresses provided in 2018 were linked to 2015-16 MADIP data. Parent and guardian names and addresses provided in 2019 were linked to 2016-17 MADIP data.

Adjusted taxable income (ATI) is used to calculate the median income of the parents and guardians of a school community. The use of ATI is supported by stakeholders and is consistent with other government policy for payments such as Family Tax Benefits and the Child Care Subsidy.

Additional data (such as concessional Australian Government financial benefits, Pay As You Go (PAYG) and spouse reported income data) are used to improve the accuracy of the measure by improving the coverage of data and capturing low income earners and others not included in taxation records.

As a result of using the Direct Measure of Income parameters many schools throughout the whole of Australia will receive a cut to their funding, this is a major concern for boarding families. Many schools will see their funding reduced anywhere from \$1,000,000 to \$4,000,000 per annum, equating to \$3,000 plus per student. Members are concerned that a greater increase to school fees will be levied upon families to bridge the gap as a result of the reduction in funding from the Government. The cost of boarding is already increasing at an alarming rate and certainly in advance of CPI, without further additional charges being incurred.

Unlike our city counterparts geographically isolated students who need to board away from home have fewer choices with regards to the school they attend; they are limited to those schools that have boarding facilities. Some States have Government Residential Colleges however, due to the tyranny of distance and logistics it is often impractical to attend these facilities.

For example: Families in the WA Pilbara region, the closest Residential College is in Geraldton some 1254km away. To fly there requires a flight south to Perth and then another back north to Geraldton. There is no Residential College in Perth, so the only option is private boarding.

The proportion of boarding families in schools is often such a minority so will have little impact on the DMI, but families could be forced to pay more in order to access an equitable education.

M9 (S2) Southern Downs Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) sincerely thanks the former Federal Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education the Honourable Andrew Gee, for his help in advocating on behalf of all geographically

isolated students during the COVID-19 lockdowns and his engagement during the “no borders for boarders” campaign.”

Conference permission for a word change requested

Add - ‘the current Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communication and Regional Education the Hon Bridget McKenzie’

Change - ‘his’ to ‘their’

Conference permission granted

“That ICPA (Aust) sincerely thanks the former Federal Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education the Honourable Andrew Gee, and the current Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communication and Regional Education the Hon Bridget McKenzie for their help in advocating on behalf of all geographically isolated students during the COVID-19 lockdowns and their engagement during the “no borders for boarders” campaign.”

Moved: Belinda Markey Southern Downs (QLD)

Seconded: Wendy Hick Federal Council

CARRIED

Explanation:

Our branch is located on the QLD/NSW border, and we saw first-hand the enormous impact that many of the decisions regarding border closures and travel restrictions were having on our boarding and University students. It was an incredibly stressful time for many students and families. We understand Minister Gee worked hard in seeking exemptions for these students and would like to extend a vote of thanks to him.

Distance Education Portfolio Presentation

Mrs Alana Moller

Distance Education Portfolio Motions

M10 (A25) Conjoined Motion presented by: Western Australia State Council (WA), Alice Springs Branch (NT), Katherine Branch (NT), Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA), North East Branch (SA)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Families and Social Services, the Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education, and the Federal Government, to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role home tutors play in educating geographically isolated students via distance education.”

Moved: Roslyn Breeding North East (SA) (V)

Seconded: Moira Lanzarin Katherine (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation Western Australia State Council (WA):

For several years members across Australia have asked ICPA to lobby the Federal Government for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA). WA State Council consider Federal Council is best placed to continue the lobby and would like to thank Council for its continued efforts in this area and for highlighting the hard work that home tutors throughout Australia undertake daily to provide an education for their students.

Due to their age, many children are reliant on home tutors to assist with their education. Home tutors are not considered teachers or education assistants. They are, however, accountable for the delivery of face-to-face educational support and supervision of students undertaking a compulsory government education program.

Children who access distance education rely on home tutors who are a necessity for equitable access to appropriate education. The DETA would assist in financially recognising the work of home tutors.

Explanation Alice Springs Branch (NT):

An introduction of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA), as financial recognition of the essential work a supervisor/tutor who is often the mother, performs in Distance Education classrooms would help alleviate the pressure placed on remote families whose only option is to home-school their children via Distance Education. In many cases the mother is unable to be a member of the workforce on the property, community or out station where they live due to the need for them to stay at home and teach their children. This in turns strips the family of a second income and places further financial pressure on those families who educate their children via distance education. If in the event the family employs a Home Tutor to deliver the distance education lessons to the children, they are effectively paying award wages for a child to receive a public education. This can amount a family paying a Home Tutor between \$25,000 to \$45,000 depending on salary / wage agreements. On top of the wage a Home Tutor is paid, they in many cases, home tutors are living with the family and have all food, board and other sundry expenses such as internet provided by the family.

Explanation Katherine Branch (NT):

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

Explanation Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA):

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

Explanation North East Branch (SA):

Case Study:

I lived and worked alongside my husband on our sheep station until my daughter began School of the Air lessons. When my daughter started school, we realised we had to employ someone else to either supervise in the school room or help on the station. As I am a qualified teacher - I took on the role of supervisor, and we employed a station hand. We were in the middle of a drought, paying an extra wage and additional expenses. Everything became more difficult with extra money going out - and not enough flowing back in. We made the difficult decision to split our family so our children could attend face-to-face school and I could earn a wage teaching again. A Distance Education Teaching Allowance would have made a significant difference to our family - and we would have been able to stay together.

M11 (A26) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that the Federal Minister for Education tables, at a forthcoming Education Ministers Meeting, a national approach to financially assisting distance education tutors in their delivery of public education in geographically isolated home schoolrooms; and to provide outcomes of this meeting back to ICPA Australia.”

Moved: Juliane Vlach NT State Council (NT)

Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Australian, State and Territory government ministers responsible for education attend the Education Ministers Meeting (previously COAG/Education Council). In addition to early childhood education and care, international and higher education, the Education Ministers Meeting is a forum for collaboration and decision-making on school education.

In previous years, our motions have asked ICPA (Aust) to advocate for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA), and we appreciate ICPA (Aust) continue to do this.

We also understand that in early 2020, the Federal Education Minister advised that lobby for a DETA should be directed to State Education Ministers.

NT State Council have gained the support of Northern Territory members to advocate to our State Education Minister for a DETA, however we believe that until there is willingness from all levels of government to recognise the value and necessity of distance education tutors in geographically isolated schoolrooms, our chances of individual success, state by state, are diminished.

In this motion we call for Australian, State and Territory government ministers to have a collaborative discussion, in a forum that has the collective power to bilaterally appreciate and agree that distance education tutors in geographically isolated schoolrooms are critical to the delivery of public education in rural & remote Australia, and indeed the cost of delivering this public service should be carried, or at least shared with government, not carried by the family alone.

M12 (A27) Broken Hill Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Ministers and Departments to increase the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) for geographically isolated students undertaking secondary education via Distance Education.”

Moved: Ali Allison Broken Hill (NSW) (V)

Seconded: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

As students reach secondary level of their schooling through distance education, their needs become greater from the primary years. Currently the AIC allowance is the same for secondary students studying via distance education as primary students. Once a student reaches year 7, more than likely they will be changing schools. This means extra cost of setting their student up for the school year. Changing schools encompasses new costs such as uniforms, appropriate furniture, educational resources, technology devices and access to satellite internet.

With students moving into secondary schooling through distance education will quite often mean that the school is a much further distance from their home. This makes travel and accommodation expenses higher for students to be able to attend residential events.

For example, many ex Broken Hill School of The Air students are continuing their education into secondary through Dubbo School of Distance Education or ECalrossy. As students move on from BH SOTA, they need to return all furniture, resources, and access to satellite internet to the school. Another example are White Cliffs and other students who live in a town which has access to primary school but not secondary schooling. These students will be studying via distance education for the first time which means students need to be set up for their secondary schooling including new appropriate furniture, learning resources and new uniforms. With more demand on technology for student learning the families need to set up access to satellite internet and have the appropriate devices to carry out their schoolwork. Dubbo and Tamworth are a much greater distance from students in far west New South Wales which adds to travel and accommodation costs for students to have equal access to educational experiences at the student's school.

All of these expenses are the responsibility of the student's family.

M13 (A28) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Australian Government to reassess entry requirements and conditions for rural families claiming assistance for isolated children through Centrelink."

Conference permission to withdraw motion requested by Lisa Kimlin, Alice Springs (NT) (V)
Conference permission granted

WITHDRAWN

Explanation:

Currently a lot of families trying to claim the assistance for isolated children are having to jump through hoops. Their applications are being denied because their cattle station/home is too close to town schools but in fact the property they live and work on can be over one million acres wide spread and could take the family hours to get to a town school when out mustering/fencing etc. Each case should be assessed individually, and decisions made based on each family's life and working conditions. At present it seems there is just generic criteria and it's either a yes or no answer. Once families have been accepted and are enrolled into a school of the air, they should automatically be accepted for isolated children assistance payments.

M14 (A29) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the Minister of Social Services and relevant bodies the need to include in the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance an eligibility criteria for students who travel with their families for the purpose of rural work to areas without access to schooling and live away from their listed permanent place of residence for the majority of the school year."

Moved: Susan Bellingham Richmond (QLD) on behalf of Mt Isa BOTA
Seconded: Gillian Semple Richmond (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Families who work as contractors and other roles in rural and remote areas often have their children with them in stock camps, fencing camps, yard building, etc.... where there is no school available to attend. As these families only work temporarily at each place of contract, and sometimes change locations frequently while they fulfil their work commitments, they do not have an address other than their permanent home address to list where they live and can be contacted. This permanent or home address is sometimes in a town/area far from where they are working and may actually have a school available, however, these children are not living there during the school year to access that school. As these families are contractors and move about, they cannot list the address of the properties where they are living and working as their address/place of residence for the purpose of applying for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance even though their children don't

have access to a school while they are in the camps and are studying at times in some of the most remote places possible. These families do not live permanently at the properties where they are working and still need an address listed where they can receive their mail, application forms etc...and their 'home' address may not qualify for AIC even though the actual living situation of their students does. The AIC application process should take into consideration the situation that children in contracting camps face and offer a means for these families to show eligibility for the AIC when their students are in an area without access to a school for the majority of the school year.

Presentation

Federal Life Membership presented to Sue Shotton Mrs Nikki Macqueen

Western Australia ICPA President's Report

Mrs Sally Brindal

Tertiary Portfolio Presentation

Mrs Kate Thompson

Tertiary Portfolio Motions

M15 (A45) Katherine Branch (NT)

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

Moved: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT) on behalf of the Katherine Branch
Seconded: Moira Lanzarin Katherine (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

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

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

M16 (A46) Walgett Branch (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) request the Federal Government to change the criteria for the Relocation Scholarship to include all students from remote or rural areas relocating who do not qualify for Dependent Youth Allowance."

Moved: Liz Powell Walgett (NSW) (V)
Seconded: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED**Explanation:**

Relocating is a costly exercise when moving long distances. Students who do not qualify for Dependent Youth Allowance who have worked since leaving school for the year but have to start university in the February are missing out.

We have found due to COVID that online learning is isolating and lonely and campuses need to be filled. Towns have suffered greatly, and the influx of rural and remote students is important to our universities. These young adults need financial help as their savings they have collected through the year dwindle rapidly with the cost of moving away. It gives them the opportunity to move and settle and commence studies before looking for employment.

M17 (\$10) Tasmania Branch (TAS)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government review the criteria of the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) to ensure all rural and remote tertiary students are able to fulfil the course of their choice”

Moved: Judy Terry Tasmania (TAS)
Seconded: Cynthia Walker Clermont (QLD)

CARRIED**Explanation:**

The Tertiary Access Payment commenced 1 January 2021 and is available to eligible students:

- who have to move away from home to study at a tertiary education provider providing it is more than 90 mins away from your home by public transport
- who start their study straight after year 12 or equivalent
- who are studying at least 75% full time study load of a higher education course or Vocational Education and Training course, certificate IV or above
- who are from an outer regional, remote or very remote area, and
- whose parents or guardian’s income is under the current combined parental income limit of \$250,000.

Our branch is extremely appreciative and thank the Federal Government for the commencement of the TAP. We believe there is a need for some additions to the existing criteria which are consistent with ICPA (Aust)’s longstanding lobby for a Tertiary Access Allowance. This includes the need for the TAP to be equivalent to the Relocation Scholarship in order to truly reflect the costs of living away from home to access a tertiary education. There needs to be assurance that the Tertiary Access Payment becomes a permanent payment available to all rural and remote students who fulfil the criteria, and the numbers are not capped. This will ensure students whose course commences in the second or later semester, do not miss out.

M18 (\$11) Tasmania Branch (TAS)

“That ICPA (Aust) request the Federal Government permanently implement the measure that was put in place during the COVID-19 lockdown for rural and remote tertiary students and Australian apprentices applying for Youth Allowance: initial confirmation of identity can be attended through a student’s myGov account.”

Moved: Judy Terry Tasmania (TAS)
Seconded: Cynthia Walker Clermont (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Many rural and remote students have difficulty in proving their identity because of the requirement that they must present their identity documents at a service centre and that is problematic for many due the vast distance many of them live from a service centre and attending during opening hours. These students cannot start or proceed with their application for Youth Allowance until these documents have been sighted.

During COVID -19 Youth Allowance applicants were able to confirm their identity online through their myGov account allowing them to start their claim online and avoid delays in their application process. For rural and remote students this provision should continue and could have the requirement that original documents be presented at service centre for confirmation, or the uploaded documents be certified before their payments commence. For many rural and remote students their identity has already been proven through previous Centrelink payments such as AIC and this should be able to be recognised when applying for Youth Allowance.

M19 (S12) Tasmania Branch (TAS)

“That ICPA (Aust) implores the Federal Government to implement the recommendations from the *Education in remote and complex environments Report* relating to tertiary students.”

Moved: Judy Terry Tasmania (TAS)
Seconded: Cynthia Walker Clermont (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The Federal Government commissions reviews in response to issues and inequities and must be held accountable to respond to the recommendations. The *Education in remote and complex environments Report* recommended that the Government announce an implementation plan for the recommendations and actions from the *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education* (Halsey Review) and *National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy* (Naphthine Review).

The implementation of all the recommendations would see measures introduced and being available for rural and remote students including:

- improved availability of accommodation
- improved information on accommodation and income support
- improved access to affordable, reliable, high speed internet services
- improved VET programs in rural and remote areas and
- greater flexibility in qualifying pathways for Youth Allowance

To achieve equity for rural and remote tertiary students, these above measures, in addition to the measures that have already been implemented previously must be implemented. The previous measures have benefited members to date and have been greatly appreciated by rural and remote tertiary students. Possibly the most significant is the introduction of the Tertiary Access Payment. Others have included the expansion of the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships and the Regional Study Hubs, and improvements to the Fares Allowance.

M20 (S13) Tasmania Branch (TAS)

“That ICPA (Aust) thanks the Federal Government for the measures put in place for rural and remote gap year students impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown.”

Moved: Judy Terry Tasmania (TAS)
Seconded: Cynthia Walker Clermont (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The measures that supported working gap year student affected by the impacts of the COVID-19 lockdown on their ability to fulfil their working criteria when trying to prove their independence for Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY have been greatly appreciated and continue to be throughout 2021 with the measure which allows a working gap year student to earn \$15000 through agricultural work between 30 November 2020 and 31 December 2021 to fulfil their working criteria.

Rural Schools/School Travel Portfolio Presentation

Mrs Nikki Mahony

Rural Schools/School Travel Portfolio Motions

M21 (A37) Richmond Branch (QLD)

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

Moved: Gillian Semple Richmond (QLD)
Seconded: Susan Bellingham Richmond (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We thank Federal Council for the work done so far forwarding this issue. Both Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY programs offer eligible students a Fares Allowance for travelling between home and their place of study if they need to live away from home in order to access this study. Likewise, geographically isolated students who receive the Assistance for Isolated Students Boarding Allowance and Second Home Allowance to access *compulsory schooling* also must live away from home. These students should have a Fares Allowance comparable to the other Commonwealth Programs available to them. While some states do offer travel assistance to students from rural and remote areas, others offer no assistance at all and there is great variance between states. Having a Fares Allowance available under the AIC Scheme would ensure that all eligible geographically isolated students would have assistance available to them to help offset the cost of travelling to *compulsory schooling*.

M22 (A38) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers for a national initiative and introduction of a ‘Student Concessional Fare’ that is protected from peak or inflated ticket costs, for students attending educational institutions within Australia who need to travel between their home residence and the educational establishment they attend.”

Moved: Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs (NT) (V)
Seconded: Mary Bayly Alice Springs (NT) (V)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Geographically Isolated students who use public transport (bus, train or plane) to travel to their educational facility, would like to access a set ticket price that remains the same, even if the child needs to change their travel arrangements at the last minute. ‘Student Concession Fare’ For example: If a standard airfare can be purchased for \$365 between Alice Springs and Sydney, then we would like to see that this standard fare be offered to students who travel on public transport to access their school all year round, even if booking at the last minute.

There are many instances that families have had to change travel arrangements for their children and some families are not in the position to afford booking all fares for their children a term / year in advance.

Families whose Children rely on air travel to access schooling are worried about the recent announcement of the closure of Virgin Airlines and what impact that will have on domestic travel in and out of regional centres and Alice Springs is a great example. Many of these families rely on domestic air travel to take their children to school.

When multiple factors, out of families direct control, are impacting fare prices, rural and remote families feel the full force. We don't have the luxury of comparing airfares as there may only be one airline providing a service between regional hubs and major centres such as Brisbane.

While our urban cousins are able to catch the school bus to the local high school at no charge, students in rural and remote Australia have a huge out of pocket expense to access their school, often paying for Bus, Train and Air travel and for many GI students this is not subsidised.

There are actually examples of how such a policy mechanism can work through allowances such as ABSTUDY and it is really important for ICPA to work with our relevant ministers at a state and federal level to talk about how a 'Student Concession Fare' rate could be rolled out for all GI students in rural and remote Australia.

It is critical that there is a national approach in regard to fair student travel costs and we should be setting some guidelines and putting policy in place to ensure students accessing public transport to and from their educational institution, are able to secure a student rate that has not been increased due to:

- a monopoly on available carriers
- increase in fares due to peak holiday times
- increase in fares due to seasonal or tourism events.

Essentially this would ensure students are not subject to airfare price hikes at peak travel times, they would be able to access the standard economy rate at any time during the year when travelling to and from their school.

The real impact of ticket price hikes at peak travel times and the problems with increase in airfares will only worsen if the residents of Alice Springs are left with one operational domestic carrier. Members whose children board away from home are often in the predicament of paying well above the standard ticket price when selecting airfares. While it is easy for airfare providers to tell families to book children's flights twelve months ahead because they know the school term dates, this is often not a reality and can end up costing families more in the long run when they need to change flight details / dates.

Airfares to and from Northern Territory airports are typically expensive, more so because students travel during school holiday fare periods, when the fares are almost always more expensive again. Student Travel Concessions are a State Government responsibility, but in the case of airfares, travel is across jurisdictions, meaning State Government concessions don't apply. The Northern Territory is not unique in this respect. A National Student Concessional Fare would help all geographically isolated students who travel across jurisdictions for education purposes.

So, we are asking that when booking tickets for students travelling to and from school, they are exempt from the huge increases to tickets when purchased close to the time of travel. Having access

to the standard ticket prices if you booked in advance for the 12-month calendar, would be a huge financial relief for many rural and remote families who rely on these services each year.

M23 (S9) Bollon Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) work with regional air service providers like Qantas to provide affordable airfares to students who need to travel from their home to attend to their education.”

Moved: Kerrie Cribb Bollon (QLD)
Seconded: Rod Cribb Bollon (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Geographically isolated students often need to travel to fulfil their educational requirements. For example, many students based in rural Australia attend boarding school and University many kilometres away from their home. Whilst there have been and still are some very generous programs offered to support our students there are some areas that still face cost challenges. The Maranoa region is one area where a once affordable scheme was in place but was recently replaced by a less supportive one. Good communication between ICPA (Aust) and Regional Air Service providers can highlight the unique challenges faced by our rural and remote students and help bring about support.

M24 (A39) Lightning Ridge/Goodooga Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Transport and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, to supply adequate funding for local councils in rural and remote areas, to prioritise and maintain unsealed roads that are travelled on by families accessing schools and school bus routes.”

Moved: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW) on behalf of LR/G Branch
Seconded: Bree Wakefield NSW State Council (NSW) (V)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Children in the Lightning Ridge and Goodooga region are often required to travel long distances along unsealed roads to access schools and school bus routes. It is recognised by local families that there are risks associated with these trips and it is important that these trips are as safe as possible. While members are aware of the importance of driving to the conditions, they believe improving the maintenance programs conducted on these access roads will greatly decrease the risks associated with the frequent trips. Without giving priority to roads that families travel on to access schools and school buses, accessing face to face education becomes difficult and dangerous. While distance education is a valuable alternative, many families do not have the time to commit to providing the necessary school room supervision or be in a financial situation to employ a suitable supervisor. For these families, travelling on poorly maintained unsealed roads becomes an exhausting daily task for students and parents, impacting on school attendance and classroom performance.

Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Summary

Mrs Alana Moller

Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Motions - Early Learning

M25 (A30) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobby the relevant ministers for funding to start a new early childhood service in central Australia as there is currently none available for pre-school aged children.”

Word change requested

Replace – ‘central’ with ‘remote and rural’; ‘as’ and ‘is’ with ‘where’ and ‘are’

Conference permission granted

“That ICPA (Aust) lobby the relevant ministers for funding to start a new early childhood service in rural and remote Australia where there are currently none available for pre-school aged children.”

Moved: Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs (NT) (V)
Seconded: Mary Bayly Alice Springs (NT) (V)

CARRIED

Explanation:

For over 15 years Central Australia has been without a mobile playgroup that services all members of the community in geographically isolated areas. Alice Springs have been advocating now for several years for the expansion of KICKS that the Katherine region has access to or having the opportunity to start up a similar programme.

M26 (A31) Conjoined Motion presented by: Katherine Branch (NT), Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA), North East Branch (SA), WA State Council (WA), QLD State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government for geographically isolated pre-compulsory school students enrolled in a registered distance education program to receive the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education Allowance where they meet other eligibility criteria.”

Moved: Moira Lanzarin Katherine (NT)
Seconded: Roslyn Breeding North East (SA) (V)

CARRIED

Explanation Katherine Branch (NT):

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

If that was actually what was happening in rural and remote areas, this motion would be unnecessary!

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

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

Explanation Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA):

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

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

Explanation Western Australia State Council (WA):

The AIC Distance Education (DE) Allowance is designed to assist families to set up and maintain the school room. Currently, pre-compulsory distance education students are ineligible, therefore families enrolled in these programs must bear the costs.

Most early learning programs require significantly more learning materials than that of older students studying at primary levels, with families having to provide these learning resources for students. If families received this allowance, it would help alleviate the cost of the provision of the resources.

The majority of children who are enrolled in a pre-compulsory program are found to have better educational outcomes in later years by forming these important foundations early on. Every child needs and deserves a school room.

Explanation Queensland State Council (QLD):

Most 3-4-year-old children across the country are enrolled in some form of pre-school education, be it Kindergarten, Reception or Prep. For those families who are geographically isolated the costs associated with Distance Education begin in this year of pre-formal education, including resourcing and internet connectivity. Access to the AIC Distance Education allowance should be available to these families from the outset.

Explanation North East Branch (SA):

Currently, 3 and 4-year-old students studying Kindergarten via distance education are ineligible to receive the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education Allowance. If families received this allowance, it would alleviate some of the costs of providing an educational experience for their children. The majority of children who are enrolled in a distance education Kindergarten/pre-school program are found to have better educational outcomes in later years, by forming these important foundations early in their educational journey.

M27 (S6) Hay Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers for funding amounts for Mobile Preschools to be reflective of individual service delivery models in rural and remote areas.”

Moved: Michelle Spence Hay (NSW) (V)
Seconded: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Current funding for Mobile Preschools is grossly inadequate. There are no reviews within the 3-year funding period so when a service increases delivery (extra days at existing venues or extra venues) within that funding period, the Approved Provider must fund the additional services with existing funding or cash reserves. This affects the long-term sustainability of services. For example: At the

start of 2021 HCS increased 3 of their venues from fortnightly to weekly. HCS is also soon to add Ivanhoe (which is located 210km North of Hay) as a venue. HCS receives no extra funding to deliver these additional services and must find ways to fund them with existing funds.

New Mobile funding model is expected to roll out in July 2021 and although there has been sector consultation, there has been no confirmation of funding models. This leaves services in doubt about service delivery capacity and unable to plan for delivery of services.

DET is pushing for 15hrs of preschool per week per child. For many Mobile Preschools this is not possible. For example: Currently children who attend HCS Mobile can access 6 hrs per week. HCS currently service 6 (soon to be 7) different communities per week and without additional secure funding, don't have the resources to increase those venues to a second day per week.

M28 (S7) Cunnamulla Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobby the relevant Federal Ministers and departments to continue to prioritise re-establishing early childhood educational programs in recognised highly vulnerable rural and remote locations."

Moved: Trish McKenzie Cunnamulla (QLD)

Seconded: Jane Morton Bouliia-Bedourie-Birdsville (QLD)

Amendment to the Motion proposed by Sarah Bridgeman, Alpha Branch (QLD)

Change 'continue to' to 'immediately'

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

Alpha Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) lobby the relevant Federal Ministers and departments to continue to immediately prioritise re-establishing early childhood educational programs in recognised highly vulnerable rural and remote locations."

Moved: Sarah Bridgeman Alpha (QLD)

Seconded: Anita Dennis Blackall (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

There are 14 families including 22 children wanting to attend educational services – 1 day-care centre and playgroup 1 day per week that started in May

- 57% of children start school in the Cunnamulla district developmentally vulnerable
- The Early childhood education and Care department have been active in Cunnamulla since July last year and no significant action or change has occurred
- Results from the Australian Early Developmental Census have deteriorated since 2009 and Cunnamulla is one of 5 locations which are going backwards
- Paroo shire has been nominated as a QLD state early childhood priority
- The Paroo Contact Children's Mobile is currently unfunded, Contact Inc (who own the equipment & did operate the service) have made no contact with Cunnamulla, the equipment including fully equipped Toyota Landcruiser 4WD with canopy all sit in Cunnamulla unused as there is no funding for the coordinator/teacher.
- The Paroo Contact Children's Mobile needs to get funding to immediately recruit staff to utilise the vehicle and trailer currently based in Cunnamulla, and extensive early childhood resources/equipment to offer regular scheduled supported playgroups to Eulo, Cunnamulla, Noorama, Quilpie and Thargomindah.

Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Motions - Childcare

M29 (A32) Kimberley Air Branch (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to review the In Home Care (IHC) Scheme to make better provision for geographically isolated families to access affordable childcare.”

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)(V) for Kimberley Air
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The current In Home Care Scheme does not adequately meet the unique circumstances of geographically isolated families. The criteria in the guidelines for accessing the scheme need to include the specific circumstances that come with accessing childcare in remote locations.

The current membership fees of belonging to an IHC service are prohibitive and do not take into account that families also need to provide board and lodging for the educator who because of the remoteness of the family need to live on location.

M30 (A33) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to impress upon the Ministers for the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, the need to prioritise a review of the In Home Care program, to improve its ability to suitably deliver a child care program for rural and remote families.”

Request – Sarah Cook, NT State Council (NT), that M30 (A33) be deemed covered by M29 (A32)

Conference permission granted

DEEMED COVERED BY M29 (A32)

Explanation:

In Home Care is the only subsidised government child care program available to geographically isolated families who cannot access mainstream child care. As it stands, the design of the program is not a ‘good fit’ for families living and working in remote areas.

We believe a review, with input from key stakeholders including ICPA federal and states, will highlight the improvements necessary to ensure this vital program continues to support rural and remote families in their workforce participation and child care requirements.

Importantly, we are not asking for an increase in funding, rather a review of policies which currently restrict families’ ability to recruit and retain skilled educators in remote areas.

M31 (A34) Katherine Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) request the Minister for Education to 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: Moira Lanzarin Katherine (NT)
Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (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 is 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 childcare. 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 childcare 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 childcare 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 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.

Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Motions - Other

M32 (A35) Western Australian State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Federal Government to implement a nationally recognised and administered Working with Children Card (WWCC)."

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)(V)

Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

WA State Council fully support the implementation of a nationally administered police clearance, specifically for children and thank Federal Council for their continued lobbying on this issue.

Currently a person who wishes to obtain a WWCC for work purposes, has their application checked nationally, then the process is administered at a state level. When employees who already hold a WWCC in one state move interstate, they are expected to reapply for a WWCC in the new state they

are applying for employment in. This process causes lengthy delays of up to eight weeks in employing staff, causing disruptions to families and students' education.

ICPA 50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CAKE – cut by newest Federal Life Member Sue Shotton

M33 (A36) Blackall Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the relevant departments within the Federal Government and supports each State ICPA organisation with their lobbying, to implement a nationally recognised and administered Working with Children Check (WWCC), to enhance the safety for students and accessibility to interstate employees, for rural and remote families.”

Request – Marcelle Chandler, Blackall Branch (QLD), that M33 (A36) be deemed covered by M32 (A35)

Conference permission granted

DEEMED COVERED BY M32 (A35)

Explanation:

The Working with Children Check or WWCC was proposed in 2000, with each state and territory's scheme operating independently of each other. Its purpose is conducting background checks for people seeking to engage in child-related work. These checks aim to prevent people from working or volunteering with children if records indicate that they may pose an unacceptable level of risk to children. While the check is currently conducted on a state level, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2015 has called for the transition to a nationwide check.

There is a real impediment to rural and remote families endeavouring to engage employees, working with their children from interstate, as the checks do not always pick up crimes committed in other states. In addition, the hold up when a prospective employee, from interstate, does not have that relative WWCC and the new ruling that no one may commence work until their state relative paperwork is sighted, can mean a lengthy delay to the commencement of employment.

Some criticism of the WWCC system followed a report that a man being investigated by counter-terrorism authorities, who had previously been involved in a standoff with police at gunpoint in which he threatened them with a sword, continued to be authorised to work with children. Nesha Oneil Hutchinson, President of Australian Childcare Alliance NSW stated that the Working With Children Check system contained serious flaws where unless an individual was convicted of a crime against a child, they may still pass the check. This would allow individuals convicted of crimes against adults to be allowed to work with children. Furthermore, the state-based system would possibly allow someone committed of a crime against a child in another state to receive the check as well.

Given this and the recommendations by the Royal Commission we feel that the nationwide system should be expedited.

M34 (S5) Hay Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant ministers for assistance for Approved Providers to offer incentives to recruit and retain qualified Early Childhood Educators and Early Childhood Teachers in rural and remote areas.”

Moved: Kate Warby

NSW State Council (NSW) on behalf of Hay Branch (NSW)

Seconded: Jane Morton

Boulia-Bedourie-Birdsville (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

50% of Educators working at any one time in Early Childhood Education and Care services are required to hold a Diploma qualification (or be actively working towards a Diploma qualification). Services are also required to engage at least one Early Childhood Teacher who holds a tertiary level Early Childhood Teaching bachelor's degree.

The recruitment of qualified staff is a constant barrier in regional and remote areas to the delivery of professional and meaningful Early Childhood Education. The lack of availability of qualified people is a major contributing factor. Incentive programs are becoming not only popular but necessary to engage qualified Educators from larger towns and cities. For many not-for-profit services, resources are extremely limited and the ability to offer competitive incentives is non-existent.

If not meeting the qualified Educator ratio, services are not able to operate. Services are in breach of legislation and the Approved Provider is liable for a \$50000 fine. In which case, service delivery is affected due to service closures. Children are not able to attend, and they miss the opportunity to participate in vital preschool programs.

Increased financial assistance coupled with incentive programs for skilled employees for rural and remote services would allow Approved Providers to attract and retain qualified Early Childhood Educators and Teachers. Services will then have the capacity to support children to meet necessary Early Childhood outcomes. The risk for rural and remote services if this is not achieved is that children will be at a disadvantage to other children through compromised delivery of Early Childhood Education and Care.

M35 (S8) Cunnamulla Branch (QLD)

“That the ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the relevant Federal Ministers and Departments to increase training opportunities and employment incentives in order to enable local childcare providers in rural and remote regions to attract and retain staff members to subsequently increase capacity for children to attend.”

Moved: Trish McKenzie Cunnamulla (QLD)
Seconded: Jane Morton Boulia-Bedourie-Birdsville (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently in the shire there are more than 100 children under the age of 8. The only childcare centre has a new service provider and waiting lists have decreased however they are unable to take more children due to a lack of staff. There is still an issue with recruiting staff and providing housing for them. The State schools are entitled to government housing, the catholic school is now building their own housing complex and also have long-standing leases with rental properties. Childcare services do not have the same access to housing and cannot provide the same support to staff.

Presentation

Certificate of Appreciation 2021 presented to Jane Morton Mrs Kate Thompson

Presentation

“ODE TO ICPA – A Tale Of Years” Poem written by Mr Rupert McCall OAM

Panel Facilitated by Jayne Cuddihy
Jack Beach, Judy Terry, Sue Shotton, Jane Gloster

5:08pm Close of Conference Day One

DAY TWO Thursday 4 November 2021

9:00am Conference Resumes

Welcome by Federal President Mrs Alana Moller

Conference Arrangements Mrs Wendy Henning

Northern Territory ICPA President's Presentation Mrs Sarah Cook

Communications Portfolio Report Mrs Wendy Hick

Communications Presentations

Telstra

nbn

Zarah Moller recording

Q&A with nbn

Mr Gavin Williams (V)

Annual General Meeting

AGM declared open at 10:34am

Introduction of Delegates in attendance

Mrs Suzanne Wilson

Treasurer's Report

Mrs Lisa Slade

AGM Motions

Setting of the 2022 Membership Fees

M36 (A53) ICPA Federal Council

"That the Federal membership fee remains at \$22.00 per member family for the 2022 membership year."

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council

Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

M37 (A54) ICPA Federal Council

"That Corporate Membership be set at \$275.00 per organisation for the 2022 membership year."

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council

Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

M38 (A55) ICPA Federal Council

"That School Corporate Membership be set at \$275.00 per school or educational institution for the 2022 membership year."

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council
Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

Appointment of Auditor

M39 (A56) ICPA Federal Council

“That Queensland Audit Services, be appointed as auditor for the 2021 – 2022 financial year.”

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council
Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

Adoption of Financial Statements

M40 (A57) ICPA Federal Council

“That the 2020-2021 Audited Report be received and accepted.”

Moved: Lisa Slade Federal Council
Seconded: Kate Thompson Federal Council

CARRIED

Constitution, By Laws and Policy

M41 (A58) ICPA Federal Council

“That the amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) By-Laws updated 10 May 2021, as circulated, be ratified.”

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

CARRIED

M42 (A59) ICPA Federal Council

“That the updated Policies of ICPA (Aust), as adopted by Federal Council, April 2021, be ratified.”

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

CARRIED

M43 (A60) ICPA Federal Council

“That the amendments to Section 3.8.2 of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution updated July 2021, as circulated, be adopted.”

Moved: Kate Thompson Federal Council
Seconded: Kim Hughes Federal Council

CARRIED

M44 (A61) ICPA Federal Council

“That the amendments to Section 5.6.4 of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution updated July 2021, as circulated, be adopted.”

Moved: Kate Thompson Federal Council
Seconded: Kim Hughes Federal Council

CARRIED

M45 (A62) ICPA Federal Council

“That the amendments to Section 27.1.1 (ii) of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution updated July 2021, as circulated, be adopted.”

50th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Moved: Kate Thompson Federal Council
Seconded: Kim Hughes Federal Council

CARRIED

M46 (A63) ICPA Federal Council

“That all other amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia (Inc) Constitution updated July 2021, as circulated, be adopted.”

Moved: Kate Thompson Federal Council
Seconded: Kim Hughes Federal Council

CARRIED

Election of Federal Council 2021 - 2022

All positions declared vacant and the Returning Officer Mrs Megan McNicholl OAM took the chair for the election of officers.

President **Alana Moller** **Clermont Branch QLD**
Nominated: Kasie Scott Clermont Branch QLD
Seconded: Cynthia Walker Clermont Branch QLD
DULY ELECTED

Vice President **Lisa Slade** **Flinders Ranges Branch SA**
Nominated: Michelle Hilder Flinders Ranges Branch SA
Seconded: Belinda Hatcher Flinders Ranges Branch SA
DULY ELECTED

Secretary **Kim Hughes** **Richmond Branch QLD**
Nominated: Gillian Semple Richmond Branch QLD
Seconded: Narelle Kelly Richmond Branch QLD
DULY ELECTED

Assistant Secretary **Kate Thompson** **Tasmania Branch TAS**
Nominated: Sue Shotton Territory Wide Branch NT
Seconded: Judy Terry Tasmania Branch TAS
DULY ELECTED

Treasurer **Nikki Mahony** **Dawson Valley Branch QLD**
Nominated: Sarah Cox Dawson Valley Branch QLD
Seconded: Heidi Shoecraft Dawson Valley Branch QLD
DULY ELECTED

Publicity Officer **Suzanne Wilson** **Territory Wide Branch NT**
Nominated: Sarah Cook Alice Springs Branch NT
Seconded: Nikki Macqueen Kinson Branch QLD
DULY ELECTED

Ex-Officio Immediate Past President **Wendy Hick**

50th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

COMMITTEE	Jane O'Brien Nominated: Seconded:	Walgett Branch NSW Alana Moller Wendy Hick	Clermont Branch QLD Mt Isa BOTA QLD DULY ELECTED
	Julia Broad Nominated: Seconded:	Charters Towers Branch QLD Suzanne Wilson Kate Thompson	Territory Wide Branch NT Tasmania Branch TAS DULY ELECTED
	Sally Sullivan Nominated: Seconded:	Katherine Branch NT Katie Payne Helen Harding	Katherine Branch NT Katherine Branch NT DULY ELECTED
	Wendy Henning Nominated: Seconded:	Westmar-Inglestone QLD Tammie Irons Alana Moller	Westmar-Inglestone QLD Clermont Branch QLD DULY ELECTED
	Naomi Obst Nominated: Seconded:	Midwest Branch WA Sally Brindal Kym Ross	Midwest Branch WA Lakes Districts Branch WA DULY ELECTED
	Laura Stalley Nominated: Seconded:	Hillston Branch NSW Kate Warby Jesse Donoghue	Moree Branch NSW NSW/VIC Lone Branch NSW DULY ELECTED
	Ali Allison Nominated: Seconded:	Broken Hill Branch NSW Claire Butler Kate Warby	Balranald Branch NSW Moree Branch NSW DULY ELECTED
	Anna McCorkle Nominated: Seconded:	Bourke Branch NSW Wally Mitchell AM Nikki Macqueen	Bourke Branch NSW Kindon Branch QLD DULY ELECTED

Vote of thanks to Megan McNicholl OAM as Returning Officer

AGM Motions – continued

Conference Venue Motions

M47 (A64) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (WA) host the 2022 Federal Conference in Perth on 3rd and 4th August.”

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)(V)

Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

M48 (A65)

“That ICPA (NT) hosts the 2023 Federal Conference in the Northern Territory.”

Moved: Juliane Vlach NT State Council (NT)

Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Pedals Editor’s Report

Mrs Raelene Hall

Web Manager’s Report

Mrs Sue Shotton

11:48am Close of AGM

Conference Resumes

Communications Portfolio Motions – Internet Access

M49 (A8) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) continue to advocate to government and telecommunications providers to ensure that communications services for the purpose of education in geographically isolated areas are maintained, expanded and do not diminish.”

Moved: Susan Bellingham Richmond (QLD)

Seconded: Gillian Semple Richmond (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We thank the ICPA Federal Council and State Councils for continuously raising concerns regarding communication services in rural and remote areas for the purpose of education and student safety wherever possible as well as participating in numerous stakeholder groups, consultations and placing submissions.

Technology changes at a rapid pace and sometimes new developments in communications have consequences for families needing to educate their children in geographic isolation. Our families risk being “left behind” as the communication gap widens when impacts of communications advances do not consider the effect on regional, rural and remote families and services can be lessened or compromised, sometimes unintentionally.

A few examples which have occurred in recent times-

- Mobile coverage - transitioning from 3G to 4G – 4G coverage appears to have a smaller footprint of coverage than 3G and many customers in rural/remote areas will be required to transition to new equipment and infrastructure at their own cost in order to use the service, communications are also moving towards 5G, will this be even less coverage for these families?

- Alternative Voice Service Trials (AVST) - to hopefully identify new technologies which might effectively replace struggling systems such as High Capacity Radio Concentrator (HCRC) phone services, but unfortunately, the trial has been heavily Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) heavy and at this time doesn't appear to have solutions to offer as a second source of communication for geographically isolated families other than relying on internet service for both data and voice purposes.
- Changes around Band Spectrum regarding Free to Air TV and also 850/900 MHz Auction Allocation Limits which may impact on free to air television channels/content available as well as quality of mobile coverage and expansion of mobile services in rural and remote areas.

We appreciate ICPA (Aust) keeping abreast of these and other developments and ask that they continue their strong advocacy wherever possible to ensure that communication services are not lessened in the bush as a result of new programs/technologies being rolled out.

M50 (A9) Western Downs Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) continue working closely with stakeholders to ensure that Sky Muster Plus continues to cater for and be further enhanced to support all geographically isolated students and their needs.”

Moved: Sharryn Gilmore Western Downs (QLD)
Seconded: Katherine Currin Western Downs (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Western Downs Branch would like to pass on our gratitude and thanks to the Minister for Communications, The Minister for Regional Communications, NBN, BIRRR and ICPA Australia for the implementation of the Sky Muster Plus product. The Sky Muster Plus product is a game changer for geographically isolated students, including but not limited to, Small School, University, TAFE, Early Childhood and Boarding students who previously did not qualify for an Education Port. The unlimited data included in this product means students can study and learn without jeopardising their households' monthly data allowance.

M51 (A10) Katherine Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) continue to request the Minister for Communications ensure all geographically isolated students have adequate internet access with regard to speed, quality, capabilities and cost of the service.”

Moved: Moira Lanzarin Katherine (NT)
Seconded: Juliane Vlach NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

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

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

M52 (A11) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“The ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Ministers and Departments to ensure that internet costs for working, traveling families of geographically isolated children enrolled in distance education have access to free mobile satellite internet and all associated costs involved with purchasing these kits are also covered.”

Word change request by Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs (V)

Change ‘free mobile’ to ‘subsidised transportable’

Change ‘covered’ to ‘subsidised’

Conference permission granted

“The ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Ministers and Departments to ensure that internet costs for working, traveling families of geographically isolated children enrolled in distance education have access to subsidised transportable satellite internet and all associated costs involved with purchasing these kits are also subsidised.”

Moved: Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs (NT) (V)
Seconded: Mary Bayly Alice Springs (NT) (V)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Put simply there is currently minimal kits and internet plans available in Australia for families who frequently travel and move due to work commitments. The kits that are available at present which are only ONE cost in excess of \$18,000 and internet plans start from \$300 per month.

M53 (A12) Alice Springs Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to satellite internet providers to develop an affordable product that traveling families can access for the delivery of education.”

Moved: Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs (NT) (V)
Seconded: Mary Bayly Alice Springs (NT) (V)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently for traveling, working families there is only one satellite internet company that caters for frequently moving teams and as this is the only company, they can and do charge through the roof as there are no other options or competition in Australia at present.

M54 (A13) 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 with companies attempting to bring universal broadband internet to Australia, including satellite-based internet like Starlink.”

Moved: Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs (NT) (V)
Seconded: Mary Bayly Alice Springs (NT) (V)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Education in remote Australia relies more and more on fast, reliable internet connections with large download limits. Internet requirements are only expected to increase. In particular, download requirements are increasing because more and more video content is needed for research and class delivery. Sky Muster has generous exceptions on data usage, but those exceptions don't extend to most video content. Universally accessible fast internet with large download limits could be available in Australia within 2 years. This would be especially welcome to families who move around in remote areas, 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 currently in beta in southern Australia (below 32 degrees latitude). It provides 50-150 Mbit/sec connection with a latency of 20-40 milliseconds for \$139/month. Downloads are currently unlimited. The connection equipment costs \$809 including delivery and, in most cases, can 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.

The Starlink beta is expected to expand to more of Australia by the end of 2021. Speeds are expected to increase (possibly upward of 300Mbit/sec) and latency is expected to decrease. Currently the service is only available at a fixed address, but this restriction is expected to be lifted in 2022.

The ACMA has given approval for SpaceX to operate in low and remote density areas until 2025. However, some sites for earth stations are only licenced until 29 October 2021.

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. <https://www.acma.gov.au/have-your-say> Keeping the perspective of remote families in the ears of politicians and ministers on these matters is also important.

M55 (A14) Western Australia State Council (WA)

"That ICPA (Aust) seek an assurance from nbn that the installation of a Sky Muster service and its hardware will continue at no cost to rural and remote student households, to ensure affordable access to education for rural and remote students."

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)(V)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently all equipment and a standard installation are provided free-of-charge to consumers and is covered by the nbn. Should this situation change in the future there is concern as to what nbn will have in place with regard to geographically isolated distance education students accessing education at an affordable cost to parents.

As a result of COVID-19 and online learning from home, a great number of members have installed a Sky Muster service. There are however members who are yet to change over; for some, it is a lack of knowledge of what Sky Muster services offer, or the cost of breaking existing contracts and for

others it is due to students not yet commencing distance education and therefore parents seeing little need for large data allowances.

We want to ensure that the future uptake of a Sky Muster service is affordable for parents of rural and remote students.

WA State Council would like to thank Federal Council for their continuous effort to bring reliable and affordable internet connectivity to rural, remote and regional families.

M56 (A15) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies nbn for all students enrolled via distance education schools to have access to the Sky Muster education port or alternative service.”

Word change request by Kym Ross (V)

Insert ‘geographically isolated’

Conference permission granted

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies nbn for all geographically isolated students enrolled via distance education schools to have access to the Sky Muster education port or alternative service.”

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)(V)

Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

ICPA (WA) would like to see access to the education port available to all students studying via distance education, with the option for those enrolled in a non-government school program funding their own access.

In WA, only students studying via distance education and enrolled through Schools of the Air (SOTA) or School of Isolated Distance Education (SIDE), qualify for the Sky Muster education port which the WA Education Department funds.

There have been instances where students studying via distance education through private campuses have been told by nbn they do not qualify for the education port and referred onto the state Education Department who have declined access.

M57 (A16) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) continue to lobby nbn, relevant Ministers and Departments to ensure that video streaming for educational use is included in future Sky Muster Plus plans for geographically isolated students studying via distance education.”

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)(V)

Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

ICPA WA thank providers of the Sky Muster Plus products for providing unmetered content. It is imperative that video streaming, including YouTube, that is actively used by educational establishments, be included in the delivery of education programs for geographically isolated students studying via distance education.

Communications Portfolio Motions – Mobile Coverage/Service

M58 (A17) Kindon Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies Minister of Communications, Minister for Regional Communications, Minister for Regional Education and relevant bodies for rural and remote schools to continue to be a priority in future Mobile Black Spot Program rounds and that mobile coverage solutions when implemented extend beyond school grounds.”

Moved: Natalie Slack Westmar-Inglestone (QLD) on behalf of Kindon Branch
Seconded: Marg Hurst Westmar-Ingelstone (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Rural and remote schools right across Australia are the hub for many communities and often the first port of call in many situations. They are the place that people gather to when an emergency happens in a district. Some schools are so isolated that they are the desired place to house defibrillator machines as they are the go-to point during a crisis. While these schools have the task of overseeing such important life saving devices, many do not have the mobile service to ensure adequate medical advice is received in such an emergency.

With minimal or no mobile coverage for areas outside of some schools they find themselves often in situations where motorists come in for help asking to use the school phone which pulls teaching staff away from classrooms to identify and record who is on school property or even on-site Principals in adjacent residences woken at all hours with demands for assistance. To entice and maintain valuable school staff to remote small schools is difficult. It is imperative that they are provided with not only a safe and secure workplace but also for privacy in their home.

Some schools are going to the extraordinary length of purchasing their own mobile booster hardware out of their school or P & C funds to ensure that mobile service is available on the school grounds. However, this privately supplied coverage usually does not extend beyond the school fence. Communities and those travelling past these schools with private signal boosters soon learn that they can access some limited service at the school. In attempting to get connection from the mobile boosters at rural schools, people are entering school grounds in order to make calls. Schools usually require records of who is on school grounds, contact details etc and also ensuring the purpose of being on the grounds is known. Handling extra visitors who merely want to use phone service uses up valuable time for teachers and staff. The interruption to school routine could be minimised if rural schools had more general mobile coverage. The footprint for this coverage needs to extend beyond the school perimeter and sufficient infrastructure needs to be in place to ensure this can happen.

Rural and remote schools need to continue to be considered as priority for mobile coverage under future Mobile Black Spot Program rollouts and ensure that when mobile coverage is installed the coverage reaches outside school grounds.

M59 (A18) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobby the Minister for Communications and telecommunication providers, to investigate the reliability and capacity of backup power on mobile towers to ensure a consistent and uninterrupted delivery of educational programs to geographically isolated children and rural and remote schools.”

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)(V)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Members continue to report significant issues with the reliability of the backup battery on mobile towers during extended power outages. We request that these concerns are raised when in meetings with telecommunication providers.

When some of our members experience power outages they also lose mobile phone coverage. It has been explained that a number of the battery backups on mobile towers are aging and it only becomes apparent when there are power outages, that these battery backups are failing. The issue of battery back-up failures also applies to local exchanges and so affects the ability to communicate via landline.

The recent cyclone in WA caused a massive amount of damage to properties in the Midwest and surrounding areas. The inability to communicate during times of crisis caused a great deal of additional stress and anxiety.

ICPA (WA) acknowledge that cyclone Seroja was a catastrophic event, however as a society, and particularly in education, we are encouraged to adopt new technologies and methods of learning but events like cyclones highlight our vulnerabilities at locations not only locally but throughout Australia when a system is down. Without a reliable mobile and communications network student learning is being impacted.

Communications Portfolio Motions – Telephone

M60 (A19) Collarenebri-Mungindi Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) ask Telstra to review its customer service and telephone assistance lines to more effectively assist rural and remote students and their families.”

Moved: Bree Wakefield NSW State Council (NSW)(V) for Collarenebri-Mungindi

Seconded: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The current 13 22 00 line for support is inadequate. After you have punched in all the numbers for account purposes the message tells you a link has been sent to your mobile for you to follow and chat with a Telstra assistant. That rarely happens. You can't ring your local Telstra shop regarding plans or purchasing a new phone or purchasing a SIM, they are unable to help you unless you go into the store and present identification. When Telstra stores are not located locally this is less than helpful to rural and remote customers.

M61 (A20) Collarenebri-Mungindi Branch (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) ask Telstra to urgently expedite the moving of all Telstra call centres to the mainland of Australia, to assist students and their families.”

Moved: Bree Wakefield NSW State Council (NSW)(V) on behalf of Collarenebri-Mungindi

Seconded: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Rural and remote students and their families have experienced problems with the overseas call centres for far too long. All Telstra call centres need to be moved back to Australia urgently, so that they can effectively assist customers need to troubleshoot issues. During COVID these centres operated from within Australia and most customers saw a huge difference in the assistance being received.

M62 (A21) Territory Wide Branch (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the Minister for Communications, other relevant Ministers and telecommunications companies to ensure that in rural and remote areas of scant to no mobile coverage landlines, such as radio telephone, optic fibre or any other service currently being used are not replaced by a voice service over satellite internet.”

Moved: Moira Lanzarin Katherine (NT) on behalf of Territory Wide
Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

In rural and remote areas communication is one of the most important tools in regard to education. Technology has advanced greatly which has assisted with the deliverance of distance education material, online classes, and aids in the formation of a solid relationship with teachers who might teach from a base a large distance away. Verbal communication via a phone is one of the important tools that connect the distance education school with the pupil and this link should always be a continuous and permanent connection. In urban areas landline services are currently received over the nbn service using Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP). The Federal Government is working with several retail service providers to trial landline services over satellite internet (Sky Muster) utilising a VOIP service for satellite technology. If this trial is successful then it is a strong possibility that existing landline services over radio telephone, optic fibre etc. will be moved to a service over Sky Muster internet. This will be very detrimental in rural and remote areas where there is no other form of communication such as mobile coverage. If the satellite system fails, there will be no other way for our children to reach their distance education provider and, also of importance, emergency services in times of an emergency. Where this is the practice of utilizing VOIP in urban areas for the landline there is also a strong mobile system so when one goes down you still have the other to use in times of education, health, and emergency. In rural and remote areas where there is no mobile coverage or very scant mobile coverage then there will be no way to communicate if the satellite is offline and therefore all communications with the distance education provider will be cut which would be very detrimental in times of major assessments.

M63 (A22) Western Australia State Council (WA)

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

**Request – Sally Brindal, WA State Council (WA), that M63 (A22) be deemed covered by M62 (A21)
Conference permission granted**

DEEMED COVERED BY M62 (A21)

Explanation:

The Universal Service Obligation (USO) should remain on landline telephony services for those living outside of mobile coverage areas and these landline services should be maintained and upgraded, as necessary. Currently there are ICPA members who rely upon their landline as their only means of reliable and affordable voice service due to poor mobile coverage, so it is imperative that the landlines are retained and maintained.

ICPA (WA) acknowledges and thanks ICPA (Aust) for its advocacy that families living in rural and remote parts of Australia, due to the nature of where they live, require two forms of communications i.e., phone/voice and internet/data/voice - each as a separate service not solely relying on the same mode of delivery and thus ensuring if one service fails, the other is still available.

M64 (A23) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) continue to lobby the Minister for Communications to ensure fault restoration and entitlements for geographically isolated students and their families occur within the Customer Service Guarantee (CSG) guidelines.”

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)(V)
Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED**Explanation:**

The CSG guidelines for repairs in remote service locations is 3 full working days after report. Recently members have experienced being without a fixed service landline for a period of six (6) weeks from the first date reported. Repair dates had been given only to be extended on numerous occasions. Members were either not offered an alternative service and/or due to poor mobile coverage were unable to rely on a consistent service from the existing mobile tower, leaving members with a lack of communications. ICPA WA acknowledge that if eligible, there are CSG financial entitlements when repairs cannot be effective within the CSG guidelines. However, members are concerned at the number of repeated extended outages occurring in aging exchanges, especially when the supply of parts is the cause for the delay (although this is not conveyed to the customer).

M65 (A24) Queensland State Council (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) ask the Minister for Communications to investigate the reliability of voice services in non NBN cable serviced areas.”

Moved: Kate Bradshaw QLD State Council (QLD)
Seconded: Rob McArthur QLD State Council (QLD)

CARRIED**Explanation:**

Some voice services especially those on older copper lines have become unreliable and untenable. Multiple faults are reported over short periods of time. The line is fixed, only to have another breakdown within weeks and this process begins again. These areas often have no mobile service. Every Australian especially those in rural and remote locations trying to educate their children need a reliable and consistent form of communication.

M66 (S3) Yaraka-Isisford Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA Australia lobby the Minister for (Regional) Communications to ensure that any proposed solution intended to replace existing Rural & Remote telephone services have equivalent or improved facilities and functionality as existing services.”

Moved: Ian Merritt Yaraka-Isisford (QLD)
Seconded: Anna Cochrane Yaraka-Isisford (QLD)

CARRIED**Explanation:**

Telephones are a vital component of education delivery in rural and remote areas. There is a real risk that technologies being trialled to replace radio services (HCRC) will be Plain Old Telephone Services (POTS) without things like call waiting, call forwarding, and so on.

M67 (S4) St George Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobby phone providers, the Federal Government and relevant Ministers and Departments to introduce a subsidised connection of additional phone lines as required for educating geographically isolated students through Distance Education.”

Moved: Trish McKenzie Cunnamulla (QLD) on behalf of St George (QLD)
Seconded: Jim McKenzie Cunnamulla (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Schools of Distance Education are requesting families install additional phone lines to allow for more accessibility to on air lessons. Families with several students completing their education through Distance Education are often required to be on air for lessons at the same time. Currently a connection fee is \$329 if the connection is straightforward and can use existing phone connections followed by the additional \$55 monthly cost for the home phone plan. As this line is for the sole purpose of calling 1800 numbers for the use of on-air school teleconferencing, a financed connection for the additional phone line/s would help alleviate the financial burden to families and ensure students are able to receive their required lessons.

New South Wales ICPA President's Report

Mrs Kate Warby

Training Portfolio Report

Training Portfolio Motions

M68 (A47) Richmond Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate to the Federal Government to provide an immediate increase to the commonwealth Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) and indexation to the CPI to better assist Australian Apprentices with the cost of living."

Moved: Gillian Semple Richmond (QLD)
Seconded: Susan Bellingham Richmond (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We thank ICPA Federal Council for their advocacy in this area over many years. The eligibility criteria for the LAFHA is based on the recognition that an Australian Apprentice has moved away from home to access their apprenticeship.

The LAFHA has not increased since 2015 and remains at:

- \$77.17 per week for the first 12 months
- \$36.95 per week for the second 12 months
- \$25.00 for the third 12 months

An example of the weekly rate of pay for a junior first year apprentice under the Vehicle, Manufacturing, Repair, Services and Retail Aware 2010 is \$482.68 before tax and deductions.

Without adequate assistance to offset the cost of living, rural and remote apprentices face extreme financial pressure to make ends meet with the significant costs associated with living away from the family home. Expenses include rental bond, rent, utilities, food, and fuel.

It should also be noted that because the LAFHA is only available to apprentices who are not eligible for Youth Allowance and therefore apprentices receiving the LAFHA are not entitled to any adjunct payments which come with Youth Allowance e.g., the Coronavirus Supplement which supported many young people during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic, this period for Australian Apprentices without any additional support was particularly dire.

The Federal Government has put a tremendous amount of money into providing incentives for employers to create more apprenticeship positions as a response of the skills shortage largely brought about by the COVID 19 pandemic. There is also significant skills reform being undertaken in the VET space. However, if reasonable attention is not placed on providing meaningful financial assistance to support young rural and remote apprentices who must move away from home to access these positions, representation from this cohort will diminish and improvements to the number of skilled and qualified workers in regional, rural and remote areas will be unachievable.

M69 (A48) Western Australia State Council (WA)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobby the Federal Government to improve the process by which eligible Australian Apprentices can apply and receive the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA).”

Moved: Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)(V)

Seconded: Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Currently, if you are eligible to apply for the LAFHA you contact your local Apprenticeship Network provider.

Members are finding it difficult to source information to keep them informed and the processes required, as arrangements are made between TAFE and the employer; no allowance is payable until the TAFE component of their course is commenced.

Some TAFE courses keep getting pushed back and six months after commencing their apprenticeships students still have not undertaken any TAFE components and consequently have received no financial assistance.

M70 (A49) Richmond Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate to the Federal Government the need to provide relocation assistance to apprentices and trainees who must relocate from their homes to access apprenticeships and traineeships.”

Moved: Susan Bellingham Richmond (QLD)

Seconded: Gillian Semple Richmond (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We thank ICPA Federal Council for their continued advocacy on this issue.

Apprentices and trainees who are ineligible for Youth Allowance as a dependent may receive the commonwealth Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) if they have had to move away from home to access their apprenticeship or traineeship. However, this allowance, although appreciated, is not adequate to provide meaningful support to offset the significant costs of relocation and living expenses including rent, rental bond, food, fuel, and utilities.

Currently there is little assistance available for apprentices or trainees to relocate to access their chosen pathway. Apprentices and trainees who are eligible for Youth Allowance as a dependent are not eligible for the Relocation Scholarship, which is an adjunct payment to Youth Allowance available for higher education study. There is also no provision for apprentices and trainees to receive the new Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) which provides assistance for relocation costs to access higher education.

It is imperative that some sort of relocation assistance is provided to these young people to ensure they have the opportunity to pursue their chosen pathways regardless of geographical location.

Specific Education Needs Portfolio Report

Specific Education Needs Portfolio Motions

M71 (A40) Charters Towers Branch (QLD)

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Health and other relevant Ministers for online Speech/Occupational etc Therapies, to be included as Telehealth Medical Benefits Scheme items to help with the cost of such therapies for rural and remote children.”

Word change request by Michelle Lyons, Charters Towers (QLD)

Insert ‘allied health services, such as’, ‘Pathology and’, ‘therapy’, ‘permanently’

Conference permission granted

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Health and other relevant Ministers, for online allied health services, such as Speech and Occupational Therapy, to be permanently included as Telehealth Medical Benefits Scheme items to help with the cost of such therapies for rural and remote children.”

Moved: Michelle Lyons Charters Towers (QLD)

Seconded: Sonia Spurdle Charters Towers (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Online therapy sessions allow rural and remote children regular access to a therapist. The cost of online therapy can be substantial. The financial status of families may limit the effectiveness of these sessions if the family cannot afford for their children to attend online therapy session on a regular basis.

M72 (A41) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to Private Healthcare Australia to ensure the rebates provided by private health insurers extend to allied health services delivered via telehealth to assist with the educational development of geographically isolated children.”

Moved: Juliane Vlach NT State Council (NT)

Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

During the COVID-19 crisis, the federal government expedited the inclusion of certain allied health services covered by the Medicare rebate, and since, there has been an expansion of telehealth generally. However, some private health insurers do not cover telehealth appointments, or if they do, they cover at a reduced rate compared to the in-person appointment. Private Healthcare Australia is Australia’s private health insurance industry’s peak representative body. The private health rebates should extend to allied health services delivered via telehealth.

In this motion, we are asking private health insurers to recognise the importance of telehealth appointments for geographically isolated children and to remove the financial penalties of using a telehealth appointment instead of an in-person appointment.

M73 (A42) New South Wales State Council (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) urges the Minister for Health and Aged Care and the Minister for Education and Youth to financially support more organisations willing to take their Early Intervention Services into regional and remote Australia.”

Moved: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW)
Seconded: Bree Wakefield NSW State Council (NSW) (V)

CARRIED

Explanation:

Many Pre-school aged children in regional and remote Australia do not have access to vital early intervention programs or assessments due to lack of services or distances they have to travel.

There are early intervention services already available - such as Royal Far West’s Healthy Kids Bus Stop - that are willing to travel to regional and remote Australia and complete these assessments on children aged 3-5 years old, but do not have the consistent funding to guarantee these services year to year or to service more areas.

We should be ensuring that any early intervention needs have started before these children attend Primary School, to make sure they have the best start to their education.

If there is a need for early intervention, we need to support these families, and ensure that they are able to access these services and they are affordable. Yes, we have Medicare, but as many of us are aware the issue is not always fixed in limited number of sessions!

Below are some statistics from the Royal Far West website¹:

- Children in rural, regional and remote areas are more likely to be developmentally vulnerable than children in metropolitan areas – 27% of all children in outer regional, remote and very remote areas compared to 21% in towns and cities.
- Children living in Very Remote areas are twice as likely as those living in Major Cities to be developmentally vulnerable.
- More than 1 in 6 (16.2%) children and adolescents aged 4-17 in rural areas have mental health problems. The highest prevalence is in Outer Regional areas (19% of children and adolescents).
- 32% of children in regional, rural or remote NSW are unable to access the health services they need.

M74 (A43) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

“That ICPA (Aust) urges the Federal Minister for Health and other relevant Ministers and agencies to ensure that federally funded health clinics across Australia are accessible to all Australians, so all geographically isolated children can receive diagnosis and ongoing treatment of medical issues that impede their ability to learn and thrive.”

Moved: Juliane Vlach NT State Council (NT)
Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

¹ Royal Far West, POSITION PAPER – JULY 2017 SUPPORTING CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE AUSTRALIA, Key Facts and Figures, page 1
<https://www.royalfarwest.org.au/wpcontent/uploads/2018/09/RFW-Policy-Paper-Supporting-childhood-development-in-regional-and-rural-Australia-July-2017.pdf> on 28th May 2021

Explanation:

Northern Territory ICPA members frequently report being turned away from their local public, albeit remote, health clinics because they *'do not meet the criteria'* (to access the public health clinic).

Remote families have no other 'local' health clinic alternative, but if they "don't meet the criteria" and are refused treatment, they necessarily must travel vast distances to access treatment for what could have otherwise been dealt with closer to where they live, at their closest remote health clinic, serviced by rostered doctors, specialists and allied health providers.

It is not acceptable that publicly funded health facilities discriminate on race, demographic or on any other basis, let alone in a situation where there are no other local alternatives for rural & remote families to 'conveniently' access.

Case Study:

Mum of four-year-old enrolled through SOA with a stutter and some speech problems, went to local remote clinic wanting to book an appointment with speech therapist that travels to the local clinic on occasion, during the year. Mum was told, ***"I'm sorry, you do not fit the criteria, you will have to make an appointment in Darwin"***. Mum gets hold of the same speech therapist that travels to local clinic, still told "no, I can't see you in XXXX (971km from Darwin), but I can see you in Darwin anytime". Speech therapist tells Mum that the first she must do is get a hearing test for her child, "most local clinics are able to do a simple hearing test". Back to XXXX clinic and told yet again, sorry, ***you don't fit the criteria***. Mum has had to travel 971km to Darwin for hearing tests and initial consult with therapist, the rest of the appointments were done over Zoom. Mum reports "Zoom is ok, but certainly made it harder with the delay, to be able to fully show the mouth positioning and sounds. It would be helpful to see the therapist at our local clinic once in a while, to make sure we are doing the right thing."

M75 (A44) New South Wales State Council (NSW)

"That ICPA (Aust) urges the Federal Government, including the Minister for Health and Aged Care and the Minister for Education and Youth, to urgently implement age appropriate and high-quality mental health programs within both schools and external services for youth in regional and remote Australia."

Moved: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW)
Seconded: Bree Wakefield NSW State Council (NSW) (V)

CARRIED

Explanation:

The mental health of our youth has been suffering in regional and remote Australia. Recently, in the Riverina of NSW, three youths have taken their own lives in a matter of months. This is not endemic to just the youth of the Riverina district; the tragedy of young lives being lost through suicide is real and happening throughout rural and remote NSW and furthermore rural and remote Australia.

For the youth of today, the world has changed and become increasingly technology based, with the easy access of smart phones, text messaging and multiple social media platforms. This has meant that the outside world is ever present in our homes, and often the youth are unable to escape these negative influences.

We need to ensure that early signs are picked up, not only within the home, but also the school systems. Once recognized, the appropriate help at school and after hours is accessible.

According to Headspace “74% of young people surveyed reported that their mental health was worse since the outbreak of COVID-19”² and “Children and young people in drought ravaged New South Wales have told UNICEF Australia that the natural disaster has meant they have had to prematurely “grow up”, facing difficulty in balancing increased farm work with their education, as well as experiencing escalating levels of stress and other adverse psychological outcomes.”³ With these two factors in mind we should be ensuring that mental health services are easily accessible and available within all areas of regional and remote Australia.

Our children in rural and remote Australia not only dealt with COVID-19, but also the impact that natural disasters such as fires, floods, drought and even mice plagues have had within the family. This is a big responsibility to place on children and if there was more funding spent on helping these children/youth deal with these situations, we will create stronger and resilient children for the future.

Miscellaneous Agenda Motions

M76 (\$14) Capricornia Branch of the Air (QLD)

“That ICPA Australia continue to advocate for the establishment of the Rural Hardship Education Fund (RHEF) and for the RHEF to also include hardships experienced by geographically isolated families in the event of a personal crisis.”

Moved: Ainsley McArthur Capricornia BOTA (QLD)
Seconded: Rob McArthur Capricornia BOTA (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

We fully support the concerns of ICPA (Aust) that the education of children is being compromised in times of hardships experienced by families living in rural and remote areas of Australia. In addition to the hardships of the RHEF assistance that have been identified by ICPA (Aust) we are calling for personal hardships to be included under the RHEF where a crisis impacts the ability to deliver or access education.

When Geographically Isolated families experience an unforeseen circumstance such as an accident, injury or illness including prolonged terminal illness of a family member it often requires them to seek medical treatment or travel to regional or metropolitan areas. Depending on the circumstance, seeking immediate medical treatment and possible rehabilitation/follow-up treatment typically requires travelling long distances from their place of residence for extended periods of time. If the primary caregiver is required to travel away, the dependent school age children’s education is often compromised.

Living in rural and remote areas of Australia adds a level of complexity in times of personal crisis.

- When Distance Education is the only education option for families living remotely and a personal crisis directly affects the Parent/Home Tutor, the dependent school aged children stand to be disadvantaged due to the Home Tutor being unable to fulfil their normal duties

² Coping with COVID: the mental health impact on young people accessing headspace services, August 2020 pg 2, from <https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/COVID-Client-Impact-Report-FINAL-11-8-20.pdf> on 28th May 2021

³ Media Release: UNICEF Australia, Children in drought affected areas have a “You just get on with it” attitude, when the reality is their need for psychological support increases by the day, 19 February 2019 from <https://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Documents/Drought-Report-2019-Media-Release.pdf> on 28th May 2021

within the schoolroom resulting in falling behind in all areas of curriculum. In a mainstream setting relief teachers could be sourced to cover classes and the education of children would remain unchanged.

- In times of an emergency, families living in rural & remote areas often don't have the support network of close neighbours and family due to the sheer geographical distance of where they live to care and support their school age children, so their education continues unchanged.
- In times of emergency where family members are able to help, it is logistically challenging and expensive to access travel to and from some of the remote areas of Australia.
- Those living in rural and remote areas are limited to the degree of access to face-to-face support services via community health services following a personal crisis e.g., Counselling and Mental Health services.
- Sourcing suitable paid help (Governess or Nanny) in Geographically Isolated areas to assist with the day-to-day school demands of either children attending a small school or distance education setting in an emergency situation is often unaffordable.
- Prior to the implications of the COVID -19 pandemic there was already a shortage of suitably experienced people to fill Governess & Nanny positions in rural and remote areas of Australia. This issue has now been exacerbated due to the ongoing travel restrictions of COVID-19 it is placing increasing pressure on families who require help and that are financially able to do so.
- In the case of a personal crisis affecting an employee, there is pressure placed on the income earner to keep working to financially support the family so as not to lose their job.

It is intended that this non-exhaustive example illustrate the degree of challenges experienced and that more support via the establishment of the RHEF is required for families living in rural and remote areas of Australia in times of hardship to ensure that education disturbance is equitable to that of our urban counterparts.

CASE STUDY:

A family of five had taken up a new employment opportunity as managers of a rural property. They had three school aged children aged 11, 9, 6 years. The oldest child had just started the first year of boarding school and was still adjusting and was very unsettled, the other two children were enrolled with an SDE in year four and year one with the mother being the home tutor.

Less than a month into their employment the two youngest children were involved in a farm accident - the nine-year-old sustained a fractured pelvis and the six-year-old sustained a life-threatening injury to the trachea. Both children were airlifted to the closest regional hospital where they were hospitalised with the youngest child in ICU and both parents being required to be in attendance due to the children being in different wards. Due to complications and specialist surgery the youngest child was transferred to the major capital city after five days in ICU was required to be hospitalised for a further 5 weeks.

The nine-year-old was discharged after five days and taken home and required a large degree of care by her father but due to the seriousness of injuries of the six-year-old he flew to the capital city. Their extended family were unable to help due to separate serious medical issue affecting another family member and had to rely on the generosity of a friend in the district to stay with the child with the fractured pelvis and older sibling who had come home from boarding school.

The education of the children was directly affected due to the mother/home tutor responsibilities being compromised. While the mother/home tutor was required to be away with the six-year-old in hospital her sister in year four was required to take responsibility for her own lessons as her father was forced to work to maintain the family income which took him away from the house as they had no leave entitlements owing to them having just started their new job. The Year Four student often had to call her mother for help with technology issues but there was little she could do to support her child.

After five weeks of hospitalisation the mother and 6-year-old were able to return home but given the traumatic event it was difficult to adjust and regain the routine in the schoolroom with regular medical appointments adding an additional two weeks of lost school time.

Due to the accident and the loss of their home tutor the two girls basically lost a term of fully engaged learning that had a significant impact on educational outcomes to the degree where it was suggested that the six-year-old repeat the year.

When asked what could have helped the situation in relation to the educational impact, the family felt that they would have benefited from having a qualified person step in and take over the teaching to allow the mother/home tutor time to develop a strategy moving forward with the education of her children. It is often not financially viable for rural and remote families to be able to afford any sort of hired help as they are on basic wages. It was a heavy load to bear as there wasn't any support offered to this family and it placed a strain on the family for a considerable time after the event.

Additional Information

Ref: Farm accident statistics

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/infographic-agriculture-fatality-and-injury-data>

Ref: Mental Health in Rural Australia

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Former_Committees/mentalhealth/report/c16

M77 (A50) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

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

Moved: Susan Bellingham Richmond (QLD) on behalf of Mount Isa BOTA

Seconded: Gillian Semple Richmond (QLD)

CARRIED

Explanation:

While some areas have received welcome rain and better seasons, there are still areas which continue to be impacted by the unrelenting drought with some families now in their 9th continuous year of dealing with drought conditions and lessened income.

Drought and other unforeseen disasters such as fires, floods and industry events which are out of producers control (i.e., The Live Export Ban, Dairy Crises etc.) all impact suddenly on rural families' income and their ability to pay the out-of-pocket costs necessary for their children to access education. This lack of income does not only affect families living on rural properties but also carries over into small town businesses and the other industries such as freight, mustering/shearing contractors, etc which also rely on primary production.

Families in geographically isolated areas still need to find the means to pay for the gap in the costs of their children's education fees even though they have little to no income during these periods of hardship and the recovery periods afterwards. In past droughts, Exceptional Circumstances could be applied for and a top up was added to the Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance, but at present no such scheme exists. During these past few years of drought some families have had to decide whether or not their children can remain in schooling or to choose between their children, deciding who can go away to school and which ones won't receive a further education. Geographically isolated families affected by bushfires, tropical cyclone events and other hardships face similar difficulties. Small rural schools have also faced difficulty in not being able to raise funds for school excursions and other activities for their students.

Families affected by the 2019 monsoon event in North West Queensland greatly appreciated the immediate support offered by the Federal Government with a \$1000 supplement to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) to ensure they had immediate assistance for their children's schooling. Similar measures occurring quickly in other times of rural hardship would go a long way to help rural families both financially and also mentally by reducing worry over how to meet their children's schooling costs at a time when they are already struggling.

It is essential that a Rural Hardship Education Fund be established and put permanently in place to assist rural families that need financial help to ensure that their children can remain in schooling during tough times. The announcement of the creation of the National Recovery and Resilience Agency in May 2021 might be an avenue in which the Rural Hardship Education Fund can be pursued to ensure that access to education for geographically isolated students can continue unchanged when their family faces hardship.

M78 (A51) Blackall Branch (QLD)

"That ICPA (Aust) review the online membership payment process to enable branches to access up-to-date membership details, online, at any time."

Moved: Anita Dennis Blackall (QLD)
Seconded: Marcelle Chandler Blackall (QLD)

CARRIED

M79 (A52) Northern Territory State Council (NT)

"That ICPA (Aust) Federal Council accepts our collective gratitude for the work you put into not only advocating for members, but also for the depth and quality of information you develop, make available and share with stakeholders, state councils and members, in the course of your advocacy on a national level."

Moved: Juliane Vlach NT State Council (NT)
Seconded: Sarah Cook NT State Council (NT)

CARRIED

Explanation:

ICPA Australia has always done an incredible job advocating for members, but in this motion, we'd like to acknowledge Federal Councils consistently high standards for the benefit of our members. From your submissions to national inquiries, to the new website, the federal BB, your portfolio briefings and motion updates, your collective efforts are always the highest quality and for this we thank you for representing ICPA nationally in a most professional and esteemed way.

South Australia ICPA President's Report

Mrs Jill Greenfield

Floor Motions

M80 (F1) New South Wales State Council (NSW)

“That ICPA (Aust) work with that the Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communication and Regional Education, to request the respective State Governments implement in an expeditious manner, a clear and consistent pathway for the Right of Appeals process under the current National Code for Boarding School Students.”

CONFERENCE AGREED TO ACCEPT MOTION

Moved: Kate Warby NSW State Council (NSW)
Seconded: Bree Wakefield NSW State Council (NSW) (V)

CARRIED

Presentation to Retiring Councillors

Briony Sinclair presented Jo Camilleri with a thank you gift for her time as a Federal Councillor and Publicity Officer.

Carried with Acclamation

Sally Sullivan presented Briony Sinclair with a thank you gift for her time as a Federal Councillor.

Carried with Acclamation

Sally Sullivan presented Kristen Coggan with a thank you gift for her time as a Federal Councillor.

Carried with Acclamation

Nikki Mahony presented Nikki Macqueen with a thank you gift for her time as a Federal Councillor.

Carried with Acclamation

Vote of Thanks - Jane Gloster moved a vote of thanks to Federal Council.

Carried with Acclamation

Alana Moller thanked the convenors.

Carried with Acclamation

Wendy Henning spoke on behalf of the convenors and thanked sponsors.

Carried with Acclamation

Conference Closed 5:15pm

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 the Federal President's report, for the second year in a row under unique circumstances not before seen at an ICPA Federal Conference. It has been a year plagued with ups and downs and challenges. Even as I stand here today I do not know if we have done anything right, however I take solace in the support we have and the fact that right now, we are all doing our best in an uncertain world. To all of you listening today, may I thank you for your support and encouragement along the way. I assure you that none of you have gone unnoticed and we have endeavoured to do our best to include you all in our conference.

I began writing this report months ago, indeed before the postponed conference in July, so it has been quite long in the composing. I put it aside and just picked it up again while at minischool a couple of weeks ago. For those who don't know, minischool is where we take our distance education children to their school where they get to do lessons with their teachers and peers, play and enjoy some time being a normal school kid. The Mums attend meetings, training, school drop offs and pick ups and get to do a little bit of socialising and shopping.

It is these weeks that I garner my inspiration from. These are the weeks I don't need a motivational quote because inspiration and motivation surround me. And it is also these weeks that reiterate to me why, 50 years ago, Mrs Patricia Edgley made a decision to give geographically isolated children and their families a voice. A voice to ensure their educational needs were met and maintained. And to do this she knew we had to unite, because as the theme of this conference reflects, we are indeed "Stronger Together". How indebted we are to Mrs Edgley and all of our ICPA forebearers for their foresight and wisdom, for bringing our great organisation to fruition and promoting such an important message which still rings true today.

Of course, it is impossible to report on the activities of Federal Council this last twelve months without beginning with the online conference in August last year and culminating with our first ever hybrid event commencing today, all as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. As pandemic conditions continue to be 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. While Federal Council have addressed the ongoing impacts which have arisen as a result of the pandemic over the past twelve months, we have also been focused on the ongoing barriers for geographically isolated students accessing and obtaining equitable educational opportunities and outcomes, continuing to emphasise that these students are a unique disadvantage group who need specialised and targeted assistance and support across all portfolio areas.

The 35 motions carried at the online Federal Conference in August 2020 were actioned early on in our council year. The Portfolio Motion Update outlining the progress of these motions was sent to all members in March and is available on our website. Despite the 2020 Motions being limited to only those issues not already in policy due to constraints with the online format, a variety of other actions and developments have occurred across portfolios. You will hear from some of our portfolio leaders over this conference, however in the interest of time we are unable to include all portfolio presentations in this year's program. There is a full report for each portfolio in the conference booklet and in the documents tab on the website.

The key activity for the Boarding/Hostels/Second Home portfolio, along with continued efforts in regard to the Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance has been to advocate on behalf of families

impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for geographically isolated boarding students who board interstate. We welcomed the outcome from efforts made by the Minister for Regional Education Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie of the National Cabinet agreeing to a National Code for Boarding Students. Activity in this space is ongoing, at Federal and State level and may I take this opportunity to commend all of ICPA state Councils for their dedication and collaboration on this issue. Mrs Nikki Macqueen will update conference further before our Boarding/Hostels/Second Home motions.

Communications continues to be an area where developments and changes can occur almost daily. The Regional Tech Hub was a welcome development and Federal Council have worked closely with Hub staff and are part of the Regional Tech Hub Stakeholder Reference Group. We also wish to remind members of other new initiatives in communications, including enhancements to Sky Muster Plus satellite services. We recently contributed to the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review, both through a consultation and submission and look forward to the outcomes of this review. Federal Council continues to maintain close relationships with key Communications groups, including Telstra and nbn who we will hear from tomorrow.

The Curriculum Portfolio has continued to work closely as a key stakeholder of Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and took part in the consultation on the Australian Curriculum Review on behalf of our members as we know it is essential that we ensure rural and remote contexts are considered and represented in the curriculum. We will keep members abreast of further developments in this space. We are also ensuring that rural and remote students are remembered as changes to NAPLAN are considered by Education Ministers across the country.

Early Childhood Education and Care continues to be occupied with highlighting that a blanket approach to educational and child care issues, when applied to rural and remote situations, is often inappropriate and unworkable and that specialised models and programs are needed to address the unique disadvantages and needs associated with caring for and educating children in geographically isolated locations. We have been concentrating on the request for an expansion of the Assistance for Isolated Children for 3-4 year olds studying an approved distance education program and the need for surety of funding for mobile playgroups and have been appealing to the government to implement recommendations made in the Report from the Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments. While we cannot report there has been any movement in this regard, we were ecstatic to receive news recently that the transitional provisions for remote and very remote In Home Care educators would be extended for another two years until December 2023, a welcome recognition by the Federal Minister for Education and Youth Alan Tudge MP of the unique circumstances faced in these locations. We thank the Department for their representation on this matter and also for their willingness to understand the experiences of our families.

In the Distance Education Portfolio, the key focus this past year has been to raise the profile of geographically isolated distance education families and to reinforce our Distance Education Teaching Allowance advocacy. ICPA (Aust) embarked on an awareness campaign, declaring 1 December 2020 as our inaugural Geographically Isolated Distance Education (GIDE) Day, to honour the ongoing plight of geographically isolated families who must educate their children at home at all times and particularly the essential role of the tutor in geographically isolated distance education. We received positive responses and support from a range of individuals and other organisations and thank members for their involvement in the initiative. We look forward to continuing to hold GIDE Day annually and hope that many of you will join us in raising the profile of our GIDE families.

In the area of Rural Schools and School Travel, our focus areas have been on the topics of the National Schools Chaplaincy Program (NSCP), the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) and of

course issues surrounding geographically isolated student travel, with continued calls for a student's fares allowance to be incorporated in the Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance. We welcomed positive developments in regard to the School Chaplaincy with confirmation that the program would be continuing and the news in February 2021 that there would be an increase by 50% to the current Parliament and Civics Education Rebates.

Medicare rebates for telehealth continue to be a key Specific Education Needs focus, especially in light of pandemic developments in this space. We have also continued our association with the National Rural Health Alliance. A key issue for our members has been the need for mental health support and resources for our young people. With this in mind, Federal Council has collated a number of resources on our website for members to access, including information regarding services available to rural and remote families. The web address for these resources is shown on this slide. We continue to ensure members are represented in the Tertiary and Training space and take every opportunity to ensure members stories are heard, areas of concern are addressed and members are made aware of any developments in this area. A number of positives have transpired in this area this past year and we will continue to seek measures that help rural & remote students attain the level of tertiary or training education they wish. Portfolio leaders, Mrs Kate Thompson and Mrs Kim Hughes will be providing updates prior to their respective portfolio motions.

We have also continued to raise the need for a Rural Hardship Education Fund where possible and welcome the development of the National Recovery and Resiliency Agency, with hopes that a focus nationally on the need for drought and other disaster support will filter through into education. Federal Council has invested much time this past year in updating and creating resources and documents both for our members and to assist with our advocacy. We continued to make updates to the policy documents which had not been reviewed since 2014 and have given our Briefing Papers a thorough and eye-catching makeover.

I especially wish to draw our member's attention to the recently released Federal Allowances document, where we have collated a thorough list of the federal allowances available to assist members. We are hoping this evolving document will serve as a valuable resource for families requiring assistance.

Perhaps the most enormous undertaking involving hundreds of volunteer hours, immense commitment and amazing collaboration by representatives from all ICPA Councils this past year has been the development an ongoing refinement of the new website. The result is an engaging and dynamic online presence for our organisation, providing ICPA history, contacts, news and updated documents and other information, which I am confident all members will be proud of. My absolute gratitude and admiration goes to the group of wonderful weavers who worked on this project together. If you haven't already, I urge you to take a look!

I also must acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) through a grant to assist in completing this project. ICPA receives financial and other support from so many sources, including other organisations, members, branches and individuals. To all ICPA volunteers, your contributions are recognised and valued and again thank you to our many generous sponsors who have contributed to Federal Conference this year. I would also like to once again acknowledge the generosity of the McDonald family and the Four Seasons Company, in naming ICPA as 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 that we are a part of this initiative.

As I mentioned in my welcome, the conference also would not have been possible without the team at the Australian Boarding Schools Association, we could not have done this without them and their continued support of ICPA across Australia is remarkable.

To the State Councils across Australia, your amazing efforts do not go unnoticed and whether it is the website, or key advocacies on behalf of our members, namely this year the no borders for boarders campaign, it continues to be an absolute delight and privilege to work with you all. While there have been seldom opportunities to come together in person this past year, we do amazingly have representatives from every state council on the conference floor and Federal Councillors were able to attend all state conferences this year. All Councils are made of a dynamic and inspiring group of people whose dedication to achieving the aims of our organisation and I can assure members that the work never wanes.

All ICPA Members, it has been a privilege to be entrusted to represent you in the role of Federal President and work alongside my fellow Federal Councillors this year. How blessed I feel to have the opportunity to work with such an inspirational team and I thank them for their hard work and commitment. The COVID-19 pandemic hampered our ability to come together in person, however it did not hinder our capacity to continue our work, with Federal Councillors participating virtually in meetings, consultations, forums, delegations and other activities. In fact this was an opportunity to give a glimpse into our worlds, with Councillors participating from their home schoolrooms, sitting on the windowsill of their house to get internet connection, rushing into meetings after loading cattle, shearing sheep, feeding poddies or harvesting crops and generally dedicating themselves to ICPA in amongst the hustle and bustle of their daily lives.

Fortunately, there have been some opportunities to come together in 2021, with a two day hybrid Federal Council meeting in February, with 7 councillors together in Hobart, and 6 others participating via Zoom and in May for the first time since October 2019, we held face to face meetings and delegations in Canberra, a welcome opportunity to work together as well as attend 23 meetings with Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators along with departmental meetings to reiterate the needs of our geographically isolated students.

With submissions continuing to be the key method from which the federal government seeks feedback, Federal Council have also completed a number of submissions across portfolios since August 2020 including:

- 2021 -2022 Pre-Budget Submission
- Consumer Safeguards Review Part C – Choice and Fairness
- National Framework for Interstate Boarding Students
- NDIS Community Consultation on Supporting young children and their families 2021
- Review of Disability Standards for Education
- Inquiry into adult literacy and its importance April 2021
- NQF Review April 2021
- Review of the Regional Schooling Resource Standard Loadings
- Australian Curriculum Review Consultation
- Quality Initial Teacher Education Review
- 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review

Sadly we farewell several Federal Councillors this year, Nikki Macqueen, Kristen Coggan and Jo Camilleri, who have all contributed immensely to the achievements of ICPA during their time on Council. It has been such a joy not only working with you but also becoming their friend and I wish them all well as they move on, please don't be strangers. Suzanne, Sally and Lisa, after 4 years of

utmost dedication and diligence in their respective executive roles will be taking on other roles within Federal Council. I remind everyone listening that new faces are always welcome to join the team, so please consider nominating for Federal Council today. Nomination forms are available on your table here at conference or on the website and can be handed to the minutes table or emailed to the Federal Conference email address by the beginning of afternoon tea today.

Although at the beginning I said I didn't need one, I do love a good quote, so I am going to end with one. Not from a famous politician or a celebrity or motivational speaker, but from one of my daughters, for ultimately it is my daughters who are the reason I am on this journey. Zarah, taught by me for primary school, headed off to boarding school at the start of 2020, only to return shortly later to do school with me again due to the pandemic, made it clear she was not happy "Mum, it's not that you're a bad teacher it is just that the teachers at school are so much better". If that is not enough motivation for me to keep on with the ICPA legacy, then what is?

As I draw to a close, may I once again wish for you all a momentous and memorable Conference experience, I certainly find that like minischools, Conferences are an opportunity to garner inspiration and motivation from those who surround me. Though it has not panned out as we had originally planned and we are so disappointed to not have everyone together in person to celebrate 50 years of our great organisation, I hope that everyone remembers that being geographically isolated does not mean you are alone.

FEDERAL TREASURER'S REPORT

Lisa Slade

There is no way, even if you were living under a rock, Covid-19 would have escaped your attention over the past 18 months. Understandably this has seen a considerable impact on our finances. Being disrupted by solar flares at the Federal Conference in 2020, still has federal councillors weak at the knees, however our bottom line took more kindly to the online format with minimal expenses being incurred compared to previous years.

I received an email from our appointed auditor 'David Murdoch' on the very day the financial year ended to notify me of the following "...due to recent legally enforceable changes in statutory accounting standards issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants under the Corporations Act, I am no longer able to conduct Audits." So, after some extensive searching we arranged for Carrick Aland to prepare our financial statements and Queensland Audit Services to conduct the audit. When we change auditors/accountants, it often results in our financial reports looking slightly different as each firm has their own way of grouping income and expense items. I will point some of these out through my report.

A Zoom subscription was probably one of the most used purchases for the year, being grounded more or less for the year meant online conferencing was now the norm. 2021 brought new hope that we would be able to be mobile again. A face to face meeting held in Tasmania (in lieu of the face to face Federal Conference in Hobart after cancellation in 2020) in early February was attended by those who could safely get in and out of Hobart. In May we were excited to be back on the road (or in the air) to Canberra for delegation. I cannot tell you how good it was to be back in the Marble Foyer again! State Conferences were attended face to face by Councillors before lockdowns were again upon us. Of course, we all know what happened to our first attempt at the 2021 Federal Conference in August!

As reported last year, we were given a deadline of December 2020 to create a new website as the old one could no longer be supported. We applied to the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) for their 'Strengthening Rural Communities' grant and were pleased to receive \$10,000 to begin work on the new website. Noted as 'Other grants received' in the profit and loss. Federal Council has borne significant costs in completing the website and at the end of the financial year had contributed an extra \$9,209 (ex GST) on top of the \$10,000 from FRRR. To date over \$25,000 has been spent on the website in total (\$10,000 FRRR Grant and \$15,000 Federal Council). This has included Federal Conference registration and voting capabilities which has and will continue to save on expensive ad hoc website add-ons from companies outside of Australia that do not understand our needs. Thank you to Sue Shotton for her tireless work in comparing website developers and most of all for finding Mark from Enrega. Our website committee, along with the State counterparts have done an outstanding job working with Mark to ensure our website is a functional resource for members.

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of the 2021 financial year, ICPA Australia had 2302 financial members, four Corporate Members and nine School Corporate Members. Following last year's decline of 96 members, it is pleasing to see we are 'flattening the curve' with only a small decline of 14 members. I could surmise the downward trend might be attributed to years of drought followed by Covid-19 but that could be drawing a simplistic conclusion from what is likely a complex issue. It is good to note that given the challenges, memberships have held relatively steady.

With their Tasmanian State Council in recess, East Coast Branch, Midlands Branch and Tasmanian Lone Branch merged to form the new Tasmania Branch. Also, during the year, the Northern Territory Lone Branch changed its name to Territory Wide Branch and Hyden Branch changed its name to the Eastern Districts Branch. Changes were made to better reflect their membership.

SPONSORSHIP AND DONATIONS

In May 2020 we were approached by Julie McDonald and Four Seasons Company regarding a sponsorship proposal in honour of Julie's late husband Zanda McDonald. Four Seasons offered to donate 5% of sales from the ZM Breeder and Weaner Block range to ICPA in the form of sponsorship. Zanda's connection to ICPA through his Mum Christine and aunt Trish Mitchell was Julie's reason for approaching ICPA to be the recipient of Four Seasons generous offer, and in her words "...to keep ICPA in people's minds as they feed cattle in the north." We received our first sponsorship payment of \$15,744.91 in October which has enabled us to provide funds to branches in need to travel to Longreach for Federal Conference. We are very proud to be associated with the ZM Breeder & Weaner Block range by Four Seasons and the McDonald family, and we're so grateful for their generosity.

NBN Co joined Telstra in generously sponsoring our Federal Conference in 2021. We certainly appreciate the support they offer us not only financially but also through working with us to improve communications.

Donations were gratefully received by the following branches during this financial year: Alpha Branch, Clermont Branch, Julia Creek Branch, Katherine Branch, Kindon Branch, Louth Branch, Midwest Branch, Rankins Springs Branch, Richmond Branch and Talwood Branch. Thank you all for

your generosity, particularly as we know how hard our members work to raise funds for their branch, especially during such difficult times.

FINANCES

In the Federal Conference revenue line, you will notice there are none recorded for 2021 however the \$20,355.40 original advanced funds, refunds and sponsorship money was returned to the Federal Council General account and can be seen in the 'Income Transferred from ICPA Federal Conference 2020' under 'Other Revenue'.

Sundry Income is higher than usual, this is attributed to money being received from the Tasmanian State Council to hold in trust on their behalf which was transferred to a stand-alone account; donations from Clermont and Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld Branches to be later distributed to the 2021 Federal Conference Convening Committee and a payment for memberships incorrectly paid into the wrong account, later transferred to the membership account. Sundry expenses cover all transfers other than the transfer of Tasmanian State Council funds which is not picked up in this report due to it being an internal funds transfer.

Subscriptions and memberships expenditure is slightly higher this year, due to the new Zoom and Survey Monkey annual subscriptions. Dropbox and Adobe subscriptions were renewed again this year but combined in a different expense line last year, so hard to distinguish that comparison in the financial statements. Our ANSVAR Combined Liability insurance through EBM saw a 50% premium increase, due to our policy being reviewed and standard increases across the board. We invested in six new laptops for Councillors throughout the year and a new printer for the Secretary, which is reflected in the 'New Equipment Purchased' expense line.

Reporting a profit of \$31,120.80 this year has enabled Federal Council to make the recommendation that Membership fees remain the same for the 2022 financial year, \$22 per member and \$275 for School and Corporate Members.

When I began the role of Treasurer in 2017, it was a daunting task. I have been helped along the way by so many, and none more so than Jane O'Brien. Jane, it has been a pleasure to work with you, you have gone above and beyond in your role as membership officer. You have been a major contributor to the online memberships and more recently the transition to the new website. Always one to steady the ship and ensure everything stays on track, I truly appreciate your support and friendship. What has been for the better part, in our Queen's words, an 'annus horribilis' year for my family on a personal level. I would like to especially thank all the members of Federal Council, my other family, for their patience, support and understanding. I look forward to what 2022 brings and hope to play a supportive role for the incoming Treasurer should I be re-elected onto Council.

QUEENSLAND PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Louise Martin

Federal President Alana Moller, Federal Life Members, State Life Members, Branch Life Members, Distinguished Guests, fellow ICPA members, ladies & gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to present my 2021 President's Report.

Wow, what a whirlwind my first term as president of this amazing organisation has been. It really seems only moments ago that State Council was gathered in Toowoomba delivering Queensland's first and hopefully last virtual conference. It has been an action packed 7 months attempting to squeeze in as much activity as possible during that time frame.

It was fantastic to be back in Brisbane for delegations in February this year, 12 months since the last visit which occurred just as the state was closing due to COVID-19. Whilst we have held many zoom meetings in the interim, there is no real comparison to meeting in person face to face.

Thanks must go to Dr Regan Neumann, Kym Turner and Julissa Vasquez from the State Schools Rural, Remote and International team at the Department of Education for facilitating the meetings with all the relevant departments. Following conference, all the motions are collated and sent to the rural and remote team who then forward the issues to the relevant areas for consideration. As a result, State Council has been able to meet with the right people to discuss the issues across all our portfolios and in many instances, issues have been resolved quickly.

Following our October conference, we updated our Position Statement Flyer with our Key Issues for 2020/21. Our key issues are: prioritising Geographically Isolated Students at Distance Education Schools, Reinstatement of the Schools Touring Program, Financial Assistance and Attraction and retention of quality teachers in rural and remote areas. We have emailed this document far and wide including all parliamentarians and key stakeholders. These keys issues continue to be current.

Delegations proved to be reasonably fruitful. We had the opportunity to discuss our key issues with the Minister for Education, Grace Grace and the Assistant Director of Education, Peter Cook. State Council has been assured that the overcrowding of DE classrooms will be addressed, and a review of the Schools of Distance Education is underway.

Our meeting with the IT department had positive outcomes as they confirmed to State Council that the increased bandwidth provided to the DE schools during COVID-19 will continue and be the new norm. The IT branch also announced \$400 million over 5 years to upgrade connectivity to Queensland State Schools. This will leave only a very small number of remote schools on Satellite and even they will get an upgrade to a business service rather than Sky Muster.

ICPA's relationship with the department continues to reflect the high value they place on our organisation – we are represented on many stakeholder groups including: the Joint Parent Council, the Rural and Remote Education Reference Group, Early Years Forum and the Senior Assessment and Tertiary Entrance Implementation Taskforce, to name a few. I also sit on the Telstra Regional Advisory Council and more recently the newly formed AgForce Social Policy group. Thanks, must also go to the other parent groups with whom we work closely – P&Cs Qld, Catholic School Parents Queensland, and Queensland Independent Schools Parent Network.

Queensland Council continues to have joint meetings with Federal council and the other states. Our zoom meetings over the past year have been invaluable, with each council offering support to each other and the sharing of ideas. Kelly Ostwald and I attended two meetings this year. We remain

hopeful that we will be able to gather as a group in person for a weekend meeting in the not-too-distant future.

ICPA Queensland held its 50th State Conference in Cunnamulla on the 1st and 2nd of June. It was a wonderful couple of days and organized magnificently by the convenor Rhiannon Newsham and her band of helpers. We welcomed back over 40 past councillors, all of whom has a great time reminiscing and some who have not forgotten how to put their hand up at conference to add to the debate. Many words of wisdom were uttered, and our current members learnt a lot from those who have gone before us.

We had 72 motions on the agenda and an additional 7 floor motions. This year, 24 of those motions were related to the Distance Education portfolio. There is a real concern amongst our members that our GI students are not being prioritized at Distance Education Schools. There were 10 motions relating to the closure of onsite accommodation facilities at Longreach and Emerald, and yet again motions requesting more classroom space at Rockhampton. There is also concern that mini school clusters away from the centre are not taking place. Small Schools portfolio had motions around the lack of permanent water supply and the need for teacher/student ratios to be adjusted in 1 teacher schools where state delivered Kindy has been introduced. Travel motions were all about legitimizing Kindy kids on school bus runs, dangerous state of some routes and a consideration for remote bus runs to be administered by the education department rather than being lost in the mammoth Translink department. The Tertiary Trade Training portfolio is continually frustrated from the lack of revolve to the repurposing of the closed Agricultural colleges at Longreach and Emerald as well as the need to have support networks for our young apprentices. There has been a call for an increase in the ICT subsidy for DE students to reflect the cost of broadband and increased usage as well as an easier process to access a second telephone line in DE classrooms. As always, we are seeking an increase in the Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme which continues to erode having dropped from covering 50% of costs to 41%. Finally, having reviewed the Education Department's strategic plan for the next few years, State council was shocked to find that Racing and Industrial Relations had also been included, due to the Education Minister also holding those additional portfolios. This prompted State Council to put forward a motion requesting that Education should be a stand-alone portfolio.

Thank you to all our sponsors, many of whom support ICPA Qld year after year. ICPA Qld is immensely proud of the fact that we have never needed to source government funding or grants to survive and for this we are incredibly grateful. This enables us to remain apolitical and not beholden to any other organisation in our advocacy.

Thank you to our councillor team. There have been some hard yards done to make it here today in one piece, following a very hectic 7 months. Not only have we been advocating on behalf of all the members through delegations and stakeholder meetings, but there have also been several other significant activities that we have been attending to. We have submitted a grant to the Regional Arts Fund to raise funds to produce a Golden Jubilee book, celebrating 50 years of ICPA in Qld. We have attended Beef week promoting ICPA and selling close to \$5,000 worth of personalised Cattle Tags, which is also earmarked for the book, no pun intended! Thank you to Allflex and Nutrien for the opportunity. Thanks to Councillors Amanda Clark and Rob McArthur, for pulling this together and all the Qld ICPA branch members who volunteered.

There has also been the huge undertaking of building the new website and transferring all our data from the old site to the new one. Melissa Iland and Tammie Irons have gone way over their usual time remit in making our new Qld page look amazing. In fact, Tammie has enjoyed it so much she has officially become our Web Tech Officer!! Thanks, must also be extended to our unsung heroes working behind the scenes in off council positions.

This year saw 4 of our councillors depart as they take on new challenges. We appreciate all the contributions they have made for the betterment of our children. We welcome on board 6 new councillors, as we prepare to tackle the next 50 years of ICPA Qld. It is wonderful to have a full council for the first time in a few years.

Finally, I cannot reiterate enough to you all, the importance of keeping this organisation strong and robust for the next 50 years. Our children need us to have a voice with the decision makers, now more than ever. Every day that we, State Councillors and Federal Councillors, are advocating on behalf of you, our members, we see the lack of understanding of our unique circumstances. Yes, over the years ICPA has had considerable influence is improving the quality of education for our children, however we must not rest on our laurels and assume that everything is ok, because it is not. Each year new challenges arise, and we must be there on the front foot ready to fight the good fight for our kids.

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 report as President of ICPA WA for the 2020/2021 year.

During May and June, I was on a camping road trip with my husband through beautiful areas in the north of our State. As many members can no doubt attest to, WA, especially in the north, is a vast State with great distances between the better-known attractions. As you travel along the highways and dusty dirt tracks, to the untrained eye, the landscape and scenery may seem the same stretching relentlessly for kilometre after kilometre. However, if you look more closely, it is easy to see the idiosyncrasies that makes a landscape that appears to be the same, different. I could not help but draw an analogy to ICPA. The ICPA journey has been, and continues to be, a long road travelled by so many and some of the issues that we still advocate for appear to be the same. But just as with the WA landscape, there continues to be little idiosyncrasies that brings an individuality to what may seem an issue of old.

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) reduction by the WA State Government from \$2105 to \$1320 by 2022, continues to be a concern for our members and remains high on the agenda for WA State Council. It has been made quite clear by the Minister for Education that there is no intention to reverse their decision but may review the structure at the end of the reduction period in 2022. The BAHA reduction was explained by the Government as being a necessary part of reducing budgets, however given the announcement of a budget surplus of \$3.1 billion this year, the continued annual reduction seems inequitable for families and students who benefit from this much relied upon allowance, especially with the continual annual increase in boarding fees.

The issue of what is considered a transport hub affecting member's eligibility for the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme – Road Travel Subsidy remains to be an issue for our members. Despite meetings and many letters from WA State Council the continued reference to a transport hub as a means of rejecting travel subsidy claims, irrespective of the transport route, the frequency of that route or even when the transport goes in the complete opposite direction continues to frustrate families.

At our October face to face, delegations raised both of these issues with Mr Peter Rundle, Nationals Spokesperson for Education and Donna Faragher, the then Shadow Minister for Education. Other topics of discussion included: the request for additional help with the transition to further education and apprenticeships from the State Government for regional, rural and remote students post Year 12, Education Funding Model changes to be introduced between now and 2029 using the direct

measure of income formulae potentially costing many schools millions of dollars, which will impact boarding families, and the WA State Government Wander out Yonder program varying eligibility between city and country.

A delegation also met with Hon Sue Ellery, MLC, Minister for Education where we discussed the Special Education Needs program (SSEN) and the need for greater awareness of the assistance available to families, the Government's professional development program offering support to new Principals and the reduction of services to rural schools, such as dental therapy vans. Support for our Schools of the Air and rural schools, and the loss of services is an increasing concern as numbers in rural areas continue to decline with an apparent direct correlation between school numbers and a reduction in programs and services.

Boyd Brown, Regional General Manager, Telstra and Eva Colic, Community Engagement Manager joined our State Council face to face and discussed the 3G closure in 2024, Telstra's Emergency Preparedness Plan, network resilience, the black spot program, and the new regional network advisors' program.

Naomi Evans, Head of Regional Community Affairs WA, nbn Local also attended and discussed the new segment team – education strategy, both Sky Muster and Sky Muster Plus, Ed ports and their Illuminate program.

Upon invitation, WA State Council were involved in a regional and rural distance education round table with Nbn conducted online. The discussion evolved around Satellite connectivity for distance education; what is working well, what challenges members were facing, the best format for distributing helpful information and the best channel for distribution to members.

In November, Hyden Branch changed its name to Eastern Districts Branch to better reflect the geographic area of its members. Prior to its name change Hyden Branch awarded Branch Life Memberships to three of its founding members: Mrs Carolyn Burns, Mrs Marlene Mayfield and Mrs Gwen Walton, and presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Mrs Kath James.

Just when WA thought life was returning to some form of normality our February face to face was cancelled at the last minute due to a 5-day lockdown starting on the Sunday and we were to meet on the Tuesday. The two-day meeting was shortened to a half day Zoom meeting to mainly discuss 2021 WA State Conference matters.

It was disappointing that the February Joint Council meeting was also cancelled. Although a Zoom meeting was held in its place, you cannot replace the valuable opportunity of meeting face to face to learn of the accomplishments and issues experienced by the other States and to connect with Federal Council and fellow inter-state councillors.

Gascoyne Branch convened the 49th 2021 WA State Conference, "Educate not Isolate". Given the events of the previous twelve months, due to COVID-19, it was a particularly apt theme. The task of remote learning online from home had presented many parents with different challenges in accessing, facilitating and supervising the online learning. At State Conference members particularly enjoyed a panel discussion looking at the impact of COVID-19 on the deliverance of education from the point of view of a university professor, the Principal of SIDE (School of Isolated and Distance Education), a second-year university student and a Year 11 boarding school student. Thanks must go to Richard Stokes, CEO, ABSA (Australia Boarding Schools Association) for facilitating the panel discussion. We welcomed members from around the State, members of parliament, Department of

Education representatives and representatives from secondary and tertiary, both Government and non-Government.

The week before conference was the WA State election. Labour was successful in their re-election as the WA State Government with most Ministers retaining their portfolios. ICPA WA will continue their relationship with these Ministers to lobby for change.

The Director General of Education, Ms Lisa Rodgers addressed conference, highlighting the importance of making sure that children have foundation skills, access to the senior secondary curriculum and having students equipped with work skills to enter the workforce. Ms Rodgers also discussed whether we need to look at changing the way we deliver education, the quality of Distance Education and SIDE being a first-choice option (as opposed to a second choice) for students in offering access to specialised courses and provisions.

ICPA WA continue to be in discussions with the Department of Education on ways to improve the deliverance of online education to strengthen both SIDE and SOTAs to capitalise on the upskilling of staff and the school system as a result of COVID-19. Ms Rodgers has a very high regard for ICPA and the quality knowledge and the ability of the organisation.

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).
- School of the Air (SOTA) funding model
- Support Teacher of Learning (STL) and ensuring that the role and funding for the position in Schools of the Air (SOTA) continues past 2021.
- Education Ports and Sky Muster Plus.
- Telecommunication restoration times and entitlements.
- Loss of services to rural schools, such as dental vans.
- Travel permissions for WA children at boarding schools interstate.
- Travel permissions for boarding students within WA.
- Policy relating to AHPPC guidelines in relation to all WA schools.
- Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) – Road Travel Subsidy application criteria.
- School Bus Services contractual obligations and recourse for breaches
- School bus routes.
- Refunds for airfares under the STSS to be processed up until 31st 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.

At conference we said goodbye to Immediate Past President Tash Johns. In her role as Immediate Past President, Tash has been a great support not only to myself but to all of State Council. Tash has always only been a phone call away should I require any help, guidance, or just want to run something by her. I thank her for her support and everything she has given to ICPA. We welcomed three new councillors at conference to State Council: Louise Ford, Meekatharra Air Branch; Jane Cunningham, Lakes District Branch and Lee-Anne White, Goldfields Eyre Branch. This means we are a full State Council which is fantastic. I would like to thank Federal Treasurer Lisa Slade, Federal Publicity Officer Jo Camilleri and Federal Councillor Briony Sinclair for attending on behalf of Federal Council and presenting the Federal Report.

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

WA State Council met for their first face to face meeting since conference on 23rd and 24th June in Perth. During these two days State Council met with John Bailly, School Bus Services, to discuss a number of school bus issues. Unfortunately, we did not receive a response to a request for meetings with the Minister for Transport concerning the on-going Student Travel Subsidy Scheme – Road Travel Subsidy issues that members are experiencing. We will continue to lobby in this area.

Promoting membership is an on-going task for State Council. WA has seen an increase in new members in 2021, however the challenge remains in continuing membership into the future. Hopefully, the new website will assist in this process.

It is wonderful to see the new website up and running. On behalf of State Council, I would like to thank Federal Council and all the State Webmasters for the time, energy and commitment they have given to what has been an enormous task. I would also like to personally thank our Webmaster Kym Ross for her contribution. Kym is also our secretary and, in the lead, up to our State Conference also continued to dedicate a huge amount of her time to the website development.

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

I would like to thank my fellow WA State Councillors, 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.

As we celebrate 50 years of ICPA (Aust), I would also like to thank Federal Council and each of the other State Councils for their continued support, camaraderie and friendship.

Thank you and we look forward to welcoming you to Federal Conference in Perth 2022.

NORTHERN TERRITORY PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sarah Cook

Madame President, distinguished guests, Federal, State and Branch Life Members, Federal Councillors, ICPA members and guests.

On behalf of ICPA NT Life Members, NT Branch Committees, Territory Members and our State Council, I feel very honoured to be presenting my third Northern Territory State President Report at the 50th ICPA Australia Federal Conference.

As State President, my focus is on advocacy, both with stakeholders who have the power to make wholesale changes on behalf of members, and with members, so they understand the work ICPA does and they continue to support this fantastic organisation.

In the Territory, we have several challenges in advocacy, the first being to adequately convey the responsibility and financial costs carried by rural and geographically isolated families, who access education in the bush, as a reason for asking for the changes we do. The sum of our contribution to education is enormous and incredibly out of balance both in financial terms and in personal contribution, compared to urban families.

Across Australia, the divide, distance and disconnect between urban and rural is increasingly evident. Perhaps the Territory is no different despite our small population size, geographical spread, and that about 40% of our population live remote or very remote.

Many of our motions request the introduction of a new policy or a review of existing, ill-fitting policy to reduce this cost/responsibility for families. Delegation after delegation, and before anything else, we (ICPA NT) find ourselves with the task of educating new, usually very senior, decision-makers on the realities of living and working in the bush while raising a family.

From issue identification to delivery, the Territory government policy cycle can take years, which is relatively standard for most governments, I would think. That is assuming we manage to keep any advancements around policy on the agenda. The Territory government is traditionally a place for career progression, especially with people coming from Canberra, and key staff change every 18 or so months, taking any knowledge they have gained and progress we have made with them.

How do we shorten the distance in relationship, understanding and willingness to action, that must be covered before issues experienced by our members can be fully appreciated by policy advisors? Policy advisors from city suburbs, who graduated from inner-city universities, worked in capital cities and who prefer holidaying in European counties over Australia's vast, yet beautiful outback? It's our home but to many Australians, our way of life and therefore our issues, are hard to grasp.

Bureaucrats love 'quick wins'; making easy decisions with low budget impact, gives the Minister good media and makes everyone happy. Ironically, our members and government share the same dilemma; we would give them quick wins if we could, but most of our issues involve a cost and are not actually ours to fix.

On social media, bush people do an amazing job framing our love of the land and the joys of living in the Territory. Maybe we give the impression we do not need as much help as we are asking for? We post strong, capable, and enabling humans, stunning places to live, with an abundance of sunsets, helicopters, hobbies and sports that unfortunately, many people associate with affluent and fortunate societies. The dichotomy of our vibrant lifestyle and the challenges we experience in education is difficult for people to reconcile.

NT State Council had a very personal experience during a meeting with a Minister; we were discussing home tutors and the actual cost of providing this compulsory resource for the delivery of public schools of the air, and the Minister responded by saying "but you choose to live there", implying the cost was entirely our decision.

The NT Education Act states, "government school education is free for Australian citizens or permanent residents..... Government schools cannot charge for any instruction, materials or administrative or other services or facilities provided as part of the standard curriculum program."

While clearly, we are Australian citizens, our government school education is not free, and what our members actually provide on a voluntary or self-funded basis is very different to what the Education Act outlines. Of course, to accept this requires a fundamental shift in policy, perhaps across Australia, and understandably no one wants to be the first mover, including the Territory Government. Nevertheless, we have costed it out, and our advocacy continues.

Last year we ran what I thought was a well-balanced story around boarding. ABC Rural picked up the story, but my excitement was quickly dampened as a string of nasty comments discussed our fortune

to afford boarding and our poor decision to send children to boarding school in the first place. If only they knew the layers behind the story.

In the NT, we have one government boarding house; it has a waiting list. We have three boarding schools (if you only count those who accept both indigenous and non-indigenous enrolments), and they are good - if not very good - schools. Unfortunately, our boarding story is also complex, and we recently escalated the issue of personal safety for boarding students at some of those schools to our Minister and Department of Education.

The Territory government will support students who board in the NT with a \$600 Supplementary Boarding Allowance. Students who board interstate may or may not receive a \$2,000 Interstate Boarding Allowance. This allowance has been problematic, and many applications are denied on a technical issue around criteria. In a nutshell, we have hardly any local choice, so most of our students board interstate, but Territory government support is pretty poor either way.

With our students boarding across Australia, COVID-19 lockdowns are confusing for our members. However, we have muddled through the complexities of different positions taken by various state governments. For this reason, once COVID-19 hit, ICPA NT immediately took the position to advocate for a single, national framework for all boarding students. We were pleased when this became the shared position for ICPA (Aust), and all ICPA State Councils, in our joint submission to the Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education, the Hon Minister Gee's office, *"Recommendations towards the development of a National Framework for Students who attend Boarding School across State borders, especially in the context of COVID-19."*

Student travel concession is a state-based scheme that Territory geographically isolated secondary and tertiary students might never use, despite the enormous cost of travel to access education. Boarding & university students continue to be disadvantaged because they necessarily travel at peak (school holiday) times and, although they are students, there is no student concession for airfares. ABSTUDY students have their fares booked, paid, and managed through a central booking agency, meaning the cost of their fares are probably not as lumpy as peak fares. Still, we have found it difficult to get any solution-focused discussion with our Territory Government and Airline contacts around a 'fair airfare'. I do wonder what came of the *"Inquiry into the operation, regulation and funding of air route service delivery to rural, regional and remote communities"*.

Despite all the positive progress around nbn and Sky Muster, I am disappointed to report that our school hardware and technology policies to enable the delivery of education in home schoolrooms still creates quite a bit of feedback to ICPA, and we have unresolved motions. However, I'd also like to touch on the point that parents remain hesitant to have this and similar conversations with their school, even through the school council, for a good reason.

Parents want to preserve a positive relationship with their school. In a small community, their relationship, where they necessarily communicate with teachers daily, comes up time and time again as the main reason parents would prefer to talk to ICPA confidentially, through case studies and motions, instead of raising challenging issues with the school or at school council meetings. Families report feeling like they have too much invested and too much to lose, to want to have hard conversations that could get their teacher or principal off-side. In a small community, this is not easy on the school, or the parent, or ICPA for that matter, but expecting more open communication between the parent and the school is not the only solution. We must respect that there are many more layers at play than simply following processes or encouraging open-door policies.

Before I close off, I would like to brief you on some of our issues in early childhood, special needs diagnosis and treatment. It is utterly inequitable that, geographically speaking, about half of the Northern Territory has no outreach early learning or mobile playgroups for non-aboriginal families. There are early childhood programs in many remote aboriginal communities, but they do not extend to non-aboriginal families outside that community.

ICPA NT's last survey identified over 50 children, less than 5 years old, with no access to these services. I would like to say these children can access early learning or playgroups by other means, but that is not so. While there is a lack of early learning centres in other remote Territory towns, the fact is, children living in regional centres have more chance of peer-to-peer socialisation opportunities and easier access to appointments, just as urban parents have more opportunities to receive respite, support and mentoring etc.

You would expect all Territory families would be able to access their local remote health clinics, but ICPA continues to receive case studies from non-aboriginal families who have been turned away from basic triage, specialist, and allied health provision, despite these services being provided at the 'local' clinic.

Equally concerning are the examples of NT SOA students receiving specific needs diagnosis in grade 2, 3 and 4. There are several very sad examples where students receive their diagnoses quite late and geographic isolation apparently has played a part in this. It's hard to find words to describe just how valuable, accessible early childhood and allied health services are to the bush.

You might have picked up that within ICPA's remit, geographically isolated non-indigenous families are often noticeably overlooked or perhaps not considered. There is certainly a lot of data on geographically isolated indigenous Territory families, but not a lot on non-indigenous, so this could be the reason. ICPA NT absolutely agrees that all remote Territorians have needs, fundamental rights, and experience inequities in service provision. These gaps are across the scope of delivery and all demographics in our regions but excluding or further disadvantaging non-indigenous people is as concerning as disadvantaging indigenous people. ICPA do not stand for the inequities, regardless of your demographic.

I hope I have not given you the impression that the Territory is not a great place to live; quite the contrary. But the government must deliver on education, especially in their rally to develop the regions. Education is a fundamental right, and if health and education are delivered well, the regions will speak for themselves. I believe ICPA's solution-focused advocacy is an asset to any government, and we continue to work in partnership to action our motions.

As a last word to regions, the bush is a small community. Please support the cause if the cause is worth investing in, regardless of who/what/why is driving it. The bush is simply not big enough in numbers or votes to let an opportunity pass.

I wish to pass on my heartfelt appreciation to our State Council, whom I am very proud of: Vice President Suzanne Wilson, Secretary Jule Vlach, Treasurer and Public Officer Moira Lanzarin, Publicity Officer Amanda Murphy, Assistant Secretary Katie Payne, Councillors Lauren Hoar, Lisa Kimlin, Kerrie Scott and Kiya Gill; Archives Ruth Woerle, Financial Support Officer Helen Harding and Editor and Webmaster Annika Bell. Thank you for all the work you do for our members.

Thank you also to our Branches for supporting NT State Council to advocate on their behalf and to all our members for being the voices that feed good advice into the halls where they often don't appreciate your plight.

NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Claire Butler

Madam President, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the President's report on behalf of ICPA NSW.

State Conference 2021

The much-anticipated ICPA NSW State Conference was held in Hay on 10 and 11 March and it was wonderful to have an attendance of 170 people - considering the year before we had to cancel the conference in Moree, it really was just the medicine we all needed to see each other face to face again. The theme "Thrive in Isolation" was very fitting - Ironically, isolation is now a word that sits more prevalently in everyone's minds no matter where we live, and this word "isolation" is now much more understood by our metro counterparts. On the afternoon before conference a Q and A Distance Education Session was held between parents and NSW Education staff where technology issues were addressed. The NSW Distance Education Survey conducted earlier this year identified a number of pressing issues relating to slow internet experiences by NSW Distance Education students. Currently, NSW Distance Education is delivered by an ageing Optus Satellite and the much-anticipated arrival of NBN Satellite into the NSW DE School room is well overdue. ICPA NSW understands this roll out should be in place by the end of this school year. Members have been raising the internet issues for a number of years with NSW Department of Education and it is not without some level of frustration that improved internet is occurring very late in the game.

Conference was very well attended, and it was fantastic to see so many retired Councillors in attendance. This was due to a very well-orchestrated and long kept secret to witness the award of ICPA NSW Life Membership to past President David Cameron. NSW Education Minister Hon Sarah Mitchell was in attendance along with Senator Perin Davey, Helen Dalton MP and Roy Butler MP. With two years' worth of Conferencing to catch up on, I am pleased to say we were very relieved when we managed to get through the 80 motions and 15 guest speakers over the two days without a minute to spare! It is also pleasing that as a result of conference the Minister for Education's office has monthly telephone meetings with State Council to try to tick off the many items that were on the agenda at conference. This is certainly helpful if we can continue to keep the ICPA conversations at the top of the pile.

Some highlights from the conference were positive commentary from Transport for NSW regarding the long-awaited School Drive Subsidy for Preschoolers and an update from Telstra advising that the final 12 Satellite schools in NSW are being transferred to Fibre Optic and by early 2022 all schools will be off the Satellite. Small Schools continue to be included in the Mobile Footprint, with both Clare and Naradhan now being in areas with mobile phone service. Some of you in this room will recall the Balranald branch motion back in 2013 at Federal Conference and it was lost but a year later carried, so please do not get disheartened if you lose a motion today, as this is what can be achieved if you stay focused and not take no for an answer. Many thanks to Federal ICPA for their advocacy for these small remote schools.

Mini Deputation 2021

To follow up from the Hay conference and keep the momentum going, on 21 June our State Secretary Deb Castle and Treasurer Shennah Joiner represented State Council in Sydney for mini deputation. They furthered the conversation with Transport about School Drive Subsidies and also met with NSW Education officials, the Minister for Mental Health Bronnie Taylor, the Minister for Education Sarah Mitchell and Roy Butler MP. There are a few key priorities that ICPA-NSW would like to see fixed as a matter of priority, issues that continually come to conference:

- Better internet technology for DE students

- School Drive Subsidy for Preschooler
- Mental Health for Youth
- Early Childhood education in remote areas

The solutions offered by ICPA-NSW are pragmatic and discussions have been positive, however it is a continued frustration for our members that things take years to be implemented and that means that for many children, the gaps in their learning and development remains.

A special mention must go to Deb and Shennah who, as a result of attending NSW parliament on 21 June, found themselves having to isolate for 14 days on their return home due to the COVID-19 restrictions affecting Sydney. I would like to publicly acknowledge both Deb and Shennah for their voluntary efforts amid yet another random outbreak. It really is testament to the commitment that they have to ICPA.

On the topic of COVID-19, with NSW sandwiched between three states, we continue to update and assist members who, due to border closures, find themselves anxious about their children's access to interstate boarding schools. We have managed to build trusted relationships with authorities in SA and Victoria and we thank ICPA Qld for being an advocate for our members with Qld authorities. The recent outbreaks have again highlighted the need for a national framework for the movement of boarding school children and we thank ICPA (Aust) for the work that continues to be done on this. The standout for us is that we surveyed members to find out where they lived so that we were armed with information to give authorities. The information we collected was invaluable as we knew that at some point the authorities would ask how many children? Where do they live? What school do they attend? And whilst the list produced is by no means exhaustive, it gave a very good indication to authorities that we knew our members and we knew what we were talking about, especially in the context of Isolation and Social Distancing due to these children living on remote properties.

There were some silver linings out of COVID-19. Being without events to attend State Councillors kept themselves busy deciding on a new logo for NSW. This circular logo builds on the previous one and is easy to use on social media platforms. We thought a calendar would be a nice little boost for everyone and ran a photo competition for member's children to produce a great calendar where a little bit of ICPA-NSW can be in everyone's homes. Plans are underway for a 2022 calendar following the success and positive feedback received. We have been able to fund this little promotion by using funds from the success of boarding schools advertising in Top Wire Magazine.

The 50th NSW conference will be held in Bourke next year. Bourke is the birthplace of ICPA, and I would like to acknowledge the work of the original founders of ICPA (Aust) in Bourke in 1971 and then of course in 1972 one year later the ICPA NSW State Council was formed, so we look forward to going back to Bourke next year for our State's 50th celebration.

Current memberships for NSW are 712. Our challenge is finding ways to keep members staying on whilst new ones join. With limited resources as volunteers, we need to do some thinking around how to keep members once their child's education is completed. We have designed some new flyers and are encouraging branches to take them to local preschools and schools – and if time permits do a small presentation to parent groups, however we are mindful of the time this takes for our volunteer branches to do. There is a sense of volunteer fatigue and on the back of COVID-19 and natural disasters in NSW the toll on our branches is evident.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the remarkable team of Councillors on ICPA NSW State Council. We currently have a full State Council and due to my own work commitments, I am often absent, this year especially I have had to step back and what I have found in doing that is others have

stepped in and I feel deeply privileged to have a team of 15 strong people who continue to inspire me with their energy and passion. I feel State Council is in good hands when the team can run like this and that is despite their own challenges with Drought, Bushfires, Floods, Mice Plagues, and family commitments, they continue to inspire me every day with their willingness to volunteer to help 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 time. The unwavering support from ICPA (Aust) has been such an incredible strength to us in NSW.

I will leave you with wise words said by Dr Lilian Katz at the ICPA (Aust) Conference in Brisbane in 1974: “Keep your eyes and thoughts on the children, they have no union, they cannot strike, they have no power – they deserve our thinking and our deepest reflections”.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Jill Greenfield

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

In 2009, I attended the Federal Conference in Longreach. Three children in tow, Col and I packed up the Jayco and headed over the border. As I watched on in awe, while listening to the speakers and motions, I never would have imagined that I would be in front of you presenting my third SA President’s report all these years later.

This year’s SA State Conference was held on Friday the 12th of March in Port Augusta, hosted by the Marree Air branch. The theme was Helping Young Minds Grow. We had approximately 80 attend the conference, with a wide range of speakers and a speaking panel consisting of representatives from SPELD, RFDS and Headspace.

We had 14 motions presented on the day and all motions were successfully carried. They came from a wide range of portfolio areas and included issues such as:

- Distance Education Teaching Allowance.
- The need to Implement high-quality, evidence-based literacy programs in schools.
- A nationally consistent and long-term approach to border restrictions and guidelines for those students who board interstate.
- The need to conduct health checks on all remote and isolated children.
- Early identification and intervention along with adequate and sufficient support for children with learning difficulties studying via Distance Education.
- To install small cell towers at properties to provide better access to communications which are vital for distance education.
- Rural school zoning and bus seat availability.
- AIC extending to 3–4-year olds.

The State Council executive elected at conference are: President - Jill Greenfield; Vice President - Lisa Slade; Immediate Past President - Kerry Williams; Secretary - vacant; Assistant Secretary - Hollie Williams; Treasurer- Michelle Hilder and Publicity Officer- Katrina Morris.

Appointed positions for 2021 are: Pipeline Editor - Lynly Kerin (off council position) and Layout Designer - Mija Reynolds (off council position); State Webmaster - Jodie Keogh; E-Newsletter Editor - Penny Rasheed; REVISE rep - Candice Brown; OACGC rep - Petie Rankin (off council position); Lone Member officer - Jodie Keogh.

We complete our State Council with: Candice Brown, Jess Barry, Belinda Hatcher, Di Thomas, Emilee Warnest, Melanie Lewis and Helen Williams.

Thank you to those state councillors that have stepped off State council: Kate Greenfield, Paulaine Vermeulen, Edwina Bowie, Petie Rankin, Mija Reynolds, Leisa Breeding and Stefanie Roeske. Your volunteer time has been much appreciated by all ICPA families.

A special thank you to Kate Greenfield who joined State Council in 2007 and has been a committed councillor over many years. We say farewell to Edwina as secretary; I would like to thank Edwina for her hard work and dedication. There were many late-night emails and early morning messages to keep the show running.

Joanna Gibson was awarded State Life membership at our conference. Joanna has been a wonderful source of information and assistance to many. Joanna joined the North West Branch in the early 2000s and soon stepped onto State council. She filled numerous positions both on State Council and in the North West branch over many years. Joanna joined Federal Council in 2013 for four years where she was the Communications portfolio leader. Joanna continues to remain passionate about ICPA and is an excellent support and source of information for me and our state.

State council have sent out motion letters and we were able to hold a productive delegation in late June in Adelaide. We met with The Hon John Gardner (Minister for Education), The Hon *Dan* van Holst Pellekaan (Member for Stuart), Child and Family Health Services (CaFHS), the Department for Education representatives and Livestock SA. We were guests of the Hon Dan van Holst Pellekaan where we had the great pleasure of dining at Parliament House. Face to face meetings are certainly an excellent and positive way of advocating for our rural and remote families.

SA ICPA have a new Membership form: <https://form.jotform.com/202696771063056> This form will give State council vital information to help us advocate for our members. The form is able to be completed when members either renew their membership or join up for the first time.

We have been extremely fortunate to have received two wonderful donations, from the Indulkaninna Foundation and Sandys Memorial Trust. State Council have put together bursary applications so that member families can benefit from these very generous donations. The categories in which members could apply are:

- Primary Schooling SPELD SA Literacy Intervention
- Kindergarten Bursary
- Primary Schooling Bursary
- Secondary Schooling Bursary
- Tertiary Education/Trade Bursary
- Creative Arts Bursary

We are once again fortunate to have been gifted a donation from the Indulkaninna Foundation and we have SPELD and education bursaries open to our members for the 2021 year.

The new ICPA website looks fantastic. Thank you to all who have put so much work into making it a wonderful one stop shop for us all to use. A special thank you to Jodie Keogh for her hard work uploading and filling the SA page with exciting content. It has been a learning curve for Jodie and one that she has tackled head on.

ICPA (SA) is fortunate to work with many government departments and organisations. Some of the projects and meetings that we have been fortunate to partake in are:

- Parent Engagement Project with the Department for Education
- Year 7 to High School with the Department for Education
- ACCAN / nbn local SA and NT Roundtable “No South Australian or Territorian Left Offline”
- Boarder/border round table meeting with Minster Gee, Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education
- Broadband Access Guarantee
- Emerging Minds podcasts released in July 2020
- Telstra Roundtable Meeting
- Joint Council Meetings
- Boarding House letter (on website)
- Portfolio Meetings
- Telstra Mobile Blackspot proposal
- CaFHS / RFDS / ICPA joint meetings
- Telstra Small Cell tower project
- Telstra “SA Far North communications upgrade”
- Country and Digital Strategies consultation meeting

Thank you to those councillors who have been able to attend meetings on behalf of ICPA (SA).

ICPA (SA) State Council wrote a submission for the Review of Regional Schooling Resource Standards Loadings in November. We based our submission on the point that rural and remote schools are more costly to resource. They need to be resourced in a unique way, so that students do not miss out on vital learning opportunities.

A letter from ICPA (SA) was sent to all boarding schools in South Australia outlining the need for our children to be caringly nurtured particularly through a difficult time of drought. Many children return to boarding school, or maybe for the first time, with a great weight of guilt for not being at home to help or knowing that there is a financial burden placed on their family. We thank the SA boarding schools for their continued support of our ICPA families and students.

Communications issues continue to be at the forefront of ICPA (SA). We have been fortunate to be invited and involved in many exciting ventures and meetings. We have joined Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN). I attended the ACCAN /nbn local SA and NT roundtable “No South Australian or Territorian Left Offline” roundtable meeting. ICPA (SA) and Telstra are currently working on the capacity to deliver small cell towers to remote properties. This is a very exciting venture, so watch this space.

ICPA (SA) were invited to be involved in a Parent Engagement Project with the Department for Education. The Department for Education want to explore how they can better support and encourage parents to engage in their children’s learning. ICPA (SA) main focus is that many of our remote schools are unique, especially School of the Air, so this brings its own challenges.

We were fortunate to be involved in the creation of the “Talking about Drought” series of podcasts. Annabel Axford and Drew Radford joined us last year at our state conference and were able to hear stories and firsthand accounts from families who were living in drought with their family. There were eight Podcasts in total with topics ranging from ‘Looking after yourself’, ‘Supporting your child’s social connections’ and ‘Focussing on the positive future’. I personally enjoyed working with Annabel and seeing the podcast develop from an idea to become a useful tool for parents as they navigate hurdles. We were able to share these podcasts with our networks and they were listened to, far and wide.

SA State Council presented a motion last year at Federal Conference regarding the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) for students travelling to Canberra to enhance their learning in civics and citizenship education. Federal Council have recently given us the positive news that there has been a 50% increase in the PACER rebate for students. Thank you ICPA (Aust) for your continuous hard work and persistence with our motion, and all the motions that were presented at conference.

We have continued to share information with members through our e-newsletter. We send out a MailChimp approximately every eight weeks which keeps our members up to date with conference information, applications for bursaries and news from State Council. Thank you to Penny who collates these editions and is always striving for members to open them with a catchy heading or photo.

The Pipeline magazine continues to go from strength to strength. Lynly Kerin is great at sourcing stories, podcast ideas, kids work, recipes, book reviews and up to date information for members to read. Whilst Mija Reynolds has stepped off State Council, she continues to do the layout of the magazine.

Sadly, one of our long-time members, Janne Warwick passed away in June. She was a life member of the Flinders Ranges branch and a convenor of three Federal Conferences all held in Adelaide. Janne was a passionate supporter of ICPA.

2022 SA State Conference will be hosted by the Port Augusta Branch, in Port Augusta on Friday the 1st of April. We look forward to welcoming members and guests to our 50th year of SA ICPA.

Thank you to the convening committee for the wonderful conference. Once again, my husband and I, minus the kids (who are now adults) have trekked up the Birdsville Track and over the border to join you all in Longreach. Thank you to the sponsors, your assistance is greatly appreciated by all.

Thank you to Alana, Federal Councillors, and my fellow Presidents for your continued support with all things ICPA. Have a wonderful day.

WEB MANAGER’S REPORT

Sue Shotton

Distinguished Guests and fellow ICPA Members, it gives me great pleasure to present the 2021 Web Manager’s Report and Longreach is a fitting venue to discuss the exciting news of ICPA’s new website.

I was on Federal Council the last time conference was held in Longreach and the exciting discussions then revolved around a new website that was in the process of being created, which we now refer to as the old website.

What a busy 18 months since we were informed our old website platform, Breeze, was going into retirement. First there was the canvassing of developers and platforms and the decision made by all state bodies on what direction we would go. It was decided that the platform Drupal would be used, and we would engage the services of Enrega to develop the website. According to our old developers, Clear Pixel, we chose wisely as Drupal is a developer's platform and it would be easy to make the website do what the organisation wants it to do. They were correct and it has done that with some minor hiccups but everything we have asked for was achieved. ICPA would like to thank Lee of Clear Pixel for his years of support and wish him well in his retirement.

As Lisa has mentioned the cost of this development has been covered in part from a grant and the remainder of the cost covered by ICPA (Aust). I am certain all members and state bodies acknowledge the financial assistance of our parent body and thank them for this which has ensured all members have access to a modern, state of the art website.

The main objective of this development was to allow each State to make their website their own and the best way to do this was to involve the States in the development and to be hands on. So, I thank our web development team Nikki Macqueen, Alana Moller, Anika Bell, Sarah Cook, Claire Butler, Gabie Le Lievre, Jill Greenfield, Jodie Keogh, Kate Thompson, Kym Ross, Louise Martin, Melissa Iland, Sally Brindal and Tammie Irons, commonly referred to as the "Website Wonderwomen" on our Messenger chat.

What an achievement this group of busy women has done to create pages that are informative and appealing. If they felt an improvement could be done, then the developer created this change to the benefit of all. I encourage all members to look at every state's pages to view what has been done and more importantly find relevant information for your situation. If you do come across something you feel is not right or missing, please contact your state web person in the first instance or the Federal web team. This is an easy process by selecting "our Team" on whatever site you are on. Click on the web person then send them a message directly.

The website itself is a one stop shop for all things such as surveys, online payments, donations, merchandise and memberships. Do you like the Federal Conference website? This was developed for Longreach, but it is actually a template on the website so if other states would like to use this for their State Conferences, the backbone structure is there to be modified with the state branding and specific information.

The database has been created and is a different format than our previous one so this is to allow the two members of the family to have their own email addresses on the database to be used for mailouts if they wish this to happen. As this change was a massive change, only members from 2020 onwards are contained on the database on the website. Previous archival membership information is available, and this can be supplied on request. I would like to thank, Assistant Web Manager, Nikki Macqueen for her tireless effort to ensure all members that were uploaded are correct. She has done a massive job. I would like to also thank Federal Membership Officer, Jane O'Brien for learning on the run how to put manual members onto the system. This too was a massive task, but I think we have it up to date now. Please if any member has an issue and feel information is not correct, please contact Jane for her to update.

As I write this, we are still in the development stage to give all Treasurer's and state Membership Officers access to the database to search, view and export. There are some teething problems with this which I hope will be rectified by Conference. This access will be available to branch Treasurers as well on request if they wish to access the federal membership information of their branch. Please

email me for access if you wish this. Blackall Branch will be trialling this when it is set up and functional.

Every financial member has access to their own member's portal where they can update their details, the details of their additional person, fill out their individual state membership questionnaires, update their payment options and access member only information. Memberships can be paid online and during Nov to March there will be an option for recurring payments if a member wishes to use this facility.

Branches also have their own mini website on their state website. This consists of three pages. The right tab page is the location and is not editable and the middle one is "Our Team" which is the executive of the branch. This information when it needs changing needs to be emailed to the State web person so they can update this page. The left-hand page and the prominent first page is information about the Branch. This can be edited by the branch and can be quite individualised if the branch would like to be creative. If the branch would like to edit this information and has a web person which would like to have a go then they must contact the Web Manager or Assistant Web Manager for access and training, but the opportunity is there if a branch wishes to use it.

I will be in Longreach throughout Conference and all of Friday so if anybody or a Branch Executive would like to discuss the website or see what can be done for their branch, please come and see me.

Finally, I would like to thank the support of the current Federal Council and Federal President, Alana Moller, over this development and thank them for the faith they have had in me with some of the decisions that had to be made. Nikki has worked the "front of house" presentation with the "Website Wonderwomen" to produce a great website and this has allowed me to work behind the scenes on technical things which need to happen so everything works. This year has been a hard year for me personally, especially the last few months, and Nikki has gone beyond what is expected to give me support and help things along. They say give a busy person more things to do and they get done. This is true in 99% of the time but sometimes when you get bombarded with one crisis on top of another that busy person then delegates it to Nikki. Thanks Nikki!!

PEDALS EDITOR'S REPORT

Raelene Hall

As I was riding my lean, green, racing machine (an old bike from a verge collection done up!) one morning it occurred to me that ICPA could basically be the Government of Australia!

Big call I know but think about this for a minute. We have a Federal level with a President in charge, state levels, each with their own President in charge and we have the people (members) across the country.

Just imagine what we could achieve if we were in charge for just one week. Hooley Dooley. There would be some money spent but spent wisely, with consultation across Federal and States, to ensure the funds would make the most impact.

Discussions would be held, without angst and all wanting the very best for everyone, not just their state/people.

And think of the savings with no fancy aircraft/helicopters, parliament houses, dining out, overseas trips, campaigning and so much more.

Oh, please bring it on -just one week! I reckon we would sort more problems in one week than our Governments can sometimes manage in a year or years.

That is a very simplistic view I know but we are allowed to dream are we not?

So, what has that to do with the 'Pedals' magazine?

Well, I see Pedals as our version of the 'Australian' newspaper. It is our National ICPA magazine, but it is there not just to share ICPA information but to share the stories of our people. Those stories we all have, that we think no one is interested in, would never want to read and we do not have time to write anyway.

It is the stories of the smallest branches volunteering to run the largest events, it is the stories of the families who have overcome heartache and hardship to forge on, it's the stories of our kids' achievements.

I have received stories that have made me laugh and cry, stories that make you want to throw your hands up in the air and just shout 'for goodness sake someone in authority help this person/child/family' and I've even watched families' journeys through life in stories and photos.

Those photos! They are not always clear, nor large enough and sometimes I just cannot use them, but I love seeing every single one of them. They are our ICPA organisation in pictures and it is always my aim to share as many of them as possible, although I can never include as many as I would like.

Every cover tells its own story, whether it features children, teenagers, adults, males, or females. They all have a wonderful connection to ICPA and, I hope, every single one of them brings a smile to your face when your magazine arrives in the mail.

So today I come to you with a message. I am not going to harangue you all to send me your stories and photos, as I often do in these reports.

Instead, I want to thank you, one and all. Every single person who has contributed to the magazine, not just in these past years of the pandemic but right back from when I started as editor. I know you are all busy and many of you do not feel you have a story worth telling but believe me when I say it is.

Your stories are the history of ICPA, of the places where you live, work, and educate your children, what your life looked like then, now, and what it will look like into the future, as we move forward. The contributions from our young people show up the outstanding talent we often find in the bush.

Please, don't ever underestimate your contributions to Pedals magazine. Without your input there is no magazine. I have had people read the magazine who have no connection, at all, with ICPA and told me how much they enjoyed reading it.

One of the reasons for that, I believe, is because every article in the magazine is real. Whether it covers the latest branch fundraiser, a State conference or book launch, struggles with educating children, frustrations with technology or your favourite recipe it is written by an ICPA member living in the very 'real' world.

At the end of the day, you also have the 'claim to fame' that you have had your words published in a National magazine – a damn good one at that!

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

BOARDING/HOSTELS/SECOND HOME REPORT

Nikki Macqueen

The Boarding/Hostels/Second Home portfolio has continued to focus on key topics which concern our families, from recent issues brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic to more longstanding issues, including the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Allowance. The ICPA (Aust) Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Briefing Paper, found here gives an outline of the key topics being worked on at this time.

<https://icpa.com.au/au/federal-boardinghostelssecond-home-briefing-paper>

COVID-19 and Beyond

COVID-19 has continued to raise serious issues for boarding students and families right across Australia and we are looking at the likelihood of 2022 being similar. Due to the online platform of the 2020 ICPA Federal Conference only motions not already in policy were accepted on the agenda and four motions were carried in the Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio. Two Pandemic related motions were tabled regarding the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) guidelines for boarding as well as the establishment of an Isolated Children's Pandemic Advisory Group made up of State and Federal Education Ministers, relevant authorities, the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) and ICPA representatives to address the issue of boarders crossing state borders to access their compulsory schooling.

Interstate Boarders

ICPA (Aust) and State Councils, along with other stakeholders including the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) have worked collaboratively and tirelessly on behalf of families who need to cross state borders to travel to and from boarding schools, including a joint submission made in November 2020 to the Hon Andrew Gee MP, Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education indicating the vision of a National Framework to support interstate boarders. Thanks must go to every ICPA State President and their Councils for the commitment that they have given which was beyond impressive and certainly appreciated by Federal Council and duly noted by the Federal Government.

Due to a cabinet reshuffle, Senator Bridget McKenzie replaced Minister Gee and we continue to work proactively with the Minister and her staff to ensure the rural and remote voice is strongly represented when it comes to boarders and borders.

Following a year and a half of collaborative and united advocacy for the establishment of a nationally consistent and practical solution to provide certainty and clarity for families whose children board interstate, the news that the National Cabinet had endorsed a National Code for Boarding Students in September 2021 was very welcome. This Code sets forth a roadmap for nationally consistent, pragmatic, COVID-safe travel arrangements to help families navigate border restrictions across all states for boarding students. Further information and the Code can be found at <https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/resources/national-code-boarding-school-students>

Our gratitude goes to Senator Bridget McKenzie, Senator Perin Davey, Minister Andrew Gee, Senator Susan McDonald and other Members of Parliament, Senators and stakeholders for their dedication to achieving this outcome for geographically isolated interstate boarding students and their families impacted by the pandemic.



Boarding schools across Australia have also been supportive and proactive in assisting geographically isolated families through some challenging times during the COVID-19 Pandemic. On behalf of our members, this message was published in the August 2020 ABSA magazine “Lights Out” which is sent to every Boarding School and Hostel throughout Australia to thank Boarding Schools for working closely with boarder families to deliver online lessons when the COVID-19 Pandemic resulted in temporary closure.

Religious Discrimination Bill

Following on from the 2020 Conference, ICPA (Aust) has also continued to monitor the introduction of the Religious Discrimination Bill to ensure that rural and remote students are not disadvantaged. Work had begun on this prior to last year’s Conference as this issue had been raised in early 2020. ICPA (Aust) has had several discussions with Members of Parliament, Senators and various individuals and organisations including ABSA regarding the Religious Discrimination Bill. At this stage, the Bill has been tabled, however we note there have been no further advancements from our reviews of the legislation. We shall continue our work in this area and monitor the situation closely.

Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC)

The Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme continues to be a central focus of the Portfolio. ICPA (Aust) has welcomed the commitment by the Government to continue to pay the allowance in 2020 and 2021 even while some geographically isolated boarding students have been unable to access their schools. Federal Council encourages members to contact the AIC hotline 13 23 18 should they be impacted in any way in the future.

ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate strongly for the AIC allowance to be increased across the board and to be aligned with the CPI Education Sub-index, rather than standard CPI rate, as this does not reflect nor keep pace with the ongoing rises in educational costs for boarding. COVID-19 has extenuated this issue, with the economic impact of the Pandemic resulting in negligible increases to CPI and therefore no increase to the AIC Boarding Allowance from 2020 to 2021 and only a limited increase to the AIC Second Home Allowance. This is very concerning as it will result in further increases to out-of-pocket expenses for geographically isolated families to educate their children, which are already proving unsustainable for many. ICPA (Aust) will continue to raise this issue at every opportunity in the coming months.

Following Canberra delegations in May, ICPA (Aust) sought to strengthen its AIC advocacy in an effort to better represent the experiences and needs of our geographically isolated children and their families. Ministers, Members of Parliament, Senators and Government Departments will receive a newly developed AIC Briefing Paper, which collates all the AIC issues in the one document. We have also supplemented this with case studies of members’ situations forwarded to us from State Councils. This AIC Paper can be found on the ICPA website at

<https://icpa.com.au/au/federal-assistance-isolated-children-aic-briefing-paper>

To assist our advocacy, ICPA (Aust) has prepared the below table using available data to exemplify the changes in boarding fees in comparison to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance. While state to state the figures are quite diverse and we have not been able to obtain all

Comparison of average Boarding fees and Assistance For Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme								
AIC – Basic Boarding Allowance 2015	AIC – Basic Boarding Allowance 2021	% Increase of AIC 2015-2021	State	Average Boarding Fee 2015	Average Boarding Fee 2021	% Increase of Boarding fees 2015-2021	% Boarding Fees covered by AIC 2015	% Boarding Fees covered by AIC 2021
\$7 897	\$8 557	8%	Vic	-	\$26 631	-	-	32%
			WA	-	\$22 730	-	-	38%
			SA	\$19 991	\$22 789	14%	39%	37%
			ACT	-	\$26 042	-	-	33%
			Tas	\$15 467	\$19 533	26%	51%	44%
			NT	\$14 233	\$24 830	74%	55%	34%
			Qld	\$17 288	\$20 430	18%	46%	42%
AIC – Basic Boarding Allowance 2014	AIC – Basic Boarding Allowance 2021	% Increase of AIC 2014-2021	State	Average Boarding Fee 2014	Average Boarding Fee 2021	% Increase of Boarding fees 2014 -2021	% Boarding Fees covered by AIC 2014	% Boarding Fees covered by AIC 2021
\$7 667	\$8 557	12%	NSW	\$20 331	\$25 206	24%	38%	34%

data for all states, there is no doubt that the trend is boarding fees are rising significantly more than AIC each year. Federal Council is immensely grateful for the AIC payment and acknowledge the growth in the payment over the years since its inception, however, we continue to harbour concerns about the impacts of the ever-increasing gap between boarding fees and the AIC payment on the ability for our families to access adequate schooling for their children.

AIC online renewal has been a motion raised often throughout the years and it is something that we mention in every meeting we have with the Department of Social Services. We have been told it will be rolled out in 2022, and we shall continue to hold the Department to that. There have often been mistakes in AIC paperwork sent from the Department to families as well as erroneous payments, and we are hopeful that an online renewal/application system will alleviate these inaccuracies.

Socio-Economic Status Score Methodology for School Funding

At the 2019 Federal Conference, members raised concerns on the Socio-Economic Status Score Methodology for school funding and its impact on regional, rural and remote students and the schools they attend, especially those who must attend independent boarding schools to access their education.

ICPA (Aust) has been monitoring this topic closely and since March 2020, has lodged two submissions to the National School Resourcing Board (NSRB) in which Council accentuated the concerns of our members. We also took the opportunity to participate in a consultation with the Board where we raised the concerns of members and highlighted the unique circumstances of rural and remote families, especially around the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) methodology along with the disregard for boarding operations in the funding measure. This was also a key topic raised during delegations in Parliament House in May this year. The Hon Alan Tudge MP, Minister for Education has tasked Minister Gee with investigating the anomalies which have been raised by ICPA (Aust) and

other organisations to ascertain the impact on rural, regional and remote schools, and we hope that this will see this issue addressed.

In May 2021 ICPA (Aust) President Alana Moller and myself were guest presenters on an ABSA webinar titled "Solving the Homesickness Challenge" directed at Heads of Boarding across Australia. We thank ABSA for the opportunity to put forward a rural and remote parents' perspective and for inviting us to be involved in such a great presentation. We look forward to participating in such forums again in the future. Federal Council is pleased to be able to work with ABSA on a range of topics and are grateful for their ongoing support and assistance for not only the boarding portfolio but for ICPA as a whole.

Thank you to the Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Kristen Coggan, Nikki Mahony, Kim Hughes and Alana Moller for your assistance this year. This will be my final report as I shall be stepping off Council after this Conference. Over the seven years I have been on Council, I have either led or been a member of this portfolio, and I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute. During this time, I have seen the Portfolio change name, the launch of the Australian Boarder Parent Handbook by Dr Kate Hadwen, undertook the ICPA (Aust) AIC Application Survey and the Boarding School Access Research for Geographically Isolated Students, had countless phone calls and meetings with Department officials including the legendary Guy Mathews and Matt Ferguson plus attended three ABSA Conferences representing ICPA (Aust). I would like to express my heartfelt thank you to Richard Stokes, Tom Dunsmore and their team at ABSA for always being only a phone call away and for keeping their door open. The support they offer ICPA and our rural and remote boarding families across Australia is astounding. Thank you to the three Presidents I have served my term under: Judy Sinclair Newton, Wendy Hick and Alana Moller, and to every Federal Councillor during that time. As I have always said, ICPA has given me far more than I have given it.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Kristen Coggan

ICPA (Aust) has continued 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 educational outcomes.

Throughout the past year we have continued our membership in the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC), attending regular RRRCC meetings and associated stakeholder forums. We have taken these opportunities to impart the experiences and concerns of ICPA (Aust) members across many communications issues. ICPA (Aust) is also a member of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) and have a representative on the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) Consumer Panel where we further raise awareness of communication challenges for rural and remote students and their families.

Federal Council's work in the Communications portfolio has continued extensively this past year.

Internet

ICPA (Aust) maintains regular contact with NBN Co and Telstra to ensure that the data and other communications needs of geographically isolated students are at the forefront of their minds and that initiatives introduced such as the introduction of Sky Muster Plus are maintained and continue to be enhanced. Sky Muster Plus has been an exciting development whereby many educational sites are now unmetered content on these satellite plans and ICPA (Aust) are in the fortunate position to be able to liaise with nbn to continue the ongoing conversation regarding the un-metering of any sites

that are needed for educational purposes. Federal Council will continue to ensure members are informed of the best choices for them in terms of accessing adequate and high-quality internet services for their children's education purposes. We are also working with Telstra and State Councils to establish increased unmetered data for educational requirements of geographically isolated students when mobile services are used.

In delegation meetings with the Minister for Communications, Urban infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP and Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government, the Hon Mark Coulton MP, Federal Council highlighted that for many geographically isolated families, online learning is ongoing and the requirement for adequate and high-quality internet services in regional, rural and remote locations are essential to guarantee access to equitable education. We have sought assurance that the Government will ensure that the communications initiatives continue to be enhanced, improved and expanded for these geographically isolated students.

Alternative internet services and technology

Members highlighted at the 2020 Federal Conference that the limited alternatives for internet connectivity and services in rural, regional and remote Australia continue to impede equitable access to educational opportunities for students in these areas. To that end, members sought to encourage the Commonwealth Government to work proactively and cooperatively with companies attempting to bring diverse universal broadband internet to Australia, including alternative satellite-based internet services and technologies. Federal Council contacted the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) as well as both Minister Fletcher and Minister Coulton, citing the importance of options and choice when accessing internet services, with the potential of alternative technology providing more affordable, practical and accessible solutions for geographically isolated families.

ICPA (Aust) understands there are already alternative solutions becoming available in Australia and that the Federal Government supports and encourages the development of these new technologies to provide increased choice for members. We will continue to watch this space and keep members informed of any developments in this regard.

ICPA (Aust) has been in meetings directly with alternative supplier Starlink and look forward to the prospect of what this could mean for our members. Currently Starlink are beta testing their product and service in Australia and have roughly 400 connections located in Southern Australia. Starlink are very keen to service more of Australia as they keep launching more satellites and build more ground stations. More information is available here

<https://birraus.com/starlink-in-australia/>

Portable internet supply for transient GI students

An ongoing concern for members is the lack of access to internet services for transient geographically isolated students who study via distance education, which is often reliant on connectivity to access the curriculum and other aspects of schooling. ICPA (Aust) has continued to raise this issue in a variety of forums, and we can reassure members that there is activity in regards to progressing a practical solution for these families. Federal Council would welcome any case studies from families who face this conundrum, so we are able to ensure your needs are recognised. We are pleased there have been some progress in this space, with trials being undertaken and solutions being investigated, however we will continue to highlight that families will require financial and possibly other support to access these solutions.

Telephone

ICPA (Aust) is acutely aware that access to adequate telephony continues to be high on the agenda for members.

ICPA (Aust) corresponded and met virtually with Telstra on a number of occasions requesting that Telstra provide a customer end technology roadmap for the transition from existing mobile phone configurations to country 5G due in 2024. We have been assured by Telstra that they are working earnestly in this space and we will certainly keep members informed of developments as they arise.

Federal Council have also sought from the Federal Government, in correspondence with the Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP and Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government, the Hon Mark Coulton MP, consideration of financial assistance or a rebate for rural and remote customers who use mobile broadband for education to upgrade the equipment they may be currently using to access these services (including antennas, boosters that may be rendered obsolete) to ensure ongoing coverage and service in locations whereby alternative telecommunications may otherwise be unavailable. While our requests have been met with some understanding and empathy, we cannot say anything has developed in this space.

Alternative Voice Trials

The \$2 million Alternative Voice Services Trials program (or AVST) aims to identify new ways to deliver voice services (including by new providers) to assess their effectiveness and raise awareness of alternative solutions to provide better services and functionality.

Six AVST grants have now been awarded to Concerotel, NBN Co, Optus, Pivotel, Telstra and Zetifi to deliver up to 885 trial services in different rural and remote locations across Australia. ICPA (Aust) are disappointed that many of the “alternatives” are satellite based as we would like to see our families with access to at least two alternative sources of communications. In saying this, we have been assured that nothing will change with regards to current phone service types unless the solutions are equal to or better than existing services.

Regional Tech Hub

ICPA (Aust) welcomed the launch of the Regional Tech Hub, a Federal Government initiative to offer free, independent advice to regional Australians on the best internet and mobile phone connection for work, study and lifestyle needs in late 2020. The establishment of the Regional Tech Hub comes as a direct result of requests from ICPA (Aust), its members, other stakeholders and organisations, for regional, rural and remote communications assistance to be made available. The Hub is being jointly operated by the National Farmers Federation (NFF) and the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN). ICPA are working closely with the Hub staff and are a part of the Regional Tech Hub Stakeholder Reference Group. Federal Council encourages members to familiarise themselves with the Regional Tech Hub and access their services when required via their website <https://regionaltechhub.org.au> through the Regional Tech Hub Facebook page, including a new discussion board initiative, Twitter, by email: helpdesk@regionaltechhub.org.au or [contact the Hub's hotline on 1300 081 029](#). The Hub also has some provider contact details and a handy printout you can fill in for easy reference when you need it.

<https://regionaltechhub.org.au/stay-connected/provider-contact-sheet/>

ICPA (Aust) has been involved in the development of the education section on the Hub's website and look forward to continuing to work with the Hub staff to ensure the needs of our members are recognised and considered. ICPA (Aust) believes that this service needs to be retained and expanded and urge the Government to provide surety of ongoing and secure funding for the Hub's continuation

past the current 12-month commitment. We raised this during meetings with the Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP and then Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government, the Hon Mark Coulton MP and urged the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review Committee to recommend the Hub be retained and enhanced.

Distance Education Broadband Working Group (DEBWG)

ICPA (Aust) has been a member of this Federal Government initiative since it was first established in 2015 and it has been a welcome forum to represent our members in the field of communications for distance education. Federal Council are keen to see this group continue and develop so that we can maintain this direct connection with the Department of Communications in order to advance the needs of our members.

Regional Rural and Remote Coalition (RRRCC)

ICPA (Aust) continues to be an active member of the Regional Rural and Remote Coalition (RRRCC). We join together with many like-minded stakeholders as a Coalition to highlight our collective concern about the lack of equitable access to reliable and quality telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia. We represent the businesses, communities and families of rural and regional Australia. In the coming months ICPA (Aust) will meet with the RRRCC for delegations in Canberra.

2021 Regional Telecommunications Review

The Regional Telecommunications Review provided an opportunity for people living and working in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia to share their views and experiences using telecommunications services in their area. Every three years the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (the Committee) is appointed to conduct the review and to hear people's experiences firsthand.

The 2021 Committee was announced by then Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government, the Honourable Mark Coulton MP on 2 June 2021. The Review will be held from June to December. The [five members appointed to the Committee](#) are: the Hon Luke Hartsuyker (Chair), Ms Sue Middleton, Ms Kristy Sparrow, Professor Hugh Bradlow and Mr Michael Cosgrave. The Review will examine the adequacy of telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia, along with particular issues identified in the [Terms of Reference](#) <https://www.rtirc.gov.au/terms-reference>.

From late July until 30 September 2021, the Committee held virtual public consultations and sought views through written submissions in response to an Issues Paper with communities and stakeholders around Australia.

ICPA (Aust) encouraged members to participate in the consultation process and Federal Council had the opportunity to attend a consultation meeting with the Review Committee to raise the experiences and needs of our members. We, along with a number of State Councils also lodged a submission to the Review. Within our submission we reiterated our belief that equitable educational opportunities in rural and remote locations are dependent upon the availability of high quality, reliable, affordable and adequate telecommunications.

As part of the Review, the Committee will deliver a Report and make recommendations to the Australian Government. The Committee has been asked to deliver its Report by 31 December 2021 or earlier. ICPA (Aust) looks forward to the release of the Committee's Report and the recommendations for future regional, rural and remote communications. Members can follow the progress of the Review at <https://www.rtirc.gov.au/>

Mobile Black Spot Program

ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate and discuss the Mobile Black Spot Program with government and stakeholders. The Government has committed \$380 million to the Mobile Black Spot Program to invest in telecommunications infrastructure to improve mobile coverage and competition across Australia.

The Program is supported by co-contributions from state and local governments, mobile network operators ([Optus](#), [Telstra](#), [TPG Telecom Ltd \(formerly Vodafone\)](#) and [Field Solutions Group](#)), businesses and local communities.

Under the first five rounds of the Program (Round 1, Round 2, the Priority Locations Round, Round 4 and Round 5), the Government's commitment has generated investment of more than \$836 million, delivering more than 1,200 new base stations across Australia. Round 6 is about to commence, more information can be found here

<https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/mobile-services-and-coverage/mobile-black-spot-program>

Telstra 3G shutdown

The Telstra 3G will be gradually shut down in June 2024. Telstra is committed to providing 4G coverage equivalent to their 3G coverage by the time of 3G closure. Telstra will be undertaking detailed checks of coverage outcomes as they upgrade sites to include 4G. 4G is more advanced than 3G so most customers will experience an upgraded service. The 3G spectrum will be repurposed to 5G. This will help expand 5G coverage in regional Australia more extensively. Most customers will migrate naturally, but all will be fully supported through the 3G closure. NGWL services will also be migrated to 4G. Reports of 3G coverage reducing are all investigated whenever reported and any reduction in coverage due to site upgrades is quickly resolved. For this to happen customers need to report faults to Telstra.

Helpful Contacts

In recent times it has been very encouraging to see providers and services acknowledging the need for rural, regional and remote customers to have access to specialised help for their communication needs. ICPA (Aust) has collated a list of useful communications contacts for members at <https://icpa.com.au/au/useful-websites-news-and-resources-communications>.

While this is not an exhaustive list, we hope that it assists many members to gain assistance and support for their communications needs. This is currently being updated on the ICPA website.

As I finalise this report, ICPA (Aust) understand that there have been developments for New South Wales schools. Read more at <https://icpa.com.au/>

ICPA (Aust) has been well supported in our telecommunications issues by the State Councils, Branches and members and we will continue to raise concerns wherever it is possible to have them addressed.

CURRICULUM REPORT

Wendy Hick

With no Curriculum motions at the 2020 Federal Conference, Federal Council has focused on our ongoing relationships with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to ensure that the perspective of our rural and remote students is considered in decisions made with regard to the Australian Curriculum. We continue to participate in regular ACARA stakeholder

meetings as part of the Parents and Principals Peak National Bodies group and have had the opportunity to provide feedback on a several topics and specifically NAPLAN recently. Federal Council has welcomed the Parent Updates we receive from ACARA which are shared in the Federal Branch Bulletin and hopefully members find these useful. Federal Council was pleased to assist in the “ACARA Parent Vox Pops re Australian Curriculum” during 2020, which provided feedback from parents in the format of one-to-two-minute short videos addressing questions related to the Australian Curriculum.

Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Review

As part of Federal Council’s interaction with ACARA, we have been involved in briefings and consultations regarding the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Review and we continue to follow the progress of the Review.

This is the first time the curriculum has been reviewed in its entirety since its inception, with the intention of scaling back the Curriculum by about 20 per cent amid concerns it is too overcrowded. Further, the syllabus will be simplified in an attempt to ensure children have a solid grasp on foundational numeracy and literacy.

The Learning Area Review aims to declutter the curriculum, improve manageability and reduce content across the eight Learning Areas as well as improve the Australian Curriculum with some revision and updating of content.

On 29 April 2021, a slimmed-down syllabus was released for public comment and the public consultation phase of the Australian Curriculum Review began. A new Review of Curriculum website was used for the public consultation phase of the Review (28 April - 8 July 2021), to assist members of the public with resources, Frequently Asked Questions and other information.

A few examples of proposed Australian Curriculum changes include:

- The English curriculum remains mostly intact, although lessons on using software such as Word or PowerPoint are removed
- Students learning a foreign language will focus more on speaking and writing, instead of analysing cultural differences in English
- reading a clock (new suggestion year 2) and reciting times tables (new suggestion Year 4) won’t be taught until children are older
- physical education lessons will include more activity, games and sport, with less classroom theory

In our comments to the Review, ICPA (Aust) put forward curriculum issues which have been raised by members and in ICPA policy throughout the consultation process and also through the web form. Topics Including:

- Basic literacy, numeracy and computer literacy be regarded as essential to all students on the completion of primary school, regardless of location
- The development of Distance Education courses to be undertaken by those who have a working knowledge of the needs of rural and remote students and consideration for the time commitment required by distance education tutors for course implementation.
- That rural and remote students with specific learning needs be a vital consideration in curriculum development.
- National curriculum which contains relevant, accurate representations of agriculture, including explicit components on Food and Fibre production, to be taught and integrated into primary and secondary school curriculums.

Federal Council acknowledges State Councils also contributed to the Review and all councils encouraged members to provide feedback where possible, as on the ground experience of the curriculum is extremely valuable.

At the conclusion of the Review, explanations of the changes being made to the curriculum and the reasons for these changes in each learning area will be explained in a section on the ACARA website and each state curriculum authority will also decide how they wish to share their information as well. The current Curriculum Review website can be found at:
<https://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/curriculum-review>

It has been indicated that the altered Curriculum should be available for implementation from early next year. However, whether the new version is implemented across jurisdictions will be dependent upon decisions made at state and territory level. ICPA (Aust) will ensure that any further developments regarding the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Review are passed on to members as available.

National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Federal, state and territory education ministers have agreed that all schools will gradually transition from the current paper-based NAPLAN tests to the computer-based assessments, with the aim for all schools to undertake NAPLAN online by 2022. ICPA (Aust) continues to participate in discussions around how to manage the devices and ensure that the download and upload required for the NAPLAN Online platform will be obtainable as well as the necessary resources available for schools no matter where they are located. Several states have raised points around a shortage of devices to implement NAPLAN Online and concern for schools that do not have reliable (or any) internet at their school and Federal Council is closely following these conversations. Federal Council would welcome feedback from members as to the experiences of their students during the 2021 NAPLAN testing period.

The Federal Government signalled that the 2021 NAPLAN results will be used to measure the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and identify consequences associated with these effects. ICPA (Aust) welcomed this intent and were especially interested to keep abreast of impacts that may be specifically attributed to the move to online lessons and schooling from home, given this mode of learning for many geographically isolated children is used regularly and often their only option for education due to the remoteness of where they live. It was therefore pleasing that from preliminary outcomes released in August, there appeared to be limited impacts on students' results; these results being somewhat of a relief for those geographically isolated families who educate their children at home full time, regardless of the pandemic, that the quality of their school experience is not significantly less than others in mainstream situations. These preliminary results are detailed here <https://www.acara.edu.au/docs/default-source/media-releases/20210813-naplan-results-med-rel.pdf>

Further Australian Curriculum information and updates are regularly available on the ACARA and NAPLAN websites <https://www.acara.edu.au/> and <https://www.nap.edu.au/>

Primary Production in the National Curriculum

The Australian Government's Educating Kids About Agriculture: Kids to Farms grant continues to run over three years from 2019-20 to 2021-22 and will conclude on 30 June 2022. The program was announced in May 2019 as part of the Federal Government's Our Plan to Showcase Agriculture: Our Heritage Our Future where state farming bodies and organisations were encouraged to apply for grants to help run programs which connect students and agriculture by sponsoring government,

Catholic and independent primary school visits to farms and other primary production worksites to learn about agriculture production, sustainability practices and land stewardship.

Federal Council is encouraged by the resources and programs being developed by other organisations as well as some state governments to assist schools and students (both Primary and Secondary) learn about food and fibre production, including:

- Kids to Farms
- Kids to Farms is a joint initiative between NSW Farmers and Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment as part of the Educating Kids about Agriculture: Kids to Farms program.

https://www.visitmyfarm.com.au/kids-to-farms_home?mc_cid=9c13c1fc23&mc_eid=f1883f5d1b

Cotton Australia

The Cotton Education Kit is a comprehensive digital platform that maps the information to the Australian Curriculum for Years 7-10 and to Years 11-12 in relevant curriculums from all states and territories. Cotton Australia has two Education Kits available for students and school classroom teachers: The Cotton Education Kit (digital resource) and the Cotton Sampler Education Pack (physical resource).

<https://cottonaustralia.com.au/education-kit?fbclid=IwAR2qWlr85fdth1zBoCzUbHKArXD5u5ayee7vcN6XKhGiGpucspCh9YyBG7c>

Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC)

The GRDC has invested in the development of a suite of user-friendly grain education resources and initiatives for students, teachers and families. Each curriculum linked resource incorporates a range of lesson plans which explore the latest science, technology, engineering, mathematics, nutrition, research and innovation in the Australian agricultural industry. A recent GRDC-supported study has provided new insights into how the story of grain growing can be incorporated into education through school subjects such as geography, biology, maths and home economics.

<https://grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/all-publications/educational>

Australian Eggs

“All About Eggs” is a resources page for teachers with complete lesson plans, resources and links to videos that will support teaching students about Australia’s Egg Industry.

<https://www.australianeggs.org.au/education>

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA)

MLA has been running their Schools Education program for more than six years which includes National Curriculum study guides, lessons and activity sheets, facts for students, digital lessons and virtual excursions. <https://www.goodmeat.com.au/education-resources/>

They also partner with others to offer online resources such as “Cattle and Sheep Farming today” <https://www.forteachersforstudents.com.au/site/themed-curriculum/cattle-sheep-farming/>

Dairy Australia

“Discover Dairy” was designed to provide tools and curriculum linked resources to better inform children of the story behind dairy products such as milk, cheese, yoghurt and ice cream. The site also offers engaging programs such as “Picasso’s Cows” and “Healthy Bones”. <https://www.dairy.edu.au/>

AgForce Qld School to Industry Partnership Program (SIPP)

The AgForce School to Industry Partnership Program provides a range of events and programs for primary and secondary students, as well as teachers. The programs inform students about the origins

of their food and fibre, engaging them with information from primary production and agricultural sectors and raise the profile of careers in agribusiness. At Beef Australia 2021, around 4000 students participated in a program designed through SIPP to provide information on agriculture and available career opportunities. <https://www.agforceqld.org.au/knowledgebase/article/AGF-01158>

ICPA (Aust) has collated a list of Food and Fibre learning resources which is located on our ICPA website. While this is not an exhaustive list, we hope that it assists members with information on some of the programs available to assist both students and teaching staff to bring food and fibre production into the classroom. This list will be updated on the ICPA (Aust) website regularly.

ICPA (Aust) continues to be a partner of Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA)- <https://www.piefa.edu.au/> PIEFA is a not-for-profit company which operates and manages several web portals and sites relating to Primary Industries Education:

- Primezone provides teachers, parents and students with an Australian Curriculum driven range of high quality vetted primary industries education resources from Foundation to Year 12. www.primezone.edu.au
- Primezone Academy which provides both teachers and students with access to a range of primary industries eLearning courses. www.primezoneacademy.edu.au
- Career Harvest- assists students in discovering rewarding careers in primary production. It provides students with career options, scholarships, opportunities and more. www.careerharvest.com.au
- Farmer Time- PIEFA is the Australian partner of the UK founded program “Farmer Time”. This program allows students to connect with a farmer, fisher or forester, ask questions, take a virtual tour and experience what a career in food and fibre looks like. Designed for years K-12, Farmer Time provides real-world context for food and fibre curriculum. www.farmertime.com.au
- Knowing Growing- This program facilitates teaching about primary industries in schools by providing quality professional development for all teachers. It is a joint initiative between Primary Industries Education Foundation of Australia, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

While the above initiatives are welcomed as an adjunct to enhancing the provision of agricultural education, we will continue to call for Primary Production to be included as a recognised essential component of the Australian Curriculum. ICPA (Aust) requests assurance be given that the actual production of food and fibre is taught in classrooms so that students gain an understanding of where food and natural materials come from as well as how they are produced.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to participate in discussions on the Australian Curriculum and provide information and background on the learning environments of geographically isolated students where possible.

DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT

Jo Camilleri

ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate for recognition and support for families who must educate their children by distance education due to geographical isolation.

Over the past eighteen months, parents and caregivers across the nation have been intermittently faced with the challenging task of providing supervision, support and the implementation of online lesson delivery for students who have been forced to learn from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has given rise to an opportunity for ICPA (Aust) to build on a newfound awareness and appreciation of the challenges for geographically isolated families who educate children at home as a necessity.

Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA)

The ICPA (Aust) Distance Education Portfolio has continued to raise the need for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) at every possible opportunity. A heightened awareness of the challenges associated with educating children at home highlighted the difficulties faced by geographically isolated families who, due to living in remote parts of Australia, have no choice but to educate their children by distance education. It has also validated the necessity of an adult tutor to be available to assist and supervise students while they participate in online learning and learning from home, drawing attention to the commitment, responsibility, time and financial impost required to facilitate children's full-time learning in the home environment.

On 1 December 2020 Federal Council launched the inaugural Geographically Isolated Distance Education (GIDE) Day to recognise and honour the ongoing plight of geographically isolated families who must educate their children at home at all times. ICPA (Aust) also used the day to call on the Federal Government to formally recognise the role that parents play in distance education. We look forward to continuing with the GIDE Day campaign again this year and encourage all members and supporters to get on board.

Following on from GIDE Day and well-documented acknowledgement by Governments of the challenges parents faced educating their children at home during COVID-19, Federal Council wrote to the Prime Minister urging him to consider, recognise and acknowledge GIDE families in this regard. Federal Council has since written to the Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education and other relevant Ministers, MPs and Senators imploring the Government to recognise the estimated 1500 families for who distance education is a way of life because of where they live. Federal Council appealed for the inception of a DETA as a way of acknowledging those who must undertake the role of the tutor in these contexts. We also raised this topic as a key issue during virtual delegation meetings and in meetings with representatives from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

The request for a DETA was again included in the 2021-22 Pre-Budget Submission earlier this year and is a key focus in our recently updated DE Briefing Papers. The topic was raised again in recent delegations, and discussions with government representatives including the Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education. In light of the suggestion that the provision of such financial assistance should be the responsibility of State governments, Federal Council have been recently highlighting that where families are unable to provide a tutor or continue with geographically isolated distance education, they may instead move to a second home or send children to boarding schools, for which the Federal Government provides financial assistance which equates to significantly more costs than a \$6 000 payment per family to assist with the provision of a tutor would cost.

Table 1. AIC Allowances Comparison – Boarding, Second Home, Distance Education

Second Home		Boarding		Distance Education		
Up to three children	Up to \$19443.84 per family per year (2021)	One child	Up to \$11 011 per family per year (2021)	One child	Current	With addition of \$6000 DETA
					\$4278 per family per year (2021)	\$10278 per family per year
		Two children	Up to \$22022 per family per year (2021)	Two Children	\$8422 per family per year (2021)	\$14422 per family per year
		Three children	Up to \$33 033 per family per year (2021)	Three children	\$12633 per family per year (2021)	\$18633 per family per year

ICPA Federal Council has and will continue to appeal to the government at every given opportunity for the establishment of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance. We also continue to seek updated numbers of geographically isolated distance education Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) recipients to assist with our advocacy around DETA and other topics.

Research

Federal Council lent their support to a team from the University of Southern Queensland in 2020, conducting a study into distance education tutoring across Australia, with the view to “mapping the experiences and perceptions of Australian Remote Education Tutors”. The study commenced with a survey across Australia to gather data to inform their research. Federal Council have devoted an enormous amount of time and effort over many years to advocate for Distance Education tutors, including our own research in the ICPA’s Distance Education Research for Geographically Isolated Families survey:

<https://icpa.com.au/sites/icpa.com.au/files/inline-files/DETA%20SURVEY%20RESEARCH%20Final%20Nov%202015%20.pdf> through a range of other endeavours and this additional research and data will certainly be useful to support and build upon our work. We look forward to working together with the team into the future.

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

Federal Council has sought assistance from many Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators in accessing up to date statistics regarding the number of geographically isolated families and students accessing AIC Distance Education Allowance to assist with our advocacy for this cohort.

Following concerns from members about the changing nature of Schools of the Air and Schools of Distance Education across much of Australia, with increased enrolments of non-geographically isolated students, Federal Council have continued to advocate for a separate category for geographically isolated students to be established within the AIC scheme. We have emphasised that geographically isolated distance education students are a unique disadvantage group who do not have any daily access to face-to-face appropriate schooling due to where they live and financial assistance needs to be maintained and assured to assist with the costs associated with educating

these students, as per the original intent of the AIC scheme.

Within submissions, meetings and delegations, Federal Council has highlighted that geographically isolated students need to be recognised as a unique marginalised 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 distinctive needs of geographically isolated students and hopes up to date data will assist in accurately advocating for the need for the AIC Distance Education Allowance to be maintained and indeed increased to better reflect the out-of-pocket costs incurred by geographically isolated families undertaking distance education. This issue was raised during delegations in Canberra in May 2021.

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. The importance of this is thoroughly understood and while decisions of this nature are principally state-based, Federal Council will support States however possible 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.

Appropriate learning resources for distance education students

ICPA (Aust) is aware that provision of learning materials and resources for distance education is the responsibility of state governments, however, requests the support of the Federal Government to ensure appropriate resources continue to be supplied to distance education students across Australia. Distance education students access their daily learning in a variety of ways, and most depend on a blend of learning materials determined by the school and communications infrastructure. Working, well-maintained landline phone services and internet access are also vital for geographically isolated distance education students as these services provide necessary access to distance education programs.

Support for volunteer remote educational support for rural and remote students' programs

Federal Council is working to ensure the continued support and funding for Volunteer for Isolated Student's Education (VISE) services across Australia. We are also pleased to welcome the newly established BushEd organisation created by former ICPA Federal Councillor Lyn French which provides similar services, which will help to ensure supply can match the demand and ongoing needs of geographically isolated families. From ICPA research, 85% of the geographically isolated distance education tutors across Australia are the mothers of the children who must study via distance education. This person receives no assistance, support, respite nor remuneration for this role as they are required to supervise and assist their students on an ongoing, daily basis in the schoolroom. Volunteer Remote Educational Support for Rural and Remote Students programs aim to support the education of rural students and in particular isolated families involved in distance education and we continue to support these programs however we can.

In closing, I wish to thank the incredible Distance Education Portfolio team, being Alana Moller, Briony Sinclair and Lisa Slade.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC) REPORT

Alana Moller

Early Childhood Education and Care has continued to be a busy portfolio and taking this on from the remarkable Jane Morton certainly gave me some big shoes to fill. The endemic inappropriateness of current Early Childhood Education and Care delivery models for geographically isolated families and the difficulties associated with accessing child care and education in rural and remote areas have been a key focus of our advocacy.

ICPA (Aust) maintains equitable and affordable Early Childhood Education and Care services and support for families living in rural and remote areas are critical. We have highlighted that specialised model/s need to be established for rural and remote families; programs designed to address the unique disadvantages and needs associated with caring for and educating children in geographically isolated locations.

In Home Care

While ICPA (Aust) acknowledges that the In Home Care program provides some childhood services to geographically isolated areas of Australia, we continue to highlight the gross inadequacies of the system for rural and remote families. It simply has not been designed to address the unique needs and circumstances of families in these areas. Advocacy has focused on the overarching recommendation that “an In Home Care Program (IHC), or sub-program thereof, be established specifically for rural and remote families”. In correspondence with then Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education, Hon Andrew Gee MP along with other relevant Ministers, MPs and Senators we provided an insight into the unsuitability of the current Scheme, highlighting the inappropriateness and unfairness of a blanket approach to Early Childhood Education and Care in rural and remote areas. This was exemplified and amplified by the issues arising from the implementation of the COVID-19 Relief Childcare Package. We requested amendments to the current scheme, or the inception of a new scheme to cater for the unique circumstances and needs of rural and remote families and to address specific circumstances, including those mentioned during our 2020 Online Federal Conference:

- Dispensation for families who must provide board and lodging for their educators, which would result in reducing families’ gap payments; and
- Amendments to the Scheme to allow an educator to care for children from more than one family at the same time, and to care for their own child whilst caring for children from another family or families.

We have also continued to emphasise the need for In Home Care, or another program, to be able to provide support for remote families who must educate their children at home due to being geographically isolated and who have no daily access to regular educational services; families also working in businesses or trying to maintain employment. Unfortunately, we are making little headway progressing this issue.

Federal Council have raised these topics during meetings and delegations as well as with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE). With recent staff changes within DESE, we have made contact with the new In Home Care team raising our concerns and sharing our updated Briefing Papers for their reference. DESE staff welcome case studies and stories exemplifying the experiences of geographically isolated families using In Home Care. My thanks to families who have passed on information to support our advocacy. The real-life, on-the-ground experiences really capture the attention of people we meet with. Federal Council encourages members to send any case studies to us to pass on to DESE.

In December 2019, ICPA (Aust) welcomed the decision of then Minister for Education, Hon Dan Tehan MP to extend the Transitional Provisions for IHC for two years until December 2021 for remote families. Given this deadline is looming, Federal Council has again raised this topic with DESE. We have been informed evidence is being gathered on the usage of the Transitional Provisions for IHC educators and hope consideration will be given to further extension of these Provisions. Federal Council will keep members abreast of developments.

Federal Council was disappointed to learn that the long-running Longreach In Home Care provider, which had been servicing both Queensland and Northern Territory families, would be closing at the end of 2020. We have raised concerns with the Department on this closure and have highlighted the need for those providers who service remote families to be supported in order to maintain services for our families. Already we know that South Australian families are negatively impacted by the lack of providers for their locations. Certainly, we know the In Home Care Scheme is not ideal for geographically isolated families, however it does provide some level of access to a service in remote areas for some and this access needs to be maintained. The In Home Care team in the Department of Education, Skills and Employment are keen to garner an understanding of the impacts and experiences of families who were affected by the Longreach closure in order to better equip themselves to deal with these situations in the future.

Assistance for Isolated Children Distance Education (AIC-DE) Allowance for Pre-Compulsory School Students and Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

The longstanding pursuit for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education Allowance to be extended to pre-compulsory geographically isolated distance education students has continued in earnest this year. In 2020 ICPA (Aust) took the opportunity to lodge a submission to the Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments¹. The ICPA (Aust) submission pointed out the challenges and expenses associated with providing a distance education pre-compulsory program and highlighted that ineligibility for AIC for this relatively small cohort of children is at odds with the Federal Government's commitment to "Universal Access to Early Childhood Education". The Final Report, released in November 2020, referred directly to our remarks in Section 3.2.7 and further made the following Recommendation:

"the Committee recommends that the Commonwealth support early learning programs through the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme Distance Education Allowance in the 2021 Budget."

ICPA (Aust) gratefully welcomed this acknowledgement of the need for AIC expansion to early learning students and implored the Government to accept and implement this recommendation, both through our 2020-21 Pre-Budget Submission and in meetings, follow-up correspondence with the Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education and other key Ministers, MPs and Senators and in a Media Release prior to the 2021-2022 Budget. While the 2021-2022 Budget did not address this recommendation, Federal Council were pleased to see the announcement of \$2 billion in support across the next four years to provide 15 hours per week of quality learning for children in the year before school, irrespective of where they live. Federal Council used delegations and another media release:

<https://icpa.com.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/ICPA%20%28Aust%29%20Education%20in%20Remote%20and%20Complex%20Environments%20Media%20Release%2017%2004%2021.pdf> following this announcement to appeal for part of this funding to be allocated to fulfilling this request.

¹ https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Employment_Education_and_Training/RemoteEducation/Report

Mobile Early Childhood Services

We have been assured funding for ex-Budget Based Funded Early Childhood Services such as Mobile Playgroups is ongoing, and grants are available through future grant opportunities. Information on grants available to services can be found at:

<https://www.dss.gov.au/grants/grant-programmes/families-and-communities-programme>,
<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programmes-services/parenting/families-and-children-activity>, www.communitygrants.gov.au and www.grants.gov.au.

Federal Council continues to advocate for funding to expand and maintain Mobile Early Childhood Services in geographically isolated areas and communities where there is no Early Childhood service at all and have highlighted the need for guaranteed funding for organisations providing these services in our submission to the Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments and we were pleased to see this acknowledged by the Committee in their key recommendation:

“the Committee recommends that the Commonwealth modify funding arrangements for mobile early childhood education to provide flexibility and surety of funding for these services in the 2021 Budget.”

In our 2021-22 Pre-Budget submission, ICPA (Aust) appealed to the Government to implement this recommendation to assist in providing much needed early childhood education services to geographically isolated children. Following on from the aforementioned Budget allocation of \$2 billion over 4 years for preschool funding, ICPA (Aust) suggested some of these funds be allocated to mobile playgroup funding.

Given the finite and insecure nature of Federal Government funding for the provision of these services and the resources and activities required across vast distances in challenging geographically isolated contexts, Federal Council has also pursued the suggestion of an alternative solution. Members at the 2020 Federal Conference suggested geographically isolated children be recognised as ‘in need’ of benevolent assistance for early childhood educational purposes, allowing the Not-For-Profit organisations serving them to be considered for Deductible Gift Recipient status. This would allow these services to access additional funds from other sources and not be completely reliant on Federal funding. We were pleased to have received positive responses to this idea from several Members of Parliament and look forward to further developments.

Remote Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce

One of the most significant obstacles in the delivery of early childhood education and care services in rural and remote areas is the difficulty in attracting and retaining a quality workforce. Finding suitably qualified staff to deliver child care or early childhood education for rural and remote families is an ongoing and urgent concern and we have continued to request that amendments to Visa eligibility incorporate Early Childhood workers in remote areas, as well as for flexibility in attaining qualifications in geographically isolated locations and that the challenges of studying and training in these locations are considered.

ICPA (Aust) has also continued its pursuit for a National Working with Children Check (WWCC) as a matter of priority to ensure early childhood carers, teachers, educators and those assisting with education particularly in rural and remote areas can transition across states easily. We have taken the opportunity to include this call in a submission to the Review of the National Quality Framework <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/2019-nqf-review>. The process of obtaining a Working with Children Check (WWCC) in each state or territory is expensive, slow and impedes early childhood workers, tutors and teachers who wish to help various families across borders. A national WWCC certification would help resolve this and was recommended in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Final Report. A National WWCC would ensure effective and efficient

assessment for suitability to work with children and address the staffing challenges of recruitment and retention in rural and remote contexts.

Other Early Childhood Education and Care Activity

In 2021 we have welcomed the opportunity to work with Sue Kingwill from Contact Inc as well as to participate in the Thrive by Five campaign www.thrivebyfive.com.au , to ensure that rural and remote children and their families are not forgotten when it comes to Early Childhood reform. We have also contributed the perspective of geographically isolated ECEC in a number of submissions this past year, including the National Quality Framework Review, the Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 and the NDIS Community Consultation on Supporting young children and their families 2021. We have also recently made contact with the team undertaking the National Quality Framework specifically requesting information on how the Review and recommendations that may come forward will impact rural and remote families and services, as rural and remote was not mentioned in previous Review documents. Indeed, our submission noted that this seemed to be missing from the Review documents and endeavoured to emphasise the unique circumstances and needs of rural and remote families. We received some assurance that the Decision Regulation Impact Statement (DRIS) recommendations will acknowledge the diversity of programs and the impact on services in rural and remote areas as a result of changes to the NQF.

Federal Council feels as though there has never been a better time to pursue the need for specific support to be made available for geographically isolated Early Childhood Education and Care, with welcome recognition of several key advocacies in this space and we will continue to advance members' needs at every opportunity. As I close, I wish to thank my dynamic ECEC Portfolio team, being Sally Sullivan, Jo Camilleri and Wendy Hick.

RURAL SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL TRAVEL REPORT

Nikki Mahony

Having joined Council in May 2020, it is astonishing to think I am meeting some of my colleagues for the first time face-to-face this week... 18 months in. It is indeed a brave new world that has forced us all to think a little differently, cherish our isolation a little more, shine a light on glaring gaps highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns and prioritise what really matters for our families and communities. Naturally, for all of us here, education is right up there so it is a privilege to be able to deliver this report both as a "newbie" to Federal Council and as leader of the Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio.

Through the blips of 2020 and 2021, 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.

Together with motions carried at the 2020 Federal conference our advocacy has focussed on five main areas in this portfolio this year, namely:

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

An outline of all areas of advocacy can be found in the current ICPA (Aust) advocacy document <https://icpa.com.au/au/icpa-aust-federal-briefing-papers>

Briefing Papers and previous conference reports specific to the portfolio can also be accessed from our new website <https://icpa.com.au/au/portfolios/rural-schools-school-travel>

Rural Schools

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

It was heartening to see the Australian Government's response to the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE) in 2019 placing regional, rural and remote areas at the forefront of the outcomes presented

<https://www.education.gov.au/independent-review-regional-rural-and-remote-education>

ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate for all of the recommendations in this report to be implemented and in regards to Rural Schools we continue to call for the recommendation relating to the reduction of the impact of administration on workloads in rural schools.

Regional, Rural and Remote locations across Australia provide great challenges for delivery of education options and pathways for children and their families. A forced and sudden shift to online learning across the board has brought some glaring deficiencies in our rural school systems into stark relief. On the flip side the fortitude and creativity of rural schools and their staff teams has been just as impressive. Many managed to quickly reallocate resources and modify teaching methods to deliver a better fit education product for their small communities where technology and local skills allowed and it is testament to the resilience of rural school staff, students and the community that in trying times they were able to continue to provide rural children with their education.

Chaplaincy Program in Schools

A commitment by the government to invest \$247 million over four years (2019-2022) to continue the National School Chaplains Program (NSCP) was welcomed in 2019 and a motion to seek assurance for ongoing funding beyond 2022 was carried at 2020 Federal Conference.

Following the 2020 conference Federal Council wrote to then Minister for Education Hon Dan Tehan MP and other relevant Ministers, MPs and Senators highlighting the important role chaplains play in rural and remote school communities especially given that other support services are not always easily accessible in these areas and requesting assurance that the program continue.

We welcomed a response from the Hon Andrew Gee MP, Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education, confirming the current Government's commitment to permanent funding of the NSCP "in recognition of the valuable contribution it makes in our school communities". During delegations in 2021 Federal Council continued to reinforce the importance of the Chaplaincy Program for our rural and remote students.

Limited Program Schools

Schools deemed as limited program schools are also commonly referred to as bypass schools as families are able to "bypass" counting the school in question as their closest school for accessing allowances through ABSTUDY, Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) and Youth Allowance for students and Australian Apprentices.

Limited program schools either don't:

- offer all year levels or grades
- have facilities or programs for students to get a Year 12 certificate or an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

While the allowances are administered federally, State and Territory education departments are responsible for which schools are determined to be limited program schools in their jurisdiction and therefore eligibility for allowances is determined by individual states. The limited program schools are reviewed by respective states and territories each year.

For more information the Services Australia website is a good starting point: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/topics/limited-program-schools-abstudy-assistance-isolated-children-and-youth-allowance/30941>

If your branch has questions or issues relating to bypass schools or limited program schools, these should be directed to your relevant State or Territory Council.

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 travel is often an essential mode of transport and unavoidable for rural and remote students with access to education institutions involving vast distances. Safety of students and poor road conditions also remains an ongoing concern.

Student Fares Allowance and access to the Corporate Airfares Program

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.

The Federal Government has in place Fares Allowances to assist with student travel under the ABSTUDY and Youth Allowance Schemes, however 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 receive to assist them to access compulsory schooling. We have also addressed the request made for AIC recipients to have access to corporate travel airfare program discounts, with our advocacy being a stepped process, in the first instance making contact with the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) and Services Australia to garner an understanding of the processes involved in the Corporate Airfares Program and its features.

Federal Council wrote to Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Minister for Families and Social Services, reiterating our longstanding request for a fares allowance to be introduced to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme. We also requested the option of access to the Corporate Airfares Program for geographically isolated students. With some concern that these fares may actually be considerably more expensive than families booking directly, we have reiterated that these only be made available as an option where those fares may be cheaper.

While we cannot say there has been any developments on the broader issue of the request for a Fares Allowance in the AIC, Federal Council will continue to pursue this along with access to the Corporate Airfares Program.

Student Concessional Fares

Federal Council continues to advocate for student concessional fares directly with airlines and also raised this issue at recent Parliamentary delegations. Unfortunately, opportunities for negotiations directly with airlines regarding discounted regional fares have been hindered this year due to limited service options and restrictions still in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic continues to have considerable effect on both the ability to travel and the availability of flights. The ongoing ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still quite unknown however Federal Council will continue our advocacy with QANTAS and regional airlines, and raise issues wherever possible.

QANTAS is committed to maintaining open lines of communications with ICPA, and in recent discussions, indicated that they have worked on a few iterations of the “Discounted fares for residents program” <https://www.qantas.com/au/en/frequent-flyer/member-specials/discounted-fares-for-residents.html> which gives a closed user group (regional residents) discounted options to book fares that cannot be accessed by resource-sector customers.

Eligible residents can access discounts starting from 20 per cent off the Qantas-controlled component of all-inclusive return fares (i.e. excludes government taxes, security and airport charges) from regional airports to their nearest capital city or major town.

Currently Supported Routes in QANTAS Discounted Fares for Residents Program (May 2021)

Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roma (RMA) – Brisbane (BNE) – Roma (RMA) • Charleville (CTL) – Brisbane (BNE) – Charleville (CTL) • Cloncurry (CNJ) - Townsville (TSV) - Cloncurry (CNJ) • Cloncurry (CNJ) - Brisbane (BNE) via Townsville - Cloncurry (CNJ) • Moranbah (MOV) - Brisbane (BNE) - Moranbah (MOV) • Mount Isa (ISA) - Brisbane (BNE) - Mount Isa (ISA) • Mount Isa (ISA) - Townsville (TSV) - Mount Isa (ISA) • Longreach (LRE) - Brisbane (BNE) - Longreach (LRE) • Barcaldine (BCI) - Brisbane (BNE) - Barcaldine (BCI) • Blackall (BKQ) - Brisbane (BNE) - Blackall (BKQ)
Western Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broome (BME) - Perth (PER) - Broome (BME) • Kalgoorlie (KGI) - Perth (PER) - Kalgoorlie (KGI) • Karratha (KTA) - Perth (PER) - Karratha (KTA) • Port Hedland (PHE) - Perth (PER) - Port Hedland (PHE) • Newman (ZNE) - Perth (PER) - Newman (ZNE) • Paraburdoo (PBO) - Perth (PER) - Paraburdoo (PBO)
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice Springs (ASP) - Darwin (DRW) - Alice Springs (ASP)

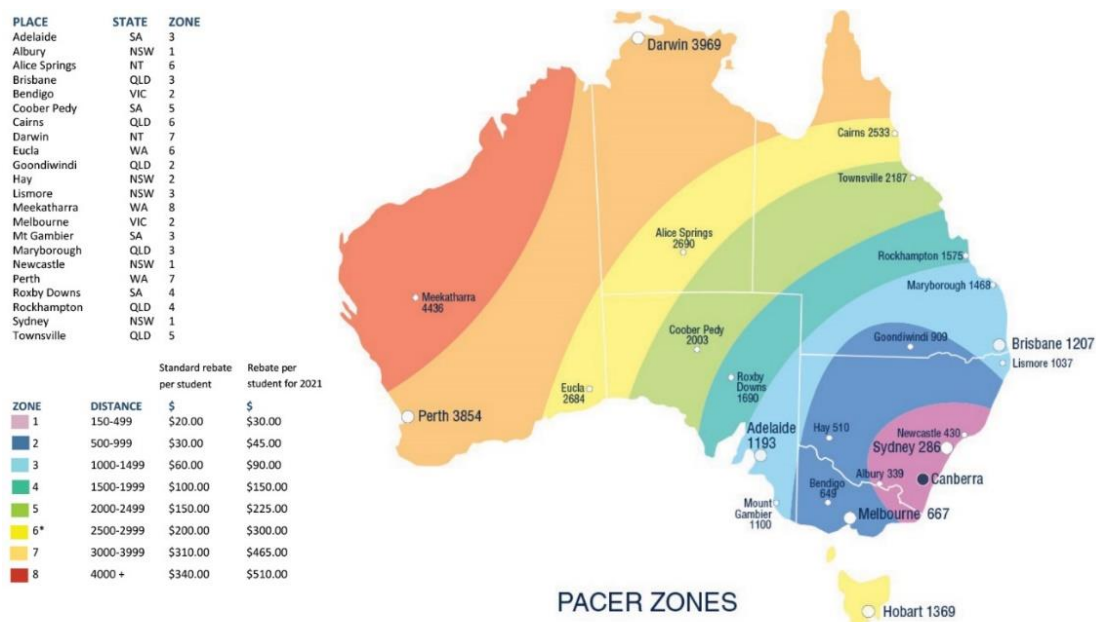
Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER)

ICPA Federal Council has appealed to the Federal Government for an increase to the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) for students travel to Canberra to enhance their learning in civics and citizenship education. In February 2021 we were pleased to see an immediate 50% increase to the PACER rebate was implemented across all current rebate amounts.

The link to the latest news section of the PACER website can be found via the link below <https://www.pacer.org.au/2021/02/12/rebate-increase-for-2021/>

Federal Council have highlighted however that a more pragmatic approach is needed to address anomalies associated with the methodology used to determine allocation of funds to schools. The sliding scale of distance from Canberra is unrealistic when applied to rural and remote schools who endure considerable extra costs associated with travel from a rural or remote area compared to a large urban centre.

For example, based on the sliding scale, Innamincka in north-east South Australia (821 kilometres north-east of Adelaide and 365 kilometres north-east from the closest town, Lyndhurst) is in the same regional zoning as Brisbane, Queensland. Innamincka is an 18-hour road trip to the ACT or a 13 hour road trip to Adelaide to catch flights to Canberra. Yet students from both locations receive the same rebate because calculations of the rebate is based on distance rather than accessibility to Canberra.



*Zone 6 (2500-2499kms) includes all students from Tasmania because of additional air/sea travel expenses.

A similar adjustment of \$120 per student will be paid to schools on other islands in remote locations as determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its classification of Remoteness.

2021 and Beyond for Rural Schools and School Travel

We continue to encourage members to contact Federal Council 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. Council will continue to look at ways to support State and Territory Councils in addressing disparities across the board.

Thank you to all representatives at Branch, State and Federal level for all the contributions you make to our regional, rural and remote children and not only imagining, but building a better future for them to walk into.

SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS REPORT

Briony Sinclair

ICPA (Aust) has continued to work on specific education needs motions passed at the 2020 conference as well as motions from previous years. Broadly, issues include early identification of learning difficulties, access to services, the cost of accessing services, mental health and disability provisions in boarding facilities.

Medicare Rebates and Telehealth

Motions from the 2020 Federal Conference focused on the continuation of telehealth MBS items initiated during the onset of the pandemic with a request to increase the scope and nature of the services provided to assist geographically isolated children with learning disabilities and disorders which affect their ability to learn, including vital Allied Health and Specialist Services.

Federal Council pursued this request with the Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health and other relevant Ministers, Senators and MPs and correspondence we received from the Medicare Review Branch in response to our request was particularly heartening. The continued announcements by the Department of Health give us increased optimism that we are being heard in our delegations and submissions.

Since the 13 March 2020, more than 300 temporary COVID-19 Medicare Benefits Schedule items have been introduced to reduce the risk of community transmission of COVID-19. These measures will continue through to the end of 2021 at this stage. Among the temporary MBS Telehealth Services are, for example, eight new allied health items for early intervention services for children with autism, pervasive developmental disorder or disability and 20 new Focused Psychological Strategies items for services provided by a psychologist, GP, non-specialist medical practitioner, occupational therapist or social worker.

<http://www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Factsheet-TempBB>

The Minister for Health stated his hope and intention for telehealth to be retained as a positive legacy of the COVID-19 response. Accordingly, the Department of Health is engaging with the community at all levels to plan a long-term and sustainable future for telehealth, including remote delivery of allied health services.

Minister Hunt recently said in a media release that "The government continues to work with peak bodies to co-design permanent post-pandemic telehealth as part of broader primary care reforms to modernise Medicare and provide flexibility of access to primary and allied healthcare services."

ICPA (Aust) looks forward to continuing work with relevant Ministers, Senators and MPs, the Department of Health and other organisations, to ensure that rural and remote families are not forgotten during these changing times.

Gifted and Talented

Federal Council continue to pursue adequate support and resources for geographically isolated gifted and talented students and their families. We welcomed the GERRIC centre of UNSW offering an online course for parents of gifted children in September of last year. Unfortunately, this course is no longer available, however Federal Council will continue to advocate for future availability of such programs.

Submissions

Specific Education Needs of rural and remote students were highlighted through five separate submissions by Federal Council in the past 12 months.

1. Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005
2. The Inquiry into Remote and Complex Environments Home Learning and Teaching during COVID-19 and
3. Inquiry into Adult Literacy and its Importance.
4. NDIS Community Consultation on Supporting young children and their families 2021
5. Quality Initial Teaching Education Review 2021

Submissions are available on the ICPA website when they are published if members wish to access them. <http://www.icpa.com.au/au/resources/submissions>

Quality Initial Teacher Education Review

ICPA (Aust) had the opportunity to progress past motions in a written submission and participation in an information webinar and consultation meeting for the *Quality Initial Teaching Education Review* which sought to identify issues relating specifically to teachers and teaching in rural and remote Australia. ICPA (Aust) sought the need for inclusion of modules specifically related to teaching in a rural and remote context and specific learning needs in undergraduate and postgraduate education courses.

The teaching of students living in geographically isolated locations with specific education needs and learning disabilities requires an increased awareness of student needs, an appropriate level of skills and knowledge, and access to appropriate programs and support staff, including allied health professionals. Schools of Distance Education and rural and remote schools must be afforded skilled teaching staff, teacher support, and ongoing professional development in the early identification, implementation, intervention strategies and teaching skills to meet the individual needs of all students.

Regular, timely, affordable and appropriate access to and collaboration with specific needs teachers, allied health professionals and specialists such as behavioural therapists, speech pathologists, ophthalmologists and psychologists will further support rural and remote teachers in recognising, referring, managing and supporting rural and remote specific needs students. This would enable the continuity of specific learning programs and take the pressure off teachers to develop management programs for students with specific needs.

Mental Health

"Resilience is based on compassion for ourselves as well as compassion for others." (Sharon Salzburg)
The past 12 months have marked devastating losses in our communities. Unfortunately, we cannot always be sure of why these deaths happen. Still, we do need to know that there are services available to those with depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns as well as support for their loved ones.

Since the advent of COVID-19, ICPA (Aust) has been particularly concerned about the mental health of boarding and tertiary students separated from their families when border closures have prevented travel between states as well as enduring isolating enforced quarantine measures which in some cases have been entirely unsuitable for the age group of the students and therefore putting their physical, mental and emotional safety at risk. Likewise, the stresses on their families have been immeasurable. Support for the ongoing mental health of students and their families has been one of the arguments for No Borders for Boarders campaigns conducted by State and Federal ICPA councils since governments began limiting people's activities and travel in April 2020.

The mental health of our families and young people is paramount to our rural communities to build strong and resilient futures. ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate for school-based mental health programs for geographically isolated children and resources for families.

If you have any immediate concerns, please contact your local health service to access appropriate care for you or your family.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

ICPA (Aust) has had the opportunity to meet with Hon Mark Coulton MP, Minister for Regional Health on several occasions both face to face and virtually in the past twelve months as well as the Honourable Linda Reynolds, Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and have used the opportunity to raise the topic of telehealth along with discussions on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We have also been involved in several NDIS consultations, including attending webinars on changes to the early childhood approach to implementation of the NDIS, which included detail on a proposal to change the age group best suited to receive early childhood services from under seven years of age, to under nine years which should be a positive improvement to the Scheme. Further information on the NDIS and relevant information for our members can be found at <https://www.ndis.gov.au/>.

National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA)

ICPA (Aust) have continued to engage with the NRHA in the last 12 months and met in Canberra in March 2021 with CEO Gabrielle O’Kane and NRHA Board Chairperson, Nicole O’Reilly, with discussion focusing on telehealth and early identification of learning difficulties and intervention.

The NRHA has kept a close eye on the developments of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on rural communities. NRHA provides factsheets which may be of interest to members e.g., Rural and Remote Mental Health Help Sheet, Rural Health scholarships, education and training.

<https://www.ruralhealth.org.au/factsheets/thumbs>.

National Rural Health Commissioner

The National Rural Health Commissioner Professor Ruth Stewart has been busy in her first year in the position and is currently supporting the governments ongoing rural response to COVID-19 and advising on the impact to the health workforce in regional, rural and remote communities. ICPA (Aust) hopes to meet with Professor Stewart soon to outline our shared interests in rural and remote communities for the future of our children.

As many of you will know, the wheels of change don’t always move as quickly as we would like but as Andy Warhol once said, "It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you don't stop."

If the last 50 years has shown us anything then it would be that ICPA does not stop no matter how slowly things might go. May the next 50 years be as industrious as the first and may our members continue to be the resilient, caring people they always have been.

TERTIARY REPORT

Kate Thompson

A tertiary education must be accessible, affordable and attainable for all Australians but the reality is that rural and remote students continue to be under-represented at the tertiary level due to a disparity in participation, retention and achievement. This adversely impacts rural and remote students and their communities.

Along with stakeholders and other organisations, the Tertiary portfolio continues to collaborate closely with relevant ministers and departments including the Minister for Families and Social Services, the Minister for Regional Education, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, the Department of Social Services and Services Australia.

Excitingly, significant developments in the tertiary sphere over the last 12 months have addressed some long standing policy objectives, albeit only in part.

NATIONAL REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE TERTIARY EDUCATION STRATEGY (NAPHTHINE REVIEW)

Rural and remote tertiary education has been placed at the forefront of the Federal Government's mind following the National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy Final Report (Naphthine Review) in 2019. The full report can be read here:

www.dese.gov.au/access-and-participation/resources/national-regional-rural-and-remote-tertiary-education-strategy-final-report.

Following the release of the report, the Government indicated they would accept the aims of the recommendations and specific actions would be considered. There were 33 actions which included expanding Regional Study Hubs, improving internet access, introducing a new tertiary education access payment, reducing earnings requirements of Concessional Workforce criteria, improving information on financial support and improving career advice in schools.

We will continue to follow up on these recommendations:

- **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.

The Report from the *Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments* included two recommendations that by May 2021 the Minister for Education publish a comprehensive implementation plan for the recommendations and actions outlined in the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (Halsey review) and the National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy (Naphthine review). The measures recommended in these two reports would ensure access, participation, retention, completion and success for rural and remote tertiary students for which ICPA (Aust) has been advocating for many years.

Also identified in the Naphthine Review was the necessity to improve the availability, quality, delivery and range of appropriate support services for rural, regional and remote students. Research commissioned by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) aimed to gain a better understanding of the range of support services provided by tertiary providers, identify the improvements required with a view to developing a range of information for tertiary providers on best practice for delivering support services to rural and remote students. In July 2021, Federal Council took part in the consultation process.

JOB-READY GRADUATES PACKAGE

ICPA (Aust) welcomed the announcement by the Government on 19 June 2020, outlining the implementation of measures from the *National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy*. In October 2020, the Job-ready Graduates Package passed Parliament.

This Package contained important changes to Australia's Higher Education System providing some additional support and opportunities for regional and remote students by:

- bridging the gap in participation and attainment between regional and remote students and metropolitan students,
- improving opportunities for regional and remote students to attend university,
- driving productivity for the regions,
- increasing facilities in regional areas,
- improving opportunities in regional communities,
- investment in regional campuses, and
- increased financial support for regional and remote students.

Details can be found at:

<https://www.studyassist.gov.au/news/job-ready-graduates-package-higher-education-reforms-0>

Job-ready Graduates Package measures applicable to rural and remote students include:

1. Tertiary Access Payment

The Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) is a \$5000 one-off payment that aims to improve tertiary education attainment and retention rates of students from regional and remote communities by assisting students with the additional costs of relocating to undertake tertiary study including start-up expenses, costs of living, direct costs of education or training and the cost of traveling home in semester breaks.

Eligibility criteria for school leavers:

- must be from outer regional, remote and very remote areas (as per the ASGS remoteness classifications),
- must be relocating more than 90 minutes by public transport from their family home,
- must be enrolled in an eligible full-time higher-level tertiary education, Certificate IV or above qualification of at least one-year duration, and
- parental income must be below the threshold of \$250 000.

The TAP commenced in 2021 and applications remain open with students encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Students relocating to study at a university should apply through their participating university and students relocating to study at a non-university higher education provider must apply through Services Australia. The TAP can be claimed in addition to YA and Relocation Scholarship. Information on the TAP can be found at:

www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/tertiary-access-payment

www.dese.gov.au/tertiary-access-payment

www.dese.gov.au/higher-education/resources/tap-program-guidelines-university-students

www.dese.gov.au/higher-education/resources/tap-program-guidelines-vet-and-nuhep-students

In August 2021, Federal Council provided feedback to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) during the first-year evaluation consultations of the TAP which aimed to examine the program's appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency in meeting its intended

objectives. Federal Council included data from a survey the tertiary and training portfolios conducted to determine knowledge, application and experience of the TAP.

Federal Council continues to advocate for the introduction of a **Tertiary Access Allowance (TAA)** for rural and remote students irrespective of eligibility for Youth Allowance. ICPA (Aust) proposes TAA amounts align with the Relocation Scholarship payments which would benefit Youth Allowance students qualifying as an independent as well as students who are ineligible for Youth Allowance. This would 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. ICPA (Aust) will closely monitor the TAP and will respond to ensure it is akin to our proposed TAA.

Members can find more information regarding the TAP and Federal Council's advocacy surrounding the program in the ICPA (Aust) Training Report 2021.

2. Rural And Regional Enterprise Scholarships (RRES) Program

The RRES program supports undergraduate, postgraduate and higher-level vocational education and training students in rural, regional and remote areas with the costs of studying at university or a vocational education and training institution. These scholarships continue to be:

- valued at up to \$18,000, and
- available to regional and remote students studying in any discipline from Certificate IV to PhD level at an eligible higher education provider or vocational education and training institution, with a duration of 6 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.

More information can be found at www.dese.gov.au/rres. Round 5 of the RRES program opened 1 March 2021 for students commencing study at any time during the 2021 academic calendar year. Information and applications for the RRES and the Creative Arts Scholarships for regional and remote students are through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) www.qtac.edu.au/rres-program/.

3. Regional University Centres (RUC)

Regional University Centres provide tertiary students in regional and remote locations campus-like facilities and support including study spaces, video conferencing, computer facilities and internet access. They also provide academic support and pastoral care for students studying via distance at partner universities. This allows students to remain in their local community and study online. More information about the program can be found at:

www.education.gov.au/regional-university-centres.

The Federal Government has committed funding through to 2023-24 including the establishment of 8 new RUCs bringing the total to 32 across Australia.

4. Fares Allowance

From 1 January 2021, the Fares Allowance waiting period for Youth Allowance and Austudy will be reduced from 6 months to 3 months before the first claim can be made. This will allow students to access a return trip home from their place of study under Fares Allowance in their mid-year break. All other aspects and the eligibility criteria of the Fares Allowance remain the same.

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/Centrelink/fares-allowance.

5. Reintroduction of the HECS-HELP Upfront Payment Discount

On 1 January 2021 the HECS-HELP upfront payment discount was re-introduced and can now be claimed. This discount provides an incentive for students to pay their student contribution either partially or fully before census date and receive a 10% discount providing the payment is \$500 or more, which will decrease their student debt.

6. Regional Education Commissioner

The Regional Education Commissioner, once appointed, will:

- oversee and coordinate the implementation of recommendations from the Napthine Review,
- work to address the complex factors driving the disparity in regional education outcomes,
- champion regional education across all education sectors from early childhood through to higher education, including both university and vocational education and training,
- oversee and coordinate projects that respond to the Strategy, and
- work with all tiers of government and other stakeholders.

QUALITY INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION REVIEW

ICPA (Aust) had the opportunity to progress past motions in a submission to the *Quality Initial Teaching Education Review* which sought to identify issues relating specifically to teachers and teaching in rural and remote Australia. ICPA (Aust) sought the need for inclusion of modules specifically related to teaching in a rural and remote context and specific learning needs in undergraduate and postgraduate education courses. This would serve to prepare teachers for future rural and remote pathways, building capacity and support in these locations. Furthermore, it would assist the recruitment and retention of competent, committed, confident and highly effective teachers in rural and remote Australian schools who can deliver a consistently high standard of education for rural and remote students.

During August and September 2021, Federal Council participated in a webinar and a consultation with the Review Expert Panel and reinforced the challenges for teaching in the rural and remote context.

The submission to the *Quality Initial Teaching Education Review* can be read here:

<https://icpa.com.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/Quality%20Initial%20Teacher%20Education%20Review%20Submission%20Final%20July%202021.pdf>

CENTRELINK - PROOF OF IDENTITY

During the height of COVID-19, provisions were made to streamline applying for Youth Allowance (YA). An applicant could 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. The Department of Social Services have indicated that the COVID-19 proof of identity provisions will cease and the return of having to present to a Service centre or Centrelink office is imminent.

ICPA (Aust) would like to see the COVID-19 provisions continue for rural and remote applicants who are unable to reasonably attend a service centre due to the tyranny of distance. This would enable an application to commence with an online proof of identity. The applicant could then present at a service centre for confirmation of identity documents once relocated to their place of study prior to their commencement of Youth Allowance payments. This provision would address the difficulty

many rural and remote students and families have with initial proof of identity that results in delays in applications, approval and commencement of YA payments.

YOUTH ALLOWANCE

COVID-19 and Gap Year Students

ICPA (Aust) welcomed the 2020-21 Budget announcements that support young people currently on a working gap year affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19 in relation to their ability to fulfil their working criteria to demonstrate independence for Youth Allowance (student) and ABSTUDY. These measures address the tertiary motion brought to Federal Conference in 2020.

Two provisions were introduced:

1. Young people from regional and remote areas who were qualifying for Youth Allowance as an independent under the Concessional Workforce Independence Criteria (CWIC) will be automatically considered, for the six-month period between 25 March and 24 September 2020 to have:
 - earned 75 per cent of the National Training Wage Schedule weekly rate (unless in receipt of a higher income), or
 - worked 15 hours per week.
2. A temporary pathway for young people planning on taking a working gap year in 2021, who earn at least \$15,000 through agricultural work during the period 30 November 2020 and 31 December 2021 will be considered independent for Youth Allowance (student) and ABSTUDY.

NATIONAL CAREERS INSTITUTE 'YOUR CAREER' WEBSITE

Federal Council collaborated with the National Career Institute (NCI) and Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) in the development and roll out of information and resources for school leavers on work and education options including university, vocational education and training (VET), apprenticeships or employment.

NCI has developed three additional resources for school leavers and their parents or guardians:

1. The **School Leavers Information Kit** (SLIK) provides information and support to assist with post-school career pathways decisions, work and education options such as university, vocational education and training (including apprenticeships and traineeships), volunteering and community service, tips and resources to assist with job applications and resources outlining available government financial support and subsidies.
2. The **School Leavers Information Service** is a free phone, text or email support to navigate the School Leavers Information Kit and the website. The service also offers a free 45-minute personalised career guidance session with a qualified career practitioner
3. The SLIK is supported by the **Parents and Guardian's Guide for School Leavers** to facilitate careers conversations at home.

www.yourcareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support/

These resources and information can be found on the Your Careers website www.yourcareer.gov.au.

YOUTH ALLOWANCE OVERVIEW 2021 DOCUMENT

The Tertiary Portfolio has updated the Youth Allowance Overview in consultation with the Department of Social Services and Services Australia as a guide to YA eligibility and application. This document summarises the lengthy YA website information for rural and remote students planning to study full-time and intending to apply for Youth Allowance and is available in the January 2020 Pedals and on the ICPA (Aust) website. 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.

Thank you to State Tertiary Portfolios, my fellow Tertiary Portfolio members Nikki Macqueen, Jane O'Brien, Sally Sullivan and Kim Hughes and all of Federal Council for their ongoing support, guidance, knowledge and dedication.

We will continue to raise members' new and ongoing issues at every opportunity through all avenues available to us, to achieve measures needed to ensure our rural and remote students have the opportunity to access, participate and complete a tertiary education commensurate with their aspirations and career plans.

TRAINING REPORT

Kim Hughes

ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate on behalf of members to ensure rural and remote students and young people have the opportunity to pursue courses, training and careers that best suit their interest and ambitions regardless of their geographical location.

At the 2020 virtual Federal Conference, a motion was carried requesting that ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to ensure assistance packages/schemes similar to 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 Commonwealth Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA).

At present only recipients receiving a social services payment e.g., Youth Allowance or ABSTUDY are eligible to receive the Coronavirus Supplement. The ineligibility of LAFHA recipients to this support payment has proven difficult for many rural and remote apprentices who have experienced reduced hours due to the pandemic. Diminished earnings have exacerbated the already high financial pressure that living away from home incurs.

Federal Council wrote to the Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships, Hon Steve Irons MP, the Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston and Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash.

Responses from both the Department of Education, Skills and Employment and the Department of Social Services highlighted that LAFHA is appropriated under the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program and LAFHA eligibility is not linked to the income that an apprentice receives as part of their employment nor subject to parental income tests.

ICPA (Aust) also raised this issue with a number of Members of Parliament and Senators at recent delegations in Canberra including the Minister for Regional Education, the Hon Andrew Gee MP. We will continue to advocate for this issue at every opportunity.

Assistance for rural and remote apprentices and trainees

ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate for an increase to the Commonwealth Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) and indexing to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to better reflect the cost of living for rural and remote young people who must move away from home to access their chosen pathway. We have made representation on this issue at every opportunity, conveying that although the LAFHA is greatly appreciated, it is simply not sustainable given the increased living expenses that come with living away from home, including rent, food, fuel and utilities.

Federal Council has also raised the issue with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment that the availability of the LAFHA payment needs to be more visible. As it is not a Services Australia

payment and therefore not housed with other student payments (e.g., Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY) it can be easily overlooked. ICPA (Aust) continues to publicise links to available allowances for Australian Apprentices and trainees in its own publications in a bid to raise awareness of the financial support available to this cohort of young people.

Members are also encouraged to contact an Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (Apprenticeship Network) Provider to discuss eligibility for apprenticeship support. They are able to:

- help find an employer and registered training organisation to complete training
- provide a training contract
- assess apprentices for a financial assistance
- provide advice and support to during the apprenticeship.

Visit <https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/search-aasn> to find your Provider.

The need for apprentices and trainees to receive relocation assistance remains a focus within the Training Portfolio. Federal Council continues to raise the concern that Australian Apprentices and trainees are not eligible to receive the Relocation Scholarship even if they are eligible for Youth Allowance as they are not participating in an approved higher education course.

The introduction of the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) has been a positive development for rural and remote VET students. The program has made available relocation assistance to those studying a VET course, which can be any of the following:

- Certificate IV
- Diploma (other than a Higher Education Diploma eligible for FEE HELP)
- Advanced Diploma.

Currently the TAP is only available to students studying in the year after compulsory schooling and it has a parental income threshold of \$250,000.00. VET students are urged to visit for more information.

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/tertiary-access-payment>

Unfortunately, Australian Apprentices are ineligible for the new Tertiary Access Payment (TAP). The Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) recently undertook a first-year evaluation of the TAP to examine the program's appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency in meeting its intended objectives. Federal Council had the opportunity to provide feedback to this evaluation process in August. Amongst the feedback given was the need for an expansion of criteria to include Australian Apprentices, given they receive no relocation assistance, are rarely eligible for Youth Allowance and also participating in a VET course as a component of their qualification.

Members can find more information regarding the TAP and Federal Council's advocacy surrounding the program in the ICPA (Aust) Tertiary Report.

2021 Budget

The 2021-2022 Budget included a further \$2.7b over four years to extend and expand the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy. This includes \$1.2 billion to uncap the program and extend the subsidy to 12 months from the date of commencement, and an additional \$1.5 billion to extend the commencement period for another six months to 31 March 2022.

Through the subsidy, any business or Group Training Organisation that engages an Australian Apprentice between 5 October 2020 and 31 March 2022 may be eligible for a subsidy of 50 per cent of wages paid to a new or recommencing apprentice or trainee for a 12-month period from the date

of commencement, to a maximum of \$7,000 per quarter. There is no cap on the number of eligible trainees/apprentices.

ICPA (Aust) continues to reiterate to Government that whilst it welcomes investment in the Skills and Training sector to boost engagement of trainees and apprentices, this also must be balanced with financial support for the individual apprentices to ensure their cost-of-living expenses do not diminish their opportunities to access these apprenticeship opportunities.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) Skills Reform

The Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform signed by the Commonwealth and all State and Territory Governments, outlines the required changes to the VET system to ensure Australians can access high quality and relevant training with the skills to take on positions that emerge through the next decade and beyond.

Skills and Training Ministers are rolling out initiatives identified in this Agreement and as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, are delivering the JobTrainer Fund to provide up to an additional 340,700 free or low-cost training places in areas of identified skills needs. Participating states and territories are rolling out training places which will benefit and support job seekers and young people, particularly school leavers.

The Australian Government has also commenced work on immediate reforms identified by National Cabinet which include a review of the current standards for Registered Training Organisations, building Registered Training Organisation capacity and capability for continuous improvement and developing a VET workforce quality strategy. This work has been informed by priorities identified through the VET Reform Roadmap and builds on VET sector reviews, including the Braithwaite Review, Joyce Review and rapid review of Australian Skills Quality Authority's (ASQA) regulatory practices, governance and culture.

Consultation over recent months has sought feedback from stakeholders on how best to strengthen the role of industry engagement in the VET system and on the design of qualifications, with a particular focus on new approaches that will better meet the needs of employers and learners now and into the future. ICPA (Aust) has had the opportunity to participate in relevant aspects of this consultation and provided feedback from a rural and remote context on how best to support geographically isolated students in their endeavours to pursue VET pathways.

All Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments are working towards a new National Skills Agreement by August 2021.

Agricultural Colleges

Federal Council has been in regular contact with the Queensland ICPA Tertiary, Trade and Training Portfolio leader to offer support in relation to the closures of Agricultural Colleges such as the Queensland Agricultural Training College (QATC) campuses in Longreach and Emerald.

Currently the Regional Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) hold the lease of the former Longreach Pastoral College campus and are investigating ways to utilise this asset in the future.

AgForce Qld have advised they have recently convened a meeting of the Northern Pastoral Companies with the Queensland Department of Education, Small Business and Training (DESBT), RAPAD, the Queensland Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance (RJSA), the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) and other interested agencies. Following on from this, AgForce Qld are now working with RJSA on a proposal to DESBT (including TAFE Qld) for livestock industry training

at Longreach, with support from the northern pastoral group members to identify required entry level skills and industry pathways. AgForce Qld will also be working with peak industry bodies (Cattle Council of Australia, Sheep Producers Australia and Wool Producers Australia) as well as broader industry. The focus initially is to consider the entry level training required for the livestock industry employers and potentially expand from there.

Federal Council will continue to follow these developments and to offer assistance and support wherever possible.

National Careers Institute

Federal Council has been working closely with the National Careers Institute (NCI) to assist with the roll out of a range of resources to support school leavers to work through their next steps after school. The NCI has rolled out a School Leavers Information Kit (SLIK) www.yourcareer.gov.au/media/xlcbghjw/school_leaver_information_kit.pdf

which has been especially developed to assist school leavers with education, training and work options. It provides:

- information and support to help with decisions about post-school career pathways
- information on work and education options such as university, vocational education and training (including apprenticeships and traineeships), volunteering and community service
- tips and resources to help apply for jobs, and
- resources outlining government financial support and subsidies available.

The SLIK is supported by the Parents and Guardian's Guide for School Leavers to help start careers conversations at home.

www.yourcareer.gov.au/media/111fn3at/parentsandguardiansguideforschoolleavers.pdf

School leavers aged 15 to 24 can also access a 45-minute personalised careers guidance session with a qualified career practitioner to ask education, training or work-related questions they may have through **1800CAREER**.

More information can be found on the ICPA (Aust) website in the Training Portfolio.

I would like to sincerely thank Federal Training Portfolio members Alana Moller, Kate Thompson, Sally Sullivan and Jane O'Brien for their knowledge and support over the past year along with the State Training Portfolio leaders. Affordable access to training and career opportunities is the only way to ensure rural Australia achieves a skilled and qualified workforce into the future. ICPA (Aust) will continue to advocate for equity in opportunity for rural and remote young people who wish to pursue a VET pathway, to ensure geographical location is not an obstacle or hindrance to achieving their career goals.

RURAL HARDSHIP EDUCATION FUND (RHEF) UPDATE

ICPA (Aust) has continued its commitment to supporting and advocating for geographically isolated families in our community when they are suffering challenges and hardships. The impacts of flood, drought, fire and other difficulties that impact on the ability of rural and remote students to access their education have been at the forefront of our minds. While the pandemic has hampered progress towards the introduction of a Rural Hardship Education Fund which would ensure geographically isolated children can continue their education unhindered at any time of rural hardship, Federal Council continues to advocate regularly on this topic.

It was encouraging to see ICPA (Aust)'s call for a Rural Hardship Education Fund put as a motion by Senator Pauline Hanson in October 2019 and given unanimous support in the Senate. Following on from this, momentum built off the back of media coverage and through the ongoing support of members, State Councils and other supporters of ICPA Australia.

Immediately after the success in the Senate, Federal Council updated our Rural Hardship Education Fund Briefing Paper and created a one-page quick reference information sheet to help get the message out there about the desperate need for assistance to support families in rural and remote areas who continued to struggle with the severe drought conditions and other hardships. This infographic and supporting information were sent to numerous Senators and Members of Parliament to ask for their further support. ICPA (Aust)'s explanation of the Rural Hardship Education Fund was expanded to more clearly show the need for support across all areas of rural education in times when difficult circumstances impact a community.

In seeking the establishment of a Rural Hardship Education Fund, ICPA (Aust) asks for:

- Establishment of a permanent/long term Rural Hardship Education Fund that remains in place so that each time a disaster/hardship hits a rural area, funds are automatically available for geographically isolated students' education assistance programs.
- Supplementary payment made to the Assistance for Isolated Children allowance (AIC) for families identified as being in rural hardship. For example: living in drought affected areas/states. However, individual consideration should also be given for families in states which do not declare a disaster such as drought, where these families show the impact of a hardship on their children's education.
- Funding for Rural Schools, Early Learning/Long Day Care Centres in affected areas.
- Itinerant and specialist teachers made available to enable more support for Distance Education students and Rural Schools, including home visits in remote classrooms and other localised support resources.
- Adjusted rate/additional subsidy to assist affected families to access In Home Care for young children.
- Tertiary Access Allowance for rural and remote students enrolled in university, training courses, or apprenticeship.
- That the amount of assistance be:
 - At least \$2000 per student per year
 - Should be for Geographically Isolated/Rural students

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic stalled the progress of many things, and government attention had to be focused elsewhere, however our resolve to continue to advocate for the establishment of a Rural Hardship Education Fund has not diminished.

On 5 May 2021, the National Recovery and Resilience Agency was announced by the Australian Government to support local communities in responding to major disasters <https://recovery.gov.au/>

This new agency will assist communities with relief and recovery efforts following large-scale natural disasters. The Agency role will also include providing advice to Government on managing the impact of future disaster events. During Federal Council's delegations to Canberra in May 2021, (our first opportunity to visit Parliament since the October 2019 visit prior to Covid-19 restrictions), Federal Council followed up on the Senate vote on the Rural Hardship Education fund with various Ministers, Senators and Members of Parliament. Then Minister for Drought and Emergency Management Hon David Littleproud MP encouraged ICPA (Aust) to discuss the need for a Rural Hardship Education Fund which would address the education needs of geographically isolated students in times of

hardship with the newly formed National Recovery and Resiliency Agency. Federal Council had already passed our information on to key staff in the former National Drought and Flood Agency. Following on from the Minister's suggestion, Federal Council has pursued making contact with the new agency in order to discuss where the Rural Hardship Education Fund may sit within their program. ICPA (Aust) will also raise the topic in future correspondence and meetings with the newly-appointed Minister for National Recovery and Resilience and Emergency Management, Senator Bridget McKenzie.

ICPA (Aust) is committed to advocating for a Rural Hardship Education Fund to be implemented in order to support geographically isolated families and communities when students' ability to access appropriate education is impacted by challenges in times of rural hardship.

Speeches

President's Welcome 2021

Alana Moller

Good morning, I am Alana Moller, the current Federal President of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association and I am greatly honoured to be chairing this milestone 50th Annual ICPA Federal Conference, alas once again in the face of the COVID pandemic, with us not all together in person again, however with more than 200 people in attendance both face to face and online, there is little doubt about the resilience of our great organisation to withstand and overcome whatever is thrown at us. One day we will all be back together again and how appreciated that day will be.

It is with great pleasure on behalf of Federal Council I welcome distinguished guests, delegates, and observers, both here in Longreach and online to our milestone 50th annual Federal Conference. A very special mention and warm welcome to the 7 Federal Life Members we have joining us today, Mr Wally Mitchell AM online from New South Wales, Mrs Julia Materne online from South Australia, Mrs Roxanne Morrissey online from Western Australia and joining us in the room Mrs Megan McNicholl OAM, Mr Jack Beach, Mrs Jane Gloster and Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM, as well as other past Councillors both virtually and here in Longreach. What a momentous occasion that on the 50th anniversary of ICPA to be able to include so many of the remarkable individuals who have helped to build and maintain our great organisation.

I would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands on which we meet today and I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

In a normal year, I would leave thank you's to the end, but as we know 2021, the 50th year of this great organisation, is not a normal year so I am turning the conventional welcome to conference format on its head, much like the whole of conference really, though that was completely out of my control.

In the words of Shakespeare 'I can no other answer make, but thanks and thanks and ever thanks.' And this goes out to all of you for being a part of this conference despite the odds that have been against us, to all state council presidents who have been the voice of members to help us plan all of this in such an unpredictable and challenging time, to all the helpers along the way and those here on the conference floor, for the heartfelt understanding, support and encouragement we have felt as we have navigated the rough waters we have had in planning this conference. And of course my thanks to all of Federal Council and the convening committee, Wendy Henning, Tammie Irons, Julie McDonald and Prue Button. who on more than one occasion have had to placate me and keep me from crawling under a rock, while also dealing with their own emotions and challenges - I know at

times it has been a comedy of errors - but I could not think of a better group to be sharing it with. I trust you all know how valued you are to me. No one but us will ever know how challenging, uncertain and emotive this past few months have been and I ask all of you listening to understand that none of what we have done in relation to conference has been done light-heartedly or without tremendous anxiety, struggle and deliberation. This has not been easy, an unprecedented situation with no definitive plan of attack and so we have done the best we could amongst uncharted territory. Also none of this could have been possible without the ongoing and immeasurable support we have received from the Australia Boarding Schools Association, if I could please ask Richard, Tom and Jared to stand up. Richard, Tom and Jared will be a regular sight throughout the conference and we most certainly could not have pursued a hybrid conference without them. Lastly a special mention of my precious family, who if not for their incredible support and encouragement I most certainly could not be standing here today.

Despite what the COVID pandemic has thrown at us these past few months, I am pleased to see so many of our Branches participating in the Conference. To all of our delegates, in particular those of you who are attending conference for the first time, thank you for attending on behalf of your branch. Over the next two days, please take the opportunity to engage in robust, passionate, and informed conversations and debate.

To our guests, thank you for taking the time to be with us, in person or virtually and please feel free to comment on motions as your knowledge and expertise can often help us to clarify our position on issues.

With the ever-changing COVID environment impacting on the conference format, we have had to adapt our program to meet the needs of all attendees, both face to face and online. While we assure those attending that you will receive an incredible conference experience, we can assure those online that we are thinking of you, particularly in terms of differing time zones and the need to be online for long periods of time. With that in mind, we have endeavoured to ensure the morning sessions of each day do not include motions or voting and we have also endeavoured to keep motions blocked together in the second and third sessions, therefore ensuring for those participating online there will be opportunity for breaks from your screen. Due to time constraints associated with the hybrid event, we have not been able to provide full presentations for all portfolios this year, however I encourage you to read the full reports in your conference booklets, along with State President reports. All reports are also available on our ICPA website under the conference documents tab. While we cannot promise that all will run seamlessly and there will not be obstacles throughout the next two days, please know that we will make every effort to ensure the conference runs as smoothly as possible for both those here in attendance and those joining us online.

We have media representation filming and interviewing as well as Federal Council representatives recording this event. If you do not wish to be photographed please advise media representatives at that time.

On the conference floor today we have 10 exceptional Federal Councillors – ladies give a wave as I introduce you - joining me on the stage are:

Our Federal Vice President Sally Sullivan

Federal Secretary Suzanne Wilson

We also have:

Immediate Past President Wendy Hick

Federal Assistant Secretary Kate Thompson

Federal Treasurer Lisa Slade

Federal Publicity Officer and Webmaster Nikki Macqueen

Councillor Kim Hughes
Councillor Briony Sinclair
Councillor Nikki Mahony
Councillor Julia Broad

Please, do not hesitate to approach federal councillors on any issues you would like clarified or have an interest in. Federal Councillors live and breathe ICPA and are your best source of knowledge. If they cannot assist, they will direct you to who can. If you are considering joining federal council, whether you are on the conference floor or online, please do not hesitate to make contact with any of us, we would love to have you on board.

I know our hosts, Queensland State Council and the Queensland convening committee, have been looking forward to this day for quite some time. Our congratulations to all involved in bringing this conference to fruition against the odds.

I wish you all an enjoyable and exciting conference; one that will challenge, motivate and inspire you to seize the opportunity to continue the legacy of ICPA to achieve equitable educational opportunities for our geographically isolated children.

I would now like to invite Conference Convenor, Mrs Wendy Henning to give an overview of conference arrangements, housekeeping etc.

Opening Address

Introduction of Opening Speakers

Alana Moller

It is with great pleasure that I now welcome Federal Life Member and ICPA QLD Patron, Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM to the stage to officially open conference.

Mrs Mitchell was awarded Federal Life Membership in Adelaide in 2019 following a stellar and enduring association with ICPA. Member of Federal Council from 1982-1991 and Federal President from 1985-1988, her ongoing commitment to ICPA is nothing short of remarkable.

Also joining us online will be ICPA foundation President and Federal Life Member Mr Wally Mitchell AM. It is an absolute honour to welcome Mr Mitchell and I'm sure you will agree that to have the foundation President able to open our 50th Federal Conference is nothing short of amazing. It is also incredibly fitting that our first ever hybrid conference should begin with a hybrid opening. I am sure 50 years ago when chairing his first meeting Mr Mitchell could never have imagined that this was how the 50th Federal Conference would commence.

With no further ado, please join me in welcoming Mrs Patricia Mitchell and Mr Wally Mitchell to officially open our Conference.

Opening Speakers

Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM, Patron ICPA QLD

It is a great honour for me to be asked, as Patron of ICPA Qld, to share the hybrid opening of our hybrid 50th Anniversary Federal Conference with our very first Federal President, Wally Mitchell. Wally was President from 1971 to 1974 while I am a Johnny Come Lately not having been Federal President until 1985 -1988. I have been a member of ICPA for 48 years and attended my first Federal Conference, the 5th, in Charleville in 1975. However, before I hand over to Wally who will be speaking

to you from Bourke, there are few things I have learned in that time that I would like to pass on to you. But before I do that I must congratulate the convening committee for the Conference led by Wendy Henning, President Alana and the Federal Council and the Branch and community of Longreach for coping so magnificently with the complications caused by Covid19 and the postponement of the Conference from July.

ICPA is as necessary today as it was when founded in 1971. We have achieved a lot in the past 50 years but the motions brought forward to this conference indicate how much is still left to be done even with the issues such as living away from home to achieve access to education, that instigated the formation of ICPA. Today there is an extensive range of factors which contribute to the delivery of a quality education. ICPA is the only organisation that can represent the interests of our geographically isolated children and their families across all levels of education from Kindergarten to Tertiary to achieve and then maintain equality of access to appropriate education for our children. The upheavals caused by Covid, particularly for so many of our children who need to live away from home reminded us of that.

I have learned that the structure of ICPA, the fact that members directly elect the members of Federal Council as well as State Councils, has been a major factor in achieving lobbying outcomes even though there have been times when State and Federal tensions have encouraged moves to change this to a State directed structure. This grass roots member driven structure has helped ensure that ICPA has remains focused on the needs of rural and remote students and is not seduced into being a more general lobby group despite often great temptations from time to do so.

I made these points along with many others, in the Pat Edgley Memorial Tribute which I presented when, as Patron of ICPA Qld, I opened our 38th Federal Conference here in Longreach in 2009.

By remaining focused we have made great strides in achieving our objectives. The quality of Distance Education today is such that it is being used widely by students other than the geographically isolated and the addition of many other services has improved education in the bush immeasurably. However, this has only happened because of the dedication and hard work of the members of this organisation who were prepared to become involved at a Branch, State and Federal levels. There are too many to name individually but some of them are here today. I want to encourage you all to consider facing the challenge to stand for election as office bearers or committee members. As my experience shows, as well as supporting our children's education into the future you will be well rewarded in so many ways. We were all completely inexperienced when we began.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary our experience over those years shows that the vigilance needed to improve and then maintain equality of access to appropriate education for our children is constant and ongoing if we are not to slip backwards. Covid19 has brought this home to us very strongly.

As I hand over to Wally, I would like to repeat the words used by our Founder and First Federal Secretary Pat Edgley, in her 1972 Secretary's Report and with which she concluded her address when opening the 25th Federal Conference in 1996. "We are working for a just cause and it must succeed in the long run. If we work on a united front with a single purpose, justice will be achieved for the isolated child."

Mr Wally Mitchell AM

Thank you very much, it is wonderful to be involved again with all of you people and with your ambition and your drive. Things have changed dramatically when I look at this little screen and see things happening.

I recollect when Pat Edgley and I used to talk on party line phone until they shut off an 10 o'clock at night but then the ladies at the exchange would leave us connected so we could go and ramble on with issues we thought could be formative and could work. Next morning was different. If somebody would ring either of those exchanges Pat and I would both answer because we were still connected. The lady on the exchange said I think you are the longest, loudest customers I've ever seen and I don't know how you could talk all night. We were blamed for it but it didn't really happen.

The organisation has done do very well and we are proud of it being able to handle this technology bit. I'm in the office now of our wonderful accountant, whose father had the first accommodation for isolated children here in Bourke. Bill Carruthers operated that venture so successfully and then he supported us in trying to broaden the approach for funds for the education of isolated children.

That is how we started on a solid footing. People travelled big miles and came to Bourke to the original conference. We owe them so much, we really do. It wasn't always easy, and generally came at a time when we could least afford it but the exchanges that we had and the friendship we built have been so valuable.

I really appreciate being asked to be involved with you again today. We're still working stock, and it's working me I tell you! We have a lot of faith in people living in the back country enjoying their lifestyle and educating their children well. We have in my family now two young ladies, one an engineer and the other in education who have degrees. I'm very proud of their achievement and the support of the organisation that helped this happen, to help country families throughout Australia. I'm very proud of it and I'm very pleased to see you all working so well to continue it. Thank you.

Presentations

Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education

Hello everyone, I am speaking to you today virtually but please know I am with you in spirit and look forward to future opportunities to meet face to face.

I am very pleased to take part in celebrating the ICPA's 50th year of advocating for educational opportunities and outcomes for geographically isolated children and their families. Firstly, my thanks go to Alana and the Association's Federal Council for inviting me to speak today at your annual federal conference.

Given the challenges of the past 18 months, and the cancellation of the July conference, I am delighted you are going ahead, it shows your commitment and passion. Congratulations. It's very special to celebrate 50 years of your dedicated work to ensure regional, rural and remote students have equity of access to a continuing and high quality education, whether they be littlies or those heading off to begin tertiary studies.

Most recently, your advocacy was highly influential in getting the National Code for Boarding School Students endorsed by National Cabinet and in making it easier for boarding students to reconnect with their families.

Since your very first meeting in the New South Wales outback town of Bourke in 1971, where families gathered to talk about the effects of severe drought on their lives and their children's education, the ICPA has made such an impact on regional education. As of today, you have grown to represent more than 2,500 families across Australia. What a great achievement. You're a truly dedicated group of volunteers, making sure your voices are heard to highlight your key objective – that the educational needs and aspirations of geographically isolated children are not compromised because of where they live.

I have been entrusted with three key roles in Government to support regional and remote Australians – Regional Education, Regional Communication and Regionalisation. This is a great privilege for me, as they are, and have always been, issues close to my heart.

I was born in a small rural Victorian town and brought up with traditional rural influences including agriculture, small business and the importance of community. I've also been both a regional high school teacher and a university lecturer, two roles which fuel my passion for improving young people's opportunities, no matter where they live.

So, I'm really looking forward to continuing to work with you all. I had the privilege of serving as Minister for Regional Education back in 2018 and am pleased to be supporting the priorities of this portfolio again.

I have a passion for regional, rural, and remote education, because it doesn't just affect the kids growing up in small towns across Australia right now, and their families. It's also crucial to the economic development and the sustainability of whole communities well into the future. Ensuring high quality teaching and supporting kids in regional and remote Australia, we are developing the next generation of farmers, tradies and local doctors.

I worked closely with the Halsey Review team as it toured the country, seeking feedback and ideas on how to better support students and young people in regional, rural and remote Australia; as I said at the time "from Bendigo to Longreach, from Karratha to Queenstown".

When teaching, I saw the obstacles faced by regional students, so I couldn't be more thrilled to be here today celebrating your achievements in overcoming these. And Longreach is such an appropriate place to host the celebration. It's a town with so much history. It's home to the Longreach School of Distance Education, formerly the Longreach School of the Air, one of 16 distance education schools in the country and one of seven in Queensland.

Longreach stories told in the QANTAS Founders Museum and the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, make it a town that has come to symbolise regional Australia. And to symbolise how vibrant, resilient, innovative, influential and community spirited people who live outside the major cities are! And no better way to describe the ICPA.

You are an excellent example of what a connected community, while geographically dispersed, can achieve in addressing shared priorities, from shared experiences.

Today, those first conversations in Bourke have translated into actions across communities that have contributed to a shift in delivery and access to education. Truly something to celebrate. Throughout your long-standing commitment to isolated children and their families, you have provided valuable

recommendations to Government. You've kept the focus on the principle of equitable access to education, despite location. The ICPA has been fundamental in guiding government policy and I look forward to continuing to work with you on the issues that affect students in regional and remote communities.

The Liberal Nationals Government continues to support many of the ICPA's long championed policy goals. And you have also implemented a number of effective and collaborative initiatives across the country to support these shared priorities.

One of the first major achievements of the ICPA was the establishment of the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme. Through this initiative, the Government provides financial support for eligible families who are geographically isolated from an appropriate school. The funding enables students to access a quality education whether it is through distance education, attendance at boarding school or the establishment of a second home closer to a school.

You have also continued to provide a regional perspective to governments across a range of issues through your lobbying and providing submissions to various parliamentary inquiries and reviews such as the Halsey Review, reviews of the Australian Curriculum and the recent House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training inquiry into education in remote and complex environments. Again, achievements to celebrate.

The provision of education across our unique country has to be flexible and adaptable. We know one size doesn't fit all. We've all seen the impacts, when students become disengaged from education and how this can affect communities more broadly.

Equitable access to education for children in isolated communities should not place unnecessary burden or pressure on families and communities. Your advocacy has made this clear.

As well as its support for school education, the Australian Government is working to reduce the gap between regional and city students. This divide was clearly highlighted in Dr Denis Napthine's National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy which showed that those living in regional and remote areas are less than half as likely as their city counterparts to obtain a university degree by the time they are 35. This disparity is far too large. The Government is committed to improving higher education access for those in regional areas, through additional investment in regional universities and regional development.

We have also announced the establishment of an independent Regional Education Commissioner who will have a central goal of at least halving the disparity in tertiary education outcomes between regional and metropolitan students by 2030. The Commissioner will have a broad remit across students' educational lifespan, from early childhood through to vocational education and training and university. The Commissioner will support and coordinate various programs to assist regional, rural, and remote educational outcomes. I expect to be able to announce the appointment of the Commissioner in the coming months.

As you would all be aware on 20 September, National Cabinet endorsed the National Code for Boarding School Students. The Code provides states and territories with principles to develop Covid-safe travel arrangements to help students and their families navigate boarding restrictions. After months of stress and separation for boarding families whose children cross state lines to attend school, this is definite win for common sense, taking a clear, compassionate and practical approach to supporting the travel needs for the approximate 1,600 boarding school students who have to cross a border to attend school.

But we know there is more to do. We are still hearing of cases where quarantine requirements are causing an unreasonable burden on families and distress for kids. We're continuing to work with state authorities to apply some compassion in these circumstances. I would like to give a special thanks to all who were involved in making the National Code for Boarding School Students happen. Advice given by the ICPA was highly regarded and played a prominent role in making it all happen. Congratulations.

The Australian Government respects and appreciates the longstanding role that the ICPA has had in providing a voice for geographically isolated families and the lead role it plays in informing evidence-based policy that directly targets the complex and diverse needs of our rural, regional and remote students and families.

That is why we approved funding of \$100,000 over two years (2021-22 and 2022-23), following the ICPA's submission. With this funding, I hope that the ICPA can continue to contribute to Australia's understanding of the issues facing regional, rural, and remote students through its advice and advocacy.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and watching ICPA's advocacy and reach grow in our shared goal of reducing the disparities that exist in educational outcomes for our regional, rural and remote students.

I trust you all enjoy the conference, reconnect with one another, make new connections and have a great celebration of your 50-year milestone.

**His Excellency, General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)
and Her Excellency, Mrs Linda Hurley**
Transcript Video Address to Conference

Governor General:

Welcome to the Isolated Children's Parents Association of Australia Federal Conference.

Can I say upfront: congratulations to all involved in organising this conference.

The impact of the pandemic has meant that event planning is particularly challenging.

So, well done to the Association on hosting a COVID-safe Conference.

Mrs Hurley:

David and I are pleased that you are able to gather physically this year after last year's conference was held online.

It's much nicer being physically together, especially when there is so much to celebrate.

We're informed it's the Association's 50th anniversary this year.

Congratulations!

Governor General:

That's 50 years of Association members, past and present, volunteering their time and ensuring that children in remote and rural areas receive access to education.

This year's conference theme, 'stronger together', is particularly apt.

The theme reflects the hard work and expertise of the Association's more than 2,500 member families.

Testament to that commitment is the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme that you helped establish in the 1970s and which still exists today.

I can't begin to imagine the number of children who have received an education as a result of your strong advocacy.

Mrs Hurley:

Your 50th Anniversary Federal Conference is an opportunity for you to catch up with colleagues and friends, to discuss issues relating to core business and, above all else, to celebrate! Australia has had a tough time of late – natural disasters, a pandemic and a mice plague. It is important nonetheless that we take time out and celebrate our successes.

Governor General:

Congratulations to all at the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia on your 50th Anniversary. May there be many more.

Mrs Hurley:

Thank you, everyone, for the important work that you do. I hope you have a productive and enjoyable Federal Conference.

**ODE TO ICPA
A Tale Of Years
Rupert McCall © 2021**

The despair of drought hung lowly on the dislocated town
An air of doubt that deepened when the Bourke Hostel closed down
But defeat was not an option on account of cloudless weather
And she knew that they'd be stronger if they all stood up together
So she commandeered a meeting and a rightful thing was done
The mighty Mrs Edgley back in Nineteen Seventy One...
Yes she rose amongst that gathering and made a declaration
"The one thing that we must protect... our children's education"
And a seed of hope was watered by a tear of joy that day
As the birth was crowned and christened in the name 'ICPA'

Four letters proud and worthy in a hard but honest nation
Children at the forefront, namely those in isolation
The parents of these children unashamedly invited
To be vigilant in vision, strong of voice and co-united
Mothers who were weighted down with far too much already
Fathers who were breaking backs to keep the home-front steady
Young Australian families and giving it their best
They descended on that meeting where the challenge was addressed
Then, all across the countryside, they gathered to the fray
And they saddled up that stockhorse with the name 'ICPA'

The message spread like fire and its relevance was burning --
"Equity of access to the tools of greater learning
An isolated child – one who for geographic station
Is compromised unfairly when it comes to education"

The reasoning compelling but the day was far from done
Every inch was fiercely fought and every classroom won

They shouted from the rooftops to personify their fears
Far too often sadly, it would fall on wooden ears
But the blaze was in their heart now and it wouldn't go away
So they shouted even louder did the bold 'ICPA'

Finally, a breakthrough and the true believers roared
For they shouted and they shouted 'til they could not be ignored
The government responded and in Nineteen Seventy Three
Persistence was rewarded with the sacred AIC
Allowances incorporated, supplements secured
The victory was vital and its relevance endured
Because the fight was one of principle and something had to give!
No one should be punished on account of where they live
So the icon was established – it was here and here to stay
And the letters were imprinted – they were I, C, P & A

Branch by branch, they made their stance - a nation joined the ride
And everyone who wore that badge, they wore that badge with pride
Dedicated, passionate and stubbornly tenacious!
It became a family of its own, hospitable and gracious
And family was paramount in everything achieved
From Monaro up to Charleville the signal is received
From Oatlands to the Alice, Port Augusta onto Broome
Broken Hill to Lord Howe Isle, from fax machine to Zoom!
And here we are in Longreach where it honours me to say
Another Federal Conference flies the flag 'ICPA'

You can almost see their faces when the sun is going down
Mitchell, Edgley, Jakins and the VPs - Green & Powne
Pioneers of progress – back when school was in the air!
Now the sky is being mustered – there's a satellite up there!
Ain't no doubt about it friends, we've walked a country mile
But the beauty of ambition fuels the same inspired smile
To be the best that one can be and 'high' is where we aim
The bond of child and parent – it's undoubtedly the same
And the spirit of the people who have gathered here today
Shines a light towards tomorrow... in the name 'ICPA'

There's a moral to this story and it echoes undeterred
Believe in what you stand for and your voice will soon be heard
Success befriends adversity on every worthy track
When all you really ask for is a fair and decent crack!
Despite the many hurdles and no matter what the weather
Strength is better measured by the mob that works together
There is love and there is loyalty incumbent in your tears
That's the sum of every heart... a tale of fifty years!
And beyond this celebration, the horizon's holding sway
As we ride into the future... and we shout 'ICPA'!

To every proud contributor who somehow lit the way
Raise your glass in honour - 50 years – ICPA!

Federal Life Membership Presentation to Sue Shotton

Nikki Macqueen

Since retiring from Federal Council in 2014, Sue Shotton has been instrumental in the establishment of two ICPA websites starting both from scratch, assisting with the development of an online membership system beginning in 2017, database upkeep, as well as the maintenance of the ICPA website by assisting both Federal and State Councils to ensure that up to date information was available and current at all times.

In addition to her website role, Sue also supports ICPA (Aust) by attending the Federal Conference as the AV assistant, set up AV assistance for presentations, motions and portfolio reports and assist the AV person at the conference with the numerous PowerPoint presentations, slides, videos and other technological wonders that helps make Federal Conference more engaging.

Sue not only assists with all aspects of the website, she also establishes and maintains email addresses and mailboxes, organises hosting and diverts emails to ensure that the correct ICPA email gets to the right person. This is an onerous task and one that has to be done correctly, every time. There are many email addresses between all of the Federal and State Councils and Sue has the responsibility of making sure each email, of which there would be hundreds daily, is delivered into the correct mailbox.

At the 2019 Federal Conference in Adelaide, Sue presented Federal Council with the news that our former website hosting company Clear Pixel no longer wished to continue with the ICPA website as the content editing program they used called Breeze had become obsolete. Due to the complex nature of our structure of 7 websites within 1 site, extremely large database and an online payment system that was going to take a lot of mapping, not just anyone could do the job. To say that this news left us despondent is an understatement. Federal Council knew how much work had gone into setting up the first and second website and to tackle that again was disheartening.

In true Sue style as our Web Manager she took the job of investigating a new website developer on with gusto and after discussions with Federal Council she began researching into who we could entrust with such a task. Many hours of pouring through suggestions, phone calls, emails, zoom meetings (being stood up and those businesses who were completely underprepared), budgets and liaising with Federal and State ICPA as to wish lists. We began the process at the end of 2019 and it all came to fruition in May 2021 and not a day in between did not have a website thought or process in it.

Sue narrowed her list down and presented prospective website companies to Federal and State ICPA Councils at the beginning of March 2020, as COVID hit. In an organisation of volunteers who have businesses and families to maintain, with children to educate along with ICPA demands, as the world was flipped on its head, the timing was not ideal. Sue had her work cut out and after much deliberation and pouring over Project Briefs, the company Enrega was appointed as our web developer using the source management system Drupal.

Sue, this Federal Life Membership is in part because this project would not have even begun without your expertise. You and Mark have had numerous meetings to discuss “back-of-house” technicalities and your in-depth knowledge and understanding has enabled this process to happen smoothly. Without your expertise and willingness to unselfishly devote so many hours to ICPA, with the support of your husband Pete, ensures our organisation maintains a digital presence. ICPA State and Federal Councils would not be in the favourable position that we are currently in with a state of the art, cohesive website for our members to enjoy for many years to come.

I would like you all to welcome ICPA Australia's newest Federal Life Member, Mrs Sue Shotton. Congratulations Sue.

Certificate of Appreciation Presentation to Jane Morton

Kate Thompson

It is a great honour to be presenting this Certificate of Appreciation.

Jane is a member of the BBB Branch: Boulia - Bedourie – Birdsville Branch.

Jane Morton served on ICPA Federal Council for over 7 years after being co-opted to Federal Council in December 2012 as Secretary. At the Federal Conference in Glenelg 2013, Jane was elected Secretary and served for 4 years, elected assistant secretary from 2017 to 2019 and councillor for one more year, stepping down from Federal Council at the Virtual Conference in 2020.

It is hard to ensure the worth of Jane is fully captured and to show completely her many attributes, skills and knowledge throughout her time on Federal Council that we are so appreciative of and Jane went above and beyond what is expected. She did this always, no questions asked and with a smile. Her trademark "no worries mate" and "we'll get there" will be forever etched in the minds of the Councillors who worked with her. And who can forget her Slim Dusty "Giddy Giddy" ring tone which we were all witness to at the Alice Springs Conference in 2017.

Jane was always available on the phone, via email or texts for fellow Councillors, members, state councils, branches and outside organisations, departments and Government and has continued this following her stepping down from Federal Council. She was an invaluable mentor for councillors in Secretary and assistant Secretary roles.

Jane has always been patient and approachable, always made time to help anyone no matter how small or large the task, knowledgeable and would ensure understanding without question or judgement. Jane always maintained a high standard of skill in every aspect of her Federal Council work. She is methodical, has her finger on the pulse, is IT savvy, a driver for change, encouraging, professional and always willing to put her hand up to help, or start tasks, plus a meticulous editor regardless of what she had on in her own position or portfolio.

Jane extended all of this to everyone on Federal Council, but also to members, branches and states councils. Jane's contribution, commitment and dedication to ICPA was unwavering and is continuing with her support of BBB branch and her help with the 50th year ICPA book.

This nomination of Jane Morton for Certificate of Appreciation is in recognition of her tireless support and assistance to ICPA while a part of our Federal Council but which has also continued since her retiring from formal ICPA roles.

Thank you Jane and congratulations.

Conference Attendance

Federal Council

President	Alana Moller
Vice President	Sally Sullivan
Secretary	Suzanne Wilson
Assistant Secretary	Kate Thompson
Treasurer	Lisa Slade
Publicity Officer	Nikki Macqueen
Councillors	Nikki Mahony
	Briony Sinclair
	Kim Hughes
	Julia Broad
Immediate Past President	Wendy Hick
Federal Web Manager	Sue Shotton
Webmaster	Nikki Macqueen
Federal Life Members	Wally Mitchell AM (V)
	Megan McNicholl OAM
	Roxanne Morrissey (V)
	Jane Gloster
	Jack Beach
	Julia Materne (V)
	Patricia Mitchell OAM

State Council Delegates

New South Wales	Kate Warby	Bree Wakefield (V)
Northern Territory	Sarah Cook	Juliane Vlach
Queensland	Melissa Iland (1)	Louise Martin (1)
	Kate Bradshaw (2)	Rob McArthur (2)
South Australia	Jill Greenfield	Hollie Williams
Western Australia	Sally Brindal	Kym Ross (V)

Branch Delegates

Alice Springs NT	Lisa Kimlin (V)	Mary Bayly (V)
Alpha QLD	Sarah Bridgeman	
Aramac-Muttaburra QLD	Jill Dyer (1)	Genevieve Hawkins (1)
Belyando-Mt Coolon QLD	Amanda Clark	Natalie Comerford (1)
	Jocelyn Omand (2)	
Blackall QLD	Anita Dennis	Marcelle Chandler
Bollon QLD	Kerrie Cribb	Rod Cribb
Bourke NSW	Tanya Mitchell (V)	Prue Ritchie (V)
Broken Hill NSW	Ali Allison (V)	
Capricornia BOTA QLD	Ainsley McArthur	Rob McArthur (1)
Charleville QLD	Louise Winten	
Charters Towers QLD	Sonia Spurdle	Michelle Lyons
Clermont QLD	Kasie Scott	Cynthia Walker (1)
	Scott Moller (2)	
Cunnamulla QLD	Trish McKenzie	Jim McKenzie (2)

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Dawson Valley QLD	Elizabeth Shoecraft	Anne Chater
Far North Qld QLD	Lyn French	
Hay NSW	Michelle Spence (1) (V)	Cas Tidey (2) (V)
Hillston NSW	Laura Stalley (V)	
Hughenden QLD	Melissa Neilson	
Katherine NT	Amanda Murphy (V)	Moira Lanzarin
Longreach QLD	Sally Cooper	Neida Mims (2)
	Jen Lindsay (1)	
Louth NSW	Annabel Strachan (V)	Jim Strachan (V)
Midwest WA	Naomi Obst (V)	
Mitchell-Tambo/Dunkeld QLD	Ashley Purcell	Page Vidler
Monaro NSW	Shennah Joiner (V)	
Moonie QLD	Margaret Doyle	
Moree NSW	Phoebe Watts (V)	
Mt Isa BOTA QLD	Nik Kennedy (V)	
North East SA	Roslyn Breeding (V)	
North West SA	Lynly Kerin (V)	Joanna Gibson (V)
Port Augusta SA	Katrina Morris	
Richmond QLD	Gillian Semple	Susan Bellingham
SA Lone Members	Jodie Keogh (V)	
Southern Downs QLD	Belinda Markey	
Springsure/Rolleston QLD	Patricia Gretton (1) (V)	Rachel Pierce
Tambo QLD	Heather Turnbull (1)	Melissa Iland (2)
Taroom-Wandoan QLD	Miffy Staines	Naomi Golden
Tasmania TAS	Judy Terry	
Walgett NSW	Liz Powell (V)	Karen Ricardo (V)
Wentworth NSW	Nerida Healy (V)	
Wentworth NSW	Sharryn Gilmour	Katherine Currin
Western Downs QLD	Miranda Ronnfeldt	Sharryn Gilmour
Westmar-Inglestone QLD	Natalie Slack	Marg Hurst
Yalgoo WA	Ruth Rowe (V)	
Yaraka-Isisford QLD	Ian Merritt	Anna Cochrane (2)
	Lesley Merritt (1)	

Branch Observers

Alice Springs NT	Amber Driver (V)	
Belyando-Mt Coolon QLD	Jocelyn Omand (1)	Natalie Comerford (2)
Boulia-Bedourie-Birdsville QLD	Kerry Morton	
Bourke NSW	Anna McCorkle (V)	
Brewarrina NSW	Kathryn Hertslet (V)	
Clermont QLD	Scott Moller (1)	Cynthia Walker (2)
Dawson Valley QLD	Louise Joyce	Keith Shoecraft (2)
Hughenden QLD	Margaret Duncombe	
Katherine NT	Marianne St Clair	David Murtagh
	Kerrie Scott (V)	
Longreach QLD	Joy McClymont	Amelia Williams (2)
	Neida Mims (1)	
Marla-Oodnadatta SA	Helen Williams (V)	

Moree NSW	Kelly James (V)	
NSW State Council	Gabie Le Lievre (V)	
NSW/VIC Lone Members	Jesse Mary Donoghoe	
QLD State Council	Kate Bradshaw (1)	Megan Easton
	Jeff Little	Louise Martin (2)
SA Lone Members	Georgy Ewing (V)	
Southern Downs QLD	Carmel Elliot (V)	
Walgett NSW	Judy Sinclair-Newton (V)	
Western Downs QLD	Melissa Matthews (V)	
Winton QLD	Paula McKerrow (1)	
Yaraka-Isisford QLD	Andrew Pegler	Mary Killeen
	Teresa Cobb	Pauline Brunckhorst
	Heather Morton	

Convening Committee

Convenor	Wendy Henning	Westmar-Inglestone
Treasurer/Registrations	Tammie Irons	Westmar-Inglestone
Sponsorship	Julie McDonald	Cloncurry
Event Coordination	Prue Button	

Conference Guests

4 Season Company	Sam Stephens	National Sales Manager
ABC Western Queensland	Maddelin McCosker	Rural Reporter
Alice Springs SOTA, NT	Kerrie Russell (V)	Principal
Anglican Church Grammar School, QLD	Tim Christie	Assistant Housemaster
Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA)	Richard Stokes	CEO
	Tom Dunsmore	General Manager
	Jared Daunt	Communication & Events Manager
Australian Communications	Andrew Williams (V)	Acting CEO
Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)	Una Lawrence (V)	Director of Policy
	Meredith Lea (V)	Policy Manager
Australian College of Rural & Remote Medicine (ACRRM)	Annabelle Brayley	Board Member
Australian Council of State Schools Organisations (ACSSO)	Dianne Giblin (V)	CEO
Australian Government Dept of Education, Skills & Employment	Peter Garrigan (V)	
	Emma Whalan	Assistant Director, ECEC
	Tracie De Boe	Assistant Director
	Keely Dwarte (V)	Policy Advisor
	Rosemary White (V)	Assistant Director
Boarding Schools Expo Australia	Amanda Ferrari (V)	Director
BushED, QLD	Tracy Adler	Administrator
Catholic Education – Diocese of Rockhampton, QLD	Tim Collins	Assist Director of Schools-Western Region
Clayfield College, QLD	Kathryn Searle	Head of Boarding
Connellan Airways Trust	Jessica Hackett	Executive Officer

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Country Education Partnership (CEP)	Joe Collins	National Project Officer, Rural Youth Aspirations
IHC Support Agency	Vicki Saarinsen (V)	Manager
Ipswich Grammar School, QLD	Steward Drinkeld	Director of Boarding
Marist College Ashgrove, QLD	Ty Casey	Head of Boarding
National Recovery & Resilience Agency (NRRRA)	Susan Dowling	Recovery Support Officer NWQ
National Rural Women's Coalition	Jane Mack	Recovery Support Officer NT
nbn	Keli McDonald	CEO
	Leonie Noble	President
	Kylie Lindsay	Head of nbn local – QLD
	Gavin Williams (V)	Chief Development Officer
	Jacob King	Exec Manager Satellite Products
	Elise Petty (V)	National Regional Stakeholder Manager
	Jen Beer (V)	Head of Segment – Education & Health
	Anshula Wilkinson (V)	General Manager, Strategy & Transformation
	Sam Dimarco (V)	General Manager, Segments & Stakeholder Relations
Office of the Senator the Hon. Susan McDonald	Susan McDonald (V)	LNP Senator for QLD, Special Envoy for Northern Australia
Office of the Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie	Rachel Dryden (V)	Senior Advisor
P&C Federation	Natalie Walker (V)	President
P&C's Queensland	Scott Wiseman	CEO
	Sally Whelan	Director
QLD Independent Schools Parents' Network (QISPN)	Justine Cirocco	Executive Officer
QLD Country Life/North QLD Register	Sally Gall	Senior Journalist
St Hilda's School, QLD	Amanda Rigby	Head of Boarding
St Joseph's Nudgee College, QLD	Sean Toovey	Dean of Boarding
St Peter's Lutheran College, QLD	Stuart Delaney	Head of Boys Boarding
	Kim Holman	Head of Girls Boarding
Stuartholme School, QLD	Kristen Sharpe	Principal
	Jane Morris	Acting Dean of Boarding
Telstra	Josie Pickering	Regional Engagement Manager
	Jon New	Wireless Network Engineer – Senior
The Cathedral College, QLD	Ron Armstrong	Assistant Principal – Boarding
	Michael Busby	Director of Sport
The Cathedral School of St Anne & St James, QLD	Ian Gamack	Principal
The Southport School	Jane Passmore	Registrar
	Karel Bos	Deputy Headmaster
	Christian Oneto	Dean of Students
The Student Housing Company	Tim Klitscher	Managing Director
Whitsunday Anglican School, QLD	Andrew Wheaton	Principal
	Nancy Fadden	Registrar
Guest	Lyla Moshmosh (V)	

Conference Apologies

Members

Lorrayne Balharry	SA Lone Members, SA
Annette Banks	Blackall, QLD
Steve & Kiya Broad	Alice Springs, NT
Sylvia Byers AM	WA Lone Members, WA
Robert & Jenny Crichton	Charleville, QLD
Pip Fearon	Tambo, QLD
Raelene Hall	Meekatharra Air, WA
Peter & Paula Heelan	QLD Lone Members, QLD
Mac & Diane McClymont	Longreach, QLD
Libby McPhee	Collarenebri-Mungindi, NSW
Katie Payne	Katherine, NT
Rosemary Philp	Longreach, QLD
Kimberley Rains	Tambo, QLD
Stacey Ryrrie	Tambo, QLD
Rory Treweeke	Federal Life Member, Walgett, NSW
Charlie & Jan Gall	Blackall, QLD

Guests

Senator Eric Abetz	Senator for Tasmania
Craig Allen	Acting Director-General for the Department of Education Queensland
Her Excellency, The Hon. Margaret Beazley	Governor of New South Wales
Senator The Hon. Matthew Canavan	Senator for Queensland
Hon. John Carey MLA	WA Minister for Housing & Local Government
Senator Richard Colbeck	Senator for Tasmania
Hon. David Coleman	Federal Member for Banks NSW, Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health & Suicide Prevention
Pat Conaghan MP	Federal Member for Cowper NSW
Lara Dalton MLA	Member for Geraldton WA
Senator Perin Davey	Senator for NSW
Hon. Colin de Grussa MLC	Member for Parliament WA
Hon. Damian Drum MP	Federal Member for Nicholls VIC
Hon. Di Farmer MP	QLD Minister for Employment & Training and Minister for Training & Skills Development
The Hon Grace Grace MP	Minister for Education, Queensland
Garth Hamilton MP	Federal Member for Groom QLD
Catherine Hawkins	First Assistant Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – Office of Women
Hon. Bob Katter MP	Federal Member for Kennedy QLD
Jane Kelsbie	Member for Warren-Blackwood WA
Senator Kristina Kenneally	Senator for NSW
Hon. Michelle Landry	Federal Member for Capricornia QLD, Assistant Minister for Children & Families

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Hon. David Littleproud	Federal Minister for Maranoa QLD, Federal Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia
Hon. Alannah MacTiernan MLC	WA Minister for Regional Development, Agriculture & Food, Hydrogen Industry
Senator Jenny McAllister	Senator for New South Wales
Kristy McBain MP	Federal Member for Eden-Monaro NSW
Emma McBride MP	Federal Member for Dobell NSW
Hon. Michael McCormack MP	Federal Member for Riverina NSW
Senator the Hon. James McGrath	Senator for Queensland
Hon Simone McGurk MLA	WA Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests; Prevention of Family & Domestic Violence; Community Services
Dr Phillip Moulds	Headmaster, The Rockhampton Grammar School
Llew O'Brien	Federal Member for Wide Bay QLD
Senator Deborah O'Neill	Senator for New South Wales
Tony Pasin MP	Federal Member for Barker SA
Gavin Pearce MP	Federal Member for Braddon TAS
Hon. Tanya Plibersek	Federal Member for Sydney NSW, Shadow Minister for Education/Women
Rowan Ramsey MP	Federal Member for Grey SA
Senator The Hon. Linda Reynolds	Senator for WA, Minister for Government Services
Hon. Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA	Member for Morley WA
Senator Paul Scarr	Senator for Queensland
Adj Professor Ruth Stewart	National Rural Health Commissioner
Senator the Hon. Amanda Stoker	Senator for Queensland, Assistant Minister for Women
Dr Anne Webster MP	Federal Member for Mallee VIC
Hon. Reece Whitby MLA	Member for Baldivis WA
Hon. Dan van Holst Pellekaan MP	Member for Stuart SA
Senator Sam McMahon	Senator for Northern Territory

Financial Statements

Annual Financial Statements

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia
Incorporated

ABN 38 908 782 315

For the year ended 31 May 2021

Prepared by Carrick Aland Accountants

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Statement by Members of the Committee

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated For the year ended 31 May 2021

We, Alana Moller, and Lisa Slade, being members of the Committee of Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated and on behalf of the Committee, certify that -

1. We have compiled the accompanying special purpose financial statements of Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated, which comprise the asset and liabilities statement as at 31 May 2021, income and expenditure statement, the statement of cash flows, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes. The specific purpose for which the special purpose financial statements have been prepared is set out in Note 1.
2. The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated during and at the end of the financial year of the Association ending on 31 May 2021.
3. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.
4. These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which contemplates continuity of normal business activities and the realisation of assets and settlement of liabilities in the ordinary course of business. The ability of the Association to continue to operate as a going concern is dependent upon the ability of the Association to generate sufficient cash flows from operations to meet its liabilities. The members of the Association believe that the going concern assumption is appropriate.

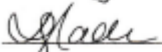
The Committee of Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated are solely responsible for the information contained in the special purpose financial statements, the reliability, accuracy and completeness of the information and for the determination that the basis of accounting used is appropriate to meet their needs and for the purpose that financial statements were prepared.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee

Signed: 

Alana Moller - President

Dated: 30 August 2021

Signed: 

Lisa Slade - Treasurer

Dated: 30 August 2021

Statement of Cash Flows

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated
For the year ended 31 May 2021

	2021
Operating Activities	
Receipts From Grants	35,500.00
Interest Received	4,506.13
Cash Receipts From Other Operating Activities	149,240.67
Cash Payments From Other Operating Activities	(159,126.00)
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	30,120.80
Investing Activities	
Other Cash Items From Investing Activities	(1,728.00)
Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities	(1,728.00)
Other Activities	
Other Activities	(11,112.03)
Net Cash Flows from Other Activities	(11,112.03)
Net Cash Flows	17,280.77
Cash and Cash Equivalents	
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	433,623.91
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	450,904.68
Net change in cash for period	17,280.77

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Income and Expenditure Statement

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated
For the year ended 31 May 2021

	2021	2020
Revenue		
Donations & Sponsorship		
Donations		
Donations - Branch	14,604.00	12,400.00
Donations - Other	1,000.00	900.00
Total Donations	15,604.00	13,200.00
Sponsorship		
Sponsorship	14,313.55	-
Sponsorship (Conference)	25,000.00	13,636.36
Total Sponsorship	39,313.55	13,636.36
Total Donations & Sponsorship	54,917.55	26,836.36
Grants Received		
Government Grants Received	25,500.00	34,000.00
Other Grants Received	10,000.00	-
Total Grants Received	35,500.00	34,000.00
Other Income		
Interest Income		
Interest Received	4,506.13	6,790.98
Total Interest Income	4,506.13	6,790.98
Other Revenue		
Accommodation Reimbursements	1,709.09	2,535.76
Badges and Pins	379.68	172.07
Boarding Parent Handbook Sale	36.36	18.18
Emails - Additional State Emails	260.00	-
Federal Conferences	-	42,660.81
Meeting - Other	2,626.82	-
Membership Income		
Memberships	56,004.55	52,754.74
Memberships - Tas Online Collected	300.00	750.00
Total Membership Income	56,304.55	53,504.74
Refund on Payment	963.50	-
Sundry Income	11,687.72	159.34
Income Transferred from ICPA Federal Conference 2020	20,355.40	-
Total Other Revenue	94,323.12	99,050.90
Total Other Income	98,829.25	105,841.88
Total Revenue	189,246.80	166,678.24
Expenditure		
Administrative Expenses		

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

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Income and Expenditure Statement

	2021	2020
Licence Fees	-	66.18
Printing & Stationery	5,505.02	5,145.52
Postage	426.54	264.66
Subscriptions & Memberships	2,635.23	-
Web Page Expenses	19,209.34	598.18
Total Administrative Expenses	27,776.13	6,074.54
Audit Fees	2,400.00	2,575.00
Federal Conference Expenses		
Federal Conference - Guest Expenses	2,125.00	-
Federal Conference - Presentation & Gifts	210.32	-
Federal Conference - Website Expenses	4,940.00	-
Federal Conferences - Branch Sponsorship to Attend	-	7,700.00
Federal Conferences - Conference Minutes	90.91	-
Federal Conferences - Convening Committee Fwd Fund	35,454.55	26,301.36
Federal Conferences - Councillor Expenses	-	31,129.03
Federal Conferences - Meals, Accommodation & Travel	14,293.90	-
Federal Conferences - Profit Split to Host State	-	5,817.38
Total Federal Conference Expenses	57,114.68	70,947.77
Insurance Expenses		
Insurance	4,105.94	2,735.56
Total Insurance Expenses	4,105.94	2,735.56
Operating Expenses		
Canberra Delegation Expenses	31,166.17	20,409.22
Corporate Memberships - State Magazines	3,261.75	1,922.73
State Conferences	15,042.06	6,148.07
Badges and Pins Expenses	2,073.41	695.69
Membership Expenses	293.64	815.45
Membership Fees - Tasmania Online Memberships	-	570.00
Meetings - Other Expenses	761.94	12,234.10
Total Operating Expenses	52,598.97	42,795.26
Other Expenses		
Bank Charges	-	54.98
Donations	600.00	600.00
Freight & Cartage	96.90	-
New Equipment Purchased - Immediate Asset Write Off	6,813.86	-
Sundry Expenses	6,651.52	128.91
Tasmania Branch ICPA Lones Funds	588.00	-
Total Other Expenses	14,750.28	783.89
Repairs & Maintenance		
Repairs, Replacement & Maintenance	334.55	2,018.18
Total Repairs & Maintenance	334.55	2,018.18
Utilities		

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

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Income and Expenditure Statement

	2021	2020
Telephone & Internet	45.45	-
Total Utilities	45.45	-
Total Expenditure	159,126.00	127,930.20
Net Current Year Surplus/(Loss)	30,120.80	38,748.04

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Movements in Equity

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated For the year ended 31 May 2021

	2021	2020
Members Funds		
Opening Balance	427,037.26	-
Increases		
Profit for the Period	30,120.80	38,748.04
Retained Earnings	-	388,289.22
Total Increases	30,120.80	427,037.26
Total Members Funds	457,158.06	427,037.26

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Assets and Liabilities Statement

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated
As at 31 May 2021

	NOTES	31 MAY 2021	31 MAY 2020
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3	450,904.68	433,623.91
Trade and Other Receivables	4	1,728.00	-
GST Receivable		4,525.84	-
Total Current Assets		457,158.52	433,623.91
Total Assets		457,158.52	433,623.91
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
GST Payable		-	3,780.86
Total Current Liabilities		-	3,780.86
Other Current Liabilities			
Funds Held - East Coast Branch TAS		0.46	2,805.79
Total Other Current Liabilities		0.46	2,805.79
Total Liabilities		0.46	6,586.65
Net Assets		457,158.06	427,037.26
Member's Funds			
Accumulated Surplus (Deficit)		457,158.06	427,037.26
Total Member's Funds		457,158.06	427,037.26

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated For the year ended 31 May 2021

1. Basis of Preparation

Compliance with Prescribed Requirements

In the Committee's opinion, the Association is not a reporting entity because there are no users dependent on a general purpose financial report. The financial report is therefore a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015 (WA)* and the *constitution of the entity*. The Association is a 'small charity' registered with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)*.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the disclosure requirements of AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements, ASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors and AASB 1054 Australian Additional Disclosures and the significant accounting policies as detailed below.

Principal Activities

The Association is a not-for-profit entity involved in the advocating and promoting awareness of the need for equitable access to educational opportunities for families in regional and remote areas in Australia.

The Association does not control other entities. The financial statements include the value of all income, expenses, assets, liabilities and equity for the Association as an individual entity.

Underlying Measurement Basis

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated specifically, current valuations of non-current assets.

Other Presentation Matters

Currency

Amounts included in the financial statements are in Australian dollars.

Comparative Figures

Comparative information reflects the audited 2021 financial statements.

Current / Non-Current Classification

Assets and liabilities are classified as either 'current' or 'non-current' in the Statement of Financial Position and associated notes. Assets are classified as 'current' where their carrying amount is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting date.

Liabilities are classified as 'current' when they are due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting date, or the Association does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement to beyond 12 months after the reporting date. All other assets and liabilities are classified as non-current.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

Income Tax

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and the organisation has been endorsed by the Australian Tax Office to be income tax exempt.

These notes should be read in conjunction with the Statement by Members of the Committee.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held on call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts.

Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors

Accounts receivable and other debtors include amounts due from members as well as amounts receivable from donors. Receivables expected to be collected within 12 months of the end of the reporting period are classified as current assets. All other receivables are classified as non-current assets.

Revenue and Other Income

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable after taking into account any trade discounts and volume rebates allowed. For this purpose, deferred consideration is not discounted to present values when recognising revenue.

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument. Dividend revenue is recognised when the right to receive a dividend has been established.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

If conditions are attached to the grant that must be satisfied before the Association is eligible to receive the contribution, recognition of the grant as revenue will be deferred until those conditions are satisfied.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the assets and liabilities statement.

Accounts Payable and Other Payables

Accounts payable and other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the Association during the reporting period that remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

COVID-19 - Going Concern without Material Uncertainties

These notes should be read in conjunction with the Statement by Members of the Committee.

Notes to the Financial Statements

Management has considered the consequences of COVID-19 and other events and conditions, and it has determined that they do not create a material uncertainty that casts significant doubt upon the entity's ability to continue as a going concern.

The impact of COVID-19 on future performance and therefore on the measurement of some assets and liabilities or on liquidity might be significant and might therefore require disclosure in the financial statements, but management has determined that they do not create a material uncertainty that casts significant doubt upon the entity's ability to continue as a going concern.

	2021	2020
3. Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Bank Accounts		
Suncorp General Account #9912	5,346.08	48,588.68
Suncorp Everyday Account #8011	3,000.00	2,787.72
Suncorp Business Saver Account #0139	400,013.83	375,716.03
Suncorp Membership Account #9963	132.00	3,636.00
Suncorp Department of Education Grant Account #0112	37,645.09	55.19
Suncorp East Coast TAS Account #5845	0.46	2,805.79
Suncorp P. Edgley Account #0066	-	0.96
Suncorp Tasmania State Council Trust Account #4629	4,733.68	-
ANZ Credit Card	33.54	33.54
Total Bank Accounts	450,904.68	433,623.91
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	450,904.68	433,623.91

	2021	2020
4. Trade and Other Receivables		
Other Receivables		
Sundry Debtors	1,728.00	-
Total Other Receivables	1,728.00	-
Total Trade and Other Receivables	1,728.00	-

These notes should be read in conjunction with the Statement by Members of the Committee.



**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.
ABN: 38 908 782 315**

Qualified Opinion

We 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 2021, 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 statement by members of the committee.

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matter described in the Basis for Qualified Opinion paragraph, the accompanying financial report gives a true and fair view of, the financial position of the association as at 31 May 2021 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 2015 (WA)* and the Constitution.

Basis for Qualified Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are 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 (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified opinion.

Income

The association has determined that it is not practical for the committee to maintain adequate systems of internal control over funds received prior to initial entry in the financial records. Accordingly, our audit in relation to the funds collected was limited to amounts recorded in the financial records. We, therefore, are unable to express an opinion as to the completeness of income.

Opening balances

With respect to the comparatives reported in the financial report of the association, which was audited by D G Murdock, per the unqualified audit report dated 4 August 2020, we have been unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to form an opinion on the comparatives.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We 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 2015 (WA)* and the Constitution. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our 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 2015 (WA)* and the Constitution and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the Financial Report

Our 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 our opinion. Reasonable



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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.
ABN: 38 908 782 315**

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 aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We 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 of our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusions, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design and 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 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 we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, modify our audit opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our 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.

We 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 we identify during our audit.

Queensland Audit Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kent Gripske'.

Kent Gripske CPA
Director

Dalby Qld, 7th September 2021

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Membership as at 31 March 2021

Western Australia	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Esperance	21	26	27	21	22	16
Gascoyne	16	12	18	11	15	8
Goldfields Eyre (<i>Kalgoorlie Air</i>)	18	16	12	19	19	17
Eastern Districts <i>formerly Hyden</i>	33	47	46	38	44	40
Kimberley Air	8	10	12	9	9	11
Kondinin	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Lakes District	49	52	44	44	47	46
Meekatharra Air	14	15	16	20	20	16
Midwest	48	51	49	46	52	46
Pilbara	14	18	17	17	20	20
WA Lone Members	34	30	36	24	24	18
Yalgoo	9	10	9	7	7	5
Central Wheatbelt North <i>formerly Kalannie</i>	33	35	29	18	18	7
	297	322	315	274	297	250

South Australia	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Eyre	0	0	0	8	8	4
Far West	1	1	0	0	recess	recess
Flinders Ranges	23	18	26	24	24	22
Marla Oodnadatta	7	10	10	10	10	8
Marree Air	14	16	13	10	10	6
North East Districts	13	16	18	16	17	15
North West	10	11	11	11	11	10
Port Augusta	9	7	8	9	10	11
SA Lone Members	8	11	16	7	7	15
	85	90	102	95	97	91

Tasmania	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Central Highlands	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
East Coast	14	19	18	7	7	
Midlands (<i>Oatlands</i>)	17	16	14	9	9	
TAS Lone Members	5	7	8	7	8	
Tasmania <i>merged East Coast, Midlands, Tas Lones</i>						12
	36	42	40	23	24	12

Northern Territory	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Alice Springs	48	44	51	41	43	49
Barkly	recess	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Katherine	52	52	64	52	53	80
Territory Wide <i>formerly NT Lone Members</i>	10	10	14	12	13	19
	110	106	129	105	109	148

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New South Wales	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Balranald	54	56	47	39	45	41
Boomi	11	20	19	18	18	13
Bourke	24	28	29	29	32	28
Brewarrina	15	18	19	14	16	18
Broken Hill	37	33	37	33	35	32
Bullarah <i>amalgamated with Moree</i>	14	12	12	closed	closed	closed
Central West Plains (<i>Tottenham</i>)	95	92	92	95	96	71
Collarenebri-Mungindi	16	11	19	15	24	17
Cobar	0	0	recess	recess	recess	recess
Condobolin	8	12	13	8	9	8
Corinella	0	0	recess	recess	recess	recess
Goolgowi	11	13	13	13	13	15
Hay	80	78	74	57	69	80
Hillston	11	0	recess	6	8	11
LR/Goodooga	2	8	9	10	10	7
Lord Howe Island	10	11	11	11	11	10
Louth	17	26	24	23	23	25
Monaro	21	31	31	29	30	21
Moree <i>amalgamated Bullarah</i>	23	15	24	33	39	46
Namoi (<i>Burren Junction</i>)	50	43	48	42	45	51
NSW Lone Member	69	103	122	109	117	136
Nyngan	25	30	25	23	24	21
Paroo	6	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess
Quambone	42	39	35	40	41	31
Rankins Springs	36	33	25	26	29	28
Tibooburra/Milparinka	13	11	14	18	18	8
Tilpa	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Vermont Hill	17	18	10	6	6	6
Walgett	39	35	43	35	39	27
Warrumbungle	2	1	recess	recess	recess	recess
Wentworth	17	17	24	26	28	30
West Wyalong	8	2	recess	recess	recess	recess
North West Slopes			8	9	11	9
	773	796	827	767	836	790

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Queensland	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Alpha	36	28	32	22	28	32
Aramac-Muttaburra	34	30	35	32	32	33
Arcadia Valley	14	16	18	9	12	14
Auburn-Burrandowan-Cardarga	11	13	32	28	28	16
Augathella	8	14	22	17	22	20
Belyando-Mt Coolon	32	43	49	40	42	45
Blackall	33	0	34	29	29	44
Bollon	21	1	16	19	19	19
Bouli-Bedourie-Birdsville	15	16	15	14	15	12
Capricornia (BOTA)	19	21	22	29	33	29
Channel Country	0	0	5	1	1	1
Charleville	20	25	20	24	25	34
Charleville BOTA	10	9	10	0	closed	closed
Charters Towers	58	46	56	55	67	59
Clarke Creek	15	17	18	23	26	28
Clermont	52	44	55	53	54	49
Cloncurry	9	14	10	16	16	12
Cunnamulla	12	22	28	22	24	31
Dawson Valley	15	10	17	13	15	25
Dirranbandi	27	27	29	32	32	27
Dunkeld with <i>Mitchell-Tomoo</i>	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Far North QLD (<i>Cairns Radio</i>)	31	0	32	9	14	25
Hughenden	27	16	16	17	17	23
Julia Creek	25	19	32	27	28	33
Kindon	29	28	31	30	32	32
Longreach	34	22	38	16	28	24
McKinlay	11	0	0	4	5	6
Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld	43	38	34	34	40	30
Moonie	29	26	25	24	26	31
Mt Isa BOTA	30	37	35	30	36	33
Nebo	14	0	9	20	22	15
North Burnett (<i>Eidsvold-Cracow</i>)	7	13	18	13	13	7
QLD Lone Members	24	15	25	20	22	12
Quilpie	39	29	32	14	14	17
Richmond	13	18	17	19	20	31
Roma	21	23	30	28	33	40
Southern Downs (<i>Stanthorpe District</i>)	33	36	31	30	32	29
Springsure-Rolleston	0	0	21	17	21	25
St George	37	41	49	46	52	43
Talwood	22	4	9	23	24	23
Tambo	30	24	27	27	41	36
Taroom-Wandoan	33	42	39	43	44	43
Thargomindah	8	0	1	0	5	10
Western Downs (<i>Condamine-WD</i>)	33	34	37	40	41	40
Westmar-Inglestone	58	64	53	53	55	46
Winton	33	33	40	29	29	32
Yaraka-Isisford	30	34	31	32	34	39
	1135	992	1235	1123	1248	1255

50th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Australia Wide Membership Totals	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
New South Wales	773	796	827	767	836	790
Northern Territory	110	106	129	105	109	148
Queensland	1135	992	1235	1123	1248	1255
South Australia	85	90	102	95	97	91
Tasmania	34	42	40	23	24	12
Western Australia	297	322	315	274	297	250
	<u>2434</u>	<u>2348</u>	<u>2648</u>	<u>2387</u>	<u>2611</u>	<u>2546</u>
Corporate			1	4	3	4
School Corporate					5	10

Financial Branches 31/05/2021	
New South Wales	26
Northern Territory	4
Queensland	45
South Australia	8
Tasmania	1
Western Australia	12
	96