

Isolated Children's Parents' Association  
of Australia Incorporated



# Minutes

of the

51<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference

**'Outback to Ocean – Growing Member Connections'**

3 and 4 August 2022

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel  
Perth, Western Australia

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

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

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

M49(A1), M50(A2), M51(A3), M52(A4), M53(A5), M54(A6),  
M55(A7), M56(S1), M57(A8), M58(A9), M59(A10),  
M60(A11)

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

M34(A12), M35(A13), M36(A14), M37(A15), M38(A16),  
M39(A17), M40(A18), M29(A19), M30(A20), M31(A21),  
M32(A22), M33(A23)

### **CURRICULUM**

M27(A24), M28(A25)

### **DISTANCE EDUCATION**

M1(A26), M2(A27), M3(A28), M4(A29), M5(A30), M6(A31)

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE**

M61(A32), M62(A33), M63(A34), M64(A35), M65(A36),  
M66(A37), M67(A38), M68(A39), M69(A40), M70(A41),  
M71(A42), M72(A43), M73(A44), M74(A45), M75(A46)

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

M77(A47), M78(A48)

### **SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS**

M23(A49), M24(A50), M25(A51), M26(A52)

### **TERTIARY**

M7(A53), M8(A54), M9(A55), M10(A56), M11(A57),  
M12(A58), M13(A59), M14(A60), M15(A61), M16(A62),  
M17(A63), M18(A64), M19(A65), M20(A66,) M21(S2)

### **TRAINING**

M76(A67)

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

M79(A68), M22(A69), M80(S3), M81(A70)

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

M41(A71), M42(A72), M43(A73), M44(A74), M45(A75),  
M46(A76), M47(A77), M48(A78)

**ICPA Federal Council 2021 - 2022**

**President**

Alana Moller  
Clermont QLD

**Assistant Secretary**

Kate Thompson  
York Plains TAS

**Immediate Past President**

Wendy Hick  
Camooweal QLD

**Committee**

Julia Broad  
Pentland QLD

**Committee**

Anna McCorkle  
Bourke NSW

**Pedals Editor**

Raelene Hall  
Meekatharra WA

**Archivist**

Julia Materne  
Keith SA

**Vice President**

Lisa Slade  
Bangor SA

**Treasurer**

Nikki Mahony  
Dawson Valley QLD

**Committee**

Sally Sullivan  
Mataranka NT

**Committee**

Wendy Henning  
Glenmorgan QLD

**Committee**

Naomi Obst  
Mingenew WA

**ICPA Website Manager**

Sue Shotton  
Winnellie NT

**Secretary**

Kim Hughes  
Richmond QLD

**Publicity Officer**

Suzanne Wilson  
Darwin NT

**Committee**

Jane O'Brien  
Walgett NSW

**Committee**

Ali Allison  
Broken Hill NSW

**Committee**

Laura Stalley  
Hillston NSW

**Federal Webmaster**

Nikki Macqueen  
Millmerran QLD

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Camooweal QLD

**Committee**

Anna McCorkle  
Bourke NSW

**Pedals Editor**

Hannah Calcino  
Brisbane QLD

**Membership Officer**

Judy Newton  
Dubbo NSW

**Vice President**

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Pentland QLD

**Treasurer**

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Dawson Valley QLD

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Hillston NSW

**Federal Webmaster**

Nikki Macqueen  
Millmerran QLD

## Outback to Ocean – Growing Member Connections

### Conference Program Day 1 – Wednesday 3 August 2022

<b>9.00am</b>	<p><b>National Anthem</b>  <b>Welcome</b>  <b>Conference Arrangements</b>  <b>Introduction of Delegates and Guests</b></p> <p><i>Confirmation of the 2020 Online Conference Minutes</i>  <i>Confirmation of the 2021 Longreach Conference Minutes</i></p> <p><b>Official Opening of Conference</b></p> <p><b>Conference Address</b></p> <p><b>Federal ICPA President’s Report</b></p> <p><b>Distance Education Portfolio Presentation</b>  <i>Distance Education Portfolio Motions</i></p>	<p>St Hilda’s Anglican School for Girls  Alana Moller  Jane Cunningham  Kim Hughes</p> <p>Lisa Slade  Lisa Slade</p> <p>Hon Fiona Nash  Regional Education Commissioner</p> <p>Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm  Assistant Minister for Education</p> <p>Alana Moller</p> <p>Ali Allison</p>
<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Morning Tea</b>	
<b>11.00am</b>	<p><b>Western Australia ICPA President’s Report</b></p> <p><b>Tertiary Portfolio Presentation</b>  <i>Tertiary Portfolio Motions</i></p> <p><b>Northern Territory ICPA President’s Report</b></p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p>	<p>Sally Brindal</p> <p>Kate Thompson</p> <p>Moira Lanzarin</p> <p>Lisa Slade</p>
<b>12.30pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	
<b>1.30pm</b>	<p><b>New South Wales ICPA President’s Report</b></p> <p><b>Specific Education Needs Portfolio Motions</b>  <i>Specific Education Needs Portfolio Motions</i></p>	<p>Tanya Mitchell</p> <p>Laura Stalley</p>
<b>2.00 pm</b>	<b>Keynote Speaker</b>	Dr Craig Challen SC OAM
<b>3.00pm</b>	<b>Afternoon Tea</b>	
<b>3.30pm</b>	<p><b>Curriculum Portfolio Presentation</b>  <i>Curriculum Portfolio Motions</i></p>	Wendy Henning
<b>3.45pm</b>	<p><b>Communications Portfolio Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Presentation – Telstra Update</b></p> <p><i>Communications Portfolio Motions – Mobile/Telephone</i></p> <p><b>Presentation – nbn Update</b></p> <p><i>Communications Portfolio Motions – Internet Access</i></p>	<p>Julia Broad</p> <p>Justine Rowe  Chief Sustainability Officer and  Executive, Sustainability, Policy and  Engagement Centre of Expertise</p> <p>Gavin Williams  NBN Co Chief Development Officer  Regional and Remote</p>
<b>5.30pm</b>	<b>Introduction of candidates for Federal Council</b>	
<b>6.30pm</b>	<p><b>Close of Business Day 1</b>  <b>Conference Dinner – Frasers Restaurant, Kings Park</b></p>	

# 51<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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## Conference Program Day 2 – Thursday 4 August 2022

8.30am	<b>Annual General Meeting</b> Introduction of Delegates	Kim Hughes
9.30am	<b>Conference Resumes</b> Introduction of Guests	Kim Hughes
9.40am	<b>Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Presentation</b> <i>Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Motions</i>	Lisa Slade
	<b>Presentation – ‘The Future of Boarding’</b>	Richard Stokes ABSA CEO
10.30am	<b>Morning Tea</b>	
11am	<b>Presentation - ‘From the Bush to the Big Smoke - - Creating Successful Transitions to Boarding School’</b>  <i>Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Motions cont.</i>	Hannah Calcino Incoming Pedals Editor
	<b>Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Presentation</b>	Julia Broad
	<b>Presentation – ‘Overview of Thrive By Five and the Campaign to Improve Early Childhood Development and Learning’</b>  <i>Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Motions</i>	David Ansell Minderoo Foundation
12.30pm	<b>Lunch</b>	
1.30pm	<b>South Australia ICPA President’s Report</b>	Belinda Hatcher
	<b>Training Portfolio Presentation</b> <i>Training Portfolio Motions</i>	Wendy Henning
	<b>Presentation – ‘Rural Inspire’</b>	Phil Brown, Country Education Partnership
	<b>Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio Presentation</b> <i>Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio Motions</i>	Naomi Obst
	<b>Queensland ICPA President’s Report</b>	Louise Martin
	<i>Miscellaneous Agenda Motions</i> <i>Agenda Motions cont.</i>	
3pm	<b>Afternoon Tea</b>	
3.30pm	<b>Presentation</b> <i>Agenda Motions cont. (if required)</i> <i>Floor Motions</i>	Alana Moller
	<i>Farewells to retiring Councillors</i> <i>Vote of Thanks and Acknowledgements</i>	
5.00pm	<b>Close of Conference</b>	
6.30pm	<b>Post Conference Function - Lucky Shag Waterfront Bar</b>	

**DAY ONE Wednesday 3 August 2022**

**9:00am Conference commences**

**National Anthem**

Sung by Sasha Browne, Boarder at St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls, Perth

**Welcome by Federal ICPA President**

Alana Moller

**Conference Arrangements**

Jane Cunningham

**Introduction of Delegates and Guests**

Kim Hughes

**Confirmation of the 2020 Web Conference Minutes**

*"That the amended 2020 Federal Conference Minutes, as circulated on 10 December 2021, be ratified."*

**Explanation:** In the 2020 Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (Inc) Federal Conference Minutes some corrections were made to the ICPA Federal Council 2019 - 2020 and the ICPA Federal Council 2020 – 2021 committee lists to rectify inaccuracies.

**Moved:** Lisa Slade, Federal Council

**Seconded:** Kate Thompson, Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**Confirmation of the 2021 Federal Conference Minutes**

*"That the 2021 Federal Conference Minutes as circulated on 15 June 2022 be accepted."*

**Moved:** Lisa Slade, Federal Council

**Seconded:** Kate Thompson, Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**Official Opening of Conference**

Hon Fiona Nash  
Regional Education Commissioner

**Presentation**

Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm  
Assistant Minister for Education

**Federal ICPA President's Report**

Alana Moller

**Distance Education Portfolio Presentation**

Ali Allison

**Distance Education Portfolio Motions**

**M1 (A26) CONJOINED MOTION presented by:**

**Katherine Branch (NT), Western Australia State Council (WA), Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA), Alice Springs Branch (NT)**

*"That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate the Federal Government to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role the Home Tutor plays in educating geographically isolated students via distance education,"*



**Moved:** Elyce Donaghy Goldfields Eyre (WA)  
**Seconded:** Sally Dyer Katherine (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

**Katherine Branch (NT):**

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

**Western Australia State Council (WA):**

Recently, it was suggested that the States need to lobby for this at a state level. Whilst we absolutely support the intention of DETA and would embrace its introduction WA members feel that dealing with this at the State level could detract from the importance of such an allowance and potentially leave a situation where some States have a version of DETA and others do not.

The argument from the Federal Government is that the deliverance of education is a state's responsibility. That responsibility is being borne by the State through the deliverance of education utilising distance education and School of the Air.

Each eligible child, who boards away from home, is afforded a federal allowance (AIC) from the Federal Government to assist with the cost of boarding, as boarding is a necessity for those children to have equitable access to an appropriate education. Children who access distance education through School of the Air are no different. Instead of boarding away from the family home, these students, due to their age, are reliant on Home Tutors as a necessity for equitable access to an appropriate education.

We feel that Federal ICPA representing all States on this issue will, if DETA is adopted, support ICPA members fairly across Australia.

**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.

**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 to 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.

**M2 (A27) Northern Territory State Council (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that the Federal Minister for Education does table, 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 (Aust).”

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

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

We appreciate that work is in progress for this motion. We thank ICPA Federal Council for your efforts thus far and wish to advise that the issue is still relevant and ongoing.

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 that ICPA (Aust) continues to do this.

We also understand that in early 2020, the Federal Education Minister advised that the 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.

**M3 (A28) Broken Hill Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests Services Australia to increase the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) for geographically isolated students undertaking secondary education via Distance Education.”

**Moved:** Georgina Luckraft Broken Hill (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Britt Anderson Broken Hill (NSW)

**LOST**

**Explanation:**

As students reach the 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, they

more than likely need to change schools. This means extra cost of setting the 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, it quite often means 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 (BH SOTA) students are continuing their education into secondary through Dubbo School of Distance Education (DSODE) 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 these expenses are the responsibility of the student's family.

Some approximate costings:

Annual costs to a family include internet, furniture, uniforms, resources, fuel and accommodation for travel. Families need to travel for their student to attend compulsory residential requirements, excursions and sporting events. This can require travelling 2000km up to 6 times a year. Accommodation is then also required due to the vast distance from their home. These costs don't include the ongoing costs of uniforms and additional resources.

An example of approximate average annual costs to geographically isolated parents within our branch with a student studying secondary education via distance education:

Fuel:	\$4800
Accommodation	\$1800
Satellite internet:	\$ 960
Furniture:	<u>\$ 500</u>
	\$8360

**M4 (A29) Capricornia Branch of the Air (QLD)**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobby the relevant government departments to outline within the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Guidelines the impact on AIC payments for geographically isolated students enrolled in Schools of Distance Education, who have been medically certified 'unfit' to engage in their usual fulltime course and have been granted medical exemption by the School of Distance Education."

**Moved:** Scott Moller                      Clermont (QLD) on behalf of Capricornia BOTA (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Louise Joyce                      Dawson Valley (QLD)

**LOST**

**Explanation:**

Given the incidence rates of Post COVID-19/Long COVID-19 within the community, it is imperative that students who are medically certified to have Post COVID-19/Long COVID-19 be acknowledged as a valid medical reason to be absent from Full-Time study without losing the eligibility of AIC. More clarity is required within the AIC Guidelines to assist those working in the AIC call centres to help field the questions of AIC eligible families when faced with this issue and any other lengthy illness that students contract.

Case Study:

A geographically isolated distance education student who has been deemed medically unfit by a medical practitioner to participate in their usual full-time school program due to the effects of Post COVID-19/Long-COVID-19. The child has been granted a Medical Exemption by the SDE and therefore is still enrolled at the school but due to the cessation clause within the guidelines they have had their AIC payments cancelled. The family were diligent in notifying the AIC of the students change in circumstances, not being able to participate in the Full -Time course but due to their Term 2 instalment being paid 1 week prior to the notification they now have a debt to repay. They have received notification from AIC to say that their child has 'Ceased attending school on a Full-Time Basis' but they are still in fact enrolled with the school

Since the diagnosis, the family have had to travel to larger regional centres to undergo specialist medical tests which has added a large degree of travel and expense. It could be argued that the cancelled AIC payment could be used to cover these medical costs in a bid to assist the child to get back to full time study in the shortest possible timeframe.

**ICPA Western Australia President's Report**

Sally Brindal

**M5 (A30) Alice Springs Branch (NT)**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Australian Government to review and amend entry requirements and conditions for geographically isolated families claiming Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) through Centrelink to make it more accessible."

**WORD CHANGE** Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs (NT)) requested Conference's permission for a word change to remove "and amend entry requirements and conditions" and add "and expand eligibility criteria"  
**Conference permission granted**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Australian Government to review and expand eligibility criteria for geographically isolated families claiming Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) through Centrelink to make it more accessible."

**Moved:** Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs (NT)  
**Seconded:** Danyelle Haigh Alice Springs (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Many families are having their Application for Assistance for Isolated Children denied because their place of residence is considered too close to a town school. When reviewing applications Centrelink is not taking into consideration the student's or family's individual set of circumstances. Perhaps the closest school isn't the most appropriate due to the family's work requirements, the student's learning needs, location of where they reside, educational outcomes or safety. It is a decision that is not taken lightly and greatly impacts the family financially.

**M6 (A31) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to ensure that Schools of the Air (SOTAs) are not overlooked in the Governments' *Student Wellbeing Boost*."

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

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The Labor Government announced pre-election that *'every Australian school will benefit from Labor's Student Wellbeing Boost, which will mean more school counsellors and psychologists, and*

*extra funding for camps, excursions, as well as sporting and social activities that improve kids' wellbeing. The average school will be \$20,000 better off this year'.*

When allocating funding to schools, it is imperative that SOTAs are included. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many camps, sporting activities and excursions have been cancelled. This has resulted in these students having either limited or no opportunity to engage with their teachers and peers in a face-to-face capacity. For students who are isolated by virtue of their geographical location, access to support services and the opportunity to reconnect with their peers is imperative for their mental health and wellbeing.

**Federal Council – “Join Federal Council” video**

**Tertiary Portfolio Presentation**

Kate Thompson

**Tertiary Portfolio Motions**

**M7 (A53) Kindon Branch (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies all relevant Federal Government Ministers to significantly increase the Dependent Youth Allowance parental income limit to reflect the actual cost for rural and remote families who support dependent students at a tertiary level.”

**Moved:** Daryl Martin Kindon (QLD)

**Seconded:** Amanda Martin Kindon (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The current parental income limit to access Dependent Youth Allowance is far too low. Rural and remote students have no other choice than to move away from home to access university due to distance and the cost for families supporting these students is high. The parental income limit at its current level means that many rural and remote students are denied access to Dependent Youth Allowance.

**M8 (A54) Bourke Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates the Federal Government to change the criteria for gaining Independent Youth Allowance, so that rural and remote students who have to leave home to study at tertiary level and are not eligible for Dependent Youth Allowance, are eligible for Independent Youth Allowance as soon as they commence the tertiary course of their choice.”

**Moved:** Prue Ritchie Bourke (NSW)

**Seconded:** Tanya Mitchell NSW State Council (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Students who are unable to access Youth Allowance due to the Parental Means Test are having to support themselves until they prove they are independent. The Parental Means Test is not indicative of what income is available to support the family. Commodity prices and sale of stock due to drought can exaggerate figures. Consideration needs to be given to the fact that most income goes back into the running of the farm or into Farm Management Deposits for restocking and/or taxation reasons because of the forced sale of stock. We are not wanting to include students moving out of home because they feel like moving. The students we represent move hundreds of kilometres to major regional centres or cities and pay inflated rent and utilities for accommodation near their university. Moving so far away from the family home to set up a second home is a fair indication that these students are the very ones that should be eligible for Independent Youth Allowance. These students should be focusing on studying their chosen degree. It is great if they find part time employment,

however finding a job in a new environment and supporting themselves is a major concern. It leads to high dropout rates and increased stress and anxiety on individuals.

**M9 (A55) Bourke Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates the Federal Government to change the eligibility criteria for Independent Youth Allowance, so that those rural and remote students who choose to save or invest their earnings during the working period prior to attending university, are not disadvantaged by the Liquid Assets criteria.”

**Moved:** Prue Ritchie Bourke (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Tanya Mitchell NSW State Council (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Students who choose to save their earnings during their gap year should not be deemed ineligible or disadvantaged due to the Liquid Asset Waiting Period. Many students work hard to save their earnings but instead must use their savings to support themselves and pay rent while attending university.

The Liquid Asset Waiting Period applies if the applicant has more than \$5500 in liquid assets prior to application for Youth Allowance and means waiting a number of weeks based on the amount of liquid assets. It tapers from \$5500 to \$11,500 meaning there may be a maximum 13 week waiting period before Youth Allowance payments begin.

Fellow students who earn the amount required to be considered eligible for Independent Youth Allowance but spend everything they earn, are eligible for the allowance straight away but those who have saved and have money in the bank are not eligible for the allowance until after the required waiting period, and therefore not eligible for Rent Assistance either until payments begin.

**M10 (A56) 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:** Liz Cook Katherine (NT)  
**Seconded:** Sally Dyer 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 the 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. The current parental threshold is \$160,000 reducing by \$10,000 for other dependent siblings.

Parental income should not enter into Independent Youth Allowance criteria 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.

**M11 (A57) Louth Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates the Minister for Social Services to increase Centrelink rent assist payments for rural and remote students who need to relocate from home to access their chosen pathway.”

**Moved:** Prue Ritchie Bourke (NSW) on behalf of Louth (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Tanya Mitchell NSW State Council (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Regional, remote and very remote children need to factor in rent to their study plans. Rent is the biggest component of a student’s costs. For example, to study in a larger city this may mean that a student has to work so much that their course suffers.

Fortnightly:

If a student is over 18 years of age, has no children and is single, Youth Allowance is \$304.60. Rent Assist varies according to your rent. If a student is paying \$124.60 in rent, they will receive a maximum of \$93.07 Rent Assist.

Approximate average fortnightly costs based on single basic room:

- Charles Sturt University Orange - \$400 without board
- Port Macquarie’s Charles Sturt University -\$480 without board
- Coffs Harbour Southern Cross University -\$400 without board
- Women’s College Sydney University- \$1200 with board
- University of New England-\$350 without board
- Sydney rented share accommodation - \$600 without board
- Larger regional NSW town/city rented share accommodation- \$320 without board.

**M12 (A58) Lakes District Branch (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government to review the criteria for the Relocation Scholarship to include students from geographically remote areas who must relocate for the purpose of undertaking a university pathway and who do not qualify for Dependent Youth Allowance; and for this to be a standalone allowance.”

**WORD CHANGE** Jane Cunningham Lakes District WA requested Conference’s permission for a word change to add ‘all’ and ‘isolated’ and remove ‘remote’

**Conference permission granted**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government to review the criteria for the Relocation Scholarship to include all students from geographically isolated areas who must relocate for the purpose of undertaking a university pathway and who do not qualify for Dependent Youth Allowance; and for this to be a standalone allowance.”

**Moved:** Jane Cunningham Lakes District (WA)  
**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Currently, the Relocation Scholarship is only for a tertiary student who is in receipt of Dependent Youth Allowance. A significant number of students from rural, regional and remote areas in Australia

are deemed ineligible for Dependent Youth Allowance as they do not meet all of the guidelines to claim this allowance under the current criteria.

To continue their chosen academic pathway students must assume the cost of relocation expenses and the ongoing cost of accommodation. This is an expensive exercise when moving long distances and should not be a barrier to pursuing further education due to geographical location. Rural and remote students deserve to be given equal support and opportunities to excel. Distance should not mean disadvantage.

**M13 (A59) Walgett Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Ministers to change the criteria for the Relocation Scholarship to include all students from regional or remote areas relocating who do not qualify for Dependent Youth Allowance.”

**Conference permission for M13 (A59) to be deemed covered by M12 (A58) requested by Tracy Grant, Walgett (NSW)**

**Conference permission granted**

**DEEMED COVERED BY M12 (A58)**

**Explanation:**

Dependent adults need financial help in relocating to university. In some instances, students have not had an opportunity to work and earn an income due to the isolation of their family home. These students are moving from remote or very remote areas like Walgett, to the city or possibly even interstate and this is a substantial burden on the financial circumstances of their family.

The Relocation Allowance would give them the opportunity and time to move, settle and commence studies before having to seek employment to subsidise their cost of living away from home.

**M14 (A60) Bourke Branch (NSW)**

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

**Moved:** Prue Ritchie Bourke (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Tanya Mitchell NSW State Council (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Tertiary students who are eligible for Dependent Youth Allowance are also able to apply for the Relocation Scholarship which is a welcome injection of funds for any student having to leave the principal place of residence and set up a new place to live to attend tertiary studies. However, it is not available to students who are deemed independent or not eligible for any other allowance. The meaning of relocate is ‘to move or to establish in a new place’. Regardless of whether a student is eligible to receive certain student allowances, they are still relocating. This scholarship was established to ensure students who had to undergo a process of relocation would not have the unfair financial burden of a move compared to those who are able to live and study from their family home. It would appear less, as they are not only unable to access Youth Allowance but are also ineligible for the Relocation Scholarship.

**M15 (A61) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government review the criteria for the Relocation Scholarship to ensure all geographically isolated students who must relocate from their usual place of residence for the purpose of undertaking post-compulsory studies are eligible.”



**Conference permission for M15 (A61) to be deemed covered by M14 (A60) requested by Sally Brindal, WA State Council**

**Conference permission granted**

**DEEMED COVERED BY M14 (A60)**

**Explanation:**

In the primary school years assistance for access to education is offered through the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Distance Education Allowance and a conveyance allowance to access a school bus service or drive directly to school. In the secondary years, the AIC – Boarding and Second Home Allowances assist with the significant financial cost incurred when children are living away from their primary residence to access education. Yet, for many of these families when their children commence tertiary studies there is no assistance unless the child qualifies for Youth Allowance, which is very few.

It is recognised across all levels of government that geographically isolated children face barriers in accessing an appropriate education, and to overcome these barriers involves significant financial contribution. But when it comes to post-compulsory tertiary education our children are not sufficiently catered for.

Having incurred the initial cost of relocating, the ongoing costs associated with living away from home can become unmanageable for many families. Rental properties in Western Australia are at a premium and it is extremely difficult to find any shared accommodation below \$200 per week plus utilities. This equates to \$13,000 per annum urban-based students do not have to fund. Students often seek employment to supplement the cost of living, which can become difficult to navigate with university timetabling, and as a result of the financial burden, many rural and remote students fail to complete their studies.

The requirement for a student to be receiving Youth Allowance to access the Relocation Scholarship is disadvantaging rural and remote students. Receipt of the AIC should also be deemed a component of the qualifying eligibility criteria.

**M16 (A62) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) seeks clarification from the Federal Government and Services Australia to confirm that to be eligible for Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) the qualifying course can start either Semester 1 or Semester 2 in the study year immediately following year 12 and for this information to be clearly visible on the website.”

**Moved:** Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The Tertiary Access Payment commenced on 1 January 2021 and is available to eligible students who meet the eligibility criteria. One of these criteria is:

- studying a tertiary course at Certificate IV or above *in the next available study period after year 12 with no gap year.*

Discussions with Services Australia have confirmed that a six-month bridging course does not qualify for the TAP; the course is required to have a duration of at least one academic year. A student who then commences a qualifying course in Term 2 should be eligible for the TAP as they have not taken a gap year. Although technically it is not *in the next available study period after year 12*, without the TAP applying to Semester 2 the criteria immediately discriminates against those students who do not meet the entry requirements for their chosen course and are required to complete a bridging course or other necessary qualification in order to be accepted into their course of choice.

Clarity is extremely important to avoid confusion based upon whom you speak to at Services Australia.

### **M17 (A63) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government and Services Australia include the *words* ‘with a minimum duration of one academic year’ to the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) study rules students need to meet on the Services Australia website.”

**Moved:** Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

#### **Explanation:**

Currently on the Services Australia website to get the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) students must be studying one of the following:

- university course
- Vocational Educational and Training (VET) course
- other higher education course.

Discussions with Services Australia have confirmed that to receive the payment a person must be studying one of the above courses with a duration of at least one academic year. This is a Services Australia internal ruling that is not advertised on the public website.

This is an important factor that families should be made aware of before applying for the TAP and we feel it would be beneficial under the **Study rules you need to meet** section of the website for it to read:

*To get the TAP payment you must be studying one of the following:*

- *university course*
- *Vocational Educational and Training (VET) course*
- *other higher education course*

*with a minimum duration of one academic year.*

### **M18 (A64) Lakes District (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Federal Government to review the criteria of the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) for all rural and remote tertiary students.”

**Moved:** Jane Cunningham Lakes District (WA)

**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

#### **Explanation:**

The Tertiary Access Payment commenced on 1 January 2021 and is available to eligible students who meet all of the following:

- an Australian resident
- meeting study rules
- from an inner regional, outer regional, remote or very remote area
- moving to study at a tertiary education provider that’s more than 90 minutes away from your family home by public transport
- have completed year 12 or equivalent
- studying a tertiary course at certificate IV or above in the next available study period after year 12 with no gap year
- 22 or younger on the day you start your tertiary course

- have parents or guardians whose income is under the current combined parental income limit of \$250,000.

Our branch is very appreciative of the establishment of this allowance but strongly feels the need for some amendments to the criteria:

- That the criteria *'studying a tertiary course at certificate IV or above in the next available study period after year 12 with no gap year'* be amended to allow students who commence study in semester two to be deemed eligible. Students who complete a bridging course or Certificate IV course in semester one prior to the commencement of their chosen course are deemed ineligible for this payment.

**M19 (A65) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to ensure regional universities are included in the proposed improvements as mentioned in the *'Your Education Policy - A stronger university system'*."

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

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The Labor Government announced pre-election that their *"Future Made in Australia Skills Plan will also deliver up to 20,000 new university places"* and that *"places will also be prioritised for universities offering more opportunities for under-represented groups such as people in regional, remote and outer-suburban areas, those who are the first in their family to study at university, and First Nations Australians"*.

For many students from rural, regional and remote areas who have faced varying disruptions and challenges in accessing an education over the past three years, the prospect of continuing to be distanced from their families is influencing their decision to continue with their post-compulsory education.

Statistically, rural and remote students are underrepresented in post-compulsory education. Increasing places at regional universities would offer students the ability to study within the regions, remain connected to their communities and help to improve the academic outcomes for this cohort.

**M20 (A66) Louth Branch (NSW)**

"That ICPA (Aust) advocates the Minister for Education to consider ways to condense tertiary training, such as at Marcus Oldham Agricultural College."

**Moved:** Prue Ritchie Bourke (NSW) on behalf of Louth (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Tanya Mitchell NSW State Council (NSW)

**LOST**

**Explanation:**

Several member families at Louth have expressed concern about the 'time wasted' when their young adult children are completing a tertiary qualification. Students who live in a very remote context such as Louth, Wanaaring, White Cliffs, Hungerford, and other places our members come from, by necessity relocate many kilometres away to access training and study.

In most instances, the training/study institutions' destinations are expensive places to live. Isolated students are entitled to access Independent Youth Allowance once they have proven their independence.

The Youth Allowance rates allow for rent and living costs, leaving very little if any at all once they are deducted. Accessing extra part time work prevents students from receiving the full Youth Allowance rate. Thus, it is often a frustrating time, and the reality is that remote parents need to financially assist their children whereas peri-urban and urban families can arrange accommodation which is cheaper or free.

These stresses could be alleviated if the courses were able to be completed in a shorter time frame, such as provided at Marcus Oldham. Louth Branch would like to see public universities considering offering that flexibility to condense their courses too.

Louth Branch would like to see that remote students have access to (some of whom find study more difficult) an accommodation institution at which they study on a daily basis from 'nine to five' (40 hours/week) so that they finish their courses at a speedier rate. We have mentioned Marcus Oldham as an exemplar of education delivery, not because of its agriculture courses, but rather because its model is based on high student contact hours, small class sizes and devoted lecturers.

Another benefit would be students possibly returning in a shorter time frame to their remote communities with their skills.

**M21 (S2) Katherine Branch (NT)**

"That ICPA (Aust) enlightens the relevant Ministers and administrators of the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships (RRES) program of the hardship caused by unacceptably late payment of some Semester 1, 2022 instalments."

**WORD CHANGE** Liz Cook, Katherine (NT,) requested Conference's permission for a word change to remove – 'enlightens' and add – 'raises awareness to'

**Conference permission granted**

"That ICPA (Aust) raises the awareness to the relevant Ministers and administrators of the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships (RRES) program of the hardship caused by unacceptably late payment of some Semester 1, 2022 instalments."

**Moved:** Liz Cook Katherine (NT)

**Seconded:** Sally Dyer Katherine (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

In order to qualify for a Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarship, a student has to prove their need for financial assistance. In 2022, the first 6-monthly instalment for the year in some cases was not paid until late May causing undue anxiety and financial duress for students qualifying for and relying on this assistance. These students have had rent obligations and study and living expenses since January (if not since the previous year) and are trying to book flights home for mid-year breaks. Such a late payment of the valued scholarship is distressing.

**ICPA Northern Territory President's Report**

Moira Lanzarin

**Presentation**

Presentation to Raelene Hall

Lisa Slade

**Miscellaneous Agenda Motions**

**M22 (A69) Yaraka-Isisford Branch (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust), on behalf of all ICPA Branches, acknowledges, thanks and appropriately recognises the out-going editor of Pedals Magazine, Mrs Raelene Hall, for the outstanding job she has done as editor of Pedals Magazine since October 2005.”

**Moved:** Ingrid Miller Yaraka-Isisford Branch (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Marguerite Hurst Westmar-Inglestone (QLD)

**CARRIED with Acclamation**

**Explanation:**

Our branch is aware that Mrs Hall has also been the publisher of Pedals Magazine, so this has been, in part, a commercial venture for her. Notwithstanding this, she has devoted countless hours to the complexities of editing a national magazine. The quality of Pedals has been exemplary, and we are sure that branch members from all over Australia would wish to see Mrs Hall’s efforts duly appreciated and recognised.

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

Tanya Mitchell

**Specific Education Needs Portfolio Presentation**

Laura Stalley

**Specific Education Needs Portfolio Motions**

**M23 (A49) Bourke Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates the Federal Government for a permanent Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) item number for telehealth consultations to be assigned to telehealth Allied Health Services, specialists and consultations, including but not limited to Speech Pathology, Paediatricians and Psychologists, where they aren’t already available, to support the specific educational needs and learning difficulties of geographically isolated children.”

**Moved:** Prue Ritchie Bourke (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Tanya Mitchell NSW State Council (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Many Allied Health Services are unavailable to rural and remote families.

Barriers are:

- that people have to travel long distances; sometimes to have the appointment cancelled
- people have to join lengthy waiting lists to access practitioners located in the metropolitan areas
- little or no access to allied health services, particularly for children with special needs and developmental delays (often on more than one domain)
- financial hardship caused by travel and accommodation costs while accessing treatment
- low socio-economic families living in rural and remote areas do not have the means to travel for treatment
- rural and remote people are often unable to find their way around or unfamiliar with metropolitan areas in order to access treatment
- most people needing National Disability Insurance Scheme plans are unable to navigate the system and without access to services they are unable to utilise their plans
- we are aware of many families rejecting National Disability Insurance Scheme plans due to lack of access to services.

Utilisation of telehealth services can be of great benefit to families in geographically isolated locations, who would otherwise have to travel considerable distances or encounter lengthy delays to access face to face consultations with relevant health professionals.

Students with developmental difficulties require frequent and timely consultations and these can be enabled via telehealth services for many families otherwise unable to access allied health professionals due to living in rural and remote areas.

Some specialist consultations, such as speech pathology, can be satisfactorily delivered using telehealth services where the technology is available. These services are already providing improved access to health services for some children in geographically isolated areas. The cost to families to access such services should also be equitable.

**M24 (A50) Northern Territory State Council (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to Private Healthcare Australia (which is Australia’s private health insurance industry’s peak representative body) to ensure the rebates provided by private health insurers extend to allied health services delivered via telehealth, including speech pathology, swallowing disorders and autism spectrum disorder, and indeed any allied health service necessary for the normal educational development of geographically isolated children.”

**WORD CHANGE** Moira Lanzarin, NT State Council (NT), requested Conference’s permission for a word change to remove - ‘swallowing disorders and autism spectrum disorder’

**Conference permission granted**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to Private Healthcare Australia (which is Australia’s private health insurance industry’s peak representative body) to ensure the rebates provided by private health insurers extend to allied health services delivered via telehealth, including speech pathology and indeed any allied health service necessary for the normal educational development of geographically isolated children.”

**Moved:** Moira Lanzarin NT State Council (NT)

**Seconded:** Juliane Vlach NT State Council (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

We appreciate that work is in progress for this motion. We thank ICPA Federal Council for your efforts thus far and wish to advise that the issue is still relevant and ongoing.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the Federal Government expedited the inclusion of certain allied health services covered by the Medicare rebate, and since then 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.

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.

**M25 (A51) 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 a diagnosis and ongoing treatment of medical issues that impede their ability to learn and thrive.”

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

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

We appreciate that work is in progress for this motion. We thank ICPA Federal Council for your efforts thus far and wish to advise that the issue is still relevant and ongoing.

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 and 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 a 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 the local clinic, still told "No, I can't see you in XXXX (971km from Darwin), but I can see you in Darwin anytime". The speech therapist tells Mum that the first thing 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 an initial consultation with a 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."

**M26 (A52) Alpha Branch (QLD)**

"That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the Federal Government to implement financial assistance and incentives to attract qualified health graduates to rural and remote areas to ensure the availability and accessibility of adequate specialist services for rural and remote children with specific learning needs."

**Moved:** Gayle Donaldson Alpha (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Tara Locke Cloncurry (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Rural and remote areas are struggling for health workers – Doctors, Nurses, Speech Pathologists, OTs etc. All which are necessary for children who need these services in rural and remote areas. The turnover is huge, often a lot of the consultations are done over telehealth. Health workers are FIFO in a lot of rural communities. They are flown in by agencies and paid wages above the rates by health departments, as well as a huge fee going to the Agency who organises the workers. I have seen a health worker flown from Western Australia to rural Qld for a 10-day contract. If we could somehow get a system where these health workers are employed by the local health services and then, could get – and just guessing, \$1000 deducted from their HECS debt for every 6 months of service, it may help encourage and retain workers. This reduction would need to be dependent on the positive work review from their manager.

We talk about early intervention being the key to child development and positive outcomes. Often in rural areas issues are identified early, and referrals are done to Speech Pathology, OTs and various Specialities. The wait for these services can be months and crucial time is being lost with these young children, which then has a flow on effect, as developmental issues are unresolved by the time they get to start school. They then, in rural areas, have issues accessing the services they need through the education system. This often leads to many families with children with such needs relocating from the rural and remote areas to metro areas where they are able to access the services for their children.

In the last two years the shortage of health workers has increased. I know the HECS for some health degrees has been reduced, and this is a great start. We now need to work on getting these graduates to the rural and remote areas and then keeping them there.

**Keynote Speaker**

Dr Craig Challen SC OAM

**Curriculum Portfolio Presentation**

Wendy Henning

**Curriculum Portfolio Motions**

**M27 (A24) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and other relevant bodies for geographically isolated students to continue to be offered practical choices/alternatives for sitting National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing.”

<b>Moved:</b>	Margaret Brock	Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)
<b>Seconded:</b>	Dale Brock	Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

In light of NAPLAN moving to an online format, our branch is concerned that the options for geographically isolated students to complete the tests have been restricted particularly for those families who:

- are unable to travel to their school to participate in the NAPLAN testing due to distance/family work etc,
- do not have suitable internet connection to access the tests from home/place of schooling, or
- have incurred limitations on students being allowed to complete the testing where they reside.

We also understand there may have been inconsistencies across schools as to the options available, with some schools providing differing information to families.

Options for sitting NAPLAN need to remain in place for geographically isolated students who may have difficulty in getting to a school for testing due to distance, and others may have difficulty in accessing NAPLAN in an online format due to being in a remote area without internet. Families need to be clearly informed of their options and these options offered consistently.

Examples:

A family living and working in a fencing contractor camp situation in remote Northern Territory and enrolled in a Queensland School of Distance Education, asked if their children could sit the NAPLAN online at their camp. They have recently set up a transportable satellite internet unit at a huge cost



to their family which would allow them to do the testing online. Their school of distance education put in a request for all students enrolled at the school to sit NAPLAN at home if required, however, this family was one of eight families in the school that were not granted permission. The family was advised that the children would need to go to the closest school to sit NAPLAN in person as they were considered to be too close to a school for them to receive permission to participate from home. The closest school for the family at the time was located more than 200kms away at Borrooloola NT and it was not possible for the family to attend at this school due to work commitments on the property that they were on.

Another family that our branch is aware of also lives and works in a camp situation in NW Queensland. This family did receive permission to conduct NAPLAN at 'home' however they were out in camp and did not have internet facilities available to them for their children to participate.

**M28 (A25) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)**

"That ICPA (Aust) works with Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) and other organisations to raise awareness among boarding schools that some rural and remote students are unable to participate in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing and other external examination programs due to geographic isolation reasons, and this should not impact on their eligibility for enrolment at boarding schools."

**Moved:** Dale Brock Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Margaret Brock Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

There are students living in rural and remote areas who have difficulty accessing examination programs such as NAPLAN, ICAS and ACER due to the distance they have to travel in order to be at a testing centre or lack of adequate internet (or any internet) where they reside for most of the school year. Some boarding schools ask for NAPLAN results, ICAS, ACER and other external examination information to be submitted during enrolment processes. Geographically isolated students who are unable to sit these types of examinations should not be penalised if they are unable to participate due to where they live or lack of internet service. We ask ICPA (Aust) to help raise awareness with boarding schools of the situation that some geographically isolated students are in and for schools to take this on board when considering these students for enrolment, so that there is no detrimental effect on these students who are unable to sit those types of examinations.

**Communications Portfolio Presentation**

Wendy Hick (read by Julia Broad)

**Presentation – Telstra Update**

Justine Rowe, Chief Sustainability Officer and Executive, Sustainability, Policy and Engagement Centre of Expertise

**Communications Portfolio Motions – Mobile Coverage/Service**

**M29 (A19) Kindon Branch (QLD)**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Communications, Minister for 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, work well and extend beyond school grounds."

**Moved:** Amanda Martin Kindon (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Daryl Martin Kindon (QLD)

**CARRIED**

### **Explanation:**

This motion was tabled at the 2021 ICPA Federal Conference in Longreach and unfortunately mobile reception in our small school area is even worse than it was last year. The mobile reception cuts from 3G to 4G, the landline has poor connectivity and the satellite phone can only pick up signal outside in the middle of the grassed area which means that the lack of mobile coverage is detrimental to all those on the school grounds.

As mentioned last year, our small school is located along the busy Gore Highway, Queensland in an area with inconsistent to no mobile coverage. The school community, like others in similar situations, has purchased and put in their own booster to enable some mobile coverage at the school to meet the broadband needs of the students and staff. However, there are numerous interruptions to the school day and staff's home life due to people coming onto the school grounds to use the school's mobile signal, which the school is providing themselves.

It is essential that small rural schools are considered priorities for mobile coverage under future Mobile Black Spot Program rounds and that these services once installed work adequately and provide coverage beyond the school premises.

*This was the explanation to the motion last year which we have included for more background information:*

*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 too 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.*

### **M30 (A20) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies 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:** Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)  
**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The issue of the reliability of the backup battery on mobile towers during extended power outages is widely known. There needs to be a better system of identifying this failure and replacement of expired batteries. We request that ICPA (Aust) continues to raise this issue when in meetings with telecommunication providers highlighting that without a reliable mobile and communications network, student learning is being impacted.

**Communications Portfolio Motions – Telephone**

**M31 (A21) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues 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.”

**WORD CHANGE** Sally Brindal, WA State Council requested Conference’s permission for a word change to remove ‘retention and’

**Conference permission granted**

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

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

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The Universal Service Guarantee (USG) 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 the advocacy by ICPA (Aust) for families living in rural and remote parts of Australia who require two forms of communications, due to the nature of where they live, 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.

**M32 (A22) Western Australian State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues 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) Standards.”

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

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The CSG Standards for repairs in remote service locations is 3 full working days after reporting. It has been acknowledged by Telstra that the existing copper landline service is old technology and sometimes the sourcing of parts can be difficult. ICPA (WA) acknowledges that if eligible, there are CSG financial entitlements when repairs cannot be completed within the CSG Standards. However, the timely repair of the service is of great importance to members, especially for those without an alternative voice service, and the focus needs to remain on meeting the CSG Standards.

**M33 (A23) Alice Springs Branch (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies Australia Post and relevant government departments to ensure that geographically isolated distance education school materials are classified as essential mail and as such, their delivery is prioritised during mail disruptions, such as a natural disaster.”

**Moved:** Lisa Kimlin Alice Springs (NT)  
**Seconded:** Danyelle Haigh Alice Springs (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

In January 2022, flood waters between Glendambo and Coober Pedy SA caused serious damage to both the Stuart Highway and North/South Railway line which made both the road and rail impassable for weeks. During this period of road and rail closures Australia Post proceeded to process 'express post' mail to the Northern Territory but held all other mail packages in Adelaide until the railway was repaired and running again. Many families across the Northern Territory were left without access to their mail for almost three months. Due to it being the start of the school year this also meant home schoolrooms went without vital education resources and supplies. Australia Post's delivery procedures SHOULD BE reviewed to ensure all ESSENTIAL mail is delivered in a timely manner during natural disasters no matter where people reside.

**Presentation – NBN Co Update**

Gavin Williams, NBN Co Chief Development Officer, Regional and Remote.

**Communications Portfolio Motions – Internet Access**

**M34 (A12) Katherine Branch (NT)**

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

**Moved:** Liz Cook Katherine (NT)  
**Seconded:** Sally Dyer Katherine (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, nbn and other providers on internet issues in the bush. In particular, the negotiations with nbn to provide dedicated ports for education is an important breakthrough. The prioritisation of installations required for education is paramount. Many remote families are using the internet provided by the family business or are having to pay for it themselves if educational internet data is not part of their employment package. This includes tertiary and training students, small rural schools and boarding students who've returned home for a period of time.

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.

### **M35 (A13) Lakes District Branch (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate Government and telecommunications providers to ensure all geographically isolated students have appropriate and affordable internet access.”

**Moved:** Jane Cunningham Lakes District (WA)  
**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

#### **Explanation:**

We acknowledge the work ICPA (Aust) has undertaken in raising concerns regarding communication services across rural, regional and remote Australia for the purpose of educating students. Members still feel disadvantaged and left behind in the ever-changing world of technology and the services available to them. Data speeds, plan sizes and service reliability are frequently improving, though our members have concerns about the affordability, data allocations in plans, reduced connection and additional expenses incurred when they exceed their plan limits.

With many of our members continuing to have students at home in COVID-19 isolation and those who educate full time from home undertaking their education via remote learning, it remains apparent that the ratio of Mb/\$ between rural and remote areas of Australia and urban areas is significantly higher thus further heightening the internet divide.

### **M36 (A14) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) seeks 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 geographically isolated students.”

**Moved:** Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)  
**Seconded:** Kym Ross 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, we would like an assurance from nbn that the standard installation remains free of charge for geographically isolated students. As a result of COVID-19 and online learning, a greater number of members have installed a Sky Muster service. There are however members who are yet to install a Sky Muster service due to the lack of requirement for large data allowances. We want to ensure that any future uptake of a Sky Muster service is affordable for parents of rural and remote students.

### **M37 (A15) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to satellite internet providers to develop an affordable product (hardware and data packages) that can be accessed for the delivery of education by families who live and work in rural and remote areas for the majority of the school year away from a permanent place of residence.”

**Moved:** Margaret Brock Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Dale Brock Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Following the successful Sky Muster satellite mobility trial conducted by nbn with the help of participating ICPA families in 2021, it has been shown that transportable satellite internet kits can be set up by families and provide a quality connection to help families who work and live in remote camps and areas of Australia and move regularly due to their work. These units help families access schooling and other data needs. In December 2021, Retail Service Providers launched the newly developed transportable satellite internet products to customers. However, the cost of these units is prohibitive for the average rural and remote family with equipment cost in excess of \$25,000 to purchase and the ongoing data costs in ranges of \$500-1000 per month. ICPA (Aust) has been requesting transportable internet systems for families requiring access to online schooling in remote areas for a number of years and this has now been successfully developed. It is essential that these units be offered at a reasonable cost to families who will rely on them for their children's education. With Distance Education in all States being delivered mainly online, students miss major sections of their study if they do not have internet, and for those families in remote camps, which move regularly from place to place, transportable satellite units are the only means for their children to keep up with their schoolwork. We ask ICPA (Aust) to encourage RSP's to offer an affordable transportable internet solution for families who live and work remotely and depend on internet for the education of their children.

Example: A family in our branch run a fencing contractor business and they move from one remote area to another as they complete each job and move on to the next - often being in far northwest Queensland or the Northern Territory, many kilometres from any homestead or internet source. In order for their children to have internet to access the online components and work for their Distance Education lessons, the family has recently signed up for a transportable internet system with a purchase cost of over \$30,000 and a monthly data plan of \$600 – just so their children can have access to the same schooling opportunities as other distance education students.

**M38 (A16) Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the Federal Government for a subsidy, or other assistance, to reduce the cost of satellite internet (both hardware and data packages) to make these services more affordable to families who rely on transportable satellite internet solutions for the delivery of their children's education due to living and working in rural and remote areas for the majority of the school year away from a permanent place of residence.”

<b>Moved:</b>	Margaret Brock	Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)
<b>Seconded:</b>	Dale Brock	Mount Isa Branch of the Air (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

There are a number of families across Australia who live and work in remote areas out in camps (e.g., stock camps, fencing camps, earthmoving businesses) or other situations away from permanent residences during 'the season'. These families often have their children with them and undertake schooling via Schools of Distance Education or Schools of the Air.

The bulk of distance education schooling is now done online, and it is essential for students studying through distance education to have good internet service. Acquiring internet is extremely difficult for families who move from remote area to other remote areas regularly due to the nature of the work they do.

Transportable satellite internet units have recently been developed and are now offered by a few Retail Service Providers (RSPs); however, the cost of these units is extremely high for the average family trying to connect internet for schooling purposes. We've given the example in another

motion, where a member family in our branch has recently set up one of these transportable internet products at a cost of over \$30,000 and a monthly plan of \$600.

There are currently no subsidies, grants or assistance to help with the costs of these transportable units for schooling. For customers who do live in a permanent dwelling, the Sky Muster hardware that satellite internet customers have installed in their homes comes at no cost thanks to assistance from the Government.

We ask that families, who move regularly due to their type of work in geographically isolated areas and who are living in some of the more remote areas of our country during the school year, also be given some form of assistance by the Government to set up transportable internet so that their children can access their education without a huge financial burden being placed on their family.

**M39 (A17) Alice Springs Branch (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the relevant ministers and departments to ensure that internet costs for working, travelling 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.”

**Conference permission for M39 (A17) to be deemed covered by M38 (A16) requested** by Lisa Kimlin, Alice Springs Branch (NT)

**Conference permission granted**

**Deemed covered by M39 (A16)**

**Explanation:**

There are 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 is only ONE, cost in excess of \$18,000 and internet plans start from \$300 per month.

**M40 (A18) Alice Springs Branch (NT)**

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

**Conference permission for M40 (A18) to be deemed covered by M38 (A16) requested** by Lisa Kimlin, Alice Springs Branch (NT)

**Conference permission granted**

**Deemed covered by M39 (A16)**

**Explanation:**

Currently for travelling/working families, there is only one satellite internet company that caters for frequently moving working teams and as this is the only option, they can and do charge high amounts of money for their service as there is no other option in Australia at present.

**Introduction of Nominations for Federal Council**

Alana Moller

**Conference Arrangements**

Jane Cunningham

**5:21pm Close of Conference Day One**

**DAY TWO Thursday 4 August 2022**

**8:30am Conference Resumes**

**Welcome by Federal President**

Alana Moller

**Annual General Meeting**

AGM declared open at 8:30am

Introduction of Delegates in attendance and apologies

Kim Hughes

**AGM Motions**

**Acceptance of the 2021 AGM Minutes**

**M41 (A71) ICPA Federal Council**

“That the Minutes of the 2021 AGM be accepted.”

**Moved:** Nikki Mahony Federal Council

**Seconded:** Wendy Henning Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**Federal Treasurer’s Report**

Nikki Mahony

**Adoption of Financial Statements**

**M42 (A72) ICPA Federal Council**

“That the 2021-2022 Audited Report be received and accepted.”

**Moved:** Nikki Mahony Federal Council

**Seconded:** Wendy Henning Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**Setting of the 2022 Membership Fees**

**M43 (A73) ICPA Federal Council**

“That the Federal membership fee remains at \$22.00 per member family for the 2023 membership year.”

**Moved:** Nikki Mahony Federal Council

**Seconded:** Wendy Henning Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**M44 (A74) ICPA Federal Council**

“That Corporate Membership be set at \$275.00 per organisation for the 2023 membership year.”

**Moved:** Nikki Mahony Federal Council

**Seconded:** Wendy Henning Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**M45 (A75) ICPA Federal Council**

“That School Corporate Membership be set at \$275.00 per school or educational institution for the 2023 membership year.”

**Moved:** Nikki Mahony Federal Council

**Seconded:** Wendy Henning Federal Council

**CARRIED**



**Appointment of Auditor**

**M46 (A76) ICPA Federal Council**

“That Queensland Audit Services, be appointed as auditor for the 2022 – 2023 financial year.”

**Moved:** Nikki Mahony Federal Council

**Seconded:** Wendy Henning Federal Council

**CARRIED**

**Election of Federal Council 2022 - 2023**

All positions declared vacant and the Returning Officer Roxanne Morrissey took the chair for the election of officers.

<b>President</b>	<b>Alana Moller</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Clermont Branch QLD</b> Kasie Scott Christy Moller	Clermont Branch QLD Clermont Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Julia Broad</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Charters Towers Branch QLD</b> Kim Hughes Lisa Slade	Richmond Branch QLD Flinders Ranges Branch SA <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Kim Hughes</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Richmond Branch QLD</b> Naomi Obst Julia Broad	Midwest Branch WA Charters Towers Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	<b>Kate Thompson</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Tasmania Branch TAS</b> Judy Terry Mandy Burbury	Tasmania Branch TAS Tasmania Branch TAS <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Nikki Mahony</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Dawson Valley Branch QLD</b> Louise Joyce Sarah Cox	Dawson Valley Branch QLD Dawson Valley Branch QLD <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Publicity Officer</b>	<b>Suzanne Wilson</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Territory Wide Branch NT</b> Sarah Cook Moira Lanzarin	Alice Springs Branch NT Katherine Branch NT <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
<b>Ex-Officio Immediate Past President</b>		<b>Wendy Hick</b>	

## 51<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Ali Allison</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Broken Hill Branch NSW</b> Britt Anderson Rebecca Pearce	Broken Hill Branch NSW Broken Hill Branch NSW <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
	<b>Wendy Henning</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Westmar-Inglestone QLD</b> Andrew Henning Ali Allison	Westmar-Inglestone QLD Broken Hill Branch NSW <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
	<b>Anna McCorkle</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Bourke Branch NSW</b> Prue Ritchie Tanya Mitchell	Bourke Branch NSW Bourke Branch NSW <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
	<b>Naomi Obst</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Midwest Branch WA</b> Sally Brindal Kym Ross	Midwest Branch WA Lakes Districts Branch WA <b>DULY ELECTED</b>
	<b>Laura Stalley</b> Nominated: Seconded:	<b>Hillston Branch NSW</b> Cathy Meyer Emma Laird	Hillston Branch NSW Hillston Branch NSW <b>DULY ELECTED</b>

**Vote of thanks to Roxanne Morrissey as Returning Officer**

**AGM Motions continued**

**Conference Venue Motions**

**M47 (A77) Northern Territory State Council (NT)**

“That ICPA NT hosts the 2023 Federal Conference in Darwin on Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 July 2023.”

**Moved:** Juliane Vlach Northern Territory State Council (NT)

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

**CARRIED by Acclamation**

**M48 (A78) New South Wales State Council (NSW)**

“That ICPA NSW hosts the 2024 Federal Conference in New South Wales.”

**Moved:** Tanya Mitchell New South Wales State Council (NSW)

**Seconded:** Bree Wakefield Wentworth Branch (NSW)

**CARRIED by Acclamation**

**Web Manager’s Report**

Sue Shotton

**Pedals Editor’s Report**

Raelene Hall

**Call for any other AGM business**

**9:30am Close of AGM**

**Conference Resumes**

**Welcome by Federal ICPA President** Alana Moller

**Introduction of Delegates and Guests** Kim Hughes

**Conference Arrangements** Jane Cunningham

**Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Presentation** Lisa Slade

**Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Motions**

**M49 (A1) Lakes District Branch (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Education and the Minister for Social Services for an increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance, to help ease financial pressures incurred as a result of increased fees charged by boarding facility providers.”

**Moved:** Jane Cunningham Lakes District (WA)  
**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Members from WA have continued to be impacted by the reduction of the State-provided Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) and any increases to the AIC in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is being eroded annually by the increased fees charged by boarding facility providers.

An increase in the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance would aid in relieving some of the financial liability geographically isolated families incur when educating their children.

**M50 (A2) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Social Services and all other relevant government departments 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 facilities.”

**Conference permission for M50 (A2) to be deemed covered by M49 (A1) requested** by Sally Brindal, WA State Council

**Conference permission granted**

**DEEMED COVERED BY M49 (A1)**

**Explanation:**

The cost of boarding in Western Australia continues, on average, to increase by 3% per annum. With the reduction of the WA State Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) by \$785 per child to the 2010 level, families are continually experiencing increasing financial pressure as the cost of boarding continues to rise. 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.

**M51 (A3) Nyngan Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that the Minister for Social Services increase the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance to more closely reflect the real costs of educating isolated students.”

**Moved:** Tanya Mitchell NSW State Council on behalf of Nyngan (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Bree Wakefield Wentworth (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Boarding school fees continue to rise at a greater rate than the CPI. The Assistance for Isolated Children Boarding Allowance, an equity allowance, needs to be updated constantly to reflect the increasing financial burden being placed on isolated families by the Government to educate their children. There is an underlying problem of an ongoing erosion of this benefit as an allowance, as boarding and tuition fees increase at a greater rate than the allowance. If our Government is serious about providing the world-best educational opportunities to equip children with the skills they need, this equity allowance needs to remain equitable, giving rural children an education equivalent to their city counterparts.

**M52 (A4) Walgett Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Federal Ministers to expand the current Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) criteria to include the following reason for receiving the AIC Boarding Allowance, under the Special Education Needs criteria:

- The only rural and remote local high schools Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) percentile is 2.”

**Moved:** Tracy Grant Walgett (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Karen Ricardo Walgett (NSW)

**LOST**

**Explanation:**

ICSEA, created by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), is a scale that identifies the socio-educational advantage of a school.

Key factors in students’ family backgrounds (parents’ occupation, school education and non-school education) have an influence on students’ educational outcomes at school. Data on these factors, as well as the Aboriginal status of students and geographic location of the school is utilised in the calculation of the Index.

The higher the ICSEA value, the higher the socio-educational advantage. The lower the value, the lower the socio-educational advantage.

Walgett Branch has lobbied for greater flexibility in the AIC guidelines to allow families living in or near our remote community access to the AIC allowance, for many years. The impact on our small community is devastating, as families leave seeking suitable secondary education that gives them some level of continuity. While State Governments can add schools to the Limited Programs list, New South Wales apart from listing two schools, offers a Statement of Support process which acknowledges remoteness and subject choice. This process does not recognise the broader issues that impact on the education in some remote schools.

Without access to the latest national ICSEA data, it is difficult to calculate the number of schools that fall into the 1 percentile range, representing schools with extremely disadvantaged student backgrounds (more educationally disadvantaged than 99% of schools in Australia). However, information on the My School website indicates that the number of schools in the 1st percentile range would be 5 - 10 (many of whom are already on the Limited Programs list) nationally.

For example, Walgett Community College has a score of 1% which means we are 99% more disadvantaged than the average school in Australia. The number of students in Walgett that don’t meet the current criteria within the AIC guidelines amounts to only a handful of families. The positive impact of receiving this allowance would be significant for this remote community.

A fair and decent education must be available to all students, without the whole family needing to relocate from their home, workplace and community.

**M53 (A5) Walgett Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Federal Ministers to expand the eligibility criteria of the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) to allow students living in Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) mapped ‘Remote’ and ‘Very Remote’ locations who are currently ineligible to access the AIC due to the distance criteria, be deemed eligible to receive AIC.”

**Moved:** Karen Ricardo Walgett (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Tracy Grant Walgett (NSW)

**LOST**

**Explanation:**

Most families that live in ‘Remote’ and ‘Very Remote’ areas are already eligible to receive AIC, but those that live within these small towns such as Walgett or just outside are not. The families living and working in these remote and very remote communities are police, nurses, teachers, agricultural workers, tradies and other essential service providers. These services are vital to the survival of these small towns.

Access to allied health services such as Speech and Occupational Therapists are essential for some children to reach educational outcomes. These services are severely limited or non-existent in areas such as Walgett.

Families in larger regional towns have a choice of at least one and sometimes multiple schools in their residential zone, whereas families living in rural and remote towns only have one local school. Not all schools can provide a safe and nurturing environment that can meet the needs of individual children.

Whether it be a child with special needs or one who is gifted and talented in a certain field, they all should have the same access to AIC as their peers that live a certain distance from a remote town. If their residential address falls within the ARIA mapping of ‘Remote’ and ‘Very Remote’ locations they should not be excluded from receiving the AIC. They are all isolated.

ARIA is an unambiguously geographical approach to defining remoteness that could be applied to the AIC criteria. It is a simple way to determine one’s eligibility for AIC in these isolated areas.

**M54 (A6) Wentworth Branch (NSW)**

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

**Moved:** Bree Wakefield Wentworth Branch (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Kirsty Wilson Balranald Branch (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

AIC is provided to many students for many valid reasons. The number of families receiving AIC continues to increase, yet our number of geographically isolated families continues to decrease.

Geographically isolated students are the minority, yet we are campaigning to increase the payment for all recipients which requires a significantly larger investment by the Government.

Geographically isolated children are unique in that there is no option to access a mainstream school close by. The cost for these families is different. If we can successfully separate the payments, then requesting an increase to AGIC will take a much smaller Government investment and may be much more achievable.

**M55 (A7) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) brings to the attention of the Federal Government the impacts the new ‘Direct Measure of Income’ funding model may have on geographically isolated students who attend boarding schools when lobbying for increases to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC).”

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

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

In 2022, as part of the Quality Schools reforms, all non-government schools completed the transition from the previous area-based socio-economic status (SES) methodology to the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) to determine the capacity to contribute (CTC) for most non-government schools.

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. Adjusted taxable income (ATI) is used to calculate the median income of the parents and guardians of a school community.

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 to bridge the gap in the reduction of funding from the Government, schools will increase their fees. The cost of boarding is already increasing at an alarming rate and certainly in advance of CPI, without these additional charges.

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.

**M56 (\$1) Bollon Branch (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continue to raise awareness directly with Boarding Schools and the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) about the important role they play in affordability and access to education for geographically isolated (GI) children.”

**Moved:** Trish McKenzie Cunnamulla Branch (QLD) on behalf of Bollon (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Amy Palmer Cunnamulla Branch (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Members are very grateful for the financial support which many Boarding schools and Government provide to GI families. Without this assistance opportunities for our children would be much more limited. Bollon Branch would like to see ICPA (Aust) continue working with ABSA and Boarding Schools directly to highlight the unique challenges faced by our GI families. It is important that schools continue to contribute to keeping education affordable and within reach.

**Presentation – ‘The Future of Boarding’**

Richard Stokes CEO, Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA)

**Presentation – ‘From the Bush to the Big Smoke - Creating Successful Transitions to Boarding School’**

Hannah Calcino, Incoming Pedals Editor

**Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio Motions continued**

**M57 (A8) New South Wales State Council (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates the Federal Government to consider boarding school staff as Essential Supervisory Staff at all times.”

**Moved:** Tanya Mitchell New South Wales State Council (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Bree Wakefield Wentworth (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

With the current pandemic some health authorities have not declared that all the boarding school staff are considered as essential workers. Boarding schools are very different school settings and need more than teachers to be operational. All teachers are considered essential workers, but not all the other staff such as boarding staff, kitchen staff, cleaning staff. Without all these members of staff, boarding schools are unable to operate.

**M58 (A9) Broken Hill Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates for rural and remote boarding school students and their immediate families to be classified as ‘Essential Travellers’ in emergency management plans.”

**Moved:** Georgina Luckraft Broken Hill (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Britt Anderson Broken Hill (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

We greatly appreciate that State borders are, for now, open, yet families live with the worry that this could change. Many families who had a child studying interstate during the pandemic faced heartbreaking decisions regarding education and these decisions often resulted in long periods of family separation. We would appreciate ICPA (Aust) continuing to work with the relevant authorities to classify students who attend school or university outside their state of residency, and their families, as Essential Travellers under emergency management plans. This would help ensure that students would be able to access their place of education with relative ease. It would also mean that families could transport students to and from school and be able to see their children, avoiding unnecessary and heartbreaking periods of family separation.

**M59 (A10) Balranald Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that relevant authorities create a standard essential traveller exemption for rural and remote boarding school students and their parents and tertiary students that live in a different State to their educational institution, should border closures occur in the future.”

**Moved:** Kirsty Wilson Balranald (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Bree Wakefield Wentworth (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

During 2020/2021 COVID-19 pandemic, many rural and remote boarding and university students and their families were placed under undue stress when State border closures prevented students returning home or back to school or university, preventing them from being able to access their

education, and maintain their emotional well-being. Some students were unable to return to school for months, without structured remote learning as other students at the school had returned to face-to-face learning. Others had to undergo 14 day quarantine alone, many more than once. Then there were the ones who were separated from home for up to six months, just to attend school. We are still seeing the mental and educational cost of these experiences today. Late in 2021, a National Code for Boarding School Students was created by the Federal Government, with all States agreeing to adopt the principles of the Code and implement it in each State. Overwhelmingly, few States implemented the Code in such a way that it benefited students and their families, only adding to the stress and uncertainty of travel and education plans. There appeared to be no federal body able to hold the States to account on this. A clear and transparent plan for boarding students and their families in the event of further border closures will allow for informed decision making and greater assurances into the future.

**M60 (A11) Balranald Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to request the relevant authorities consider the emotional well-being of boarding students when implementing COVID-19 management plans in boarding houses.”

**Moved:** Kirsty Wilson Balranald (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Bree Wakefield Wentworth (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

With school returning in 2022 during the Omicron wave of COVID-19, State Governments again gave differing guidelines to boarding houses and hostels to accommodate and care for students upon return.

Many boarders commenced boarding with a ‘drop off’ where parents were not allowed on school site and students were unable to leave school premises for any reason, including medical appointments. Many of these boarders share classes with day students who return home daily with freedoms to come and go from school.

In many cases, it would seem boarding students are being isolated on school grounds to avoid isolation in the future. This could become detrimental to the emotional and social wellbeing of students if it is to continue for prolonged periods of time, as well as effecting their ability to perform academically.

The lack of consistency around these requirements has led to confusion and stress for many families and children. Some state health authorities have defined all boarding students within a boarding institution as close contacts of each other, while others have different rules. Some are allowed to have students isolate within the boarding house, while others have been told they cannot do this, and any child who is unwell, deemed a close contact, or positive with COVID-19 must be collected immediately. This obviously presents logistical problems with many families unable to make a return trip from home to school safely without needing to stay overnight along the way due to distance, but unable to do so with a student with COVID-19. These scenarios present constant concern and worry for boarding staff, students and family, causing building stress and worry for all involved, while the wider community returns to a greater sense of normal while living with COVID-19.

The gap is widening for the rural and remote students accessing education through boarding school. With ICPA (Aust) continuing to advocate for these students, their wellbeing can be at the forefront of the relevant authorities.



**Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Presentation**

Julia Broad

**Presentation** –‘Overview of Thrive By Five and the Campaign to Improve Early Childhood Development and Learning’

David Ansell, Minderoo Foundation

**Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Motions – Early Learning**

**M61 (A32) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“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:** Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The AIC Distance Education (DE) Allowance is designed to assist families to set up and maintain the schoolroom. Currently, part-time distance education students are ineligible, therefore families enrolled in pre-compulsory 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 learning resources for these students. If families received this allowance, it would assist with the cost of suitable learning resources.

The majority of children who are enrolled in a pre-compulsory program are found to have better educational outcomes in later years, by forming these important foundations early on. Full-time or part-time, every child needs a schoolroom.

**M62 (A33) Katherine Branch (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate the Federal Government for the AIC Distance Education Allowance to be extended to include all pre-school students enrolled in a distance education program.”

**WORD CHANGE** Liz Cook, Katherine Branch (NT) requested Conference’s permission for a word change to add ‘geographically isolated’

**Conference permission granted**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate the Federal Government for the AIC Distance Education Allowance to be extended to include all geographically isolated pre-school students enrolled in a distance education program.”

**Moved:** Liz Cook Katherine (NT)

**Seconded:** Sally Dyer Katherine (NT)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

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/universal-access-early-childhood-education](http://www.education.gov.au/universal-access-early-childhood-education) “The Australian Government is providing funding certainty for preschool, having committed \$453.1 million in the 2019-20 Budget to extend the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education until the end of 2020. This funding ensures that every child will

*continue to have access to a quality preschool program for 600 hours (15 hours a week) in the year before school. Universal Access [has] a focus on participation by Indigenous children, vulnerable and disadvantaged children in a range of settings in order to meet the needs of working families, and will be accessible to all Australian children, regardless of their location.”*

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

Setting up the classroom for distance education delivery for 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 2022) has 16 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.

**M63 (A34) Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA)**

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

**Conference permission for M63 (A34) to be deemed covered by M61 (A32) requested** by Tallaya Wood, Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA)

**Conference permission granted**

**DEEMED COVERED BY M61 (A32)**

**Explanation:**

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.

**Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Motions – Childcare**

**M64 (A35) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

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

**Moved:** Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The current In Home Care Scheme does not adequately meet the unique circumstances of geographically isolated families. The scope of the guidelines when accessing this scheme needs the flexibility to address the varying situations and differences that are associated with accessing childcare in remote locations.

**M65 (A36) Northern Territory State Council (NT)**

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

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

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

We appreciate that work is in progress for this motion. We thank ICPA Federal Council for your efforts thus far and wish to advise that the issue is still relevant and ongoing.

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.

**M66 (A37) Katherine Branch (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests that the Minister for Education amend the In Home Care (IHC) 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:** Liz Cook Katherine (NT)  
**Seconded:** Sally Dyer Katherine (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 would solve 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 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.

**M67 (A38) Westmar-Inglestone Branch (QLD)**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies relevant authorities to ensure that graduates with a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education, or equivalent, who are less than the age of 18 years are eligible for positions of employment through the In Home Care (IHC) program, regardless of their age, but rather commensurate with their education qualifications."

**Moved:** Marguerite Hurst Westmar-Inglestone (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Ingrid Miller Yaraka-Isisford (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Students in rural and remote areas who attain their early childhood qualifications but who do not meet the 18 year old age requirement to work through the In Home Care program are disadvantaged from taking positions. This IHC criteria prevents highly educated and qualified young people from taking positions of employment. This in turn disadvantages families in need of early childhood education and care options, especially in rural and remote areas.

Case Study: A current Year 10 student commenced a Cert III in early childhood education and care and will be working within a school-based traineeship in a kindergarten setting for the duration of her studies. She was able to commence the Cert III in Year 10 at high school as she had clear career aspirations to work within a rural setting as an in-home educator or carer. This student will not be 18 years old for approximately six months after the completion of Year 12, thus meaning she will be ineligible to obtain an IHC position and be disadvantaged in pursuing her career for this period of time.

**M68 (A39) Capricornia Branch of the Air (QLD)**

"That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant government departments to immediately introduce guidelines to regulate the service fees that are charged to families by In Home Care (IHC) Service Providers."

**Moved:** Scott Moller                      Clermont (QLD) on behalf of Capricornia BOTA (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Louise Joyce                      Dawson Valley (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Currently there are no guidelines in regard to how much fees can be charged to a family by an IHC Service Provider.

It is unconscionable that the In Home Care Service Providers can charge any given amount of fees to a family with no regulation. Potentially, this means that the parent is left with a bigger out of pocket expense each week. Given that there are no guidelines for Service Providers to set their fees by, this can allow services to charge exorbitant fees which can mean families requiring crucial care for their children may not be able to afford to access necessary care.

**M69 (A40)      Queensland State Council (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant government departments to immediately introduce guidelines to regulate the service fees that are deducted from educator's pays/wages by In Home Care support agencies.”

**Moved:** Louise Martin                      QLD State Council (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Annette Boyle                      QLD State Council (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Currently there are no guidelines in regard to the fees that can be deducted from an educator's fortnightly payment. CCS is given to families to help pay for having their child in either a day-care facility or having an educator through In Home Care (IHC). It is unconscionable that the In Home Care support agencies can deduct any given amount of CCS money from the educator's payment. Potentially, this widens the gap payment and means that the parent is left with a bigger out of pocket expense each week. CCS is there to benefit the child not the IHC support agency. Additionally, some IHC agencies have recently chosen to use eHarmony software to keep track of educator's hours worked and payments. eHarmony also attracts an additional fee for which is, in many cases, being charged to the educators by IHC support agencies. Given this is a business-based choice made by the IHC agency, this fee should be paid for by the IHC agency, not passed onto the educator to be deducted from their payment each fortnight.

**M70 (A41)      Queensland State Council (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant government departments to undertake a review of the current service fees that are being charged to educators by In Home Care (IHC) support agencies.”

**Moved:** Louise Martin                      QLD State Council (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Annette Boyle                      QLD State Council (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment from the Australian Government that is designed to assist parents with the cost of childcare. In the recent years, fees that are being deducted from educator's fortnightly pays are increasing rapidly. In 2021 alone one particular IHC Service Provider increased their fees three times in a nine month period without any warning to the educator. The fees that are deducted from an educator's pay by the agency eat into the CCS funds that are allocated to the families to subsidise the cost of caring for their children. Making the out-of-pocket costs for families greater through unregulated and unrestricted fees/charges wrought by IHC service providers.

**Early Childhood Education and Care Portfolio Motions – Other**

**M71 (A42) Wentworth (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) requests the Minister for Early Childhood Education review pay rates and incentives for Early Childhood workers in rural and remote locations.”

**Moved:** Bree Wakefield Wentworth (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Kirsty Wilson Balranald (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

For many years Education Departments have been aware of the need to provide pay and incentives to attract and keep teaching staff in rural and remote locations. We now need the same attention paid to attracting and retaining staff in the Early Childhood sector.

We are losing university trained early childhood educators to the school system where the pay and conditions far outweigh that of long day care centres, yet we know how important those early years are. These educators are with our children during their years of greatest development, yet we are not prepared to pay or reward them accordingly.

In very remote areas, access to housing or subsidised housing can mean the difference between having an operational centre or not. Rural and remote areas need assistance to attract educators because our children deserve a ‘good start’ too.

**M72 (A43) Bourke Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) advocates to the relevant Federal Ministers for funding to be sought to address Early Childhood Teacher pay parity between teachers working at an Early Childhood Education and Care centre and a teacher working in early childhood education in a school.”

**Moved:** Prue Ritchie Bourke (NSW)  
**Seconded:** Tanya Mitchell NSW State Council (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Pay parity of Early Childhood Teachers is a significant issue. An Early Childhood Teacher completes a four year degree course. If they elect to work in the public school system in a rural and remote location, the additional benefits they would get compared to working as an Early Childhood Teacher would include:

- Additional 7 weeks of annual leave (approx. \$10,000pa)
- Significantly shorter contact hours per week
- Approx. \$20,000-\$30,000 additional salary
- Professional mentoring by other teachers
- Structured Professional Development programs (\$10,000 pa)
- Access to teacher housing (at a 70% discount on market rates in Bourke) (\$10,000 pa).

Early Childhood services are significantly limited in their budgets. It is important to find long term solutions to address pay parity of Early Childhood Teachers in rural and remote locations.

**M73 (A44) Cunnamulla Branch (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Minister for Early Childhood Education and the Minister for Education to immediately prioritise re-establishing early childhood educational programs in recognised highly vulnerable rural and remote locations.”

**Moved:** Trish McKenzie Cunnamulla Branch (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Amy Palmer Cunnamulla Branch (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

We would first like to acknowledge the work that Bush Kids have done in providing necessary health services and support in our kindy and wider community.

However, it is an ongoing issue that playgroups and other early childhood programs are not being provided and sustained in our communities.

- 2021 AEDC data indicates that 47% of children in Cunnamulla & surrounds start school developmentally vulnerable.
- Cunnamulla is still one of 5 locations going backwards and is recognised as a QLD state early childhood priority with ECEC launching the Connect 4 Children strategy in Cunnamulla in 2021. Through the Connect 4 Children strategy, communities in Queensland are developing unique plans to help improve the wellbeing of children prior to school (from birth to 5 years old). Each Birth to five plan is created locally by the people who are invested in, and care deeply about, the future of that community and its children.
- There has been zero contact from ECEC in community in the last 8 months. Previous contact came to 1 meeting in Dec 2021.
- Keeping Early Years in the Spotlight was developed through the Cunnamulla P-12 State School, with the support of all other education providers in the Paroo Shire, to support early childhood programs through the employment of an early childhood teacher 2 days per week. However, this position has remained unfilled since July 2021, only recently being filled at the end of July 2022.
- The Paroo Contact Children's Mobile, including a fully equipped Toyota Landcruiser utility and trailer, remain idle in Cunnamulla unfunded.
- PCCM needs sustainable support and funding to immediately recruit staff to supply regular mobile playgroups to Eulo, Cunnamulla, Wyandra, Quilpie and Thargomindah.

Noorama is a small community 100kms outside of Cunnamulla who are currently running their own playgroups with volunteers and have been actively searching for funding to provide a qualified educator. With a total membership of 10 core families and 20 children. The main issues this playgroup hopes to address include:

- Access to quality educators that can help parents learn how to interact with their children at home and identify developmental needs. If required, they could assist with pathways to support services.
- Ensure funding and services are reaching remote children
- Provide socialisation, education, and support for both parents and children.
- Prepare families and facilities/services for Distance Education, which will be required in the near future.

**M74 (A45) South Australia State Council (SA)**

"That ICPA (Aust) advocates the Minister for Early Childhood Education and the relevant departments for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services, to consider the unique needs of rural and remote families when it comes to the eligibility criteria for funding and benefits such as the Child Care Subsidy (CCS)."

**Moved:** Helen Williams SA State Council (SA)  
**Seconded:** Jessica Bell Marree Air (SA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

In South Australia, the Remote and Isolated Children’s Exercise (RICE) provide an Outback Childcare program that enables families to receive short-term childcare in the family home when they are in need of childcare during busy times or if they need respite or emergency care. Currently this program does not attract any Government support or funding, resulting in RICE having to rely on community donations or asking families to pay an unsubsidised, full rate hourly fee for the service.

The Childcare Subsidy Scheme (CCS) can only be received when a child is enrolled through a centre-based childcare facility or through the In Home Care (IHC) scheme which is currently unavailable for RICE member families due to provider limitations within South Australia.

The cost to access childcare without the CCS is an unaffordable option, leaving families to try find other ways to manage childcare needs. Families living in rural and remote areas have no real option of childcare like community creches, nearby centres or family or friends who could step in. Living on a remote cattle station 1000km from Adelaide makes asking your mum, sister or best friend to step in and help for the day unpractical and often impossible.

With the recent report that indicated the Federal Electorate of Grey (which encompasses 90% of South Australia, including all of its rural and remote areas) has the worst access to childcare in the country, just finding a facility, let alone accessing it, is a difficult undertaking in itself. The Outback Childcare service needs to be made affordable for families as well as being viable for RICE to manage and administer.

If the criteria for eligibility for the CCS was to consider the needs of rural and remote families, therefore allowing them to access childcare through the IHC program, then the RICE based Outback Childcare and similar services would become more affordable and accessible for families in times of need.

**M75 (A46) Western Australia 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:** Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

WA State Council fully supports the implementation of a nationally administered police clearance, specifically for children. Employees who move across State borders are required to reapply for a WWCC when applying for employment in a new state. This process can result in lengthy delays when employing staff of up to eight weeks, causing disruptions to students and families. Currently, a person who wishes to obtain a WWCC for work purposes is checked nationally, which is then administered at a state level.

**ICPA Distance Education Video**

**ICPA South Australia President’s Report**

Belinda Hatcher

**Training Portfolio Presentation**

Anna McCorkle (read by Wendy Henning)

**Training Portfolio Motions**



**M76 (A67) Western Australia State Council (WA)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the Federal Government to ensure regional TAFEs are included in the proposed improvements as mentioned in the *‘Your Education Policy - TAFE Technology Fund’*.”

**Moved:** Sally Brindal WA State Council (WA)

**Seconded:** Kym Ross WA State Council (WA)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

The Labor Government announced, pre-election, that a *‘\$50 million TAFE Technology Fund will improve IT facilities, workshops, laboratories and telehealth simulators across the country’*.

It is important that our regional TAFE campuses continue to grow, develop and offer a broader/enhanced range of opportunities for the betterment of all rural and remote students.

Statistically, rural and remote students are underrepresented in post-compulsory education. Improving facilities at regional TAFEs would offer students the ability to remain within the regions and may reduce the financial barriers faced by rural and remote students.

**Presentation – ‘Rural Inspire’**

Phil Brown, Country Education Partnership

**Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio Presentation**

Naomi Obst

**Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio Motions**

**M77 (A47) Alpha Branch (QLD)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby relevant bodies for an affordable ‘Student Concessional Fare’ for students attending educational institutions within Australia who need to travel between their home residence and the educational establishment they attend.”

**Moved:** Gayle Donaldson Alpha (QLD)

**Seconded:** Tara Locke Cloncurry (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Regional airfares are increasing in price all the time and students are sometimes paying exorbitant prices which are sometimes unaffordable when they are trying to compete with the prices mining companies and other business travellers will pay. A university student flying to Emerald left booking until two weeks before to fly home for Easter. The flight one way was \$712 which is unaffordable for a university student.

The bus and rail fares are also increasing and the number of these services being offered in regional areas are decreasing.

**M78 (A48) Walgett Branch (NSW)**

“That ICPA (Aust) lobbies the relevant Federal Ministers and the Education Ministers Meeting to implement a national funding program that would guarantee no young geographically isolated children are left on school or childcare buses by installing sensor devices that sense sound and movement, to detect and alert drivers if young children have been left in the vehicle.”

**Moved:** Tracy Grant Walgett (NSW)

**Seconded:** Karen Ricardo Walgett (NSW)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Despite numerous incidents occurring over the years of children being left on school/childcare buses, this continues to be a major issue. These incidents occur on a far more regular basis than reported to the public. These incidents have caused distress and heat exhaustion but have also caused major physical injury and unacceptable death.

Whilst thoughtful Policies and Procedures are continually put in place in schools and childcare centres, there needs to be a procedure implemented to counteract unfortunate human error.

A Sensor Device that monitors sound and movement just like a home monitoring device could be set during the hours that the bus wouldn't ordinarily be transporting children. Alerts could be made to the bus drivers and centres or schools by mobile phones should the sensor detect anything.

Human error is inevitable, we urge the Government to act on implementing movement monitors as a matter of urgency on all school and childcare centre buses.

**ICPA Queensland President's Report**

Louise Martin

**Miscellaneous Agenda Motions continued**

**M79 (A68) Bollon Branch (QLD)**

"That ICPA (Aust) allocates funds each year to an external professional consultancy to advise and mentor on how to best gain traction on some longstanding lobbies."

**Moved:** Trish McKenzie Cunnamulla (QLD) on behalf of Bollon (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Amy Palmer Cunnamulla (QLD)

**CARRIED**

**Explanation:**

Bollon recognises the outstanding work that ICPA volunteers do every day for our rural geographically isolated students and families. We understand that other rural advocacy groups (for example AgForce) pay professional advisors and we believe it is time ICPA (Aust) also employed professional, expert advice to support our volunteer efforts. We recommend this be allocated and budgeted for annually.

**M80 (S3) Yaraka-Isisford (QLD)**

"That ICPA Australia investigate options to partner with a nationwide accommodation provider or hotel chain in offering a member discount loyalty program to help ease travel costs incurred by ICPA Members needing to access education and essential services in major centres and capital cities."

**Moved:** Ingrid Miller Yaraka-Isisford (QLD)  
**Seconded:** Marguerite Hurst Westmar-Inglesstone (QLD)

**LOST**

**Explanation:**

At some point, the majority of ICPA members across Australia will need to travel to a major centre or capital city for education, medical care or to access essential services not readily available in regional and remote areas. Membership loyalty discount programs are successfully run by other organisations such RAV groups around Australia, meaning that a mutually beneficial agreement with a suitable accommodation provider or hotel chain, has the potential to benefit ICPA by:

- Helping to reduce out of pocket travel expenses for existing members.
- Attracting new members and boosting diversity within Branches.

- Raising the profile of ICPA in major centres through marketing campaigns of such a partnership.

This initiative is also an opportunity for a suitable hotel or accommodation provider to be recognised as a valued supporter of rural Australia and geographically isolated families. It is proposed that any agreement reached would be eligible only to financial ICPA members.

**M81 (A70) 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:** Moira Lanzarin NT State Council (NT)

**CARRIED with Acclamation**

**Explanation:**

ICPA (Aust) 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.

**Presentation** – Tribute to Julia Materne, Retiring ICPA Archivist

**Presentation-** Farewell to Retiring Councillors

Jane O’Brien

Sally Sullivan

Lisa Slade

**Carried with Acclamation**

**Presentation** – Thank You to the Convening Committee

**Carried with Acclamation**

**Vote of Thanks**

**Carried with Acclamation**

**Conference Closed 5:00pm**

## 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, as I complete my third year as ICPA Federal President, yet my first fully face to face conference. To all of you here, I know how challenging these past few years have been for all of us, from the pandemic to the weather and everything in between and I thank you all for joining us over the coming days to ensure the voices of our geographically isolated children are heard, because as we all know, they should not be condemned to an inferior education because their families live and work in rural and remote Australia.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing" and once again I feel humbly grateful to have been afforded the opportunity to have continued to work hard as part of the ICPA Federal Council team, work which is most certainly worth doing.

As we commenced the second half century of this great organisation, despite distance and geographical isolation, the 2021-2022 Federal Council has once again proven that passion and dedication to achieving ICPA's goal of educational equity for our children remains strong. While the days have been short, the task list has been long for Federal Council since our postponed 2021 Federal Conference held in November last year. Following the Conference we hit the ground running, with all motions actioned before the end of the year. This was no mean feat; the stats show just how much was achieved in such a short timeframe!

The pandemic has continued to have impacts upon our members and their children, with boarding being at the coalface of this, as demonstrated by the 4 motions we have this year in regard to boarding and COVID. We know 2021 saw a myriad of issues arise for interstate boarders, which continued right through until the end of the year and 2022 commenced with further heartbreaking and confronting stories of unfair and inequitable directives imposed on already disadvantaged geographically isolated boarding children, as the country continued to negotiate the ongoing pandemic. There was a concerted effort towards alleviating these challenges with ICPA (Aust) working in conjunction with then Minister for Regional Education Senator the Honourable Bridget McKenzie, State Councils and the Australian Boarding Schools Association.

Come what may, Federal Council maintains our commitment to addressing impacts of COVID on the education of our geographically isolated children, however we have also spent this council term focused on the ongoing barriers for geographically isolated students, emphasising that they are a unique disadvantage group who need specialised and targeted assistance and support across all portfolio areas.

The Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Allowance continues to be a core focus, sitting across the Boarding/Hostels/Second Home, Distance Education and Early Childhood Education and Care portfolios, including the need for the Allowance to be increased to reflect the exponential growth in educational expenses, along with requests for a separate category for geographically isolated students within the AIC to ensure their unique needs are recognised and met. We also continue to call for an expansion of criteria, with particular emphasis on including 3-4 year olds undertaking approved distance education early childhood education programs.

Communications as always has been an eventful portfolio, with the key focus on sourcing affordable internet connection solutions for transient families working in remote areas, as well as maintenance and enhancement of existing internet and telephone services. In the Curriculum portfolio focus has

been on the Australian Curriculum Review and changes to NAPLAN. Federal Council has also continued in earnest its Geographically Isolated Distance Education (GIDE) awareness campaign and the request for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA). As well we have continued to seek improvements in the space of early childhood education and care, particularly in relation to In Home Care and Mobile Playgroups. At the forefront for the Specific Education Needs portfolio, access to telehealth, early intervention services and mental health resources and support have been our priority topics. For the Tertiary and Training portfolios the Tertiary Access Payment, Youth Allowance and Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA) topics have been on the agenda.

This is just a snippet of the work of our Federal Portfolio teams and throughout the Conference you will hear an update from all Portfolios. The full reports of portfolio activities, developments and other information are in the Conference booklet.

The Federal Election Campaign and caretaker mode earlier this year, while meaning we were unable to actively work with the federal government and departments, enabled us an opportunity to reiterate some of our key long-term advocacies, as well as other topics across media and other platforms. We used the six-week campaign to specifically focus on the six topics which had also been included in our pre-budget submission. These included:

1. An increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Allowance.
2. AIC for 3–4-year-old geographically isolated children accessing an approved distance education early learning program.
3. A Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA).
4. Assured funding for rural and remote Mobile Early Childhood Services.
5. An increase to the Commonwealth Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) for apprentices/trainees.
6. The establishment of a Rural Hardship Education Fund (RHEF).

All of our portfolios and advocacy are important and picking out a small few is almost like choosing a favourite child and so of course we also ensured that where possible other topics were raised. Immediately following the election and appointment of the new cabinet we have made contact with MPs and Senators, including Education Minister, Hon Jason Clare MP, Assistant Minister for Education, Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm, Hon Michelle Rowland MP, Minister for Communications, the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, Minister for Social Services and Anne Aly MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth to familiarise them with ICPA and share with them our full suite of briefing papers. We have welcomed a number of responses to our correspondence and ICPA looks forward to working with the new government and engaging with as many representatives as soon as possible. It was especially pleasing to receive the recorded address to our Conference from Assistant Minister for Education Senator the Honourable Anthony Chisholm which we heard earlier.

In December 2021, the appointment of the Hon Fiona Nash to the role of Regional Education Commissioner was a valuable development for ICPA. We are thrilled and tremendously grateful that the Commissioner has been able to participate in our Conference, and Federal Council looks forward to working closely with her in the future. I once again thank the Commissioner for addressing our Conference today.

Across all portfolios, ICPA Federal Council has continued to participate in a variety of consultations, meetings and submission opportunities this council year. We have also endeavoured to maintain and strengthen links with Services Australia, the former Department of Education, Skills and Employment, now the Department of Education and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department of Social Services in addition to other key departments, with regular meetings scheduled and direct lines of contact to ensure members messages can be relayed to those

who are at the frontline to address them. May I take this opportunity to acknowledge those representing these Departments who are joining us throughout Conference.

Federal Council also maintains relationships with many organisations, stakeholders and groups who support us and I acknowledge and thank them for their ongoing support and collaboration and a particular mention to all of those who have assisted with this conference.

While much of this collaboration over the past three years has been virtual, in 2022, Federal Council has finally had the opportunity to meet with some of these groups face to face again, including the National Farmers Federation, the National Rural Women's Coalition and the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network. We have also had members of Federal Council attend all state conferences this year and have been thrilled to be a part of celebratory anniversary events held in New South Wales, South Australia, the Northern Territory and online with Western Australia. My personal highlight though, was to be in Bourke, the birthplace of ICPA, celebrating 50 years with the founding President, Mr Wally Mitchell AM, such a momentous and historic occasion that I felt so very privileged and humbled to be a part of.

In May, Kim Hughes and myself attended the first full joint councils face to face meeting since February 2020 in Canberra, an enjoyable, inspiring and motivating get together which reiterated how important it is for us all to not only work together, but to learn from each other and encourage each other. It is an absolute pleasure to work with each State Council and I truly admire their continued endeavours and dedication.

Following the joint councils meeting, Federal Council took the opportunity to meet as a team in Canberra for the first time since the 2021 Conference, to get to know each other and work together in person, as well as finally pinning Anna, Ali, Naomi and Laura! Over three days Federal Council covered a substantial amount of ICPA business, but in particular focussing on strategies for ensuring our advocacy is heard to achieve our goal of educational equity for our geographically isolated children. May also once again acknowledge 4 Seasons Company for their continued support through the ZM cattle lick blocks initiatives. This has helped Federal Council to assist Branches to come to Conference.

What I would like to add though is that despite only having one chance to get together in our Federal Council term, may I pay tribute to the 14 Federal Councillors for all they have managed to accomplish in the 9 months since conference – not only actioning the motions from last year, but also continued efforts to represent our members and raise the topics that matter most. I want them to know that I am very proud to count myself amongst them and I look forward to what the next twelve months will bring for Team Federal Council. If I can add an extra small personal comment, it is difficult to find the words to describe my deep indebtedness to these illustrious ladies, who have supported me, in ICPA business and personally, given me strength, optimism and friendship, this past 9 months, and I only hope that I have provided for them support and strength in equal measure. We will be farewelling the tremendous trio of Jane O'Brien, Lisa Slade and Sally Sullivan from Federal Council at the end of the Conference. ICPA will always be far better off for having these ladies on our side. Of course, it will not be goodbye, but instead "see you later".

It is with regret that we have two farewells to make this year from our extended ICPA team as well. After many years in the role of Pedals Editor and Publisher, the time has come for Raelene Hall to move on, leaving behind her a legacy that will not be forgotten. Raelene, my heartfelt gratitude and admiration to you for your extraordinary commitment to ICPA. Another incredibly dedicated ICPA stalwart, Mrs Julia Materne is also stepping down from her Archivist role this year after decades in the position, a remarkable effort! Federal Council feels immensely grateful and fortunate to have outstanding individuals ready to take on these roles, along with a new Membership Officer following conference, when these off-Council positions are appointed. ICPA (Aust) could not continue to function without the support and hard work of our behind the scenes extras and I thank all of those who help us in any way to keep all parts of our machine working.

While I am acknowledging the people behind the scenes, I digress from ICPA business for a moment, to make a special mention of Federal Council's beloved families, "the ICPA widows and orphans" who are often very forgiving of the time spent on ICPA. I am sure there is one on a table to my left nodding his head in agreeance. However, they let us do all this, because they know we love it and I am pretty sure they do too.

Well, this brings me to the end of the 2022 Federal President's Report and I wish to reiterate the message from the Conference theme "Outback to Ocean – Building Member Connections" because as Japanese writer (and I won't get this right despite my middle daughter trying to help me!) - Ryunosuke Satoro said "Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean." And so here we are having come together from Outback Australia, to continue the legacy of ICPA to bring waves of change, indeed an ocean, to achieve equitable education for our geographically isolated children and to be reminded that being isolated does not mean we are alone.

### FEDERAL TREASURER'S REPORT

Nikki Mahony

It has been a short year since the postponed 2021 conference in November last year. It is wonderful to see so many of you again and some vibrant new faces in the mix. The audited report for 2022 financially reflects Federal Council slowly being able to kick back into gear, or at least reach cruising speeds around a few less road blocks and travel restrictions. While delegations still did not go quite according to plan with an election thrown into the mix, most new Federal councillors were at least able to meet the team face to face in Canberra for meetings along with State Council representatives.

#### MEMBERSHIP

At the end of the 2022 financial year, ICPA Australia had 2503 financial members, four Corporate Members and six School Corporate Members. It is good to note that given the challenges, memberships have held relatively steady for the past two years. There is still a need to continue to promote ICPA to all those who can benefit from our action as our true strength lies in our membership and the number of families we represent.

#### SPONSORSHIP AND DONATIONS

Julie McDonald and Four Seasons Company continue to generously support ICPA (Aust) through a sponsorship in honour of Julie's late husband Zanda McDonald. Five percent of sales from the ZM Breeder and Weaner Block range not only "*...keeps ICPA in people's minds as they feed cattle in the north*" but also allows ICPA (Aust) to support branches to attend conference and provides us with a broader scope to promote ICPA's cause and maintain our presence on a Federal level. In the 2021-22 financial year they have supported us to the tune of \$44,950 which provides ICPA a much needed leverage at an unusual period of learning how to operate differently. ICPA (Aust) is very proud to be associated with the ZM Breeder & Weaner Block range by Four Seasons and the McDonald family, and we are so very grateful for their support.

Marcus Oldham Student Association wanted isolated children to benefit directly from their fundraising last year. Despite the College's COVID-19 lockdowns and lockouts, an extraordinary \$17,811 was raised at their Parent Student Ball and donated to ICPA (Aust). Federal Council was happy to be a conduit for the funds. We were able to facilitate the direction of funds to branches holding sports camps and clinics in 2022-2023, through an expression of interest and proposal process. We look forward to hearing more about these events and sharing stories with our membership and Marcus Oldham Student Association. What a difference their generosity will make to each of these branches.

Cobram Estate also approached ICPA (Aust) with a unique proposal for \$5 from each tasting kit purchased for selected virtual olive oil tasting sessions to be donated to ICPA (Aust). This included their official attempt at the world's biggest virtual olive oil tasting – a confirmed Guinness world record with 16,537 unique viewers online participating on 28 October 2021. \$1000 was raised for ICPA (Aust) making it a fascinating, tasty and productive partnership.

NBN Co and Telstra are once again generously sponsoring the ICPA Federal Conference in 2022. We certainly appreciate the support they offer ICPA not only financially but also through working collaboratively with Federal Council to improve communications. It has been exciting to see so much movement in this space in the past two years and we enjoy challenging and working with both groups. Please note that part of sponsorship funds for our 2021 conference actually fell in this financial year.

Donations were gratefully received by the following branches during the 2021-22 financial year: Clermont branch (Qld), Lakes Branch (WA), Louth Branch (NSW), Mt Isa BOTA (Qld), Midwest Branch (WA), Namoi Branch (NSW), Wentworth Branch (NSW) and Winton Branch (Qld). Thank you all. We know how hard our members work to raise funds for their branch and our organisation. Every little bit helps ICPA give our families a voice and we truly appreciate your generosity.

Raelene Hall KMK Publishing (Pedals) also supported ICPA (Aust) financially as well as through her professional production and distribution of Pedals. We thank Raelene for her support and wish her well as she hands over the reins of both roles at this conference.

### FINANCES

With a new contractual term signed off for our grant through Department of Education, Skills and Employment, we were pleased to receive our first two payments within this financial year. As announced, the grant is for \$100,000 over two years which represents an increase of 25% from our previous grants. Our first contractual report on Student Engagement Strategies was submitted to the Department in February 2022.

In the Federal Conference revenue line, you will notice there is nothing recorded for 2022 due to the lateness of Federal conference last year and a delay in being able to have accounts prepared and audited in time for the end of financial year. The funds from 2021 in this line are returned advanced funds from 2020 conference which was cancelled.

Merchandise sales relate to once off 50-year memorabilia, most of which were sold at conference with some online sales – all anniversary stock has successfully been sold. The online shop now has facemasks and flags for purchase.

Tasmanian State Council funds continue to be held in trust on their behalf in a stand-alone account and Tasmanian membership fees are now paid to Tasmania branch. Federal Council continue to administer the online component of Tasmanian memberships.

Most increases in expense items are reflective of the fact that we can now move around more freely and get back to our “normal” business of face-to-face meetings, attending conferences and delegations with Members of Parliament, Senators, government departments and other educational stakeholders.

New and updated software expenses remained high this year to service our newer laptops in use with a full Council (2021 software expenses sit in subscriptions and memberships so this is difficult to compare). We expect software and related IT expenses to remain high due to changes in how computers and programs now operate. We now maintain online subscriptions to Adobe, Microsoft operating systems, email domain platforms, Mailchimp email software, Zoom etc.



Donation expenses relate to the passing on of some funds from Marcus Oldham to branches. Significant increases in Federal Conference expenses are a celebration of actually being able to hold and attend a modified face to face and virtual event. Four Seasons sponsorship money was also passed on to help six branches attend conference in 2021 (Dawson Valley, Hughenden, Tasmania, Territory Wide, Western Downs, plus one branch that was later unable to attend and refunded monies).

ICPA (Aust) renegotiated and changed insurance organisations this year as the first quote with ANSVAR Combined Liability insurance saw yet another 50% premium increase. It is a very tricky space to work in at the moment with many insurance companies choosing not to extend policies or simply raise premiums beyond practical reach. Another broker was also sought for a second opinion and could not obtain a better deal. EBM were eventually able to secure us cover through Community Underwriting at a much more reasonable rate and we feel this group is a good match for ICPA (Aust).

Website expenses remain high at \$12,663 for this financial year as the new ICPA website was being finalised. We are now at the stage where most pages are complete and many issues are ironed out. State and Federal Councils now have a signed agreement in place regarding distribution of costs related to website changes and fixes required.

Reporting a profit of \$65,056 this year has enabled Federal Council to make the recommendation that Membership fees remain the same for the 2023 financial year, \$22 per member and \$275 for School and Corporate Members. Taking into account growing inflationary pressures and the need to adequately cover the costs of Federal publications, we expect to recommend a small fee increase next year, however in appreciation of the current climate, ICPA (Aust) would like to propose the Federal membership fees remain static for 2022-23.

A significant profit in 2021 and 2022 is reflective of several quiet years of operations and greatly reduced travel expenses due to COVID-19. It is also greatly bolstered by extremely generous donations and sponsorships. Federal Council feel the time is right utilise these funds to leverage our impact through strategic media engagement and more targeted campaigns. (A not-for-profit can make a profit, but any profit made must be used for its purposes. It can keep profits as long as there is a genuine reason for this and it is to do with its purpose.) With significant reserves now invested to ensure sustainability for ICPA in the medium term, we are confident that we can achieve good traction for the greater benefit of our rural and remote children and their respective families.

2022 has been a year of steep learning for me and my favourite on Council so far. Perhaps it is just more normal considering I joined the team in the midst of the growing COVID-19 crisis in 2020. I appreciate gaining a deeper understanding of how and why ICPA works so effectively and have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know some members, branches and state councillors more. Thank you to Lisa Slade, our wonderful previous Treasurer who lingered a little longer on Federal Council partly to support me through my first year and to Jane O'Brien in her role as Membership Officer who has patiently talked me through the intricacies of membership tiers and the quirks of cashflow manager (our accounting program). I will be sad to say goodbye to the two of you for your friendship foremost and quietly daunted by being the most experienced finance officer on deck moving forward. Thank you to my fellow federal councillors, state and branch treasurers for your understanding and support as I wrapped my head around the role. It has been a pleasure doing business with you all – I think I love my new job!

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sally Brindal

Well, hello and welcome to the Quay, the place to be.

Madam President, Distinguished Guests, Federal Councillors, ICPA members. It is with great pleasure I present my report as President of ICPA WA. This is my final report as WA State President, and thanks to the COVID pandemic, my first live report – befitting that it is here in Perth. Thank you so much to everyone who has travelled from near and far to join us in beautiful Perth today.

The start of the 2022 school year began with many COVID restrictions still in place which caused an element of disruption to WA schools. Term 2 2022 was particularly difficult. The relaxing of COVID restrictions resulted in a surge of COVID cases throughout the whole community and an increase in people self-isolating due to being deemed a close contact. I would like to thank all education and boarding staff for their dedication and commitment in ensuring the disruption and impact to our children's education was minimised. I would also like to thank parents, and particularly boarding parents, for their patience, understanding and cooperation as we all navigated a high case load COVID environment.

2022 sees the removal of the final Royalty for Regions component of the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA). Over the past five years this allowance has now been reduced by \$785 per student to \$1320 per year, back to the same level it was in 2010. The BAHA reduction was explained, at the time, by the Government as, *'being a necessary part of reducing budgets'* however, given the announcement for the second year in a row, of a revised budget surplus, of \$5.7 billion this year, the reduction seems inequitable for families and students who benefit from this much relied upon allowance, especially with the continual annual increase in boarding fees. In correspondence during 2020 the Hon. Sue Ellery, MLC, Minister for Education and Training stated,

*"After 2022, I will request the Department of Education examine the structure of BAHA payments."*

WA State Council look forward to development in this area and hope the Department will look favourably on boarding families.

Another casualty of the 2018 Education budget cuts, to save money, was the privatisation of the running of the six camps schools to Fairbridge WA. Despite assurances at the time, it has recently become quite clear that there has been a deterioration of both facilities and programs, particularly at the rural camp facilities in Geraldton and Kalgoorlie, which used to be outstanding. At a recent meeting with the new Fairbridge CEO it was made abundantly clear that financial economics is a large factor. School camps play such an important role, especially for distance education children, and provide an important opportunity for parents, who are more often the home tutors, to receive some professional development. However, the current situation is impacting both of these valuable experiences and ICPA WA will continue to support our members in this area.

Members have continuously presented motions requesting a review into the School Bus Service offered to students (Orange School Buses). In August 2021 the State Government referred regional school bus services to the Parliamentary Public Accounts committee to consider a review focussed on the Public Transport Authority's (PTA) Student Transport Assistance Policy Framework, which provides students living in remote or rural areas with transport assistance to attend school. It also provides transport assistance to students with special needs who attend education support facilities. ICPA WA presented a submission to the review committee and in February myself, Kym Ross, WA Secretary and Jane Cunningham WA Vice President gave evidence to the hearing.

Unfortunately, the Department of Transport have been less than cooperative regarding issues in relation to the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme – Road Travel Subsidy for high school students. Numerous letters have been written to the Department of Transport all receiving the same standard rote reply. It is extremely disappointing that requests for a meeting to further explain how the application of the current eligibility criteria is disadvantaging families living in rural communities have not been met with a favourable response. On the one occasion a meeting was arranged with the Minister of Transport's Policy Advisor, he failed to attend, with no prior warning given and no apology received after.

ICPA WA and Lisa Rodgers, Director General of Education, are maintaining their cohesive working relationship. Discussions have revolved around increased access and awareness for families to the School of Special Education Needs (SEEN), SOTA reviews and accountability, promotion of the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) and expectations of staff during school reviews at rural schools.

WA State Council are a part of the Education Department's System Alliance Group. The System Alliance consists of key stakeholders across the whole education sector including Presidents of the various Principals Associations, Catholic Education, Independent Schools Association, various unions and P and C to name a few. The Alliance participates in assessing proposed policy across all facets of education from staffing to curriculum. The group is very receptive to each stakeholder sharing information on the impact of proposed policies; this information is taken on board. The group meets six times a year, led by the Director General Lisa Rodgers however prior to the return to school, met weekly from January, which continued throughout February, solely focussed on the return to school and the implications of proposed COVID guidelines. The attendance by ICPA WA was extremely important to voice any concerns and impacts the proposed guidelines would have on our rural schools and boarding families. ICPA did get a mention on the radio when the Education Minister announced the return to school guidelines and COVID planning measures that had been discussed with ICPA!

Due to the COVID situation in Perth, the WA 50<sup>th</sup> State Conference '50 Years along Way Down the Track' in March was postponed. In true Olympic fashion the planned 2022 50<sup>th</sup> celebrations were rolled forward to 2023 with all sponsors also agreeing to roll their sponsorship forward, for which we are most grateful. With five weeks to go, WA State Council converted to an online State Conference and on 18<sup>th</sup> March celebrated "50 Magical Years" of ICPA WA instead.

Conference was opened by Hon. Sue Ellery, Minister for Education and Training. Messages from Mrs Margaret Hoare (Lacy) the founding President of Meekatharra Air, the first ICPA Branch in WA, and also the founding President of ICPA WA, Mrs Roxanne Morrissey, Federal and WA State Life Member, Mrs Raelene Hall WA State Life Member and the founding President of the Yalgoo Branch Mrs Roma Heath, added a beautiful personal touch to the celebrations. There were thirteen branch motions presented predominately concerning the:

- WA Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA)
- Student Travel Subsidy Scheme-Road Travel Subsidy (STSS-RTS)
- degradation of the government's camp schools, now contracted out to Fairbridge WA
- teacher registration and pre-service placements at SOTAs and SIDE (School of Isolated and Distance Education) which encompasses not just geographically isolated children.

The WA Director General of Education, Ms Lisa Rodgers addressed conference and took questions without notice. Her open and informative response to questions was greatly appreciated by members. Ms Rodgers is very passionate about rural and remote education and improving the quality of education deliverance through distance education.

The revised programme concluded with the AGM being held straight after lunch. I would like to congratulate Naomi Obst, Midwest Branch who stepped down from Council due to taking up a position on Federal Council. Sincere thanks must go to ABSA, Federal Council and Nikki Macqueen for all their assistance with our online Conference. I would also like to thank Telstra and Greencollar for their sponsorship of the additional IT costs in setting up an online conference with online voting capabilities.

The online format meant that the tyranny of distance was not a barrier for people to attend. Despite feeling the conference itself was a success, the lack of social interaction and networking that normally follows conference was such an anti-climax. It really highlighted the importance of face-to-face connections, and although sometimes that does require more effort, it really is so so worth it! As the saying goes, ***you don't know what you have until its gone!***

It was wonderful to be able to attend a Federal Joint Council meeting, with WA Secretary Kym Ross in Canberra in May, and meet up with other State and Territory executives. It really is such a fantastic opportunity to hear issues and success stories from each other and discuss how we can all build on the wonderful organisation of ICPA.

Membership has remained steady in WA however, as we continue to learn to live with COVID, it is imperative that through the network of Branches we remain engaged with our members and rise to the challenge of continuing membership into the future and raising awareness of the role ICPA plays in supporting the access to education for rural and remote families.

I would like to acknowledge the support ICPA WA receives from all our generous sponsors and stakeholder groups.

I would like to thank my fellow State Councillors for volunteering their time and knowledge to such a worthy organisation and for their support, hard work and commitment. Thank you also Federal Council and the other State and Territory Councils for their continued support, camaraderie and friendship.

I took on the President's role on Friday 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and since that time COVID has continued to present so many challenges, changes and disruptions to lives the entire world. However, throughout that time there has remained one constant - ICPA. Thank you everyone for your support and contribution. Thank you for being the united voice during a time of chaos and great uncertainty.

I hope the two days of Conference are enlightening and enjoyable.

Thank you.

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

Moira Lanzarin

It is with great honour and humility that I stand here before you to share my first state President's report at Federal Conference. Thank you to my amazing fellow Territorians who join me here and to all those keeping the home fires burning. NT members please wave your hand: they include fellow State Councillors, Federal Councillors, and member representatives from all three of our Branches, Katherine, Alice Springs and Territory Wide.

The role of State President is a special privilege, and a huge responsibility that I do not take lightly. But it is something that does not happen singularly and is very much a team effort in which we all

have important roles to play. The groundwork set by those before us; the support, assistance, and hard work by all those on Council; Branch Executives and Members; but most importantly, the source of our being, our why – the Bush families – the Mums, Dads, and children across the width and breadth of our nation working hard every day to educate their children and continue living, working, growing and feeding our amazing country. Rural, remote and regional families and their children is why we do what we do, why ICPA was formed all those years ago and why ICPA is still equally as relevant and important today. The other integral members of Team ICPA are our wide and varied support base of stakeholders, sponsors and partners. Thank you for joining with us today and always. Your participation in this journey is appreciated and important.

ICPA has been an ominous and reassuring presence throughout my life. As a child growing up on the family cattle station in North Queensland and Distance Education and School of the Air, ICPA was always there. The familiar logo on folders and meeting bags. My Mum (Clair O'Brien) juggling radio time to participate in meetings and her regularly having to travel for conferences and meetings in her roles at Branch, State and Federal levels. We knew Mum was off doing really important stuff talking with Government to make things better for ourselves and other bush children's education and opportunities. It was at a Federal Conference in WA, in 1993, that Mum stood down after six years as Federal Councillor, the first three of those also as a Queensland State Councillor. This was also the year we moved to the Territory. As an adult and a bush parent living and working in the NT, I knew it was only a matter of time before I became a member of ICPA in my own right. This was first as a Lone Member then belonging to the Katherine Branch. I joined NT State Council as Treasurer two and a half years ago, on answering the call for assistance and knowing it was now my turn to step up. Our two sons now are also benefitting from direct and in-direct ICPA activities and influence as small rural school students at Mataranka Primary, Katherine School of the Air and now boarding school in Charters Towers. I fit ICPA in around my daily routine of managing the small family stud Brahman cattle operation at Coodardie Station, other volunteer and family commitments and helping my husband supervise our eldest son's middle school distance education lessons at home.

ICPA in the Northern Territory is strong. At our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, "Before and Beyond" in Darwin this March, members and participants loudly and passionately responded that 40 years on, the role, purpose and need of ICPA is as important as ever. The beautiful diversity of individuals, backgrounds, locations, needs and experiences all coming together with the common goal of striving to create the best education outcomes for our bush kids and enabling families to stay living and working in the outback. Through the motions and workshops, we connected with members and stakeholders, to progress current concerns and shape the pathways forward. The program was jam packed and the speakers, both prepared and impromptu were amazing, and the networking and connections invigorating.

This year sees a strong and full ICPA NT State Council with 12 members. It is a great balance of continuing and new members and it is a pleasure to work with such a talented and dedicated group. The professional state and high regard of ICPA in the Northern Territory is in no small way thanks to the relentless and targeted effort and commitment of those who have gone before us.

The core top 5 issues for Northern Territory ICPA have remained unchanged in the last several years. 1.) Improve the NT Student Assistance Schemes and include a Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA) for all students who attend boarding school. 2.) Maintenance funding & new funding for Mobile Playgroups to reach geographically isolated children (five years and under). 3.) Early identification, diagnosis and management of special learning needs, including access to specialists, Medicare rebates, telehealth services and education advisors. 4.) Continued improvements to accessing affordable and reliable technology for geographically isolated education purposes, including connectivity and the software and hardware required for delivery. 5.) A Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) to recognise the substantial financial costs associated with the role of

the home tutor who facilitates the delivery of distance education in geographically isolated schoolrooms.

NT Council has its work set out, but we are excited about the challenges and possibilities ahead. It feels as though we are making progress on a number of these long-standing issues.

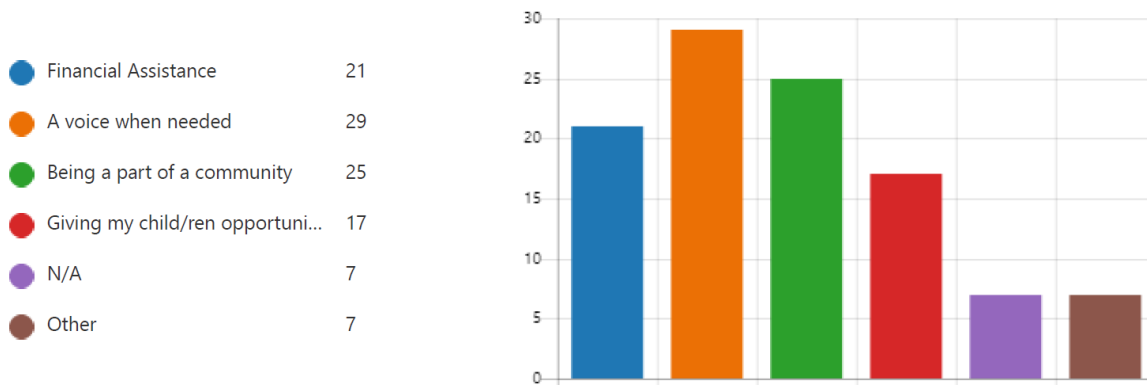
Our access to high level decision makers within the NT Education Department is improving. Post Annual Conference, ICPA NT was invited to join SEAG – School Education Advisory Group. This group brings together key education stakeholders to provide advice to the Chief Executive on important strategic and system policy relating to government Schools. Our NT Education Minister has always been responsive to our calls, and this has now been formalised with regular 2 monthly meetings. A department official, embarrassed by the slow progress and the repeated presence of motions seeking improvement in the NT Student Assistance Scheme, has vowed that improvements will occur this year, negating the need for such motions to be present at our next annual conference.

Member's motions have been presented to stakeholders in Darwin at Delegation on the 11-12 May, in Darwin. A total of 13 meetings in all, over 2 very busy days. Meetings included the Education Minister's Office, the Opposition Party, multiple members of the Department of Education as well as established partners such as the NT Cattleman's Association and new partners in St John's Ambulance and current members of Charles Darwin University. Plus, a tour through the most impressive and state of the art, new boarding facilities at Hailey Bury Rendall School in Darwin. I and two fellow councillors attended delegation in person, with another two councillors participating via phone for their Portfolio meetings. A very positive reception was received, and we will continue to follow up and action where needed. Planning for our next delegation is now in the pipeline.

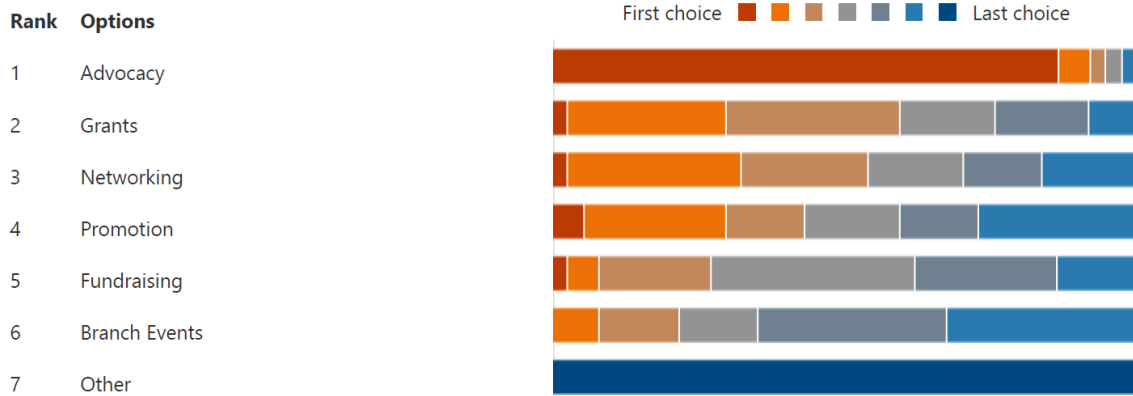
By coincidence, our 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was reported and celebrated in our 90<sup>th</sup> Edition of Down the Track magazine. Our humble member's newsletter continues to move from strength to strength. We have moved to taking paid advertising to offset production costs and are also investigating an e-magazine option to best accommodate the needs and wishes of members.

During our Conference we asked participants to complete a survey. Not only about the conference but about ICPA. I would like to share the following highlights with you.

## 1. How has ICPA benefited your family?



8. What do you think ICPA priorities should be in the future? (Please list 1-6 with 1 being the highest)



Advocacy, a voice when needed, and the sense of belonging and being part of the ICPA family, resonated strongly. Participation at conferences – both State and Federal – is critical to achieve this. This was recently reinforced at the local Katherine ICPA NT brains trust informal weekly morning tea, when host and life member legend, Pat Elliot, stated “The best thing we can do is get members to Federal Conference”. “Growing Member Connections” is a wonderful conference theme and the NT wish everyone all the best for a successful conference. Just how successful, will depend on what each one of us does once we get home with the things that we have learnt, heard, or were inspired by.

Thank you to both Federal Council and WA State Council convening group for enabling such an opportunity and for all conference participants for accepting the challenge.

**NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT’S REPORT**  
Tanya Mitchell

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

The last twelve months have continued to challenge all of us in ways we never thought imaginable.

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

We know families living in rural and remote Australia face limited access to pre-school and quality early childhood education. The importance of technology and telehealth in providing distance education is heightened in these isolated geographical areas, that are less serviced by the market, and more serviced by local and state government services. Attracting quality, skilled staff in any industry to remote areas is another unique issue, but particularly with educators needing more professional and peer support.

Research shows that children living in rural and remote Australia have far greater likelihood of developmental vulnerabilities or delays compared to their city counterparts – which are in turn linked

with poor educational outcomes, disability, chronic mental health problems and a higher risk of unemployment, personal relationship difficulties, contact with the criminal justice system and homelessness.

The recently released 2021 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data shows children living in very remote areas of Australia continue to be more than twice as likely as those living in major cities to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains. They are also three times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains. The most recent figures show children living in rural and remote areas of Australia are further falling behind with the gap widening for children who are developmentally vulnerable.

All evidence supports pre-school is advantageous in the early years for brain development and to help identify any developmental issues. The physical, emotional, and social development attained in early childhood sets a trajectory for long term outcomes in health, education, and well-being. We know that reducing childhood developmental vulnerability and improving developmental health outcomes in rural Australia will help increase educational outcomes and build stronger regions and a stronger nation, well into the future.

However, the results of a recent report from the Mitchell Institute highlights that families in regional, rural, and remote areas are the most at risk of suffering from poor access to early learning. The Report shows just over 30% per cent of families living in major cities live in areas the researchers classified as childcare desert neighbourhoods. The contrast is even more stark with remote and outer remote areas having the highest levels of childcare deserts at 87.5% and 79.9%. About 453 remote towns did not have a childcare centre within a 20-minute drive.

ICPA-NSW have been involved in Rural Roundtables, held in conjunction with Thrive by Five and Royal Far West late last year, to develop a specific plan for early learning in rural and remote Australia, that considers some of the unique issues our communities face. These issues are certainly not new to ICPA but the research and reports show evidence of the gaps between remote and metropolitan children's education and outcomes which we can then use to advocate for change. Thrive by Five is an initiative of the Minderoo Foundation and is campaigning to make our early learning childcare system high quality and universally accessible.

March 2022 saw many past and present members of ICPA descend upon the town of Bourke for our 50<sup>th</sup> Annual NSW State Conference with 112 delegates and over 200 people in attendance at the conference dinner. It was heartening to see so many come to celebrate 50 years of ICPA in its birthplace. The Conference was officially opened by Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of NSW who along with her husband Mr Dennis Wilson, are joint Patrons of ICPA-NSW. We were grateful to have them in attendance to unveil the 50 years plaque which was later placed next to a commemorative tree planted by Wally Mitchell and Rory Treweeke, both founding members of ICPA. Wally was awarded Life Membership of ICPA-NSW at the conference which now sees both he and Rory as Life Members of all three, Branch, State and Federal levels.

It was fortunate to have many wonderful speakers including our NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, Richard Stokes from ABSA, the inspirational Sam Bailey, Dr Rosalind Walsh from Department of Education – High Performing Students Program, Mike Marom from Telstra, Ben Ballard, Executive Director of Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy Unit and special thank you goes to our Federal President Alana Moller for travelling to Bourke and being there to support NSW State Council and speak to any Federal issues that arose.

On the day before conference, Distance Education families gathered in person and online with the Department of Education Rural Regional and Remote Education Policy team to discuss and address issues raised by the families and educators. The recently formed team has been an important factor



in the mutual exchange of information and to create solutions to problems faced by our members in the provision of education in rural and remote situations.

In the first week of June, nine ICPA-NSW State Councilors descended on Sydney for a full deputation. It has been 3 years since we have been able to meet with all our relevant stakeholders face to face. We had 40 meetings booked over the two days, so precision timing and patience was needed as we navigated the city and changes to some of the meeting times. We had 6 meetings with several departments within the newly formed Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy Team which were followed by meetings with stakeholders and Ministers including;

- NSW Farmers
- Royal Agricultural Society Foundation
- Bus NSW
- NSW Centre for Effective Reading
- CWA of NSW
- Contact Inc
- Council of Catholic School Parents
- NESA
- Telstra
- Ms. Kate Washington MP – Shadow Minister for Family Communities and Disability
- The Hon. Mark Latham, MLC - Chair Parliamentary Committee on Education
- Ms Prue Car, MP – Shadow Minister for Education and Early Childhood
- Mrs. Helen Dalton MP – Member for Murray
- Ms. Julia Finn MP - Shadow Minister for Sport, and Shadow Minister for Youth
- Mr. Tim Crakanthorp – Shadow Minister for TAFE and Tertiary
- Ms. Jenny Aitcheson MP – Shadow Minister Regional Transport and Roads
- Mr. Roy Butler MP – Member for Barwon
- The Hon. Mick Veitch, MLC – Shadow Minister for Regional NSW, Agriculture and Western NSW
- The Hon. Bronnie Taylor, MLC – Minister for Women, Regional Youth and Mental Health
- The Hon. Wes Fang, MLC - Deputy President and Chair of Committees
- The Hon. John Graham, MLC - Shadow Minister for Roads
- Advisor to Mr Ryan Park, MP – Shadow Minister for Health and Mental Health
- Advisor to The Hon. Paul Toole, MP – Minister for Regional NSW
- The Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC – Minister of Education and Early Learning
- The Hon. Dugald Saunders, MP – Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW
- The Hon. Steph Cooke, MP - Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Flood Recovery
- The Hon. Sam Faraway, MLC - Minister for Regional Transport and Roads
- University Admissions Centre
- ACCAN
- BCEF
- Transport for NSW
- Teachers Federation
- Parents and Friends Association
- Ministry for Health
- Australian Independent Schools

As day two came to close, we attended the Launch of the Thrive by Five Campaign at Parliament House. It was a pleasure to be invited to speak at the event representing our members needs in rural and remote NSW and Laura Stalley presenting a speech on behalf of ICPA (Aust), President Alana Moller. It was a great networking event with Ministers and organisations such as Royal Far West, Contact Inc. and Life Education also being involved in the project.

It was heartening to hear the excitement that our stakeholders had for meeting us in person again, but also grateful for the relationship and honesty that we provide them from our members. Many of them look forward to our meetings, as they feel that we provide them with vital information about rural and remote education. These issues are not always able to be dealt with straight away, but we

will continue to advocate for our members. However following deputation there was a myriad of new budget announcements by NSW Government and it was amazing to hear of the investment and changes that addressed some of the issues we took to the Ministers which have been raised by our members. Whilst the new reforms will not benefit every family or address all of our issues it is so good for many of them to be acknowledged and see movement in areas of early childhood education and health, workforce participation and training. As a result, this budget places a strong emphasis on supporting families and investing in a brighter future, by accelerating investment in the health system, and providing immediate support for cost-of-living pressures and housing to deal with the current inflationary challenges.

The NSW Government announced it will invest \$7.2 billion in 2022-23 in cost-of-living support. These will come in the form of:

- \$1.3 billion for the Brighter Beginnings Affordable Preschool initiative to provide fee relief for families with children across the community and mobile preschools and long day-care sectors.
- \$193 million for the Back to School subsidy, providing \$150 to every NSW schoolchild towards the cost of school supplies in 2023.
- \$98 million for a two-year pilot of a \$250 prepaid Regional Apprentice and Uni Travel Card for university students and apprentices in NSW each year.
- \$192 million Parents NSW program to reward and thank eligible NSW households for their efforts to support learning from home in 2021
- \$155 million Before and After School Care program, providing a \$500 voucher towards the cost of before and after-school care for every child in New South Wales
- \$5.8 billion over 10 years to establish a year of universal pre-kindergarten in the year before school and investing over \$280 million over four years to support the workforce of early childhood educators.
- Investing \$41.3 billion over four years to make preschool more affordable for families, including by providing \$2,000 of support per child to access preschool services in long day care from the beginning of 2023.
- \$111.2 million for development checks in preschools, delivered jointly by the Department of Education and Ministry of Health.
- \$70.9 million to expand the Sustaining NSW Families program to support families to reach their full potential.
- \$1.2 billion to maintain and enhance the quality of education facilities at NSW public schools.
- \$108.5 million to continue the rollout of Institutes of Applied Technology pilots, bringing together industry, Vocational Education and Training and higher education providers.
- \$82.7 million for Fee Free Vocational Education and Training to support a further 70,000 students to access apprenticeships, traineeships and other high-priority training.
- \$25.1 million to expand the Careers NSW pilot, providing comprehensive careers and education advice to NSW schools.
- \$18.2 million co-investment towards development of a University of Newcastle campus in the Gosford CBD.
- First Nations people are also a key focus area in the budget, with the government investing \$715.8 million to help meet NSW's targets under the National 'Closing the Gap' agreement.

ICPA-NSW have also participated as part of the Disability Strategy Reference Group, a focus group to support the development of the Outcomes Framework for students with disability. The group are looking at ways to see how are we tracking and improving outcomes for all students with disability.

It is also expected this work will inform work done at a school level and will be informed by the research and community consultations that have been completed. This means there can be developed evidence-based indicators and measures that reflect what is important to students with disability and their communities.

Sometimes we present motions for a long time before finally seeing progress. Sometimes we need to review what we are asking for and see how we can word it differently to change the way a situation is viewed by those with the power to approve or make policy changes. Personal stories make great case studies to present on deputation and help to give real life experiences to our motions. Each year both State and Federal ICPA Councils bring your issues to respective state and federal governments for increased financial support through various allowances to assist with educating rural and remote children. On behalf of all ICPA-NSW members, I would like to thank our Federal Council colleagues and NSW State and Federal governments in working together to increase the financial support offered to our rural and remote families. ICPA families are truly grateful.

In closing I would like to thank my fellow State Councilors for all their support and for the time you give voluntarily advocating for and providing assistance to our members.

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

Belinda Hatcher

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

In March 2012, I headed to Wilpena Pound to attend my first ever ICPA State Conference as an observer for the Flinders Ranges Branch. I had joined our branch only 6 months before after some friends in the area told me that now my kids were older and on School of the Air, that I might benefit from being involved. Now, I knew what ICPA was and what they did but as I had only been living back in the community for a couple of years and between settling back into station life and 'herding' 3 kids under 9, it hadn't really crossed my mind to join until then. Attending conference, I was told, would be a great way for me to dip my toes into the waters of ICPA – little did I know I was about to be dunked into those waters headfirst!

As I sat and listened to motions (which confused the heck out of me back then!!) I began to understand what my friends at SOTA camps and local cricket matches were speaking so passionately about. I listened to Judy Newton give her Federal Council update, Glennis Crawford and Jane Gloster speak to motions with such ease and confidence and watch all those ladies who I knew from SOTA, RICE and outback events sit up the front and run the day so effortlessly. To say I was in awe was an understatement. Lunch time quickly rolled around and someone brought this little piece of paper to me that had my name in the nominee position with the word secretary written next to the 'position nominating for' section. It was all a blur after that and by the end of the day I was elected to the roll of State Secretary! Fast forward 10 years, and here I am as President, a role which I am slowly starting to get the hang of. Going to Wilpena all those years ago changed my life for the better and I am so proud of everything that I (and all the councillors I have served with or who served before me) have been part of achieving for this amazing, highly valued organisation and all its members.

This year's South Australian State Conference was held on Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> of April in Port Augusta and was hosted by the Port Augusta branch. The name for this year's conference was 'Looking Forward, Looking Back', which was the perfect theme as we were celebrating 50 years of South Australian ICPA. With approximately 80 members, guests and visitors in attendance conference was opened by

Port Augusta Branch life member Colleen Manning. By the end of her speech there wasn't a dry eye in the house and it was the perfect opening to the day. We were also treated to some wonderful recounts from a panel of past members on what their time was like on SA ICPA and some of their favourite memories from that time.

There were many laughs and lots of 'I remember that's' coming from the audience and it was such a great way to pay tribute to those who have paved the way for our current councillors, members and SA ICPA. We had a bumper 23 motions presented with all being successfully carried. They came from a wide range of portfolio areas and were debated in a passionate and respectful way. Overall, it was a positive and successful day that was enjoyed by all.

The State Council executive elected at the 2022 AGM were President – Belinda Hatcher; Vice President – Lisa Slade; Immediate Past President – Jill Greenfield; Secretary – Hollie Williams; Treasurer – Michelle Hilder and Publicity Officer – Helen Williams. Branch reps and councillors are Katrina Morris, Amanda Michael, Ellen Litchfield, Pamela Cuffe, Louise Kohler, Candice Brown, Penny Rasheed, Di Thomas and Linda Haydon.

Appointed positions for 2022 are: Pipeline Editor – Lynly Kerin; Pipeline Layout Designer – Mija Reynolds; State Webmaster – Jodie Keogh; E-Newsletter Editor; Helen Williams; REVISE Rep - Candice Brown; OACGC rep - Petie Rankin; Lone Member officer - Jodie Keogh.

Thank you to those state councillors that stepped off of state council this year. They were Kerry Williams, Jess Barry, Melanie Lewis and Emilie Warnest. Their time and passion has been appreciated by all. A special thank you to Kerry who has been Pipeline editor, President and Immediate Past President during her time on state council. Those that know Kerry, know of the immense passion she has for the Specific Needs portfolio and education in general. She is and always will be our 'go to' person for almost any question we have about education.

I would personally like to say a big thank you to and acknowledge Jill Greenfield, who over the past three years as State President has been a steady hand and a fearless leader of our state council. When faced with the unprecedented issues that arose from the pandemic or anything that was thrown her way, she rolled up her sleeves and dove headfirst into doing whatever was needed to support our members no matter what it took. Thanks Jill!

SA ICPA State Council were invited to participate in the Country Education Strategy and it was such a privilege to be included in this consultation by the Department for Education. The Country Education Strategy paper was released in September 2021 and some of the common issues found included the attraction and retention of quality leaders, teachers and support staff, transition and induction of new staff into local communities, better access to quality student support and broad curriculum choices as well as access to quality ICT infrastructure, capabilities and support.

These key topics are what ICPA advocates for on a daily basis and it was such a great opportunity to relate things back to our member's needs and highlight the extra support and resources families in rural and remote South Australia need to meet these expectations and we look forward to working with the Department for Education and key stakeholders in bringing many of these goals to fruition.

The South Australian Department for Education launched their '[Parent Engagement in Learning Strategy](#)' on the 29 December 2021 and SA ICPA were lucky to be part of the consultation process. The strategy outlined how the department will support parent engagement in learning now and into the future. Given the higher level of involvement that most parents have in distance education, it was a great opportunity to not only understand how this works for families in metropolitan areas and

face to face situations but to also offer insights into how those distance ed parents manage the level of involvement that comes with this unique form of education.

After what I imagine was a nervous and stressful wait for Federal Council, it was finally time to celebrate 50 years of ICPA at the 2021 Federal Conference in Longreach on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of November. SA ICPA was represented by 5 members, including Jill Greenfield, Hollie Williams and Katrina Morris, who made their way from William Creek to Longreach in a light plane. I hear there were a few nerves and it was a bit cramped, but in the end, they knew it would all be worth it to be part of the event. Even though I was not there, I am told that attendees were thoroughly spoilt by way of virtual guest speakers, dinner by the Thompson River and the Qantas 50<sup>th</sup> birthday display, just to name a few enjoyable moments. SA's very own Lisa Slade was farewelled from her position of Federal Treasurer and then welcomed into the role of Federal Vice President very soon after. Thank you Lisa, for flying the flag for SA – we are all very proud of your dedication to the organisation and its members.

In December SA ICPA were given the chance to be a stall holder at the SA Arid Lands field days which was held in Port Augusta where we were part of the 2-day event which saw many organisations, local businesses and services come together. It was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old friends, take part in the informative and interesting workshops provided, have a sticky beak at the latest innovation for the pastoral industry or buy something from a small business or two. It was very obvious just how big a part that ICPA plays in rural and remote people's lives as it turned out that our stall was the most visited during the event!

The beginning of the 2022 school year did not start smoothly for many boarding children and families in South Australia and it was especially tough for those starting their boarding journey.

It became apparent early in the term that boarding houses were applying the rules based on how their leaders interpreted the guidelines from SA Health and it quickly became known by the boarders and their families that not all rules were the same. With this knowledge, State Council collated case studies from families across many boarding situations and then with the assistance of then Member for Flinders, Peter Treloar and then Member for Stuart, Dan van Holst Pellekaan MP, we were able to secure a meeting with SA Health, Department for Education, Catholic Education SA and Independent Schools of SA. This meeting was extremely useful for us all to come together for the common goal of boarding children and some useful solutions were filtered back to families and passed onto their boarding schools. By term 2 things had settled and thankfully boarders began to see some return to normality.

I don't think I am alone in saying that the effect the COVID 19 pandemic has had on children and their education is yet to be truly quantified. It has been a difficult couple of years for our students but their resilience has continued to shine, even during the toughest of times. The tireless work of Federal Council, State Councils, ABSA and other interested parties in trying to find the best solutions for the never ending and constantly changing issues that have arose during the pandemic has been nothing short of incredible and SA ICPA and our members are so thankful for all you have achieved across this area.

State Secretary Hollie Williams came up with the great idea to sell fishing shirts, which we all know (along with double bander trucker caps) are among the hottest items for country people at the at the moment, as a fundraiser for both SA ICPA and SOTA. Sponsorship for the production of the shirts was sought and there were many businesses interested in supporting this fabulous idea. A call was then put out to members for photos of stock, kids in the outback and country scenes to feature on the shirts and the responses made the choices a difficult one. The money raised was shared equally with School of the Air's Outback Parents and Friends Association and overall raised around \$5000, which was an incredible amount and very welcome.

SA ICPA would like to acknowledge and thank the Indulkaninna Foundation for their generous donation. Their donation has been put to very good use in the form of bursaries for students, which are being utilised for wide variety of things including new laptops, online music and drama lessons, school uniforms, school camps and SPELD support lessons just to name a few. We look forward to this being an ongoing partnership and are very grateful to be considered in the philanthropic vision for their foundation.

We have continued to communicate with members in many ways including our E-Newsletter, Facebook, the website and of course the Pipeline Magazine. The Pipeline magazine is delivered to members twice a year and in January 2022, the 100<sup>th</sup> edition landed in members mailboxes.

It was full of nostalgia, memories and wonderful articles that paid tribute to how far the magazine has come and what it means to members.

In May, Hollie and myself made the trip to Canberra to be part of the joint state and Federal Council catch up. The opportunity to meet our peers from other states was a special one, especially considering it was the first face to face catch up of that kind in almost 3 years. Whilst there may be differences in council make ups, membership numbers and member needs, it is the collective passion of all councilors across the country at every level that makes ICPA such a powerful organisation, with the ability to bring about real change, where change is most needed. To know I have played just a small part in this big family is one of the reasons why I am (and I think why so many others are as well) so inspired to be involved. Alana, I had such a fan girl moment just being in the room with you over those couple of days and I truly look forward to learning and being inspired by your leadership style as I begin writing this chapter of my ICPA story.

At the time of writing this report and since our state conference, SA ICPA State Council have been busy writing motion letters, organising our delegation to Adelaide and supporting members with their needs. I am slowly finding my feet as President, but I have quickly realized that my passion and excitement for being in the role does not necessarily make writing reports and doing 'presidently' things any easier! Many thanks must go to our state councilors for their support during this transition time, especially to Hollie, Jill, Lisa and Michelle for their extra encouragement and gentle prompts when it has been needed.

Finally, congratulations and thank you to Alana, Federal Council and the WA State Council for putting on what I can only imagine will be an excellent couple of days for the 51<sup>st</sup> Federal Conference in Perth. I am sad I could not be there with you all, but have my fingers firmly crossed that I will be able to join you all in Darwin next year.

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

Louise Martin

Federal President Mrs Alana Moller, Federal Life Members, State Life Members, Branch Life Members, Past Councillors, Distinguished Guests, fellow ICPA members, ladies & gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to present my 2022 Queensland President's Report.

We were extremely lucky and very fortunate that the Cunnamulla conference was held in person, 12 months ago, in amongst covid lockdowns. We have really commiserated with Federal Council and other states as they navigated the pandemic forcing delays in conferences, going online and trail blazing the blended approach. ICPA Qld is truly grateful that we have had a full 12 months between conferences for the first time in 3 years. Delegations and face to face meeting were not without complications with councilors unable to attend in person at a variety of events. Fortunately, with

technology and adaptability councillors were able to join most of our meetings virtually. We sincerely hope that we can now put all those challenges behind us and look forward to a more normal future.

Following Cunnamulla conference, we updated our Position Statement with our Key Issues for 2021/2022. It was determined the key issue for the year would be an overview of the lack of equity in education for rural and remote students and highlighted the shortfalls of each portfolio. This document has virtually covered the state, reaching many inboxes far and wide, including all parliamentarians and key stakeholders.

A compact crew of five state councillors descended to Brisbane in August, kicking starting the first meetings of the year. Covid again put a dampener on proceedings with the majority of councillor zooming in from home for our face-to-face meeting as well as departmental meetings. We were fortunately able to meet with a variety of people in person which really made the trip worthwhile. The central issue for discussion was the closing of the accommodation facilities at several schools of distance education, which was debated very passionately at conference. Some progress was made after considered discussion with the department. Other highlights included meeting with the Minister for Agriculture, Mark Furner, broadening the scope of our lobby to seek an increase in the LAFHAS. A Mini Delegation was held in November resulting in progressive discussions with the Department of Education. Unfortunately, Tony Cook the Director General, one of ICPA's inclusive supporters during the pandemic has, moved on. We were fortunate enough to meet with Craig Kelly, Acting DG and Peter Kelly, DDG State Schools at the time to highlight our key issues. This included expressing our disappointment that the Education Portfolio is not a standalone portfolio and unfortunately incorporates industrial relations and racing under the one umbrella. We were back in Brisbane again in February this year for a face-to-face meeting and delegations with nearly a full council, which was pretty exciting. ICPA QLD met with the newly appointed Director General for Education Michael De'Ath who was left without any doubt of the challenges of educating rural and remote children. The Minister for Education, Grace Grace, gave us valuable time to meet and discuss our current key issues. During this meeting, we sincerely thanked both the Minister and the DG ensuring ICPA Qld was involved, and able to contribute, in stakeholder meetings during covid leading to some of the most practical return to boarding codes in the country. Discussions were held around the increasing concerns that Geographically Isolated Students are being minoritized in the Schools of Distance Education, which were initially purpose built for these students. The concern that rural and remote students could be disadvantaged with NAPLAN testing moving online was also raised with the Minister.

Thanks again to Dr Regan Neumann, Kym Turner and Julissa Vasquez from the State Schools Rural, Remote and International team for facilitating the meetings with all the relevant departments. Post Conference all the motions are collated and sent to the relevant areas for consideration. This has streamlined our meeting days considerably.

ICPA's relationship with the department of education continues to reflect the high value they place on our organization. We are proud to be represented on many stakeholder groups including the Rural and Remote Education Reference Group, Early Years Forum, Qld Schools Ethics Committee and Outside School Hours Care Committee. Over the last 12 months, during the height of the border closures preventing boarding students travelling to and from school we were very appreciative of being on the Response, Lead, Engagement stakeholder group facilitated by Qld Health. In collaboration, the stakeholder group attained the most practical solutions for crossing borders and management of boarding houses during covid outbreaks. 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. Again, I would like to thank Carmel Nash and the team at the QCEC offices in Brisbane for the continued use of their boardroom and web conferencing facilities

for our Council meetings along with the delicious smokos and lunch they provide, it is much appreciated.

ICPA Qld is very proud of the great working relationships we have with our Key stakeholders, ABSA, QCAA, AgForce, Telstra, nbn, QCEC, ISQ, P&Cs Queensland and others. Knowing that we can communicate with these organisations at any time to assist in our advocacy is invaluable.

In October, we had the most amazing experience in Chillagoe, for our midyear meeting, hosted by the FNQ branch, some of whom travelled further than we did to host the weekend. We took the opportunity to arrive a day earlier, in order for our new council team to get to know each other considering we couldn't all be together in person for our first meeting. We had a lovely time exploring the local tourist attractions on Friday. We then knuckled down for 2 solid days of meetings and strategic planning.

Queensland Council has participated in two joint meetings with Federal council and the other state councils. We had a zoom meeting in February, and just recently we had an in-person meeting held in Canberra, where all state councils were in attendance. It is such a valuable experience, with each council offering support and the sharing of ideas. Amanda Clark, State Treasurer and I were privileged to represent Queensland at the face-to-face meeting. Amanda and I also travelled to Bourke, NSW to attend the 50<sup>th</sup> New South Wales ICPA conference and celebrations. Alana Moller joined us on the road trip and you know what goes on tour stays on tour!! It was fascinating to listen to the 81 motions presented at the conference as our issues are so similar yet so different. It was a real privilege to be there and meet some of the founding members, including Wally Mitchell.

Our Annual Conference was held recently in Blackall and wow! didn't Blackall turn the cold weather on for Conference!! Every conference seems to have its special memories and I am sure the cold frosty mornings will be etched in the minds of attendees!! Not to mention the 5.30am start on the loud speaker at the campdraft on a frosty Friday morning adjacent to tent city. The beautiful wattle theme and decorations in the hall was a beautiful distraction though and. The 51<sup>st</sup> conference held in Blackall, 50 years on from the first conference also held in Blackall, was a wonderful event, with over 200 people attending. This special conference, so important to the Blackall branch, was so ably convened by Anita Dennis and Susie Milson and the Blackall branch convening committee and it ran seamlessly from start to finish, which was much appreciated by Qld State Council.

Qld State Council was thrilled that The Minister for Education, the Honourable Grace MP was able to take time from her busy schedule to open conference in Blackall this year. We must also thank the Minister for listening to some of our issues and providing direct feedback to the attendees. We welcomed the news that the ICT hardware subsidy will be increased from \$250.00 to \$400.00 for distance education students and the partnership between Education Queensland and Telstra to deliver faster internet to all schools. We also appreciated the attendance from several government agencies who took a keen interest in the issues faced by rural and remote families.

It was a privilege to present two outstanding contributors to ICPA Qld over the years with Life Membership. Margie Greenway and Jan Gall have continued to fly the flag for ICPA Qld for many years long since their official roles within the organisation have drawn to a close. Certificates of appreciation were presented to Jeff Little for his long-term support of ICPA and to Noela Wilson who has been busy behind the scenes for over twenty years proof reading News and Views and the Minutes. We know that no federal conference or Qld conference will be the same without Jeff who has been such a passionate supporter of ICPA over the past 25 years and beyond.

Conference also saw the launch of the 50 years of ICPA Qld book. Christine McLean, with the assistance of Mary Killeen, Di Selby and Carmel Elliot undertook a mammoth task to have this history



compiled by conference. Thank you so much for all who contributed to the book as it is a wonderful record of all that has occurred over the last 50 years. Again, ICPA Qld thanks you, Julie Collis, for your generous donation towards the printing of this book.

Preparations are now underway as State Council organises delegations to Brisbane in July where we take all the motions passed at conference and present the issues to the Education Department, the relevant Ministers, and other Key Stakeholders. The Motion Action Plan is taking shape for the coming year, and we look forward to, hopefully, a regular year of action for lobbying our actions.

Our next face to face meeting will be in Brisbane while we are at delegations. We will be finalising the portfolio objective updates from motions presented at conference, determining the key issues for the year and finalise our plans for the next 12 months.

This year saw the departure of two councillors, Rob McArthur and Jocelyn Freeman, for whom we thank for all your efforts over the period you were on council. Tammie Irons position as Immediate Past President has ended; however, we really appreciate Tammie staying on as Registrations Officer and overseeing the Website. We welcome Tammy Bailey, Richmond Branch to the team and look forward to working with you.

Thank you to WA State Council for treating us to a fantastic few days in Perth and we continue to be inspired by the passion we all bring to the table at conference.

### **WEB MANAGER'S REPORT**

Sue Shotton

At the 50<sup>th</sup> annual conference in Longreach, ICPA was celebrating the achievements of our organisation and the grass roots members who have volunteered thousands of hours to teach their children and to lobby to give our children an education that any urban student expects.

Longreach also showed us that our great organisation can rise above current issues, such as COVID or state restrictions, and unite our members to debate policies even if full attendance is not possible, through technology. All who attended last year had a huge learning curve with dealing with online voting and although there were minor hiccups it worked and motions were debated and voted on forming our policy moving forward.

In 2021 ICPA launched its new website collection with all member states having their own website to individualise as they wish. All branches also have their own webpage within their state website which also can be individualised. Hopefully this will encourage cohesive interaction between members, branches, states and federal.

As with any new development in its infancy there will always be teething problems. Our technology has grown at a great speed with new features being created to respond to different scenarios which in turn has highlighted issues which had not been visualised in the early testing. It must be noted that like all new things, issues will arise and solutions can be sort to improve the technology we currently have.

Since our launch, Federal and State Conferences have utilised mini conference websites which are housed within the framework of the existing ones creating a one stop shopfront without the need to go through a third party. This is extremely important to keep everything within the websites framework so that traffic, both members and public, are drawn to the websites which will, in turn, highlight our lobbies and hopefully encourage new memberships. The more traffic visiting the

website will also raise the website profile to improve our exposure on google search. A pleasing circle of events which ICPA strives for and which will benefit our membership.

Another important feature of the websites is the Federal database, which is an integral building block of the websites and it also has had its teething problems, such as life members receiving a membership renewal in error. When these issues arise changes in back of house are done to ensure these things do not happen again. I would like to thank Jane O'Brien, retiring membership officer, for her expertise in learning on the run how this database works and the wonderful work she has done over the past few years. She will be missed.

States, portfolio leaders and some branches utilise the icpa.com.au email addresses. These can either be a physical email inbox which does incur a monthly fee or a virtual mailbox which is directed to another email. This virtual box is free. Every branch has a virtual icpa.com.au email address which is being redirected to a branch executive. To update your redirection please come and see Nikki or myself.

Due to the speed of the technology developments and issues that have arisen we have found that communication between state webmasters, state memberships officer and the web team is vital so messenger groups were created which seem to work efficiently. It was also a requirement that generic emails were created so anyone can email a query to receive a reply in a timely manner. These emails go to all federal web team members for a resolution of the issue.

Thank you to all members of our technology team, whether it be website or membership, for all your hard work over the past year. A special thanks to my web guru, Nikki and our Federal President, Alana, who allows Nikki and me to do what we feel will benefit the website and ICPA. Also a special mention to our web developer, Mark from Enrega, who has been very accommodating to all our needs which is ensuring our website goes from strength to strength.

A conference report can't really show how this technology works so I hope you visit our website stand at conference and get some hands on demonstrations from Nikki or myself. We are available at any time and can also be contacted on [website@icpa.com.au](mailto:website@icpa.com.au) for website queries or [database@icpa.com.au](mailto:database@icpa.com.au) for any membership or database queries.

We hope to see you soon.

### **PEDALS EDITOR'S REPORT**

Raelene Hall

Madam President, Federal and State Councillors, ICPA members, ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure I present to you my very final Pedals report.

My memory of the conference at which I was first appointed editor of Pedals is very vivid in my memory - even seventeen years on. It wasn't the nerves or the anticipation although they were both present. No, it was that I attended a pre-conference event at Parliament House with, the then Prime Minister John Howard, with an egg on my forehead and the beginnings of a lovely black eye!

Earlier in the day, whilst walking down Anzac Parade, I had tripped at one of the memorials and landed on the side of my face/head. I managed to get myself up, call my friend and we got a taxi back to our hotel. After I collapsed to the hotel floor -twice - some concerned ICPA members suggested a visit to hospital was in order. Fortunately, there was no major damage other than a lump, a headache and bruising that kept appearing for the next 24 hours!

Seventeen years! What a journey it has been and how grateful I am to have had such an amazing opportunity. I've learnt countless skills; I've made friends and attended conferences across our vast land. I've worked with the most amazing Federal and State Councillors. As for all those members who have contributed to Pedals, your stories have made me laugh, cry, and want to hug you when you wrote about the inequities your kids in the bush face time and time again. So many of you have amazing writing talents but just don't see it or don't have time to nurture it. I hope one day you all see what you have to offer the world. Your kids are lucky to have you as parents.

Many others have contributed to Pedals content during my years as editor. Some distinguished, others in businesses, writing, publishing and more. Thank you for your generosity in sharing writings with all our readers. I will always be grateful for your support.

Those cover photos. Oh, my word! I never knew what the cover photo would look like until it landed in my inbox but once it did, I knew. I just knew. How? I can't explain it. Of course, there are the technical details like the resolution, orientation and room for the Pedals heading but then it is just the 'it' factor. Some photos just have 'it' and I hope the absolute delight I felt every time I found my 'it' photo was replicated by the joy you all felt when you saw the cover of your Pedals. To every person who has allowed me to share their amazing photos as covers thank you so much.

I would like to acknowledge all those who have gone down the Pedals editorial path before me. Each one of you has helped shaped the magazine we have today, and you all did it in eras when nothing was as simple and easy as it is for me today.

Why does anyone choose to do a voluntary job like this for so many years? Firstly, I don't even know where those years have gone? I certainly don't feel like I'm seventeen years older than when I started but, unfortunately my birth certificate doesn't lie. More than that though it's not only about what you can give but what you receive in return. I've mentioned it already -friendships, travel and new skills, to name just a few. Having to ensure Pedals was put together each quarter also helped me through some of the most difficult periods of my life. It gave me purpose and resolve to continue on with life when it would have been so easy just to wallow in a sea of grief and misery. I know my late sisters and brother would be proud that I stood up and carried on.

ICPA is a lobby group, an organisation to fight for the rights of our bush kids to have an equitable education to their city peers but it is so much more than that. It is a family. It is a family that puts its arms around you in the tough times, celebrates with you in the good times, holds your hand through the scary patches and is always there no matter where you go or what you do.

John F Kennedy famously said, 'Think not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country'. Paraphrasing those immortal words, I challenge you to 'think not just what ICPA can do for you but what you can do for ICPA'.

My final acknowledgement must go to my amazing family. My husband Clyde, who prefers to be behind the scenes but is 100% supportive of everything I choose to do and my three amazing children, Kenneth, Matthew and Kelly. You are the inspiration for everything I have done with ICPA. You truly are the wind beneath my wings. I love you all.

This is not goodbye from me but just farewell for now.

## PORTFOLIO REPORTS

### BOARDING/HOSTELS/SECOND HOME REPORT

Lisa Slade

The Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio has been kept busy again this past year keeping abreast of the issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. The Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) continues to be a priority, along with monitoring the change in the school funding model and how it will impact on boarding school fees.

#### **COVID-19**

The four motions presented and carried at the 2021 Federal Conference regarding cross border travel and the National Code for Boarding School Students were actioned immediately. In November, ICPA (Aust), along with other key stakeholders, were invited by the then Minister for Regional Education, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie to attend a follow-up virtual roundtable regarding the Implementation of the National Code for Boarding School Students. Following on from this, a joint ICPA Council media release titled 'Border Chaos Continues – Enough is Enough' called upon State Governments to adopt the National Code for Boarding School Students endorsed by National Cabinet in September 2021 to ensure the 2022 year was met with informed and clear determinations around cross border travel for students travelling between their home and place of school as outlined in the National Code. ICPA (Aust) thank Senator McKenzie, Senator Perin Davey and Senator Susan McDonald, along with the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) and other stakeholders for their unwavering support and willingness to pursue this issue with the States and Territories through avenues such as National Cabinet meetings. We would also like to acknowledge the tireless work behind the scenes by both ABSA and Senator McKenzie's office to supporting individual members, helping families overcome the perplexing layers of red tape and mind-boggling inconsistencies across jurisdictions to ensure their children could travel across borders between their school and their home in time for Christmas, when all other avenues had been exhausted. While the foot has come off the pedal so to speak with regards to the boarder/border situation, we are still seeing motions at State Conferences seeking assurances from their State/Territory Governments that should a similar situation arise in the future, these Governments will abide by the National Code.

With the commencement of the new school year across the country, the COVID-19 guidelines (within a boarding environment) varied across each State and Territory and the subsequent implementation of these guidelines by each boarding school was subject to interpretation. This evolved into inconsistent, unjustifiable, and stifling requirements, processes and rules that brought further adversity to an already disadvantaged cohort of vulnerable students. Accounts of extended isolation, families not being able to settle children into boarding at the start of the year, boarding students being segregated from day students and many more stories of heartbreak made these conditions unbearable for both the children and their families. State Councils worked tirelessly within their own States and Territories to address these issues and be the voice for these families and Federal Council worked as a conduit between Councils to share information to help bring a resolution to a fundamentally confused and unworkable situation. In March a further joint ICPA Councils media statement was released - 'ICPA Calls for a Balanced Approach to Risk Management Within Boarding' – outlining the need to urgently address unfolding issues surrounding COVID-19 within the boarding environment. I commend all for their ongoing tenacity in this diabolical situation.

Once again, ABSA along with Senator McKenzie and her office provided much needed support and help during the first term of school in particular, and we thank them greatly on behalf of ICPA members across Australia. In most cases there was a breakdown in communication between the relevant health department and the boarding schools leaving the scope and interpretation of the guidelines quite broad. While each and every boarding school were acting in the best interests of

their students while keeping within the guidelines, it was often a case of misinterpretation of the guidelines, due to lack of specific direction within them, that formed the crux of the issue. Some state government departments communicated far better than others, but importantly ICPA were able to be a part of the conversation and raise concerns to help find a balanced approach to risk management within boarding situations, where the COVID-19 risks could be mitigated without disproportionate constraints on our vulnerable young children.

### **Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC)**

Federal Council continues to seek blanket increases to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding and Second Home Allowances. In late December, we were invited by then Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, to attend a virtual meeting with her office to discuss the issues raised in the 2021 Federal Conference motion letters. The opportunity to provide extra information added a human element, gave the issues context in a rural and remote setting and fostered a broader understanding of why our members request increases and changes to the AIC. It was a positive meeting, and we were thankful to be given the opportunity to speak on behalf of members and to build a rapport with the Minister's office.

Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan, who chaired the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment wrote to notify Federal Council that he would take our request for an increase to the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance to the Senate Standing Committee meeting in late February. We are yet to hear if this eventuated.

Federal Council has been in regular contact with Services Australia and the Department of Social Services since Federal Conference. Following a major reshuffle throughout both of these departments over the past few years, we had been left floundering, losing what were once strong staff connections and dealing with revolving staff, unfamiliar with ICPA. It is pleasing to report that we now have a strong and fluid relationship with both Departments again and that regular meetings have been established.

At the end of November 2021, the Department of Social Services supplied ICPA (Aust) with data showing the breakdown between geographically isolated students (distance education, boarding and second home) and other recipients of AIC by State/Territory. This was a major breakthrough as this data has been requested by Federal Council as far back as 2016 after the Department had stopped providing it. This information is valuable to assist in our advocacy to the Federal Government and relevant departments.

In December 2021 Services Australia provided the 2022 payment rates and payment dates for AIC, which were distributed to members via the Branch Bulletin and uploaded onto the ICPA website. It was a major milestone to not receive messages from members regarding erroneous 'AIC Cancellation' letters over the Christmas period. Federal Council passed on its appreciation to the Department for putting this issue to bed after four or more years.

In January 2022 ICPA (Aust) was contacted by Services Australia investigating families' concerns surrounding the current COVID-19 situation and the return to boarding. We were pleased to report recently that arising from this feedback we were given assurance that the AIC will continue to be paid to families throughout Term 1 and 2 of 2022, regardless of whether a child is at boarding school or learning remotely due to the pandemic. The continuation of AIC basic and additional boarding payments will be reassessed each term according to the COVID-19 situation.

Federal Council was subsequently invited to attend quarterly meetings with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and Services Australia to discuss the AIC, Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY and the Tertiary Access Payment. The first meeting for the year was held virtually in early February. The need for an

online AIC renewal form was discussed and feedback indicated that while its rollout was likely delayed due to COVID-19, this is a priority and the departmental team were confident they were gaining traction. Unfortunately, due to the election and subsequent caretaker mode, Federal Council was unable to meet with the department in Canberra at our face-to-face delegations in May but were able to connect virtually again in mid-June. We were pleased to see the same faces following the change in Government and thank DSS and Services Australia for continuing this important communication network with us.

### **Direct Measure of Income (DMI) School Funding Model**

While much of Federal Council's focus has been on the issues around COVID-19 in boarding, we have begun working with ABSA to monitor the affect the application of this model on boarding schools could potentially have on rural and remote boarding students. ABSA has access to boarding schools across Australia and has been working with the Coalition of Regional Independent Schools Australia (CRISA) around statistical data across regional schools as well as boarding schools.

Federal Council has previously raised concerns regarding this school funding model and in 2020 presented a submission to the Review of the Regional Schooling and Resource Standard Loadings, the findings of which are yet to be released. We also wrote to then Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie to raise our grave and immediate concern over the impact the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) funding model will have on rural and remote families Federal Council have cited concerns on the impacts increases in either or both tuition and boarding fees or lack of school services as a result of the imminent decreases in funding to Independent Regional Boarding Schools will have on our members.

ICPA (Aust) supports extra loading recommendations which recognise the disadvantages in Regional, Rural and Remote (RRR) educational contexts and acknowledge the establishment of the Choice and Affordability Fund to address funding shortfalls. However, we believe the potential inadvertent negative impacts for rural and remote families due to the consequences of the Capacity to Contribute (CTC) arrangements on Independent RRR Schools need to be thoroughly investigated and provisions made to mitigate these effects on geographically isolated students who access these schools due to lack of access to an appropriate school where they live. ICPA (Aust) has raised the following issues:

- There are simply not enough State Government-run hostels and boarding facilities to accommodate the thousands of rural and remote children who must board away from home for their secondary education
- The lack of inclusion of 'boarding' within the DMI funding model and the need for boarding fees to be taken into consideration in conjunction with in-school costs within the model. When calculating boarding families' capacity to contribute, it is imperative the boarding fees they incur on top of tuition fees are taken into consideration.
- The lack of inclusion of boarding operations expenses of Independent Regional Boarding Schools in providing essential boarding facilities for rural and remote children within the DMI funding model also indicates a lack of acknowledgement by Government of the importance of educational equity for geographically isolated students
- Concerns regarding the use of taxable income to determine the capacity to contribute for rural and remote families who are involved in primary production industries such as agriculture as this can be a grossly inaccurate measure of income for the following reasons:
  - Income and operating expenses within the agricultural industry are highly variable and fluctuate from year to year depending on factors such as the season and commodity prices.
  - Many agricultural operations are private enterprises, often asset rich and cash poor and disposable income is low.
  - The income of families involved in primary production is almost completely dependent

on the weather, commodity prices, bushfires, drought, floods and other rural hardships which are entirely uncontrollable and unpredictable in nature.

- Often with family-owned agricultural businesses and other rural businesses in small towns, the “income” is actually the business earnings, and any profit is reinvested back into the business rather than personal income to be used by a family for other needs.
- Rural and remote families are in an unusual position in that their children need to source an education, which comes at a considerable cost but they have very little disposable income even in productive years.
- Without due consideration of fluctuating incomes and possible inflated and inaccurate income data that the CTC arrangements may generate in relation to families involved in primary production, funding shortfalls for RRR schools may not be identified and therefore not adequately addressed in the Regional Schooling Resource Standard Loadings
- Students from geographically isolated areas often form a very small percentage of an Independent Regional Boarding School’s student base which can result in a dilution of their own Capacity to Contribute and yet they are the ones that face the greatest challenge to educate their children.

ICPA (Aust) believes these concerns need to be addressed as a matter of urgency and pose the following recommendations to mitigate any impacts the DMI model may have on our already disadvantaged rural and remote students.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That recurrent funding for schools be extended to include the provision of boarding to ensure the continued viability of Independent Regional Boarding Schools and the accessibility and affordability of these schools for geographically isolated students
2. That the Capacity to Contribute methodology recognises the financial circumstances of geographically isolated families when applied to Independent RRR Schools and Independent Regional Boarding Schools which cater for geographically isolated students
3. Choice and affordability fund – assurance that the quarantined funds for Independent Regional Schools in each State and Territory is distributed appropriately to adequately mitigate the impacts of the DMI model for independent schools with boarding facilities
4. Incremental annual increases to the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance of at least \$500 per geographically isolated recipient, along with incremental annual increases to the AIC Additional Boarding Allowance of \$500 per recipient to recognise the expected increase in boarding school fees incurred by their families to ensure affordable access to a compulsory education for their children.

### **Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT)**

A motion regarding the removal of FBT for businesses who assist employees with boarding fees was actioned in correspondence to the Minister for Finance. Federal Council received a reply from the Individuals and Indirect Tax Division department within The Treasury, on behalf of the Treasurer, who maintained the important role FBT plays. It is believed those who receive other forms of remuneration above their salary and wages are at an advantage to those who are only able to generate an income entirely from their salary. By taxing those additional payments (fringe benefits) it levels the playing field in helping to provide an equitable taxation system within Australia. They believe providing a tax exemption for private boarding fee payment by an employer, as we have requested, would deliver significant disadvantage to those employees and self-employed persons who also pay private boarding fees from their own salary and wages, as opposed to those in receipt of the fringe benefit from their employer.

Unfortunately, the election and ensuing caretaker mode halted much of the movement in the groundwork laid earlier in the year, but like any challenge we look forward to working with the new

Government in paving the road ahead.

### **Useful Links**

For the most up to date information please follow these links to the Briefing Papers related to this Portfolio:

Federal Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Briefing Paper

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

Federal Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Briefing Paper

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

Link to Media Release 'ICPA calls for a balanced approach to risk management within Boarding'

<https://icpa.com.au/au/icpa-calls-balanced-approach-risk-management-within-boarding>

Link to 2022 AIC Payment Rates and Dates

<https://icpa.com.au/au/important-portfolio-update-march-2022>

I would like to thank my fellow Boarding/Hostels/Second Home Portfolio members, Alana Moller, Ali Allison, Julia Broad, Naomi Obst and Wendy Henning for their invaluable support this past year. I would also like to wish the new Council for 2023 all the very best for what will be a busy year getting to know the new Government and making sure they in turn know all about rural and remote children's education!

### **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

Wendy Hick

Communications continues to be a lively portfolio, with the connectivity needs of our members remaining a priority for ICPA (Aust), from internet access to telephony service. Communications is a portfolio where developments and changes can occur almost daily.

ICPA (Aust) works closely with key communications stakeholders to ensure we have opportunity to raise topics and issues on behalf of our members. We maintain our involvement with the Rural, Regional and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC), Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) Consumer Panel and Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) Consumer Consultative Forum, where we are able to raise and seek to address the communications challenges faced by our members. ICPA (Aust) also participates in regular meetings with NBN Co and Telstra to discuss issues and topics from across the country.

### **Internet Access**

The necessity for adequate internet access for geographically isolated families continues to be reflected in motions presented by Branches. Following our 2021 Federal Conference, Federal Council wrote to then Minister for Decentralisation, Regional Education and Regional Communications Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie and other key Ministers, MPs and Senators, requesting assurance that internet services for the purpose of education are maintained and expanded. In this correspondence Federal Council cited the need for current internet services in rural and remote Australia to not only be maintained, but for further enhancements to be made, to ensure geographically isolated students and their families have access to adequate internet services as reliance on online resources expands across all levels of education. With the recent change of Government, ICPA (Aust) will continue to advocate on this with newly appointed Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP.



### **nbn® Sky Muster™ Satellite Services**

Many of our members rely on Sky Muster satellite services in order to access internet in their geographically isolated locations and we continue to raise a variety of issues associated with Sky Muster internet, both ongoing and time-sensitive, with relevant parties, including the Federal Government and nbn directly.

In our correspondence following conference to the former Minister for Regional Communications we requested reassurance that the installation of the Sky Muster service and its hardware would continue at no cost to rural and remote student households to ensure affordable access to education for rural and remote students. Federal Council was assured that this would continue and will seek further reassurance following the change of Government.

In recent years, the Sky Muster network has seen enhancements in the form of the Sky Muster Plus product, which provides an extensive unmetered data capacity. For current users of Sky Muster services, we can confirm that all users are eligible to migrate to a Sky Muster Plus plan, including families using an educational port on the Sky Muster network. ICPA (Aust) encourages all members who have a standard Sky Muster plan, whether on an educational port or otherwise, to investigate their options for a Plus plan with a Sky Muster Plus Retail Service Provider (RSP) as education sites as well as all web meeting tools such as Zoom are unmetered on Sky Muster Plus. Members should be aware that not all RSPs have Sky Muster Plus plans, however customers are able to change providers to a RSP that does offer these plans in a few simple steps. All Sky Muster providers can be found here <https://nbn.com.au/skymuster-providers>.



### **Sky Muster™ Plus changes as of 1 July 2022**

As of 1 July, Sky Muster Plus services were further enhanced with a plan upgrade which allows for completely uncapped data usage from Midnight to 4pm. This new upgrade includes Virtual Private Network (VPN) as well as video streaming during these hours which will assist students who require this for their education lessons. Under the new plan, only VPN and video streaming count towards customers' data allowance. These changes came into effect automatically on 1 July for all Sky Muster Plus accounts and are only available on Sky Muster Plus (regular Sky Muster service does not offer this unmetering, and not all RSPs offer Sky Muster Plus plans, so members are encouraged to check their plan with their internet provider). See link above.

nbn® have recently released several tools to help families navigate the ever-growing online world.

- the Online Skills Check & Resources (OSCAR) has been created to help measure online skills and find resources to help families with their digital journey. OSCAR takes users through four essential competencies: online knowledge, device usage, sharing data and e-safety and online communication. Through the answers provided in the online skill check, users online skills are measured and information to relevant resources which may assist are provided. ICPA (Aust) sent out a link to OSCAR with our unique ICPA QR code in the March edition of the Branch Bulletin for members to access this tool or you can scan it here to access the tool and accompanying resources.



- The nbn<sup>®</sup> Sky Muster Satellite Services Connectivity Guide is an interactive trouble shooting tool which can be downloaded to a device or computer so that it can be accessed if customers are offline. This troubleshooting guide helps users work through their service, troubleshoot and optimise performance. The Guide can be found and downloaded here: <https://www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbn/documents/support/satellite/nbn-sky-muster-troubleshooting-guide.pdf>
- Recently nbn have also released their Fixed Wireless Connectivity Guide which can be found here <https://www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbn/documents/support/fixed-wireless/Fixed%20Wireless%20Connectivity%20Guide.pdf>

Federal Council continues to add useful resources such as this to our ICPA (Aust) website so that members can find them easily. <https://icpa.com.au/au/useful-websites-news-and-resources-communications>

### **Alternative Internet Services**

While Sky Muster has provided welcome internet access not previously seen in rural and remote Australia, ICPA (Aust) advocates that all geographically isolated students need access to adequate communication services to meet their education needs. In a response from the Minister in December 2021, it was acknowledged that internet access “*via the National Broadband Network (NBN) Sky Muster satellite service is critical to the education of many geographically isolated students*”, and additionally that “*the government remains committed to ensuring that students, regardless of where they live, have access to high quality education and experience the same education opportunities as other students*”. ICPA (Aust) is encouraged by the recommendation in the recent Regional Telecommunications Independent Review that the Government Fund Innovation trials to explore the value and reliability of new technology solutions able to address broadband and mobile coverage across regional, rural and remote Australia and that more and improved internet solutions may emerge in the future.

### **Transient Families**

The need for an affordable internet product for transient families working in remote locations of Australia has been a high priority for Federal Council as the need for an internet connection to access schooling continues to increase. ICPA (Aust) welcomed the recent nbn Mobility Trial and NBN Co’s commitment to testing portable flyaway connection kits with distance education students and families who work in remote areas of Queensland and the Northern Territory late last year. The outcomes of these trials were as expected – the families, and most importantly their children, were ecstatic with the opportunity to be able to access internet and therefore their schooling while on the move.

ICPA (Aust) believes priority must be given to the provision of internet to these children as a matter of urgency in order to ensure their education is not hindered because of their family’s circumstances. Unfortunately, the costs of these kits are prohibitive and we therefore corresponded again with Minister McKenzie and other relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers in February, requesting provisions for possible subsidies or other assistance to be made available similar to fixed (home) Sky Muster installations, to ensure transient internet connection kits are affordable and accessible for the small number of students for whom they are required. Federal Council will continue this

advocacy with the new Government.

### **Mobile Coverage/Service**

ICPA (Aust) also included in our correspondence to Minister McKenzie issues raised in regard to the need for both expanded mobile coverage in rural and remote areas, particularly in the vicinity of schools along with the need to ensure current mobile services have sufficient backup power to provide consistent and uninterrupted delivery. In a response received in December these concerns were noted and reference was made to funding available to expand mobile services through the next round of the Mobile Black Spot Program and Round 2 of the Regional Connectivity Program. We do know that previous Mobile Black Spot programs have concentrated on expanding coverage in the vicinity of small rural schools and we expect this to continue. Members are encouraged to investigate opportunities for funding applications for locations of concern. The recent Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee, included in their 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review Report released on February 14, 2022, recommendations to *“Encourage shared network access and innovative funding for mobile in regional areas”* and to *“Increase Government investment in regional connectivity”*. At this stage we are uncertain of the new Government’s commitment to the Mobile Blackspot Program, however we will continue to raise the need for continual improvements to be made for mobile services in rural and remote areas, not just in regards to coverage but also capacity of mobile networks.

The issue of back-up power reliability and capacity on mobile towers has been raised in a number of forums by Federal Council. Consistent, uninterrupted service is important to families living in geographically isolated areas for the delivery of children’s education programs as well as safety and health concerns. ICPA (Aust) has been working collectively on communications issues and recently Federal and all State Councils attended a communications meeting with representatives from Telstra to discuss the issues members raised at the 2021 conference. At this meeting, information was provided regarding Telstra’s mobile sites being actively upgraded with battery and battery replacements as well as mobile transmission equipment also being upgraded to improve resilience in regional, rural and remote areas. There is currently some suggestion that this advocacy on backup power should also include the various power supply companies as they are ultimately in charge of overall power sources. Federal Council will continue its discussions on back-up power and work towards better outcomes in areas dependent on these services.

ICPA (Aust) advocates strongly for this investment to be concentrated in areas with maximum advantage for educational access in any future funding opportunities.

### **3G Shut Down**

ICPA (Aust) has continued to seek assurance from Telstra and the Federal Government that rural and remote areas will not be left lagging as the Telstra 3G is gradually shut down leading up to June 2024. Telstra has committed to provide 4G coverage equivalent to their 3G coverage by the time of 3G closure and ICPA (Aust) will continue to advocate both to Telstra and the Federal Government that until it is certain that this commitment met, the 3G shut down should not proceed. A number of new plans are currently being investigated to assist with enhancing current mobile capacity and ensure as many rural and remote locations are able to access adequate mobile coverage.

In May 2022, Optus shut down their 2100MHz spectrum band 3G service, with 3G no longer available to Optus customers on that band. Telstra has given customers notice of the June 2024 changeover date and time to plan for the change to 4G and most technology sold within recent years has been 4G capable. It is important to remember that technology changes over time and all equipment needs to have a replacement plan, similar to computers, printers and other devices. The average recommended life span of technology equipment is between three to five years and replacement or upgrade should be considered and planned for as that time approaches for any communications

equipment as devices become incompatible with new technology and services.

### **Telstra Broadband Upgrades for Education Projects**

Telstra has paired with state governments and state education departments with projects to bring about better digital inclusion through upgrades to internet services in schools. The projects will benefit 1258 state schools across Queensland, joining an upgrade for more than 2000 schools in NSW, a boost for more than 1600 public schools in Victoria, an upgrade for more than 500 schools across SA, an upgrade to more than 750 public schools in WA, and upgrades to some regional schools in Tasmania. Education departments in each state should have lists of the schools receiving upgrades, what those upgrades entail and expected date of completion.

### **The Blue Tick**

Recently we have become more aware that not all devices perform well with mobile services in rural and remote settings. In 2007, Telstra put forward the 'Blue Tick' program where mobile devices were thoroughly tested and if given the 'Telstra's Blue Tick' it signifies that a mobile device delivers superior voice coverage in rural and regional areas on the Telstra Mobile Network. The Blue Tick program is still in place and we encourage members to consider looking for devices that have the blue tick for use in rural and regional areas that have mobile coverage. If members are experiencing reduced mobile coverage in certain areas compared to previous times, it can sometimes be a change in the device they are now using, and blue tick devices have been tested to identify their performance in rural and regional areas.

### **Telephone**

In rural and remote areas, telephone connections remain a significant and essential part of the communications services relied on by residents and understandably members continue to request for services to be maintained to adequate standards. Through correspondence to Minister McKenzie and other relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers as well as recent submissions to the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review and the Carrier License Conditions - Better Reporting on Telstra Delivery of Voice Services consultation, ICPA (Aust) has raised key concerns of our members including:

- The need for customer service and telephone assistance lines to more effectively assist rural and remote students and their families.
- The need for priority, subsidised phone line installations and repairs in rural and remote areas when the purpose is education delivery.
- The need to ensure rural and remote students have consistent access to continuous and reliable telephone communications through regular maintenance of existing telephone infrastructure and the provision of a temporary satellite phone or other service to any rural or remote family where a phone fault is not rectified within three working days.

We have also sought reassurance that for those members who live in nbn satellite and fixed wireless mapped areas, who have non-nbn landlines such as, high-capacity radio concentrator (HCRC), Next G Wireless Link (NGWL) networks and copper lines, the retention and ongoing maintenance of these current services is maintained and prioritised until equal or better alternatives can be identified and installed. Several ICPA members were involved in the Alternate Voice Services Trials which concluded on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022, the report is available on the Department's website. We thank our members who gave valuable feedback on these trials. We continue to advocate that all residents living in geographically isolated areas should have access to two independent communications services and not be solely reliant on one communication source while stressing that a move from existing HCRC or copper line services to Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) services reliant on satellite is not a satisfactory replacement of legacy voice services at this time, where rural and remote residents currently only have satellite internet access.

The Minister's response to our letter raising these topics in December provided reassurance that the Government was committed to upholding the current Universal Service Obligation (USO) commitments, which should ensure that existing services are adequately maintained until such time as viable alternatives are identified. We are also optimistic that the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee recommendations to "*continue but reform existing universal services for the future*" will ensure this commitment is adhered to. Federal Council will highlight the importance of this with new Minister for Communications Hon Michelle Rowland MP and seek a commitment from the new Government to uphold this guarantee.

### **Telstra Call Centres returning to Australia**

In early 2020, Telstra announced that their call centres would be moving back to mainland Australia and assurance was made at the 2021 Federal Conference that Telstra was working towards having all consumer and small business calls answered in Australia. At the start of July 2022, Telstra announced that all consumer and small business calls are now being answered within Australia <https://exchange.telstra.com.au/say-gday-call-centres-back-in-australia/>. ICPA (Aust) is optimistic this will improve members' experiences when making contact regarding their Telstra services and will monitor the outcome of this move.

### **Telstra RAN**

The Telstra Regional Advisory Network (or RAN) is a program that helps Telstra's regional customers (Consumer, Small Business & Enterprise) get connected wherever they are in regional, rural or remote Australia. The RAN program has been designed to help Telstra customers who are having connectivity issues in their home, business premises or on the road. It provides holistic service solutions using Telstra experts from regional Australia, as well as the Telstra Network & IT team and field technicians, to provide Telstra customers with a range of services from a simple fix to fully integrated and bespoke network solutions to ensure they are able to make the most of their connection using the Telstra regional footprint. More info here <https://exchange.telstra.com.au/helping-our-regional-and-rural-customers/> and also at Telstra's Regional Services and Coverage web page <https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/telstra-regional-australia>

### **Other Relevant Communications Topics**

The Regional Telecommunications Independent Review which ICPA (Aust) robustly participated in, was conducted last year and the Committee tabled its report *2021 Telecommunications Review – A step change in demand* on 14 February 2022. Due to COVID travel restrictions the committee conducted online consultations, holding 26 public consults and receiving over 650 submissions. A number of consultations were successfully conducted over Sky Muster services including the consultation several of our Federal Councillors participated in, as well as the Review's Deputy chair and ICPA member Kristy Sparrow participating in the review via her Sky Muster connection. The full report is available [here](#).

The review committee made twelve recommendations:

1. Adopt a longer-term strategic approach to regional digital infrastructure and skills
2. Increase Government investment in regional connectivity
3. Implement a regional telecommunications resilience fund
4. Trial emerging connectivity technologies
5. Build connectivity literacy and digital capability among regional users
6. Enhance NBN Co's regional fixed wireless and Sky Muster services
7. Implement and enforce new performance and reliability standards for wholesale and retail services
8. Continue with reforming existing universal services for the future

9. Improve information available to consumers about mobile services including coverage and performance
10. Encourage shared network access and innovative funding for mobile service in regional areas
11. Focus on the digital needs of Indigenous communities
12. Improve affordability of telecommunications for vulnerable groups in regional areas

With a new Federal Government now in place, ICPA (Aust) is hopeful that their commitment to acknowledging and enacting the recommendations of the Review Committee are comprehensive. The government is working towards their Better Connectivity for Rural and Regional Australia Plan, which they say will deliver improved broadband and mobile coverage in regional Australia.

Recently the first major milestone of the plan was implemented with \$480 million provided to NBN Co to upgrade the NBN fixed wireless network. After the upgrades are rolled out, nbn Fixed wireless customers will be able to access increased download speeds of up to 100 Megabits per second (Mbps), with up to 85 per cent able to access 250 Mbps. The upgrade will also deliver an increase to typical wholesale busy hour speeds of at least 50 Mbps. This will benefit an estimated 755,000 premises.

Fixed wireless coverage will be expanded to cover a further 120,000 currently mapped for satellite premises, which have allowed NBN Co to increase Sky Muster data allowances and plus plan offerings product, with further enhancements to follow after the upgrades are complete.

This is the first of a number of commitments made by the new government in the lead up to the federal election under the Better Connectivity for Rural and Regional Australia Plan which also includes:

- Boosting NBN speeds on NBN Fixed wireless
- Increasing NBN satellite data allowances un-metering Sky Muster Plus usage between midnight and 4 pm.
- Expanding fibre access in the regions – investing to expand full-fibre access to a further 660,000 homes and businesses in the regions currently relying on copper wire.
- Conducting a national audit of mobile coverage – an independent audit of mobile coverage to better identify black spots and guide investment priorities.
- Boosting mobile coverage on roads – \$400 million to provide multi-carrier mobile coverage on roads with coverage black spots, and in regional communities.
- Solving local connectivity problems – \$200 million towards place-based regional telecommunications projects, such as mobile or targeted fibre, to meet community needs.
- Boosting on farm connectivity – \$30 million program to enable more farmers to extend connectivity in their fields and take advantage of connected machinery and sensor technology.
- Access to speeds of 100 megabits per second or more by late 2025 for 80 per cent of the 3.7 million homes and businesses in regional and remote Australia.

<https://www.alp.org.au/policies/better-connectivity-for-rural-and-regional-australia-plan>

Federal Council will continue to monitor the implementation of these commitments and any developments in this regard and ensure these are communicated to members.

### **Regional Tech Hub**

ICPA (Aust) would like to remind members that the Regional Tech Hub is a free Federal Government initiative which offers independent advice to regional, rural and remote Australians on the best communications connections (phone and internet) for their needs. The Regional Tech Hub was established after requests from ICPA (Aust), the Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote

Australia (BIRRR) team and other organisations for regional, rural and remote communications assistance and independent advice to be made available. Federal Council encourage members to become acquainted with the Hub services and make contact with the team to assist with addressing communications issues which may arise. The Tech Hub can be contacted by:

Telephone: 1300 081 029

Email: [helpdesk@regionaltechhub.org.au](mailto:helpdesk@regionaltechhub.org.au) or

Website: <https://regionaltechhub.org.au>.

They also have a social media presence by way of an interactive Facebook Page where members of the public can raise and discuss communications issues. Federal Council work closely with the Hub staff and were part of the Regional Tech Hub Stakeholder Reference Group and currently have a representative on the Regional Tech Hub Advisory Panel.

### **CURRICULUM REPORT**

Wendy Henning

The 2021 Federal Conference in Longreach saw no Curriculum motions presented. Federal Council has used the time since conference to work on past motions in policy and to continue fostering the relationship with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). ICPA (Aust) continues to partake in regular ACARA meetings as part of the Parents and Principals Peak National Bodies group. With the recent Curriculum Review and the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) undergoing changes to delivery processes, ICPA (Aust), has been kept informed of changes and also provided feedback from our members and experiences.

#### **Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Review**

Federal Council took part in the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Review which has been completed and endorsed by Education Ministers on 1 April 2022. ACARA has now made the new version 9.0 available on an improved, specially built website at this link [v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au). The previous version 8.4 website will be maintained and will support all resources until all states and territories have fully transitioned to the new version. The link to this version is [existing Australian Curriculum website](#).

This was the first time the curriculum has been reviewed in its entirety since its inception, with the intention of scaling back the curriculum 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. While ACARA was responsible for the review and its finalisation, State and Territory Governments are solely responsible for the implementation of the changes within their jurisdictions.

#### **National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)**

In 2022, online National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing was fully implemented as well as the change from the previous three day national testing to a two week testing window. Further changes are being implemented going forth, with the NAPLAN testing window moving to Term 1 (March) in 2023. It is envisaged that this will allow for more timely return of results, meaning that the data will be available earlier in the year to inform teaching and learning programs within schools and to give parents information about their child's performance earlier in the year. Further information on these changes can be found here: <https://www.acara.edu.au/docs/default-source/media-releases/improvements-to-naplan-from-2023---final.pdf>

and here: <https://www.nap.edu.au/home>



Following the 2021 Conference, Federal Council made contact with then Federal Minister for Education, Hon Alan Tudge MP to raise concerns regarding the proposed reforms and planning for NAPLAN. ICPA (Aust)'s main concern about the changes was the possible adverse effects they may have on geographically isolated students, citing *that the unique circumstances of the geographically isolated distance education students we represent, specifically regarding timing and accessibility of NAPLAN testing*. Federal Council also encouraged State Councils to make contact with their respective Education Ministers to raise these concerns, as all changes were to be signed off at the Education Ministers' Meeting. The priority for ICPA (Aust) in all jurisdictions is that while geographically isolated students have idiosyncrasies in their learning and living locations, away from their mainstream urban counterparts, they are a dynamic group that cannot be dismissed in considerations as their "data" for learning is as imperative as are all of their cohorts. Federal Council was encouraged to receive a response from then Acting Federal Minister for Education Hon Stuart Robert MP noting our concerns and committing to reiterating them at meetings to discuss the proposed NAPLAN reforms.

Despite assurances to the contrary, Federal Council has been made aware of instances where the circumstances of geographically isolated distance education students have meant they have been unable to participate in NAPLAN testing due to allowances not being made for their unique situations. Federal Council have raised this with relevant bodies and have been reassured that measures are in place to avoid issues and efforts will continue to avoid such situations.

While the 2022 NAPLAN results are yet to be released, the 2021 result data brought to the fore a clear picture that for those children educated in rural and remote areas of Australia with significant gaps and clear trends between the results of regional, remote and very remote students compared to metropolitan students from 2016 - 2021. The results highlighted that educational opportunities and outcomes for rural, remote and very remote are simply not equivalent to their urban counterparts and more needs to be done by all levels of government to recognise and rectify this trend. ICPA (Aust) published a Media Release titled 'ICPA Message As Important As Ever' <https://icpa.com.au/au/icpa-federal-media-releases-2021> calling on all Governments to address and rectify these trends. The message cannot be clearer. Living in rural and remote Australia should not mean that an inequitable education is tolerated.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to actively participate in discussions on the Australian Curriculum and provide information and background on the learning environments of geographically isolated students where possible with a view to improving these outcomes.

### **DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT**

Ali Allison

I was honoured to be given the role of leader of the Federal Distance Education portfolio and have enjoyed learning a lot whilst working in this portfolio. ICPA continues to be a strong advocate for geographically isolated families in Australia who have no choice other than to educate their children via distance education. I have taught both of my sons over the past decade in our geographically isolated schoolroom via distance education and am very aware of the issues and challenges families face.

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

Metropolitan, regional and rural families across Australia now have lived experience of educating their children at home, due to school lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. ICPA (Aust) hopes that this experience and understanding of the challenges faced when educating children at home may help with our continued advocacy for a Distance Education Tutor Allowance (DETA).



Remuneration and recognition for Distance Education Tutors continues to be a dominating issue for geographically isolated families. Over the past decade motions have continued to be brought to federal conference by branches asking for ICPA to lobby the relevant authorities for a DETA.

Following the 2021 Federal Conference in Longreach a letter was written to Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, former Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education. Her response outlined that this issue was a state and territory issue.

In response to this letter Federal Council wrote an open letter to all stakeholders who value rural and remote education, including the relevant ministers and shadow ministers. In this letter we emphasised that, *“The unique issue of supervision and delivery of these (distance education) programs within individual family’s schoolrooms across rural and remote Australia goes beyond standard educational delivery and requires a distinctive multi-faceted approach.”*

We also drew particular attention to the extensive, unremunerated work performed by the home tutor, as detailed in the table below.

<b>Family member as geographically isolated distance education tutor</b>	
<b>Average hours per day</b>	<b>6-8 hours per day, approx. 40 weeks per year</b>
<b>Average years spent as DE tutor for one child</b>	<b>8 years (kindy/preschool plus primary school)</b>
<b>Average total hours spent tutoring one child</b>	<b>9 600–12 800 hours</b>
<b>Minimum Wage</b>	<b>\$20.33 per hour</b>
<b>Unpaid Work/Wages forgone (number of hours x Minimum wage)</b>	<b>\$195 168 - \$260 244</b>
<b>Superannuation @ 9.5% foregone</b>	<b>\$18 540 - \$24 721</b>

ICPA (Aust) raised the need for a collaborative and consistent solution involving both State and National tiers of government to address this situation which is so important to rural and remote Australia.

ICPA (Aust) continue to raise awareness of this issue through the Geographically Isolated Distance Education Day (GIDE). Last year we continued the campaign over December and into January 2022. We feel it would be beneficial to boost awareness and understanding of this issue by putting the faces of our amazing distance education tutors out into the world and sharing some of the staggering statistics of time spent in the schoolroom and the forgone wages and superannuation. We would like to see this campaign continue and are calling out for the 85% of Mums who are tutors in their distance education schoolrooms to share their stories with us. Much work has been done in this area and it will continue.



**Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) - Distance Education**

In April, Federal Council was very pleased to receive a breakdown of AIC data by State/Territory, by eligibility categories and by allowance type. This data will assist Federal Council’s advocacy by giving a good understanding of the number of people and families in the categories relevant to ICPA (Aust).

Two motions were brought forward at Federal conference in Longreach regarding the AIC, requesting ICPA (Aust) advocate for:

- An increase to the AIC for geographically students who are completing their secondary schooling via distance education, and
- An inclusion in the eligibility criteria for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance 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.

Correspondence was to Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, then Minister for Families and Social Services, in December 2021 regarding both issues and Federal Council received a response in March. In a response from Senator Ruston, it was acknowledged that there may be some issues with AIC eligibility for itinerant families, with a commitment made to progress work to update the Guidelines to reflect this. While the ICPA (Aust) request for an increase to the AIC Distance Education Allowance for secondary students was noted, no commitment was made to address this request.

Federal Council began regular meetings with representatives from the Department of Social Services and Services Australia in February. These meetings are an opportunity to raise issues associated with the AIC, both from a legislation and implementation perspective and ICPA (Aust) is confident this quarterly meeting format will ensure the needs of member families can be addressed timely and effectively.

I look forward to continuing work in the Distance Education portfolio and working towards equitable access to education for geographically isolated families whose children study via distance education.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE REPORT

Julia Broad

Issues with Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) have continued to underpin and shape the disadvantage faced by children in rural and remote Australia, hence Federal Council's strong advocacy for giving these children a better start to their education.

ICPA (Aust) views quality Early Childhood Education and Care in rural and remote Australia as an educational imperative. Accessing affordable ECEC for families living in rural and remote regions has never been more concerning and is proving beyond the reach of many.

ICPA (Aust) welcomes the acknowledgement by the new government that Early Childhood Education requires a dedicated ministry to address the endemic failures and disparities in the current centre-based childcare system. We particularly would like to acknowledge the Government's recent response to the New South Wales and Victorian Governments' commitments to preschool education that "Investment in early childhood education isn't welfare. It's critical economic reform."

Federal Council have taken the opportunity to introduce our issues to the new Minister for Early Childhood Education, the Hon Ann Aly MP, with a letter sent in June.

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

ICPA (Aust) were pleased to welcome staff from the In Home Care (IHC) Project Management team to the 2021 Federal Conference and we have continued to engage in fruitful discussions regarding issues associated with In Home Care in rural and remote contexts. The IHC Management team sought feedback to ascertain why Family Day Care is not a viable option for multiple families on one remote property and has therefore not been a suitable solution to providing childcare in the above circumstances. ICPA (Aust) were advised that Department staff were conducting an internal review of the In Home Care program from December. This was expected to be complete in February however will be completed following the election of the new Government in May. We envisage there will be upcoming news from the Department over the coming months.

Ongoing correspondence and meetings will continue to seek opportunities to raise the unique needs of geographically isolated families requiring In Home Care.

### **Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) for Pre-compulsory Distance Education Students**

AIC Distance Education Allowance for 3-4 year old geographically isolated children accessing an approved distance education early learning program has continued to be on the agenda for this portfolio. Correspondence with then Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston has, this year been answered with '*state and territory governments have the responsibility for supporting the participation of all children in quality early childhood education programs.*'

Currently all states and territories do provide distance education early learning programs, however, families who need to undertake these programs due to being geographically isolated incur expenses associated with accessing these programs, similar to those incurred by families with students studying primary or secondary distance education programs. The Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme Guidelines, last updated May 2022, section 5.4.1 outlines the purpose of the Assistance for Isolated Children – Distance Education Allowance:

*"The Distance Education Allowance contributes towards incidental costs incurred by geographically isolated families whose students are undertaking their education by distance education methods."*

Given that families undertaking early childhood distance education programs incur the same

incidental costs ICPA (Aust) believes that it is incongruous that they are not eligible for the same assistance.

The topic was raised by ICPA (Aust) in a meeting with Minister Ruston’s advisers in December. It was also included as one of the six recommendations in Federal Council’s 2022-23 Pre-Budget Submission. It was also included as a key ask during the 2022 election campaign.

Thank you to State Councils, who helped Federal Council to ascertain there had been a slight increase in the numbers of children enrolled in pre compulsory programs across Australia from approximately 200 in 2018 to around 250 currently. Obtaining these numbers allowed us to provide clear costings within our Pre-Budget Submission as noted in the table below

**AIC – DE Allowance for 3-4 year-olds**

Number of Students	Funding required per Child	Total Funding per annum
250	\$4428	\$1 107 000

\*student numbers are based on the 2021/22 figures in each State and Territory.

With a new government in place, ICPA (Aust) will continue to fervently call for this request to be implemented.

**Mobile Early Childhood Services Funding**

Addressing funding issues for remote mobile early childhood services is ongoing. The Katherine Isolated Children’s Services (KICS) and Remote and Isolated Children’s Services models were used as examples in our advocacy to the previous Minister for Education and Youth the Hon. Alan Tudge MP. Unfortunately, after changes in the leadership of this department, we were assured our letters were passed on, but no reply was forthcoming.

There is some hope for a new early childhood and mobile playgroup service in the Alice Springs region with RAISEducation receiving charity status and working with their sponsors and donors to provide individualised learning programs for remote classrooms and a mobile playgroup with professional assessment, intervention, and support of transition from early learning to primary school.

**National Working with Children Check (WWCC)**

In reply to correspondence from ICPA (Aust), The Hon Karen Andrews, the then Minister for Home Affairs, detailed the progress that has been made with the National Standards for Working with Children Checks (WWCC) through the National Office of Child Safety. Steps have been taken toward national consistency since 2017 and the release of the Working with Children Checks Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission). National Cabinet agreed on December 10, 2021, to explore avenues to further improve national consistency in the WWCC. They aim to eliminate unnecessary red tape, duplication, and regulatory barriers around WWCC without sacrificing safety standards. I feel we’re making slow but steady progress on this issue.

**Employment and Training Incentives for Rural and Remote Early Childhood Education Staff**

Given the complexity of the issues affecting employment and training of rural and remote early childhood education staff, correspondence was sent to then Minister for Education and Youth as well as other key Government and Shadow Ministers citing examples of the shortfall in staff detailed at the 2021 Federal Conference and suggesting possible incentives to improve this issue. Federal Council would welcome any further case studies exemplifying challenges being experienced due to early childhood staffing shortfalls in rural and remote areas to strengthen our advocacy around this request.

### **Other Early Childhood Education and Care Advocacy**

ICPA (Aust) has been part of the Thrive by Five Rural and Remote Action Group meetings and supported the launch of their Five Point Plan to address the lack of childcare services across regional, rural and remote Australia that were reported so clearly in the Mitchell Institute Report [Childcare deserts and oases: How accessible is childcare in Australia.](#)

The intention of the Rural and Regional Five Point Plan recently developed by Thrive by Five in conjunction with Royal Far West and other stakeholders is to consider the unique needs of this community. Research shows that two in five children, living in rural and remote areas, begin compulsory schooling developmentally delayed, and therefore not fully prepared for optimising their opportunities at school. This then translates into poor educational outcomes, possible mental health issues, higher risk of unemployment, social and emotional difficulties, and homelessness.

The Rural and Remote Five Point Plan is based around three pillars:

1. A fairer, more accessible funding model
2. Workforce incentives and assistance to attract and retain teachers in remote and rural areas
3. The need to have a unified system across States and Territories with fair and equitable access for all, no matter the postcode.

The Plan calls for the following actions:

1. A dedicated funding model for a sustainable and viable early childhood education and childcare system in rural and remote communities regardless of location, setting, income or hours.
2. Early childhood education and childcare to become part of the National Cabinet reform agenda to deal with complexities of the system and build a true national universal system.
3. Agree to a new national agreement to deliver universal three-year-old preschool across the country to match the partnership agreement in place for four-year-old preschool.
4. Make the Childcare Subsidy available to all children regardless of the setting and the income or work status of the parents. Lift the Childcare Subsidy to 95% for all children and set agreed fee caps.
5. Start workforce planning for universal access.

This Plan has been supported by the following organisations.

- Royal Far West
- Community Connections Solutions Australia (CCSA)
- Contact Inc
- Bourke & District Children's Services - Yanmali
- Regional Early Education and Development (REED)
- Connected Beginnings - Yanmali - Bourke
- Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (ICPA Aust)
- Royal Queensland Bush Children's Health Scheme (BUSHkids)

Thank you to our Federal ECEC team of Alana, Laura, Jane and Ali for your support and guidance as I have developed my understanding of this portfolio. I look forward to working with you further on these important issues.

## RURAL SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL TRAVEL REPORT

Naomi Obst

I feel very privileged to be able to present this report as the Rural Schools & School Travel Portfolio (RSST) leader. I certainly did not intend when I joined Council as an online conference participant in 2021 to be put straight on as a portfolio leader, however the RSST portfolio is an area that is very relevant to my day-to-day life, so I hope that I am able to assist Council with my knowledge in this area. My thanks must go to Alana Mahony and Nikki Mahony who have helped steer me on this portfolio path and the support of Anna McCorkle and Wendy Hick as assistants on this portfolio.

It all seemed very weird at first, here I was elected to a Federal Council but hadn't even met most of the people I would be working with. On my first delegation to Canberra in May of this year it was not the face of a fellow Councillor that had come to pick me up at the airport that I recognised; it was her voice as she chatted to another Councillor. How strange, but so very real has the zooming world become for many of us!

There were no Rural Schools Motions presented at Federal Conference in 2021.

While the pandemic has no doubt brought many challenges, the opportunities in our small rural schools have also opened many doors that were resisted previously just because "that's the way it has always been done".

The ability for staff in small schools to collaborate to get online lessons out to students in 2022 so effortlessly is a huge testament to the way it was done in 2020 and 2021. School closures in 2020 saw many students given work packs to collect from the school's front gate, whereas in 2022, there has been an opportunity to collate and distribute via various modes of technology for those students who are in isolation. The ability for staff at rural schools to upskill themselves and their students for the online delivery of lessons is commendable. The staff are not only training their students but the whole family is benefitting. Many families that previously had limited internet service and skills are now confidently navigating their way through the online world and for rural and remote schools this means that their students may now have access to a larger choice of resources compared to the past.

The benefits to education are obvious but the flow on effect that this has had on the rural economy and the ability for the skills in small communities has also grown.

The enabling and normalising of staff meetings to be held online over the various platforms has reduced the amount of time staff spend out of school. When travel is required, this can amount to considerable time away from the classroom throughout the year. Many small rural schools rely on their Principal to also teach in the classroom and time absent from their school is an obvious educational disadvantage to these students.

### **National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP)**

In 2019 and again in 2020, ICPA members raised the need for continuance of the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP). Federal Council received assurance from then Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education Hon Andrew Gee MP that his government had committed to permanent funding of the Program. With the recent change in the Government, ICPA (Aust) understands that there may be some amendments to the current Program. While official information on these proposed changes is not yet available, Federal Council will keep abreast of any developments in this regard and ensure these are communicated to members.

### **School Travel**

Four travel motions were presented and carried at the Federal Conference in 2021.

Travel to and from schooling includes vast distances on roads, rail and by air for geographically isolated families. A motion requesting the inclusion of a Fares Allowance in the Assistance for Isolated Children allowance, similar to Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY, was actioned with correspondence sent to the then Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston and all relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers for this to occur following Conference.

Federal Council also met virtually with Senator Ruston's advisors late last year to provide further information as to why our members are requesting the inclusion of a Fares Allowance in the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme. This was a positive meeting, and we will continue to raise this issue with the new government.

Affordable airfares for students continue to be a concern for many of our members, with two motions focussed on this topic. The pandemic has created obvious difficulties in the advocacy for more affordable airfares for geographically isolated students whose only reasonable measure of transport is flying to and from educational facilities. As the country is getting back into the air, Federal Council is hoping to continue these discussions with the new Government.

ICPA (Aust) is aware of several initiatives and developments across some States which address, to some extent, the need for improved access to affordable transport options for rural and remote students and their families.

Federal Council would welcome any further information from members who may be aware of initiatives or options which help to address this issue.

### **Road Travel – School Bus Routes**

The request raised at last year's Conference for federal funding for local councils in rural and remote areas to ensure prioritisation and maintenance of unsealed roads that are travelled by families accessing schools and school bus routes was made in a motion letter to the then Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport, the Hon Scott Buchholz MP. ICPA (Aust) understands that while roads funding is largely a State responsibility, there are federal programs in place which deliver funding for local road maintenance, such as the 'Roads to Recovery Program'.

Further information can be found here <https://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/about/local-initiatives/roads-to-recovery-program/index.aspx>. Federal Council has requested a dedicated, federally funded road maintenance programs be allocated so that local government has the financial ability to prioritise school bus routes. While we have not received a response to these requests, we will continue to raise this topic wherever possible.

Prior to the May 2022 Federal election, several initiatives were announced by the former Federal Government in the Federal Budget 2022-23 for improving regional roads, including \$500 million to local councils to maintain and deliver priority road and community infrastructure projects across Australia. This included \$385.4 million for the Northern Australia Roads Program, as well as \$678 million for further sealing of roads on the Outback Way, a 2,720km route that links Laverton in Western Australia with Winton in Queensland via Alice Springs.

With a new Government now in place, ICPA (Aust) are hopeful that the 2022-23 Budget announcements will be upheld and prioritised so that families and school buses using rural and remote roads can travel safely on roads which are maintained to a high standard. Federal Council will monitor this and ensure members are informed of further developments.

More information can be found here: <https://budget.gov.au/2022-23/content/regions.htm>

### **Other Portfolio Activities**

At the end of April 2022, I welcomed the opportunity to facilitate a virtual joint ICPA Council portfolio meeting with members from each State Council. Motion updates and progress on the current motions were discussed. It was pleasing to hear from NSW State Council that 34 years after it was first suggested that seat belts be fitted to all school buses that this has now been achieved. Sometimes the wheels on the bus go around very slowly but maybe as our world gets more instant focused these sorts of decisions will take a little less time!

We continue to encourage members to contact Federal Council to share real-life scenarios and case studies to help us present the reality of what members are facing, a meaningful and robust way to arm us with the information that keeps conversations relevant. Federal Council will continue to look at ways to support State and Territory Councils in addressing disparity across the board.

Thank you to all representatives at Branch, State and Federal level for all the contributions you make to our rural and remote children. Your experiences collectively tell our story and enable us together, to make our geographically isolated students' educational journey the best it can be.

### **SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS REPORT**

Sally Sullivan

The focus for the Specific Education Needs portfolio this year has continued to be advocating for an expansion of telehealth services along with Medicare and other Private Health Fund rebates, early intervention services, universal access to Federally funded health clinics and mental health program needs for rural and remote students.

### **Allied Health Telehealth – Medicare Rebates**

Thanks to COVID-19, more Australians have come to see the benefits of and place for telehealth which has seen the Government expand Medicare assistance for telehealth services. Following the 2021 Federal Conference, ICPA (Aust) wrote to then Minister for Health Hon Greg Hunt MP and other relevant Ministers, asking 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.

In response to this correspondence in late April we received a reply from the Department of Health Medicare Reviews Unit Assistant Secretary outlining that *“From 1 January 2022, this includes allied health services by phone and video in relation to chronic disease management, autism, pervasive developmental disorder and disability, allied health follow-up for people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, and mental health... Telehealth consultations by GPs have also been made permanent since 1 January 2022, through which relevant referrals to allied and medical specialists may be provided.”*

Unfortunately, in order to access this Medicare rebate for Speech and/or Occupational Therapies, a child needs to first have a General Practitioner Management Plan (GPMP, previously Chronic Disease Management Plan). Further, Medicare benefits are only available for telehealth with the General Practitioner if the 'patient' has seen the GP (or been to the GP's practice) face-to-face in the previous 12 months. The well-known and ongoing issues associated with accessing a GP makes these restrictions extremely challenging for rural and remote families and result in long delays and increased expense at the detriment of the timely and satisfactory treatment and development of a child.



It was also recommended in the response that ICPA (Aust) raise this with the incoming Government following the election. With a new Federal Government in place ICPA (Aust) is encouraged by the appointment of an Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, Emma McBride MP by the new Government. Federal Council will earnestly raise this with Minister McBride along with new Minister for Health and Aged Care the Hon Mark Butler MP. While to date we are unaware of specific policy from the new Government in this space, we do know that there has been a commitment to strengthening Medicare, with a view to making access to General Practitioners easier. More information can be found here <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/medicare-and-your-health>

### **Telehealth - Private Health Funds**

Following receipt of correspondence requesting that the rebates provided by Private Health Insurers extend to Allied Health Services to assist with the educational development of geographically isolated children, Dr Rachel David, CEO of Private Healthcare Australia responded with the following, *“Private Health[care] Australia was very pleased that the industry was able to quickly move to allowing telehealth rebates for customers from March 2020. Telehealth has generally been a success for many Australians, and as you have recognised, funds have either extended access to telehealth or made it a permanent feature of their products. We are confident that each of our member funds will provide rebates for telehealth permanently.*

*While telehealth is going to be a permanent feature of Australian health care, there are still some issues to be considered to maximise access for Australians accessing telehealth. These issues include quality standards, training for practitioners and ensuring that city- or overseas-based services do not affect the viability of existing providers living and serving in remote communities. Any further feedback or advice from your membership to improve access, quality and service continuity would be most appreciated.”*

Dr David kindly forwarded ICPA (Aust)’s letter to each of Private Healthcare Australia’s member health funds for their information and consideration.

For the interests of our members, the peak organisation, Speech Therapy Australia, lists Private Health Funds allowing customers who have extras cover for speech pathology (May 2021) to make a claim for speech pathology services delivered via telehealth [here](#).

### **Early Intervention Services in Rural and Remote Areas**

Early intervention needs to have started before these children attend Primary School, to make sure they have the best start to their education however many pre-school aged children in regional and remote Australia continue to have no access to vital early intervention assessments or programs. A Medicare rebate is available for some services, however accessing those services and the accompanying rebate in rural and remote Australia can be difficult due to a lack of services or the distances needed to travel to access a service. While there are some existing early intervention service providers in rural and remote Australia without consistent and guaranteed funding, it is challenging, if not impossible for to expand to service areas without any access to services. There is also little incentive for new services to commence in these areas.

The lack of and need for increased support for early intervention services in rural and remote areas was raised following the 2021 Federal Conference, with then Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, with a request to increase financial support for existing organisations to expand and support new organisations willing to take their Early Intervention Services into regional and remote Australia. Federal Council also requested an increase to the number of sessions covered by Medicare. In the correspondence we referred to data from the Royal Far West POSITION PAPER – JULY 2017 SUPPORTING CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE AUSTRALIA which clearly illustrates the developmental vulnerability of children in rural and remote areas. The

Position Paper can be found [here](#). No response was forthcoming from the former Minister.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to advocate for more support for early intervention services with the new Government at every opportunity, to ensure all rural and remote students have improved access to interventions and services necessary to enhance the educational outcomes of geographically isolated children.

### **Universal Access to Federally Funded Health Clinics in Rural/Remote Areas**

During the Conference in 2021, ICPA (Aust) heard of distressing situations whereby remote families were being refused treatment at federally funded 'local' health clinics as they "don't meet the criteria" whereupon they must travel vast distances to access treatment for what could have otherwise been dealt with closer to where they live. In a letter sent to the then Federal Minister for Health and other relevant Ministers and agencies in December, ICPA (Aust) articulated that discrimination based on race, demographic or any other criteria by publicly funded health facilities is unacceptable, ever, let alone in a situation where there are no local alternatives for rural and remote families to 'conveniently' access. Unfortunately, no response has been received and we are still hearing of circumstances where this is occurring. ICPA (Aust) are committed to ensuring that this issue will be raised in upcoming meetings, consultations, delegations and further correspondence.

### **Mental Health Program Needs for Rural and Remote Students**

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

While a response was received from the former Minister in March, referencing strategies the Government had put into place to improve access to mental health services ICPA (Aust) harbours concerns for the lack of urgency in addressing this matter.

With the new Federal Government now in place, ICPA (Aust) is pleased to note their commitment announced during the election campaign to Restore Regional Mental Telehealth Services by reinstating 'the 50 per cent loading, allowing regional and rural Australians to access bulk billed telehealth psychiatry consultations' <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/regional-mental-telehealth-services> as well as the 'Students Wellbeing Boost' program, with plans to deliver:

- A \$200 million Student Wellbeing Boost to get students' mental health and wellbeing back on track. This will mean more school counsellors and psychologists, and extra funding for camps, excursions, as well as sporting and social activities that improve kids' wellbeing
- A voluntary mental health check tool so primary school students who are struggling can get extra help.

ICPA (Aust) look forward to seeing these commitments come to fruition and are hopeful they will provide much needed assistance, without delay.

To assist members, ICPA (Aust) has collated a selection of resources and contacts on its website for members to access where required. This page can be found [here](#). Federal Council will continue to add relevant services and resources to this page to assist members to support their children. Should members have any suggestions of possible further resources to be included, we would welcome you to contact Federal Council.

## TERTIARY REPORT

Kate Thompson

For rural and remote students who aspire to attend university, the pathway must be accessible and affordable. The disparity in participation, retention, attainment and opportunities must be addressed to ensure equity for this rural and remote student cohort. Students from this cohort are faced with barriers which has led to under-representation. These barriers include lower access, choice and opportunities in rural and remote areas, connectivity (reliability, high speed and affordability) and the high cost of relocation and ongoing living expenses. Relocation is out of necessity rather than choice and challenges increase the more remote a student resides from their chosen university.

The tertiary motions presented at the 2021 Federal Conference continue to highlight the breadth of issues facing rural and remote tertiary students when accessing higher education. The Tertiary Portfolio has addressed the motions through correspondence to and collaboration with Ministers and Government departments including the Minister for Families and Social Services, the Minister for Regional Education, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment and the Department of Social Services and Services Australia.

Pleasingly, Federal Council can report that there have been some welcome outcomes from our advocacy which will positively impact rural and remote tertiary students.

### **Tertiary Access Payment (TAP)**

Cost is the greatest restraint on rural and remote students' ability to attend university and the TAP is designed to ease the burden of these costs, which include:

- the high cost of relocation
- up-front set-up expenses including accommodation (rental housing bond or residential college fees, electricity connection) and
- ongoing costs of living expenses, travel and communications (telephone, internet).

The Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) is a one-off, means-tested payment of up to \$5000 for school leavers from inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote areas. Eligible students are those who relocate more than 90 minutes by public transport from their family home to undertake a full-time, eligible higher level tertiary education course (Certificate IV or above) in the year following Year 12 or equivalent and whose parental income is below \$250 000.

The second year of the TAP commenced in 2022. Late in 2021, Federal Council participated in the evaluation consultations of the TAP, recommending changes to the program so all rural and remote students who have to relocate for study/training are afforded equity of access to a tertiary/VET education. ICPA (Aust)'s recommendations included:

- Aligning the TAP with the Relocation Scholarship in terms of payment rates, transitioning to an annual and ongoing payment to recognise that the costs are not just being borne in the first year of the student's course.
- The availability of the TAP for all rural and remote students on commencement of university including after a gap year.
- Removal of the \$250,000 parental limit as many parents are already facing huge costs as they support other tertiary students already at university and younger siblings at boarding school.
- The inclusion of rural and remote Australian Apprentices who fulfil the TAP criteria.
- Eligibility extended to eligible inner regional students.
- The administration of the TAP solely through Services Australia.
- The uncapping of TAP availability by removing the 'first-in, first-served and best-dressed' criteria.

Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, former Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC, former Minister for Government Services, in a joint Media Release, announced changes to the delivery, eligibility and payment structure of the TAP on the 17 December 2021 in response to the evaluation of the program.

Changes included:

- The extension of eligibility criteria to include eligible inner regional students.
- The application and payment process for all TAP applicants whether attending a university, a Vocational Education and Training (VET) provider or other higher education provider to be administered solely through Services Australia.
- Eligible students from outer regional, remote and very remote areas will continue to receive up to \$5,000 and students from inner regional areas will receive \$3,000.

Information on the TAP can be found at:

[www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/tertiary-access-payment](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/tertiary-access-payment)  
[www.dese.gov.au/tertiary-access-payment](http://www.dese.gov.au/tertiary-access-payment).

Whilst the introduction of a TAP has been a positive development, ICPA (Aust) is working with the Government to ensure this payment meets the needs of all rural and remote tertiary students and the guidelines used reflect our longstanding advocacy for a Tertiary Access Allowance.

### **Delegations and Meetings**

Federal Council met with Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, former Minister for Families and Social Services' advisors via teleconference in December 2021. Tertiary issues raised included:

- A thank you from ICPA (Aust) for the 2020 and 2021 COVID-19 measures for gap year students, liquid assets test and proof of identity, Fares Allowance changes and the Tertiary Access Payment.
- The Tertiary Access Payment and the issues mentioned above.
- Youth Allowance:
  - The need for significant increase in the parental income limit for dependent students.
  - The need for the removal of the parental income limit for independent rural and remote students.
  - The need for the implementation of the Naphthine Report recommendations, namely
    - the provision of greater flexibility in pathways to qualify for Youth Allowance,
    - reduced earning requirements for Independent Youth Allowance and
    - a review of the parental income cut off limits for Independent Youth Allowance.
  - The need for the Relocation Scholarship criteria to be extended to include all rural and remote students who must relocate and live away from home to access tertiary education not just if in receipt of Dependent Youth Allowance.
  - The need for flexibility in the Proof of Identity process for Youth Allowance.

The Tertiary Portfolio has been involved in the Department of Social Services and Services Australia quarterly meetings, advocating on behalf of our tertiary students.

### **Proof of Identity for Youth Allowance**

The initial confirmation of identity for many rural and remote students who live vast distances from a Centrelink service centre or rural and remote access centre has long been an issue. These students have not been able to start or proceed with their application for Youth Allowance until these original

documents have been sighted at an access or service centre leading to delays in the application, approval and commencement of Youth Allowance payments.

Following correspondence from Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds, former Minister for Government Services and discussion with the Department of Social Services, ICPA (Aust) is pleased to report that a new process of identity confirmation has been established. Processes are now in place for students to confirm their identity and commence their application for Youth Allowance online, removing the need for the applicant to present in person to an access or service centre.

Proof of identity can be verified:

- Online - for students applying for Youth Allowance online, applicants have the option during the online claim process of booking a video for sighting and verification of original identity documents which allows the applicant to proceed with the application process.
- over the phone, or
- in person.

More information can be found here: [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-to-prove-your-identity-with-centrelink?context=43916](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-to-prove-your-identity-with-centrelink?context=43916).

### **Regional Education Commissioner**

The appointment of the Hon Fiona Nash as Regional Education Commissioner has been welcomed and ICPA (Aust) looks forward to working closely with the Commissioner on the implementation of the National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy (Naphthine Review) recommendations to achieve positive outcomes for rural and remote tertiary students.

### **Recommendations from the *Education in Remote and Complex Environments Report***

ICPA (Aust) has welcomed the measures from the *Education in remote and complex environments Report*, the *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education* (Halsey Review) and the *National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy* (Naphthine Review) which have been implemented for rural and remote tertiary students including the introduction of the Tertiary Access Payment, the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships, the Regional University Centres, the Course Seeker website, the appointment of the Regional Education Commissioner and improvements to the Fares Allowance scheme. These have considerably improved access, outcomes and opportunities for regional, rural and remote students' access to higher education.

ICPA (Aust) continues to seek the implementation of **all** the recommendations which would ensure rural and remote tertiary students' access, participation, retention, completion and success in the course of their choice. These measures include:

- Improved availability, information and support of accommodation, income support and high-quality career information and advice.
- Improved access to high quality VET programs in regional, rural and remote areas.
- Reduction in the earnings requirements of the Independent Youth Allowance Concessional Workforce test and a review of the recent changes to the parental means test cut-offs.
- The provision of greater flexibility in pathways to qualify for 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 to their place of study for a minimum of one further year and are 90 minutes by public transport from home.
- Improved access to affordable, reliable, high speed internet services.

- The implementation of an Away from Base payment for students who have to travel to complete mandatory units and practicums of their course and are studying externally either at home or a Regional Study Hub.
- Improved quality and range of student support services including pastoral care, mentoring programs and academic support.

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.

### **Rural And Regional Enterprise Scholarships (RRES) Program**

This 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, 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 including an additional \$500 to support an internship.

Round 6 of the RRES program is available for students commencing study at any time during the 2022 academic calendar year. For more information and the application process for the RRES and the Creative Arts Scholarships for regional and remote students visit the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) [www.qtac.edu.au/rres-program/](http://www.qtac.edu.au/rres-program/).

### **School Leavers - National Careers Institute 'Your Career' Website**

NCI has developed information and resources for school leavers and their parents/guardians transitioning to university, vocational education and training (VET), apprenticeships or employment. These include:

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 **Parents and Guardian's Guide for School Leavers** to facilitate careers conversations at home.
4. **Webinar series.**

These resources and information can be found on the Your Careers website here:

[www.yourcareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support/](http://www.yourcareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support/)

### **Youth Allowance Overview 2022 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 Youth Allowance eligibility and application. This document summarises the lengthy Youth Allowance 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 2022 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](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-allowance).

ICPA (Aust) is very appreciative of the Federal Government's continued commitment and prioritisation of tertiary education for rural and remote students. The recent positive and significant measures have addressed many current and past motions, albeit in part. ICPA (Aust) will continue to progress and raise the profile of current, previous and ongoing issues rural and remote students face when accessing a tertiary education through all avenues available to us at every opportunity, to ensure they have the opportunity to access, participate and complete a tertiary education of their choice commensurate with their aspirations and career plans.

My sincere thanks must go to my fellow Tertiary Portfolio members Jane O'Brien, Sally Sullivan, Anna McCorkle and Lisa Slade, the State Tertiary Portfolios and all of Federal Council for their ongoing support, guidance, knowledge and dedication.

### **TRAINING REPORT**

Anna McCorkle

The children ICPA represents are often born into or grow to contribute as if they have a job at a young age. Rural family life can be so much a part of the family business that many fit in work tasks around school days or terms right through their early childhood, primary and secondary education, developing valuable skills and knowledge to contribute positively to the community around them. The ability of rural and remote students to learn on-the-job, which is the very core of Vocational Educational and Training (VET) does not need to be questioned; but the ability of our students to access the opportunity to learn and gain skills, knowledge and VET credentials (to secure future employment) at any stage of their education journey can certainly be questioned.

The VET system provides nationally recognised qualifications developed through skill and knowledge-based competency attainment. There are around 1,800 qualifications on offer, covering accredited courses, industry-recognised skill sets, units of competency and specific skills training. VET training takes place in classrooms, workplaces, online, and can be full-time or part-time. It appears on paper that VET is an incredibly good fit for regional, rural and remote students due to its diverse delivery options. As we know the reality can be more troublesome.

Employment in our contemporary world is rapidly changing and more of our workforce are highly skilled and micro or fully qualified. Completing Year 12 (or equivalent) is the minimum requirement for most employers and many more are seeking people with post-school qualifications. Apprenticeships, traineeships, diplomas, or certificate III or IV level qualifications can set young people up for a stable and rewarding career. In 2020, 69% of Australians aged 20-64 years had a post-school qualification, increasing from 57% in 2005. There were nearly 300,000 apprentices and trainees in 2021, working across more than 500 different occupations, including many non-trade occupations. The success of rural communities relies on this figure having a fair representation of rural and remote students.

ICPA (Aust) advocates for those who live and work in rural and remote areas who are under-represented in long term reports on both Training and Tertiary certification. With the national completion rates for VET qualifications frequently reported at an alarming 50%, it is clear that Governments are falling short of supporting those on a trade career pathway across all areas of Australia, whilst facing a chronic National Skills Shortage. Established funding and support programs



are still centred on the employer or Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) rather than the student/trainee/apprentice. Our advocacy will continue until we see this addressed.

### **Training Motions**

At the 2021 Federal Conference members presented three Training motions seeking continued advocacy on increases to the Commonwealth Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA), the need to address issues with the LAFHA application process and a request for relocation assistance for Australian Apprentices and trainees needing to relocate to access their chosen pathway process.

Following Conference, correspondence was sent to then Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business the Hon Stuart Robert MP, in relation to the need to increase the LAFHA, copying in the relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers. Federal Council also raised the need for provision of relocation assistance and the inclusion of Australian Apprentices and Trainees in the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) to assist with costs associated with moving away from home to access their chosen trade/training pathway. While to date we have not received replies to our correspondence, with the change of Government, we will continue to raise these topics where possible and will inform members of any developments.

ICPA (Aust) has sought advice from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) regarding the processes for applying and receiving the LAFHA and raised concerns that this process needs improvement to ensure eligible Australian Apprentices are able to access the assistance. DESE confirmed that there should only be a three month wait on payments and that they are handled by the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) providers.

<https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/>.

Furthermore, DESE has advised that there is a provision for LAFHA to be claimed and paid for up to three months in certain circumstances without an approved training contract from the date of commencement or recommencement, however each jurisdiction determines the requirements from the RTO to approve the training contract. The Guidelines for the Australian Apprenticeship Incentives Program can be found here:

<https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-support-individuals/resources/australian-apprenticeships-incentives-program-guidelines>.

Federal Council is continuing the advocacy of previous Training motions and member enquiries highlighting concerns that VET Certified Training remains unobtainable for rural and remote students. Issues include:

- The frequent lack of availability of courses/qualifications, which is further influenced by chronic teacher/trainer shortages
- The lack of access to the face-to-face component of training, assessment and mandatory workplace experiences
- The high costs of travel and accommodation to fulfill training and assessment requirements.

### **National Review of VET Delivered to Secondary Students**

In March 2022 Federal Council contributed to the National Review of VET Delivered to Secondary Students in Regional, Rural and Remote areas and raised the following issues affecting rural and remote students:

- The limited opportunity to participate in VET courses due to the availability of courses and local workplace experience and training
- The lack of access to qualified VET staff (both trainers and assessors) including the recruitment and retention of trained staff, teaching out of specialty, the funding capacity of



schools to run and resource VET and to employ specialised staff often related to remoteness, VET staff maintenance of credentials

- The distance to providers or workplace training and assessments, the cost of travel and accommodation to placements, including if VET program is accessed from another school or facility, and the impact on the family when parents need to accompany the student i.e., time away from home and cost
- Online courses are either not the course of choice for the students or they are hindered by limited and unreliable internet capacity
- The need for VET qualifications to be recognised beyond school.

### ICPA (Aust)'s Recommendations:

- Funding and support to rural and remote schools to deliver VET programs
- Incentives and provision of extra funding and allowances to assist with additional costs such as travel, accommodation and other costs unique to rural and remote contexts
- Virtual VET programs partnering with bigger centres that deliver VET programs
- Ensuring adequate and affordable communications technology is available for online courses
- Pathways for VET Trainers (teachers) which consider their unique situations in rural and areas
- Ensuring the VET pathway is valued equally as a higher education pathway or a direct employment pathway.

### Current Government Initiatives

Current national initiatives for apprentices and trainees are based around the Skills Priority List and the Australian Priority List which identifies occupations assessed as experiencing national skills shortages.

<https://www.dese.gov.au/australian-apprenticeships/resources/about-australian-apprenticeship-priority-list>

These programs include fee-free employer incentive payments or reduced student course fees to address the National Skills Shortage and targeting specific industries and occupations.

It was positive to see attention given to the Skills Shortage area in the 2022-23 Federal Budget. The proposals below from the Budget are presently being reassessed by the current Government with final announcements yet to be released.

### Australian Apprentice Incentive Scheme and Financial Assistance Employer Incentives

Employers who engage an Australian Apprentice in an occupation on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List may be eligible for a wage subsidy of up to \$1,500 per quarter for the first two years of the apprenticeship and up to \$750 per quarter for the third year.

Hiring incentives are available for employers of Australian Apprentices in occupations not identified on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List of up to \$3,500 in the first year of the apprenticeship. Federal Council are currently seeking further confirmation of these initiatives.

### Apprentice Incentives

#### **Australian Apprentice Training Support Payment**

Commencing 1 July 2022, the **Australian** Apprentice Training Support Payment is available to eligible apprentices undertaking a qualification at either Certificate III, IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma level leading to an occupation on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List. It is a payment of up to \$5,000 for the first two years of their Australian Apprenticeship to support apprentices with the cost of undertaking an apprenticeship.

**Commonwealth Living Away from Home Allowance** is available for eligible Australian Apprentices in the first three years of the apprenticeship.

**Trade Support Loans** are available to eligible Australian Apprentices to assist with everyday costs while completing your apprenticeship.

Information on eligibility and application for financial assistance for Australian Apprentices is available at <https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/aus-apprenticeships-incentives>

### **National Skills Agreement - Skills Reform Priorities**

While the Australian, State and Territory Governments had committed to work collaboratively on long-term improvements through the National Skills Agreement ensuring that Australians have access to a high-quality Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, we understand that with the new Government now in place, the commencement of this Agreement has been delayed. Federal Council will keep abreast of any developments in this regard and ensure these are communicated to members

### **JobTrainer Fund**

The JobTrainer Fund commenced in July 2020 to provide school leavers and job seekers access to free or low-cost retaining and upskilling opportunities to assist in job attainment in high-priority areas. Funding was also allocated for the Supporting Apprentices and Trainees wage subsidy.

Funding for the JobTrainer Program was further extended in the 2022-23 Budget with additional places pledged and investment for a further two years contingent on matched funding from States and Territories.

The extension and expansion of JobTrainer will help to address the increase in demand for skilled care workers, particularly aged care, supporting existing care workers to get the skills they need and providing affordable access to training for new care workers. It will also provide more training places to support the growing demand in Australia's digital workforce.

Job seekers and young people, including school leavers, may be eligible and can take advantage of subsidised training to learn skills for jobs in demand. Under the extension, any Australian who wants to enrol in an aged care, digital skills, disability care or childcare qualification can also access a JobTrainer place, regardless of their age, employment status or prior qualifications.

JobTrainer funding is available for full qualifications and short courses, based on a list agreed between the National Skills Commission and State and Territory Governments.

Training places under JobTrainer are now available. Further information on the JobTrainer Fund is available on the following websites:

- Your Career: [www.yourcareer.gov.au/jobtrainer](http://www.yourcareer.gov.au/jobtrainer)
- My Skills: [www.myskills.gov.au/jobtrainer](http://www.myskills.gov.au/jobtrainer)
- Department of Education Skills and Employment: <https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-reform/jobtrainer-fund>

Federal Council will maintain contact with the relevant Government Ministers and Departments to raise any concerns that members have so please make contact with us.

Websites that offer additional information include:

- National Skills Commission: [www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au](http://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au)
- National Careers Institute: [www.dese.gov.au/nci](http://www.dese.gov.au/nci)

- Your Career: [www.yourcareer.gov.au](http://www.yourcareer.gov.au)

To conclude I would like to thank everyone on Federal Council for welcoming me in November 2021. I seem to have jumped in boots and all on a steep but well supported learning curve. I am grateful for the encouragement and guidance that is always available. I did not expect to be heading up a portfolio team right off the bat! The Training Portfolio continues to work closely with the Tertiary Portfolio on many issues that overlap. Thank you, particularly to those within the Training Portfolio Alana Moller, Kim Hughes, Kate Thompson, Jane O'Brien and Sally Sullivan and the Federal Council Team who are always on hand.

### SPEECHES

#### **President's Welcome 2022**

Alana Moller

Good morning. My name is Alana Moller I am the current Federal President of ICPA and I feel honoured to be chairing the 2022 Isolated Children's Parents' Association Federal Conference over the next two days. Well here we are, finally back together in person and how gratifying this is after the past two online and hybrid conferences. There is little doubt about ICPA, that we can adapt and deal with anything that comes our way, however there is no better way than in person.

Before I begin, may I show my respect, and acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and also pay my respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

On behalf of Federal Council, it is with great pleasure I welcome delegates, observers and guests to our Federal Conference. A very special mention and warm welcome to our two Federal Life Members joining us this year Mrs Roxanne Morrissey, who like many has been unable to attend a Conference in person since 2019 and our newest Federal Life Member, awarded last year, Mrs Sue Shotton, still working behind the scenes to make our Conference (hopefully) a success.

The Conference theme this year "Outback to Ocean, Building Member Connections" aptly describes the greatest benefit a face to face conference provides, the opportunity to connect with other ICPA members who have all come together in one place, this time from Outback Australia to the Indian Ocean to discuss our common interest, our geographically isolated children and our common aim of educational equity for them. I am absolutely delighted to have you all joining us here and relish the opportunity to interact with you all and invite you to also take this opportunity to connect.

It is pleasing 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. Delegates, as you consider the discussion and debate on the motions presented over the next two days, be mindful that as you are voting, you are setting ICPA policy. The decisions made here by you as branch representatives, will determine how Federal Council will go forward with our advocacy for the next 12 months. To all ICPA members present, conference is your opportunity share your stories of the challenges faced by rural and remote students across the country. If you don't have a chance to speak on a motion, your story or information is still very important to us, so please feel free to reach out to Federal Council at any time to share your experiences with us.

We know some of you may be nervous or worried about making a mistake and the reason we know is that we share those feelings and I cannot promise I will not make mistakes over the coming days. However we are all here to support each other to get through anything that comes and I appreciate

and thank you in advance for your understanding and support as I chair the conference over the next two days.

Welcome and thank you also to State Council representatives in attendance, we look forward to hearing updates from all states over the next two days.

To our guests, thank you for taking the time to be with us and please feel free to comment on motions as your knowledge and expertise can often help us to clarify our position on issues. We are also pleased to have a number of government and organisation representatives attending conference.

You'll have noticed, on the conference agenda that many reports will be presented to conference. Nevertheless, due to time constraints, many of the reports you'll hear around issues that we deal with have been condensed. I encourage you to read the full reports in your conference booklets. All reports will also be added to the ICPA Australia website.

I would also like to let everyone know that our official photographer for Conference is Olivia Ford. We ask people to please be courteous and allow room for her to take required photos. We also 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 our photographer, Olivia Ford and media representatives.

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:

Federal Vice President Lisa Slade and

Federal Secretary Kim Hughes

We also have:

Federal Assistant Secretary Kate Thompson

Federal Treasurer Nikki Mahony

Federal Publicity Officer Suzanne Wilson

Councillor Julia Broad

Councillor Wendy Henning

Councillor Ali Allison

Councillor Laura Stalley

Councillor Naomi Obst

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.

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. There may be times when there are necessary changes made to the program. Indeed since printing, there have been some changes to the program and you will find a copy of an updated program on each table. As I mentioned earlier, I am sure to make mistakes, I am definitely not an expert at this and there may be times where I may need to call on the wider experience that we have present in the room for guidance. I ask for your patience and understanding should this occur. If we do happen to make a mistake in procedure or something else, please raise a "Point of Order" or let us know, so that we are aware of the error and can take steps to rectify it. We have much to work through over the next two days, but we also want to ensure that we proceed in the appropriate manner.

Our hosts, Western Australia State Council and the convening committee have been looking forward to this day for quite some time. Our congratulations to all involved in bringing this conference to fruition. A very special mention to the sponsors who have contributed to make this happen, I know there are representatives from some sponsors attending Conference and I welcome you.

All that is left to do now is to 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 and outcomes for our geographically isolated children, knowing that from outback to ocean, we are all connected.

I now invite Conference Convenor, Mrs Jane Cunningham to give an overview of conference arrangements and housekeeping.

### **Opening Speaker**

Hon Fiona Nash

Regional Education Commissioner

Good morning, Alana and thank you very much for that very kind introduction. Can I firstly acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we meet and pay my respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Good morning Everyone. As Alana said I had full intentions of being there with you today, indeed it has been in my diary for quite some time, unfortunately very recently my knee had an altercation with a concrete floor in my shed and the floor won. Unfortunately, this meant I could not travel this week so I do apologise for not being there because Zoom presentations are always a little bit clunky, a little bit awkward but I will absolutely do my best to try and make you feel like I am in the room with you because I am certainly there in spirit.

Can I just say Sasha Brown who sang the anthem this morning was absolutely wonderful and what a beautiful way to start the day.

So, I thought perhaps this morning it might be an idea to give you a sense of the Regional Education Commissioner, the role, what I am doing and just some observations about rural and remote education from my perspective as Commissioner and somebody who has spent many decades in regional Australia.

At the end of the last year the former Government appointed me the inaugural Regional Education Commissioner which I think has been a great thing for rural, regional and remote communities to have now a national focus through the Commissioner on regional education and improving the outcomes for education. It came about as the result, as a few of you might be aware, there was a review of tertiary education done by Denis Napthine and a panel that accompanied him to do that and one of the recommendations was to put in place a Regional Education Commissioner.

It has been something that has been discussed over time but that recommendation gave the catalyst for it to be put in place and I was very honoured to have been given the privilege of being in the position. The position kicked off at the end of last year and I spent the first 6 months in a very detailed way, talking to stakeholders across a range of areas. In this role I need to make sure that the decisions I make and the priorities that I land on, are the priorities that people need out there on the ground and in our communities.

The role itself encompasses the whole education journey, I am not a fan of the word journey but I cannot think of a better one at the moment so it goes from early childhood, schools, vocational education and training and higher education and universities. But I have also added in workforce because I do not believe you can look at all those areas and not take into account the end point of all that education and training and particularly for our regional communities. Those workforce issues

and those workforce shortage issues that we so often see, are tied into the educational opportunities that are there for people to take advantage of, so that is very much a part of my thinking.

I have been dealing with stakeholders right across all of those areas from people in the Education sector itself, to people in industry, to communities, to people in Government, bureaucracies to as I say to get that really keen sense of what the priorities are. As Commissioner I am not going to be able to do everything for everyone and I see very much my focus being on identifying what those key priorities are and making sure that I am focused on those.

My vision coming into this role is that all rural, regional and remote people, regardless of where they live, have access to the education they need to reach their full potential. I think we have got a great cross-section from across the nation in the room today that showcases just how diverse the needs are, the regions are, the people are, that I need to be focused on when looking at fulfilling that vision.

There are many challenges obviously when it comes to regional education and I think all of you sitting in this room will know them better than anybody. My job is to make sure I identify those challenges as I say many have been identified already, identify the barriers that are there and look for the solutions that are going to give those improved outcomes for rural, regional and remote people. I do not have funding capacity so I do not have any ability to come up with dollars for programs or projects. What my key role is though, is to give advice to Government. Being able to work with ICPA, being able to work with many groups and organisations across the country, makes me as best informed as I can possibly be, to be able to give that robust and well informed and quality advice to Government. It is quite a long process, the first 6 months has been very much working with stakeholders and now moving into what I call the more strategic development of those key priorities to be able to give that advice to Government which will come over the next few months. I particularly want to thank your President Alana for meeting with me very early on, in fact ICPA was one of the first meetings I met with and I have always appreciated being able to work very closely with ICPA. It is a terrific example of the knowledge that you have being able to be transferred to decision makers and the things that you know and you understand so well because you live out there in the communities and you feel it, you live it, you breathe it and you know it better than anybody else.

Some of you may not know me, so I'll give you a very quick background. I grew up in Sydney but then spent 25 years farming out in the central west in NSW. My two boys, Will and Henry have now taken over running the farms which is absolutely fantastic to watch. I am very nearly a grandmother for the first time with a grandtot on the way, that is very exciting, just around the corner. I spent 12 years in the Senate and some of that as Minister in the former Government. I was very fortunate to have responsibility for roles in Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, Regional Communications and Regional Health which I think has given me a really good ability to understand on the ground what the issues are for the regions. So now to be specifically looking at regional education, bringing that broader regional background, has been a great assistance for me.

After I left politics, I spent 3 years at Charles Sturt University as their Strategic Adviser and now Regional Education Commissioner. And I note in your opening comments Alana, you use the phrase "Educational Equity for geographically isolated children" and that is exactly what this is all about. It is about equity and when I travel from one side of the country to the other and I look at the disparity between city and country, there is a lot we still need to do to make sure we have equity. I do not mean exactly the same things, we all know we cannot have exactly the same things out in the regions as we do in the cities but we need to absolutely make sure there is equity.

Because you face a whole lot of issues that other people across Australia don't when it comes to educating your children; it is the isolation, it is the tyranny of distance, it is the lack of access to

services, it is the telecommunications issues, it is a whole range of issues. Quite often, these will occur along as a standalone issue and things you do not expect. The boarding issues that occurred during COVID for many of you, are a really good example of how issues occur for people in rural and remote areas that just simply don't fall on people in the cities. I am sure that was absolutely troublesome at least and traumatic probably at worst and I know some of those issues were addressed along the way but I think it is a really good example of where decision makers need to be absolutely sure that they are not just doing one size fits all policy. It just does not work for rural, regional and remote communities when you compare them to the cities and that is something that is always in my mind.

For me looking at all of you and what you all do for rural and remote communities, home education is not a choice, it is a necessity and that is something that decision makers need to understand very, very clearly. Because our rural and remote families need to be supported and the reason I say that from the decision makers perspective, as I have not come across a Government yet who does not want rural and remote Australia to be populated, to have economies out there, to have communities out there so if we are going to have those families in those communities then Governments and decision makers need to make sure that they are supported. I am often saying that people that live in those areas, they are the backbone of the nation, when you look at nearly two thirds of our export income comes from rural, regional and remote areas, about 53 billion of export income from agriculture, forestry and fisheries, its about 340 billion from resources and energy. They are just a couple of the industries that are out there in out rural and remote communities where people like you all live and where that is so important, is that the people who are living out there are making a massive contribution to the economy, an absolutely massive contribution. Those industries underpinned by the people living out there and those people live out there so very often have children and those children deserve access to quality affordable education. I think it is very, very important that decision makers keep that in mind. I am also very conscious of workforce issues in those areas because when we have people who are living in those areas, if they feel that they need to leave those areas and communities because they are not getting the educational opportunities they need for their children, that is very often the workforce leaving those communities. We all know there are enormous workforce shortages at the moment and that just compounds the fact of just how difficult it can be to get people out into those communities.

We need to make sure that we all, all of us that do not live out in the rural and remote communities value our home educators in those areas. It is really important whether it is me as Commissioner, politicians and decision makers or bureaucrats, and have to never take it for granted because they are doing an extraordinary job. Sometimes this slips under the radar of many people who think 'Oh that is just a parent educating their children'. The time and the absolute focus that goes into what people who are home-schooling out in these areas do, is just tremendous and often giving up other opportunities to work on farms or in business because they are educating their children at home, it is important that we remember that.

So you will be well aware that we have a new Government and new Ministers. I have been very impressed by Minister Jason Clare, Minister for Education's focus on equity and as we all know that is key in rural, regional and remote areas. He said in his first speech "Let us be the Government that ensures postcodes do not determine opportunity". I was so pleased when I read that because this is a minister who is focussed on equity and that the equity issue absolutely extends to rural and remote Australia. I am very encouraged by his words and his understanding of the importance of creating better outcomes in education in our rural and regional and remote areas. I have also been impressed that the Government has appointed Senator Anthony Chisholm as Assistant Minister for Regional Education and Regional Development. I understand that he is providing an address after I make my

remarks this morning but the fact that the Government has a specific focus for Regional Education through a standalone minister is a great credit to them and bodes very well for the future of Governments decisions around regional education.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are so many issues reflected in the motions that have come through to the conference and I am sure it is going to be a couple of days of absolutely great, robust and well informed debate. As I said Madam President Alana, I very much appreciated being able to meet with you early on because what it did for me as Commissioner, was to make sure that I have a very clear understanding of your priorities. As we have discussed Alana, we will catch-up after your conference to see if any of that has changed as a result of the deliberations over the next few days of conference and I very much look forward to that.

One of the issues you are raising that I feel very strongly about is the AIC DE allowance and being able to have the ability to provide affordable and more accessible education to geographically isolated 3-4 year olds. This is something that is of key importance when I look at equity, when you look at other families across the country who have their children in pre-school with all sorts of supports. Certainly, from my perspective it is an equity issue and one I will definitely be focussing on.

My last comments would be around ICPA. I would say to you all, do not ever underestimate the value and importance of your organisation. You have an amazing well respected voice in the corridors of power and the offices of decision makers and very much on the basis that your priorities and the issues you bring forward are well informed, well debated at conferences like this and the very fact that you understand the issue so importantly. The comment I would also say is that you not only understand the challenges, you also have the solutions and that is something that the decision makers are very keen to see.

I will be very much looking forward to working with you all. Madam President and your executive, I am looking forward to working with you. Of course, some of you in the room I do know already and to those I don't, I just want to wish all the very best for the next couple of days of deliberations. I have always been a very strong supporter of ICPA and will absolutely continue to be.

All the very best and I am delighted to officially open your conference. Thank you.

### **Conference Address**

Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm

Assistant Minister for Education and Assistant Minister for Regional Development

Thank you for the invitation to speak at the Isolated Children's Parents' Association Annual Federal Conference. I acknowledge the Whadjuk and the Noongar people and acknowledge elders past and present.

I first met Wendy Hick the Immediate Past President of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association in Cloncurry where I was helping conduct an Enquiry into the high prices of regional airfares. I can recall that experience and the good first-hand account that I received about life as a child but also life as a parent in those remote communities and the effort that they have to take and the cost that they have to take to ensure that their children get adequate access to a great education.

It is a pleasure to talk to you today and I understand that education can change lives and I know that first-hand as well as anyone. I know that access to education can open so many new opportunities however many families across the nation face barriers accessing quality education and that is particularly the case in geographically isolated areas. We know children from remote and regional



areas are less likely to finish high school. Our NAPLAN results reveal the more remote a student is the wider the learning gap, they are less likely to go to university and students from regional and remote areas are half as likely to obtain a higher education degree than students in major cities. And for indigenous Australians who make up about half of all remote students the gap in educational access and outcomes is even wider.

In a country as great as ours this just isn't acceptable. We need to do more to ensure all Australians have access to quality educational opportunities no matter your postcode, your wealth or the colour of your skin. We need to close the gap between city and country, between indigenous and non-indigenous students. We need to find solutions that support choice including where families and children choose to take advantage of distance education or boarding school opportunities like I know so many in regional Queensland do. But equally we need to keep investing in our regional and remote communities so students don't always feel the need to relocate to access quality educational opportunities. We need to tackle the nationwide teacher shortage; it is critical we work collaboratively to find ways we can encourage more people to become teachers and keep teachers doing the important work they do particularly in regional areas.

The Australian Government will offer up to 5000 new students a \$10000 a year bursary throughout their teaching degree to address teacher shortages. This includes a \$2000 top up payment for students who do their placements in regional areas. The solutions to these areas are not easily resolved but it is both necessary and rewarding for us to solve them together. That is why I am glad that you have heard from Australia's first Regional Education Commissioner, Fiona Nash at this conference. The Commissioner's work helps ensure regional education has a national focus and coordinates our response to the issues and barriers to regional students educational success.

The work you do at ICPA and championing the educational needs of geographically isolated families and their children is important. The value you provide to the community is immeasurable. Where you live should not dictate the pathways you have access to or the opportunities you want to pursue. I thank you for the work you do and thank you for inviting me to speak at this conference. I look forward to working with you as does Minister Clare as we open the door of opportunity for all Australians no matter where they come from. Thank you.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Raelene Hall Presentation**

Lisa Slade

Raelene Hall and her husband Clive live on the family cattle station 'Neds Creek' in the East Gascoyne region of Western Australia. Raelene taught her three children through the Meekatharra School of the Air and has been involved with ICPA at various levels for well over 20 years.

On the 12 of August 2005 Raelene began her time as Editor of ICPA's flagship publication, PEDALS, taking over from Lyn Cadzow. She and then Publisher, Rebecca Cornes, managed to battle through facsimiles and snail mail to not only provide and share content for the magazine, but to get those highly anticipated issues out to eagerly awaiting members each quarter.

Raelene introduced numerous initiatives in her early years, including a 'centrefold', 4 glorious pages in colour, in what had always been a black and white publication. It was her first issue as editor, Issue 97. Other additions were 'Kids' Corner', 'Time for a Giggle', member surveys and making subscriptions available to non-ICPA members.

Raelene, a passionate freelance writer, often wrote opinion pieces for the Midwest Times in Western Australia. In 2009 Raelene published a book, 'Legitimate Bush Woman, the lighter side of life on the land' which was a collection of those opinion pieces and I have it on good authority it is just the trick if you're in need of a good laugh!

In 2007, Raelene took over the role of Pedals Publisher for issue number 103. This complimented her role as editor and provided her with the opportunity to really put her stamp on the magazine. In January 2009 Pedals was printed in full colour for the first time.

Raelene's final edition of Pedals was the July 2022 issue, issue number 164. That's 61 issues, 61 magnificent issues, packed full to the brim with information and stories from across Australia.

Immediate Past President Wendy Hick fondly remembers one of Raelene's speeches at the Tasmanian Federal Conference entitled 'Freddo Frog' which had everyone in stitches and clamouring for frogs as they tried desperately to correctly answer questions about PEDALS. Unfortunately, we have no photo evidence to support this, however, if any of you do, we would be very happy to hear from you!

Here's cheers to 17 wonderful years Raelene, we wish you all the very best for your next chapter, a chapter where you no longer have to holler far and wide for Pedals content. We hope you accept this as our heartfelt and sincere thanks for your passion and support of geographically isolated families across Australia. Please join me in a round of applause.

### **Tribute to Julia Materne**

It has been said that "The most truly generous persons are those who give silently without hope of praise or reward." (Carol Ryrie Brink) and I have the honour today to pay tribute to a person who truly epitomises this statement.

Mrs Julia Materne has been involved in ICPA since the early 1980's, becoming a Federal Councillor in 1986, moving on to the role of Federal Secretary in 1989, after also being the SA Secretary from 1985. She was awarded a Certificate of Merit in 2002 and presented with Federal Life Membership in 2003.

Despite retiring from Federal Council, Mrs Materne continued in the role of ICPA archivist, one which she has now held for more than 2 decades, not an 'active' role in her own words, however certainly one that requires a significant amount of effort and dedication.

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

In 2020, Mrs Materne was awarded a Federal Certificate of Appreciation for her extraordinary dedication to ICPA Australia, as archivist for such a lengthy period of time. Federal Vice President Lisa Slade recalls her reaction when she spoke to her about receiving the certificate, one of not really knowing what all the fuss was about, exemplary of her humble nature.

The time has come where Mrs Materne has decided to stand down from the Archivist position and while it is a sad loss for ICPA, it is my pleasure to acknowledge her longstanding generosity and commitment to our organisation and may I ask if we can all show our appreciation with a round of applause.

### **Farewell to Retiring Councillors – Jane O'Brien, Sally Sullivan and Lisa Slade**

*“Stop letting your potential go to waste because you don't feel confident enough.  
People with half your talent are making waves while you're still waiting to be ready.”*

This pertinent quote from champion surfer Layne Beachley randomly popped up as I searched Commonwealth Games replays this morning.

You might think it's a little too late in the day to start inspiring you all now, but it's always worth the mention that all ICPA councils consider curious enquiry and expressions of interest anytime. Two councillors we farewell today were co-opted onto the team outside of conference as I was myself mid-way through a growing pandemic. It took me three years of toying with the idea of joining a board before I finally stopped thinking and started doing. With a background in ag economics and genetics, I was in the process of approaching a beef research organisation but Nikki Macqueen got to me first.

Now, I remember random phone numbers not people's names or faces. Large group gatherings, debate and public speaking were up there with drowning at sea on my Richter scale of fear. I was ridiculously naive and didn't even know the difference between what State and Federal did (GASP!) and yet barely two years in and already know that step was well worth taking from skills, knowledge and confidence gained alone. Being underestimated almost seems like a special kind of superpower that some of these clever ladies keep tucked up their sleeve... it's phenomenal.

Today we farewell three long term Federal Councillors who not only chose to be brave rather than ready, but most definitely have had a significant impact on ICPA's operation and progress over the past decade.

It's always a tough gig to get the lowdown on those who have gone before you when you've had two years of minimal socialisation, they all reside in different States and there exists a golden rule of what happens on delegation stays on delegation!

Luckily for me, Jane O'Brien and Sally Sullivan are both stranded in their respective states so are unable to debate my claims on the floor. As for Lisa Slade, most of the information I gleaned on her was from her husband - three beers in last night and I cannot vouch for their accuracy.

**JANE O'BRIEN** Our first victim (hhmm, I mean cab off the rank) is someone I can give no grief to whatsoever.... A kind, gentle and humble lady with a strength and determination not to be underestimated.

Jane O'Brien's association with ICPA began in 1986 when she joined the fledging Goodooga NSW Branch. She clearly remembers her first meeting in the back room of the Goodooga Pub, with talk revolving around forming an AIC motion to present at the upcoming State Conference. Members were concerned the rate wasn't keeping up with the cost of boarding school fees! Sound familiar?

Some 36 years later AIC, LAFHAS, BLM, SLM, FLM and myriad other acronyms are now well and truly a part of Jane's life.

Jane and husband Jim have three children. Living 24 kilometres from Walgett, Jane drove the kids in and out to school for most of their primary years. At the time she thought she would be 'on the road' forever, but in reality, the time passed very quickly, and Jane was able to immerse herself in their education by assisting in the classrooms and involving herself in after school sport. In no time at all they all moved onto boarding school in Sydney, where there was sport, sport and more sport!

When Judy Newton (also a Walgett member) became ICPA Federal President in 2010, Jane stepped into her role as Branch President and rotated through various executive positions. She was made a Walgett Branch life member herself in 2017 – a well-deserved accolade.

While we all curse any drought, the one upside of the NSW drought was while she was not required to man the weighbridge, tractor and carting trucks on their family's cropping farm, Jane saw her spare time as a golden opportunity to sidestep onto ICPA Federal Council. And what a quiet but significant impact she made. Co-opted on in Aug 2014, in 2016 she took on the newly formed position of membership officer. I can't tell you how grateful I am that this is no longer a role for the Treasurer.

Jane quite simply LOVED her personal contact with the branches and individual members. She was determined that ALL would feel welcome into the fold. One of our more nervous branch delegates told me how very grateful she was to Jane for seeking her out at her first conference to make sure she felt comfortable and had someone to call on if she felt out of her depth.

Being a realist and with an eye on the future, Jane pushed for the membership officer role to be an off-council position. This has allowed Federal Council to fill the role through an expression of interest process in the lead up to conference this year. Serendipitously, this time around in a role reversal, it is Judy Newton filling Jane's shoes.

Jane your foresight may be evidenced in a seamless transition, but you will still be dearly missed by all of us who worked alongside you.

Wendy Hick, for one says she will miss her "white champagne partner" which is what Jane O referred to her and Wendy's drink of choice... soda water in disguise!

Who now will get us walking, jogging, running at delegations, meetings and conferences? Jane seriously puts us all to shame with her athletic ability which she passed onto her very talented children. Getting information out of Jane as what was happening in any of her children's lives was always difficult as to say Jane is humble, is most certainly an understatement. Federal Councillors have dined with Jane's Olympic rowing son Jack and cheered him on from afar through his many competitions around the world. With another son working alongside them at the farm and Jane and Jim enjoying their new role as grandparents as their daughter embarks on the parenting journey herself, life is certainly full.

Just the other day, Jane called me at 6am to chat through some accounting program problems and casually mentioned she was only puffing as she was out on her early morning run getting a few calls out of the way before she started the day. *"It's the best way to stay warm"* she said! Just quietly, I thought that's what a gas heater was for and if I attempted to jog AND chat on the phone, I'd end up falling down a pothole or expired at the 400 metre mark.

Jane has been an excellent mentor for me – patiently taking care to explain each step in the process and filling me in on any background required on memberships – quite regularly while she was on a tractor, and I was rushing out the door for a muster. Then she would wax lyrical about how much she misses horses (and that tractor horsepower is just not the same!) Jane you are welcome on my horse any day. We will all miss that incredible bank of knowledge, your attention to detail and the love and kindness you showered on all of us.

Thank you for your diligence and quiet consideration.

May you always feel welcome in every member's home you have made a difference to. (That's an awful lot of Australia for you to cover!)

**SAL SULLIVAN** Our next subject when co-opted onto Council in 2016 famously declared she would *"only join the team as long as she wasn't expected to wear a skirt and stockings"*.

Wendy Hick still has visions of Sal Sullivan in a crocodile hat convening Darwin conference - it was an actual hat shaped like a crocodile head- you couldn't miss it- bright green croc head with big sharp teeth! Wendy reckons she knew on the spot that Sal had the right stuff for Federal Council.

After her first reluctant year, Sal stepped into the Vice-President role for four years rotating through various portfolios and then stuck around for one more year to see off COVID. Sal also held the role

of NT State President for three years and in 2021 she was awarded Katherine Branch Life Membership.

Originally from Goondiwindi Qld, Sal followed her husband Rohan to 'Cave Creek Station' in the NT, just a stone's throw away from the Mataranka Thermal Pools and set about raising Brahman-cross cattle and five children.

Sally has been involved in many facets of rural and remote education, first joining ICPA when her oldest daughter was doing pre-school through Katherine School of the Air. The Sulli's, as the Sullivan kids were collectively known, did most of their primary schooling at Mataranka Primary School, a one teacher school expanding to two teachers in around 1990. Access could be an issue, once boating to school for an entire term.

Through ICPA, and as School Council Chair for many years, Sally has engaged in many battles to achieve an equitable education for children in small schools and distance education. Perhaps the most significant being persuading the department to allow middle year students to stay in the small school and undertake supervised School of the Air lessons.

The Sulli's boarded for high school in Alice Springs before tackling various interests that took them "hell, west and crooked"

Donal – is now helicopter mustering pilot in the top end.

Jess - graduated from medicine last year and is now a junior doctor

Margo -is working at home after attending Marcus Oldham College and in a weird twist of coincidence working with my own family for her prac year, before I even knew Sal. Margo proudly told me she has just purchased her first stud bull to start breeding seedstock for the family.

Dean is on the verge of completing a Bachelor of Science majoring in Computing and Software systems with Melbourne Uni

And Philip - Studying Accounting and Commerce at Melbourne Uni

Having experienced the emotional, educational and fiscal challenges of many facets of regional education (from distance education, a small rural school, boarding, tertiary and VET systems), Sally remains very appreciative of those who have come before her in ICPA. This first-hand knowledge also stood her in good stead through all her dealings with "pollies" and associated organisations. She was just so good at asking the hard questions, challenging political correctness, "calling a spade a spade" and was quite fond of suggesting it was our job to "enlighten them" (whoever "they" were). Cutting through the crap didn't stop with political discussion. I have it on good authority that Sal can also unplug a drain and fix any hotel toilet with the tools she happens to carry around in her handbag!

If she happens to be passing by, Sal is also very good at dropping in for a visit with half the weekly groceries in exchange for a cup of tea. When questioned why so many gifts, the answer is "it's the Territory way". Her generosity and loyalty is outstanding and will be missed by all on Council.

In her daughter Margo's words, *"Mum has always been very supportive of all our dreams and aspirations. She has worked so hard to make sure we got access to as many educational opportunities as possible."*

*She has been a big part of ICPA, full time book keeper at Cave Creek, camp cook, keeper of children, animals, in-laws and one husband ... she is a truly loving and supportive person".*

Sally, you have been an amazing, level-headed, sage, astute team player, an excellent mediator and a master wordsmith, great for a dry quip or quiet musing over a good rum at the end of a tough day.

Thank you for your invaluable contribution, pragmatism and importantly being able to make us laugh when things get a little tense.

How much we are going to miss you, crocs, boots and all.

In your own words Sal, “See you down the road Mate, have a rumbo on me”!

**LISA SLADE** Which just leaves the lovely but very cheeky Lisa Slade. Are you scared yet?

Lisa grew up in a small rural town in South Australia and upon marrying her husband Keith, moved to a remote sheep station in the Northern Flinders Ranges, six hours due North of Adelaide.

Her association with ICPA began in 2001 with a gift of branch membership from her mother-in-law (oh how I love that story)!

Lisa and Keith’s three children attended Port Augusta School of the Air for their primary schooling years. While the younger two children completed their upper primary years, Lisa also undertook a Bachelor of Commerce via distance education.

Lisa has been involved with the South Australian State Council since 2013. Throughout her children’s education journey, Lisa has been an active member within Remote and Isolated Children’s Exercise (RICE), School of the Air, Orroroo Area School and other community organisations.

Lisa bravely put her hand up for Federal Council in 2017 and stepped straight into the role of Treasurer. After a four-year stint, she moved into the Vice-President’s position and will leave a big hole in our team as she steps down and spends more time on deck at home. I certainly appreciate the structure Lisa has built into the Treasurer’s role and am a fervent disciple of her Treasurer’s Timeline which is quickly morphing into a document entitled Treasurer for Dummies! I am also grateful for her practical accounting knowledge and guidance as I tackled my first year in the role.

Lisa is someone who my mother would describe as the girl with the lovely face and sparkling eyes. I could tell from those sparkling eyes and cheeky grin from the occasional times her internet enabled her to turn on zoom video that this “girl” was serious fun well before I met her..... and never before have I seen so many hilarious and pertinent GIF clips grace my messenger apps.

Other councillors fondly recall being drawn into playing board games around the dinner table and won’t easily forget when during one delegation dinner in Canberra, a handsome waiter came to sit with the “fun” Federal Councillors and pose for pictures.

Lisa also has a solid reputation as the Boomerang Queen – I heard rumours she had everyone in stitches when a new-fangled app called “boomerang” came out one year and FC found themselves boomeranging all over Canberra.

Thanks to COVID-19 I only actually met Lisa at our handover in Longreach in November last year. She has probably reached Nikki saturation point in 2022, babysitting me through the SA State conference, and ending up as my roomie for delegations in Canberra and Qld State conference. In Blackall we landed a family room that could have slept ten, complete with a cot and one thermal artesian fed bathroom. She defensively maintained for a full day “I’m pretty sure the smell is the water, not me”!! That was until we both pulled out a long flowing black and white dress for day two of conference, at which point she possibly thought my shadowing of her had gone a little too far.

Lisa, your ICPA team are indeed sad to let you go but so very grateful for the contribution you have made and the professionalism you brought to the team.

We will miss your quick wit, cheeky quips, your knowledge of commerce and your gently spoken yet determined “voice” for rural kids!

You must be so proud of daughter Isabella graduating from medicine last year and about to take on her first placement in northern Qld. Millie in her third year of mechanical engineering and Henry 2nd year physio at University in Adelaide. Keith reckons the brains came from his lovely wife and he is in awe of your being able hold down two jobs, an ICPA executive position AND a good man.

I note actually how Keith has pulled out all stops to get to Perth this year to make sure ICPA gave you back. Perhaps it was just to make sure you weren't tempted to hang with the gang for "just one more year". But what I really want to know is. When are you going to tell him you're taking up cave diving?

Lisa, that twinkle of mischief in your eye does not distract from your deep inner strength, nor hide your generous heart – I suspect it's just the sparkle glinting off the edge of a true diamond when it catches the light.

Thank you and farewell from your dream team!

**CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE**

**FEDERAL COUNCIL**

President	Alana Moller
Vice President	Lisa Slade
Secretary	Kim Hughes
Assistant Secretary	Kate Thompson
Treasurer	Nikki Mahony
Publicity Officer	Suzanne Wilson
Councillors	Ali Allison
	Julia Broad
	Wendy Henning
	Naomi Obst
	Laura Stalley
Federal Web Manager	Sue Shotton
Federal Webmaster	Nikki Macqueen
Pedals Editor	Raelene Hall

**FEDERAL LIFE MEMBERS**

Roxanne Morrissey  
Sue Shotton

**STATE COUNCIL DELEGATES**

New South Wales	Tanya Mitchell	
Northern Territory	Moira Lanzarin	Juliane Vlach
Queensland	Louise Martin	Kate Bradshaw (1) Annette Boyle (2)
South Australia	Helen Williams	
Western Australia	Sally Brindal	Kym Ross

**BRANCH DELEGATES**

Alice Springs NT	Lisa Kimlin	Danyelle Haigh (D1) Mary Bayly (D2)
Alpha QLD	Gayle Donaldson	
Boulia-Bedourie-Birdsville QLD	Janelle Leiper	
Bourke NSW	Prue Ritchie	
Broken Hill NSW	Britt Anderson	Georgina Luckraft
Central Wheatbelt North WA	Lisa Brennan	Amanda Nixon
Charters Towers QLD	Sonia Spurdle	
Clermont QLD	Scott Moller	
Cloncurry QLD	Tara Locke	Cindy Walsh
Dawson Valley QLD	Louise Joyce	
Eastern Districts WA	Krystie Falconer	Samantha Greay
Far North QLD	Robyn O'Brien	Juanita Saal
Goldfields Eyre WA	Elyce Donaghy	Tallaya Wood
Katherine NT	Liz Cook	Sally Dyer
Kimberley Air WA	Kirsty Forshaw	Abbi Riles
Kindon QLD	Amanda Martin	Daryl Martin



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Lakes District WA	Jane Cunningham	
Marree Air SA	Lisa Edwards	Jessica Bell
Meekatharra Air WA	Natalie Bevan	Tracie Blair
Midwest WA	Jen Critch	Jackie Simkin
Moonie QLD	Catherine Baker	Margaret Doyle
Mt Isa BOTA QLD	Dale Brock	Margaret Brock
Pilbara WA	Robin Pensini	
Territory Wide NT	Jacinta McInerney	Clair O'Brien
Walgett NSW	Tracy Grant	Karen Ricardo
Wentworth NSW	Bree Wakefield	
WA Lone Members	Michelle Abbott	
Western Downs QLD	Kristen Coggan	Briony Sinclair
Westmar-Inglestone QLD	Marguerite Hurst	
Yalgoo WA	Roxanne Morrissey	
Yaraka-Isisford QLD	Ingrid Miller	

### BRANCH OBSERVERS

Bouli-Bedourie-Birdsville QLD	Ron Norris	
Broken Hill NSW	David Shrimpton	
Central Wheatbelt North WA	Kate McCreery (D2)	
Goldfields Eyre WA	Jasmine Carmody	Karen Forrester
	Katie Hall	
Kimberley Air WA	Katie O'Donoghue	Keith Shoecraft (2)
Meekatharra Air WA	Louise Ford	Olivia Ford
	Madi Hall	Jim Quadrio
Midwest WA	Jasmine Allen	Teneale Bagley
	Sam Messina	Kirrilee Warr
QLD Lone Members	Hannah Calcino	Amelia Williams (2)
WA Lone Members	Jennifer Pitman	

### CONVENING COMMITTEE

Sally Brindal	Kym Ross	Michelle Abbott
Chandra Ridley	Jane Cunningham	Jasmine Carmody
Louise Ford	Samantha Greay	

### CONFERENCE GUESTS

Richard Hudson	Executive Producer Rural WA	ABC
Jared Daunt	Director of Member Experience	Australian Boarding Schools Association
Tom Dunsmore	General Manager	Australian Boarding Schools Association
Richard Stokes	CEO	Australian Boarding Schools Association
Dianne Giblin	CEO	Australian Council of State School Organisations Ltd
Sharron Healy	President/Board Chair	Australian Council of State School Organisations Ltd
Petrina Cardin	Director, Regional Schools Policy	Australian Government Department of Education
Rebecca Mason	Director, Regional Policy (Higher Education)	Australian Government Department of Education
Kristie Van Omme	Assistant Director, Regional Education Commissioner Policy Secretariat	Australian Government Department of Education

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Rosemary White	Assistant Director, Regional Schools Policy Team	Australian Government Department of Education
Sue Clifford	Registrar and Marketing Assistant	Ballarat Grammar School, VIC
Jessica Hackett	Executive Officer	Connellan Airways Trust
Phil Brown	Project Manager	Country Education Partnership
Dana McDonald	National Project Officer	Country Education Partnership
Mark McLay	CEO	Country Education Partnership
Mrs Jo Hersey MLA	Member for Katherine, Shadow Minister for Education	Country Liberal Party
Annette Balmer	Recovery Support Officer	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Adam Walker	Director Policy Planning and Research	Department of Training and Workforce Development
Neesha Flint	Principal	Geraldton Grammar School, WA
Julia Bairstow	Community Relations Manager	Great Southern Grammar, WA
Tara Ball	Head of Middle Boarding	Great Southern Grammar, WA
Malcolm Gillet	WA Senior Development Manager	GreenCollar
Emily Aarts		Guest
Tracey Dewell		Guest
Kate Pryce	Research Officer	Hon. Steve Martin MLC
Kate Callaghan	Head of New House	Kinross Wolaroi School, NSW
Hannah Whittemore	Head of Boarding	Kinross Wolaroi School, NSW
Elizabeth Gubbins	Deputy Principal	Marcus Oldham College, VIC
Ty Casey	Assistant Head of Boarding	Marist College Ashgrove, QLD
David Ansell		Minderoo Foundation
Matthew Humphrey		National Recovery and Resilience Agency
Naomi Evans	Head of Regional Community Affairs (WA)	nbn Co
Elise Petty	National Regional Stakeholder Manager	nbn Co
Gavin Williams	Chief Development Officer Remote and Regional	nbn Co
Xavier Gargan	Head of Boarding	Newington College, NSW
Leanne Kruss	Agriculture Workforce manager of Far North Queensland	Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network
Garry Jowett	Director	REACH Australia
Trent Geddes	Operations Manager	Regional Tech Hub
Athena Kannellos	Senior Program Officer ABSTUDY/AIC Team	Services Australia – Jobseeker, Students and Concessions Branch
Kerrie Magain	Assistant Director ABSTUDY/AIC Team	Services Australia – Jobseeker, Students and Concessions Branch
Rachel Stenslunde	Dean of Boarding	St Hilda’s Anglican School for Girls, WA
Natalie Hanau	Executive Assistant	St Hilda’s School, QLD
Wendy Lauman	Principal	St Hilda’s School, QLD
Kellie Douglas	Head of Boarding	St Mary’s Anglican School – Karrinyup, WA
Julie Garnett	Assistant Head of Boarding Operations	St Mary’s Anglican School – Karrinyup, WA
Stuart Delaney	Head of Boys Boarding	St Peters Lutheran College, QLD
Kim Holman	Boarding Coordinator	St Peters Lutheran College, QLD
Don Ryan	Executive Officer	Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council
Boyd Brown	Regional General Manager WA	Telstra
Eva Colic	Regional Engagement Manager WA	Telstra

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Kevin Donnellan	Regional Network Advisor WA	Telstra
Justine Rowe	Chief Sustainability Officer	Telstra
Nicholas Stacpoole	Manager Rural and Regional Partnerships	Telstra
Tay Alers	Policy Advisor	The Nationals WA (D1)
Mr Peter Rundle MLA	Member for Roe, Shadow Minister for Education & Training	The Nationals WA (D1)
Ross Cardiff	Chief Financial Officer	The Southport School, QLD
Katrina Martin	Administrations Registrar	The Southport School, QLD
Renee Buckingham	Marketing and Communities Manager	The Southport School, QLD
Hon. Sandra Carr MLC	Member for the Agricultural Region	WA Labor (D1)
Clare McElhinney	Electorate Officer, Office of Sandra Carr MLC	WA Labor (D1)
Hon. Sue Ellery MLC	Minister for Education & Training	WA Labor (D2)

### CONFERENCE APOLOGIES

#### MEMBERS

Heather Allen	Midwest, WA
Margaret Duncombe	Hughenden, QLD
Patricia Elliott AM	Katherine, NT - Federal Life Member
Colleen Evans	Boulia - Bedourie - Birdsville, QLD
Jane Gloster	North East, SA - Federal Life Member
Wendy Hick	Mt Isa BOTA (Branch of the Air), QLD
Anna McCorkle	Bourke NSW
Lorraine McGinnis	Mt Isa BOTA (Branch of the Air), QLD
Megan McNicholl OAM	Western Downs, QLD - Federal Life Member
Patricia Mitchell OAM	Cloncurry, QLD
Jo Murphy	Hughenden, QLD
Lynn Nagel	Port Augusta, SA - SA State Life Member
Judy Newton	Walgett, NSW
Jane O'Brien	Walgett, NSW
Katie Payne	Katherine, NT
Helen Rogers	Hay, NSW
Kate Schubert	Alice Springs, NT - NT State Life Member
Sally Sullivan	Katherine, NT
Rhonwen Tighe	Clermont, QLD - Clermont Branch Life Member
Rory Treweeke AM	Walgett, NSW - Federal Life Member

#### GUESTS

Hon Anthony Albanese	Prime Minister of Australia
Hon Dr Anne Aly	Minister for Early Childhood Education; Youth, Federal Member for Cowan, WA
Angie Bell MP	Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education; Youth, Federal Member for Moncrieff, QLD
Christine Bevans	Principal Meekatharra School of the Air

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Hon Chris Bowen	Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Federal Member for McMahon, NSW
Colin Boyce MP	Federal Member for Flynn, QLD
Hon Russell Broadbent	Federal Member for Monash, VIC
Senator the Hon Slade Brockman	Senator for WA
Hon Scott Buchholz	Federal Member for Wright, QLD
Alison Byrnes	Federal Member for Cunningham, NSW
Hon John Carey MLA	WA Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness and Local Government
Hon Darren Chester	Federal Member for Gippsland, VIC
Hon Jason Clare	Minister for Education, Federal Member for Blaxland, NSW
Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck	Senator for Tasmania
Pat Conaghan MP	Federal Member for Cowper NSW
Hon Roger Cook MLA	Deputy Premier of Western Australia, Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade; Tourism; Commerce; Science
Hon Mark Coulton	Federal Member for Parkes, NSW
Lara Dalton MLA	WA Member for Geraldton
Senator Perin Davey	Shadow Minister for Emergency Management, Senator for NSW
Hon Mia Davies MLA	WA Opposition Leader, Leader of the Nationals WA
Hon Stephen Dawson MLC	WA Minister for Emergency Services; Innovation and ICT; Medical Research; Volunteering
Margery Evans	Independent Schools Australia, CEO
Hon Paul Fletcher	Shadow Minister for Science and the Arts; Government Services and the Digital Economy, Federal Member for Bradfield, NSW
Hon Andrew Gee	Shadow Minister for Regional Education; Regional Health, Federal Member for Calare, NSW
Hon Patrick Gorman MP	Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, Federal Member for Perth, WA
Senator Nita Green	Senator for QLD
Annabel Irvin	Stuartholme School, QLD
Dr Helen Haines	Federal Member for Indi, VIC
Brooke Hartigan	Assistant Secretary, Australian Government Department of Education
Andrew Hawkins	The Southport School, QLD
Senator the Hon Sarah Henderson	Shadow Minister for Communications; Senator for VIC
Karen Ho	General of the Department of Training and Workforce Development, WA
Ali Kent MLA	WA Member for Kalgoorlie
Kim Kiepe	Somerville House Principal, QLD
Sue Kingwill	Contact CEO
Julian Leeser	Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians, Federal Member for Berowra, NSW
Hon Dr Andrew Leigh	Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury, Federal Member for Fenner, ACT
Hon Sussan Ley	Shadow Minister for Women; Industry, Skills and Training; Small and Family Business, Federal Member for Farrer, NSW
Hon David Littleproud	Leader National Party, Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Federal Member for Maranoa, Qld
Shane Love	WA Deputy Leader of the Opposition & Nationals

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Hon Nola Marino	Shadow Assistant Minister for Education, Federal Member for Forrest, WA
Hon Richard Marles	DPM, Minister for Defence, Federal Member for Corio, VIC
Senator Jenny McAllister	Senator for NSW
Hon Kristy McBain MP	Federal Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, Federal Member for Eden-Monaro, NSW
Hon Michael McCormack	Federal Member for Riverina, NSW
Senator Susan McDonald	Shadow Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, Senator for Queensland
Hon Simone McGurk MLA	WA Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interest; Community Services
Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie	Senator for Victoria
Senator Nick McKim	Senator for Tasmania
Brad McLennan	University of Southern Queensland, Senior Lecturer
Lachlan Millar	QLD Member for Gregory
David Murtagh	Managing Director and Senior Research Fellow, Simbani Research
Gabrielle O'Kane	National Rural Health Alliance CEO
Senator Deborah O'Neill	Senator for NSW
Hon Paul Papalia CSC MLA	WA Minister for Police; Road Safety; Defence Industry; Veterans Issues
Gavin Pearce	Federal Member for Braddon, TAS
Dr Karen Peel	University of Southern Queensland, Senior Lecturer
Hon John Quigley MLA	WA Attorney General
Mr Dan Repacholi	Federal Member for Hunter, NSW
Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC	Senator for WA
Hon Amanda Rishworth	Federal Minister for Social Services, Federal Member for Kingston, SA
Lisa Rodgers	WA Department of Education, Director General
Senator the Hon Anne Ruston	Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care; Sport, Senator for SA
Rebekha Sharkie	Federal Member for Mayo, SA
Marianne St Clair	Managing Director and Senior Research Fellow, Simbani Research
Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC	WA Minister for Mining and Petroleum; Energy; Corrective Services; Industrial Relations
Hon Dr Anne Webster	Shadow Minister for Regional Development; Federal Member for Mallee, VIC
Hon Reece Whitby MLA	WA Minister for Environment; Climate Action

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

# Annual Financial Statements

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia  
Incorporated  
ABN 38 908 782 315  
For the year ended 31 May 2022

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 2022

We, Alana Moller, and Nikki Mahony, 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 2022, 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 2022.
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 cashflows 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*

Alana Moller - President

Dated: 19/07/2022

Signed: *Nikki Mahony*

Nikki Mahony - Treasurer

Dated: 19/07/2022



## Statement of Cash Flows

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated  
For the year ended 31 May 2022

2022

### Operating Activities

Receipts From Grants	58,500.00
Interest Received	2,181.62
Cash Receipts From Other Operating Activities	182,448.75
Cash Payments From Other Operating Activities	(178,073.97)
<b>Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>	<b>65,056.40</b>

### Investing Activities

Other Cash Items From Investing Activities	364.00
<b>Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>	<b>364.00</b>

### Other Activities

Other Activities	5,478.20
<b>Net Cash Flows from Other Activities</b>	<b>5,478.20</b>

### Net Cash Flows

70,898.60

### Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	450,904.68
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	521,803.28
<b>Net change in cash for period</b>	<b>70,898.60</b>

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 2022

	2022	2021
<b>Revenue</b>		
<b>Donations &amp; Sponsorship</b>		
<b>Donations</b>		
Donations - Branch	7,760.46	14,604.00
Donations - Other	19,952.88	1,000.00
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>27,713.34</b>	<b>15,604.00</b>
<b>Sponsorship</b>		
Sponsorship	44,950.47	14,313.55
Sponsorship (Conference)	40,000.00	25,000.00
<b>Total Sponsorship</b>	<b>84,950.47</b>	<b>39,313.55</b>
<b>Total Donations &amp; Sponsorship</b>	<b>112,663.81</b>	<b>54,917.55</b>
<b>Grants Received</b>		
Government Grants Received	50,000.00	25,500.00
Other Grants Received	8,500.00	10,000.00
<b>Total Grants Received</b>	<b>58,500.00</b>	<b>35,500.00</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
<b>Interest Income</b>		
Interest Received	2,181.62	4,506.13
<b>Total Interest Income</b>	<b>2,181.62</b>	<b>4,506.13</b>
<b>Other Revenue</b>		
Accommodation Reimbursements	775.14	1,709.09
Badges and Pins	1,933.09	379.68
Boarding Parent Handbook Sale	-	36.36
Emails - Additional State Emails	-	260.00
Income Transferred from ICPA Federal Conference 2020	-	20,355.40
Meeting - Other	-	2,626.82
Memberships	63,984.11	56,004.55
Memberships - Tas Online Collected	-	300.00
Merchandise Sales	2,924.55	-
Refund on Payment	4.80	963.50
Sundry Income	163.25	11,687.72
<b>Total Other Revenue</b>	<b>69,784.94</b>	<b>94,323.12</b>
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>71,966.56</b>	<b>98,829.25</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>243,130.37</b>	<b>189,246.80</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>		
Computer Software	2,944.61	-
Email Expenses	1,652.73	-

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

# 51<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

	2022	2021
Email Expenses - Mailchimp	2,260.96	-
Licence Fees	1,619.82	-
Postage	996.13	426.54
Printing & Stationery	1,888.31	5,505.02
Subscriptions & Memberships	647.07	2,635.23
Web Page Expenses	12,663.21	19,209.34
<b>Total Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>24,672.84</b>	<b>27,776.13</b>
Audit Fees	2,875.00	2,400.00
Bad Debts	859.00	-
<b>Federal Conference Expenses</b>		
Federal Conferences - Branch Sponsorship to Attend	7,636.96	-
Federal Conferences - Conference Minutes	25.35	90.91
Federal Conferences - Convening Committee Fwd Fund	20,565.91	35,454.55
Federal Conference - Guest Expenses	4,142.43	2,125.00
Federal Conferences - Meals, Accommodation & Travel	36,975.81	14,293.90
Federal Conference - Presentation & Gifts	8,917.39	210.32
Federal Conference - Printing & Stationery	76.75	-
Federal Conference - Registration	2,600.00	-
Federal Conference - Website Expenses	-	4,940.00
<b>Total Federal Conference Expenses</b>	<b>88,940.60</b>	<b>57,114.68</b>
<b>Insurance Expenses</b>		
Insurance	2,332.27	4,105.94
<b>Total Insurance Expenses</b>	<b>2,332.27</b>	<b>4,105.94</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Badges and Pins Expenses	3,396.47	2,073.41
Canberra Delegation Expenses	19,881.34	31,166.17
Corporate Memberships - State Magazines	3,473.82	3,261.75
Meetings - Other Expenses	-	761.94
Membership Expenses	903.81	293.64
Membership Fees - Tasmania Online Memberships	532.00	-
State Conferences	11,202.86	15,042.06
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>39,390.30</b>	<b>52,598.97</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>		
Bank Charges	247.63	-
Closure of ANZ Credit Card	33.54	-
Donations	9,350.00	600.00
Freight & Cartage	70.05	96.90
New Equipment Purchased - Immediate Asset Write Off	1,542.73	6,813.86
Staff Training & Welfare	72.73	-
Sundry Expenses	7,550.92	6,651.52
Tasmania Branch ICPA Lones Funds	-	588.00
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>18,867.60</b>	<b>14,750.28</b>
<b>Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b>		

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

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	2022	2021
Repairs, Replacement & Maintenance	-	334.55
<b>Total Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>334.55</b>
<b>Utilities</b>		
Telephone & Internet	136.36	45.45
<b>Total Utilities</b>	<b>136.36</b>	<b>45.45</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>178,073.97</b>	<b>159,126.00</b>
<b>Net Current Year Surplus/(Loss)</b>	<b>65,056.40</b>	<b>30,120.80</b>

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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 2022

	2022	2021
<b>Members Funds</b>		
Opening Balance	457,158.06	427,037.26
<b>Increases</b>		
Profit for the Period	65,056.40	30,120.80
<b>Total Increases</b>	<b>65,056.40</b>	<b>30,120.80</b>
<b>Total Members Funds</b>	<b>522,214.46</b>	<b>457,158.06</b>

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 2022

	NOTES	31 MAY 2022	31 MAY 2021
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3	521,803.28	450,904.68
Trade and Other Receivables	4	1,364.00	1,728.00
GST Receivable		-	4,525.84
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>523,167.28</b>	<b>457,158.52</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>523,167.28</b>	<b>457,158.52</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
GST Payable		952.82	-
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>952.82</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>			
Funds Held - East Coast Branch TAS		-	0.46
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>0.46</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>952.82</b>	<b>0.46</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>522,214.46</b>	<b>457,158.06</b>
<b>Member's Funds</b>			
Accumulated Surplus (Deficit)		522,214.46	457,158.06
<b>Total Member's Funds</b>		<b>522,214.46</b>	<b>457,158.06</b>

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 2022

### 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 2022 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.

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These notes should be read in conjunction with the Statement by Members of the Committee.

Notes to the Financial Statements

### 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.

	2022	2021
<b>3. Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>		
<b>Bank Accounts</b>		
ANZ Credit Card	-	33.54
Suncorp Business Saver Account #0139	430,624.46	400,013.03
Suncorp Department of Education Grant Account #0112	40,673.46	37,645.09
Suncorp East Coast TAS Account #5045	-	0.46
Suncorp Everyday Account #0011	7,665.30	3,000.00
Suncorp General Account #9912	37,344.21	5,346.00
Suncorp Membership Account #9963	799.72	132.00

These notes should be read in conjunction with the Statement by Members of the Committee.



Notes to the Financial Statements

Suncorp Tasmania State Council Trust Account #4629	4,696.13	4,733.68
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>	<b>521,803.28</b>	<b>450,904.68</b>
<b>Total Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	<b>521,803.28</b>	<b>450,904.68</b>
	2022	2021

#### 4. Trade and Other Receivables

<b>Other Receivables</b>		
Sundry Debtors	1,364.00	1,728.00
<b>Total Other Receivables</b>	<b>1,364.00</b>	<b>1,728.00</b>
<b>Total Trade and Other Receivables</b>	<b>1,364.00</b>	<b>1,728.00</b>

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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 INCORPORATED  
ABN: 38 908 782 315**

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Incorporated (the association), which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 31 May 2022, 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, the accompanying financial statements presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the association as at 31 May 2022, and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015 (WA)*, *Associations Incorporation Regulations 2016 (WA)* and Constitution.

**Basis for 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 Statements* 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* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements 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 opinion.

**Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting**

We draw attention to Note 1 & 2 to the financial statements, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial statements has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015 (WA)*, *Associations Incorporation Regulations 2016 (WA)* and Constitution. As a result, the financial statements may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

**Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Statements**


The committee is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015 (WA)*, *Associations Incorporation Regulations 2016 (WA)* and Constitution, and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, 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.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the association's financial reporting process.

**Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the Financial Statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements 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 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

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**   
**TO THE MEMBERS OF**  
**ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED**  
**ABN: 38 908 782 315**

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 statements.

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 statements, 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 statements 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 statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements 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  
CPA Australia



Kent Gripske CPA  
Partner

Dalby Qld, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022

## 51<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### MEMBERSHIP at 31 May 2022

<b>Western Australia</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Esperance	26	27	21	22	16	12
Gascoyne	12	18	11	15	8	8
Goldfields Eyre ( <i>Kalgoorlie Air</i> )	16	12	19	19	17	12
Eastern Districts <i>formerly Hyden</i>	47	46	38	44	40	34
Kimberley Air	10	12	9	9	11	9
Kondinin	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Lakes District	52	44	44	47	46	37
Meekatharra Air	15	16	20	20	16	15
Midwest	51	49	46	52	46	47
Pilbara	18	17	17	20	20	11
WA Lone Members	30	36	24	24	18	17
Yalgoo	10	9	7	7	5	2
Central Wheatbelt North <i>formerly Kalannie</i>	35	29	18	18	7	12
	<b>322</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>216</b>

<b>South Australia</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Eyre	0	0	8	8	4	18
Far West	1	0	0	recess	recess	recess
Flinders Ranges	18	26	24	24	22	18
Marla Oodnadatta	10	10	10	10	8	7
Marree Air	16	13	10	10	6	9
North East Districts	16	18	16	17	15	12
North West	11	11	11	11	10	9
Port Augusta	7	8	9	10	11	12
SA Lone Members	11	16	7	7	15	17
	<b>90</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>102</b>

<b>Tasmania</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Central Highlands	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
East Coast	19	18	7	7		
Midlands ( <i>Oatlands</i> )	16	14	9	9		
TAS Lone Members	7	8	7	8		
Tasmania <i>merged East Coast, Midlands, Tas Lones</i>					12	10
	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>

<b>Northern Territory</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Alice Springs	44	51	41	43	49	41
Barkly	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Katherine	52	64	52	53	80	45
Territory Wide <i>formerly NT Lone Members</i>	10	14	12	13	19	18
	<b>106</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>104</b>

## 51<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

<b>New South Wales</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Balranald	56	47	39	45	41	32
Boomi	20	19	18	18	13	12
Bourke	28	29	29	32	28	35
Brewarrina	18	19	14	16	18	14
Broken Hill	33	37	33	35	32	34
Bullarah <i>amalgamated with Moree</i>	12	12	closed	closed	closed	closed
Central West Plains ( <i>Tottenham</i> )	92	92	95	96	71	63
Collarenebri-Mungindi	11	19	15	24	17	15
Cobar	0	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess
Condobolin	12	13	8	9	8	5
Corinella	0	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess
Goolgowi	13	13	13	13	15	8
Hay	78	74	57	69	80	77
Hillston	0	recess	6	8	11	10
LR/Goodooga	8	9	10	10	7	6
Lord Howe Island	11	11	11	11	10	13
Louth	26	24	23	23	25	27
Monaro	31	31	29	30	21	15
Moree <i>amalgamated Bullarah</i>	15	24	33	39	46	36
Namoi ( <i>Burren Junction</i> )	43	48	42	45	51	36
NSW Lone Member	103	122	109	117	136	108
Nyngan	30	25	23	24	21	23
Paroo	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess
Quambone	39	35	40	41	31	30
Rankins Springs	33	25	26	29	28	20
Tibooburra/Milparinka	11	14	18	18	8	9
Tilpa	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Vermont Hill	18	10	6	6	6	5
Walgett	35	43	35	39	27	31
Warrumbungle	1	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess
Wentworth	17	24	26	28	30	20
West Wyalong	2	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess
North West Slopes		8	9	11	9	8
	<b>796</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>692</b>

## 51<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Queensland	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Alpha	28	32	22	28	32	35
Aramac-Muttaburra	30	35	32	32	33	36
Arcadia Valley	16	18	9	12	14	14
Auburn-Burrandowan-Cardarga	13	32	28	28	16	11
Augathella	14	22	17	22	20	16
Belyando-Mt Coolon	43	49	40	42	45	40
Blackall	0	34	29	29	44	31
Bollon	1	16	19	19	19	14
Boulia-Bedourie-Birdsville	16	15	14	15	12	10
Capricornia (BOTA)	21	22	29	33	29	20
Channel Country	0	5	1	1	1	1
Charleville	25	20	24	25	34	31
Charleville BOTA	9	10	0	closed	closed	closed
Charters Towers	46	56	55	67	59	60
Clarke Creek	17	18	23	26	28	26
Clermont	44	55	53	54	49	42
Cloncurry	14	10	16	16	12	14
Cunnamulla	22	28	22	24	31	16
Dawson Valley	10	17	13	15	25	32
Dirranbandi	27	29	32	32	27	26
Dunkeld with <i>Mitchell-Tomoo</i>	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Far North QLD ( <i>Cairns Radio</i> )	0	32	9	14	25	23
Hughenden	16	16	17	17	23	23
Julia Creek	19	32	27	28	33	34
Kindon	28	31	30	32	32	34
Longreach	22	38	16	28	24	24
McKinlay	0	0	4	5	6	9
Mitchell-Tomoo/Dunkeld	38	34	34	40	30	26
Moonie	26	25	24	26	31	28
Mt Isa BOTA	37	35	30	36	33	46
Nebo	0	9	20	22	15	17
North Burnett ( <i>Eidsvold-Cracow</i> )	13	18	13	13	7	12
QLD Lone Members	15	25	20	22	12	10
Quilpie	29	32	14	14	17	14
Richmond	18	17	19	20	31	33
Roma	23	30	28	33	40	35
Southern Downs ( <i>Stanthorpe District</i> )	36	31	30	32	29	28
Springsure-Rolleston	0	21	17	21	25	24
St George	41	49	46	52	43	28
Talwood	4	9	23	24	23	24
Tambo	24	27	27	41	36	34
Taroom-Wandoan	42	39	43	44	43	38
Thargomindah	0	1	0	5	10	8
Western Downs ( <i>Condamine-WD</i> )	34	37	40	41	40	30
Westmar-Inglestone	64	53	53	55	46	44
Winton	33	40	29	29	32	31
Yaraka-Isisford	34	31	32	34	39	35
	<b>992</b>	<b>1235</b>	<b>1123</b>	<b>1248</b>	<b>1255</b>	<b>1167</b>

## 51<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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<b>Australia Wide Membership Totals</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
New South Wales	796	827	767	836	790	739
Northern Territory	106	129	105	109	148	124
Queensland	992	1235	1123	1248	1255	1265
South Australia	90	102	95	97	91	121
Tasmania	42	40	23	24	12	14
Western Australia	322	315	274	297	250	240
	<b><u>2348</u></b>	<b><u>2648</u></b>	<b><u>2387</u></b>	<b><u>2611</u></b>	<b><u>2546</u></b>	<b><u>2503</u></b>
Corporate		<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
School Corporate				<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

<b>Financial Branches 31/05/2022</b>	
New South Wales	26
Northern Territory	3
Queensland	45
South Australia	8
Tasmania	1
Western Australia	12
	<b>95</b>

51<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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**Chair:**

**Secretary:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_