



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia

Advocating for equitable access to education for students in rural and remote Australia

POST-CONFERENCE MEDIA RELEASE

Isolated parents and children snap up the opportunity to meet in the Top End 31 July 2023

Members and guests of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association Australia enjoyed an extremely successful 52nd annual Federal Conference in Darwin last week.

Around 200 members and guests came together to present motions, network, share experiences of educating children in rural and remote Australia.

Regional Education Commissioner, Hon Fiona Nash, who opened the conference shared what she loves about attending-

"I find coming to conferences like this absolutely inspirational, there are people here that have come from all over the country who live in rural and remote communities, who are absolutely so passionate about making their communities better, doing everything they can, not for their own children's futures but for their peers futures, their friends children's futures and it is just the most terrific thing to see the debate that comes, the ideas that come from the ground, the work that goes in to supporting the motions that they're putting here at this conference, it's truly inspirational"

More than thirty ICPA branches from all over Australia were represented in Darwin, from areas including Tasmania, far west NSW, outback South Australia, Midwest WA, Far North Queensland and throughout the NT.

These members shared stories from families experiencing many challenges in the provision of educational opportunities for their children in rural and remote Australia. Over 70 motions were presented, debated and voted on during conference, often with great passion and emotion. Issues included -

- The high cost of sending children to boarding school, when they have no other option available for their children to access secondary education.
- The difficulty rural and remote families face when accessing appropriate early childhood education that meets the unique needs of geographically isolated families.
- Challenges that school leavers from rural and remote Australia face when accessing assistance enabling them to continue into higher education or commence and continue an apprenticeship.
- Difficulties geographically isolated families face being able to access diagnosis and ongoing treatment and support for learning disabilities.
- The continued call for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance to recognise and remunerate the overwhelming cost and commitment geographically isolated families face when providing a home tutor for students accessing their compulsory education via distance education.

All motions and explanations, including several case studies, can be found [here](#).

When asked about the importance of the Annual Federal Conference, outgoing ICPA (Aust) Federal President Alana Moller said-

"ICPA helps people know that just because they live in isolated locations they are not alone, and it gives them the opportunity to collaborate and meet with those people who are all the same as them, they come together, enjoying each other's company all in the name of making sure that rural and remote children are educated equitably..."

I can't describe just how the passion in the room and the inspiration in the room is second to none and knowing that we are able to come together from such vast distances and from such different places, to share our experiences and have a voice and hope that someone is listening, can't be understated".

Several Federal politicians attended Conference, including Assistant Minister for Education, Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm, Senator for NSW Perin Davey and Senator for Queensland Susan McDonald.

Attendees heard an inspirational presentation from Keynote speaker Tracey Hayes, Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, Chair - Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia. Siblings Dean, Jess and Margo Sullivan entertained the audience with tales of growing up at Cave Creek near Mataranka and the difference ICPA made to their educational opportunities.

The conference was hosted and convened by ICPA NT State Council. ICPA NT President, Moira Lanzarin, said -

"On behalf of all Northern Territory ICPA members, sponsors and stakeholders, it has been our absolute pleasure to host Federal ICPA conference in our beautiful capital city. We wish the 2023-4 Federal Council all the best and are looking forward to all meeting again in Sydney next year. Travel safe."

ICPA Federal Council will immediately begin working with Government and stakeholders on the motions carried at conference to address the issues experienced by geographically isolated students from early childhood to tertiary and training.

For further information and comments please contact:

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