



ICPA NT 2025 State Conference

Portfolio Reports

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ICPA NT - 2024 Portfolio Teams

Boarding & Allowances	Melissa Kerr , Kerrie Scott, Bec Osmotherly, Kiya Gill
Distance Education & Communications	Amanda Murphy , Danyelle Haigh, Connie Woods
Early Childhood	Jacinta McInnerney , Julianne Vlach, Danyelle Haigh
Tertiary & Training	Kiya Gill , Catherine Atkins
Rural & Remote Schools	Melissa Kerr , Jacinta McInnerney
Special Needs	Jacinta McInnerney'
Miscellaneous	Moira Lanzarin

Please also see our revised **Policy Documents** that will be presented at this year's conference.

The Policy Statement will become ICPA NT Policy (updated only via full Constitutional process). All Policy Objectives are determined by resolved motions from conference and referenced with year and motion number.

Department of Education update on motions from the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) 2024 State Conference

Motion	Department response – July 2024
Special needs	
<p>1. Katherine branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT requests that the Dept of Education and the Dept of Health provide targeted support to ‘Special Needs Teachers’ at Schools of the Air. To better educate and support Home Tutors and families of students who are Geographically Isolated and have recognised additional needs.</p>	<p>The Department of Education (the department) can confirm that Katherine School of the Air and Alice Springs School of the Air each have an allocated Key Contact in Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Programs and Services (SWIPS) Client Services team that is available to provide advice and support to the school.</p> <p>The schools are able to request a service for support and this has been discussed as part of the School Service Plan. This includes planning for support to special education teachers, home tutors and students through professional consultancy, professional learning sessions and individual supports (e.g. assessments and counselling) as required.</p> <p>The School Service Plans are reviewed regularly by the Key Contact and school leadership to ensure that needs identified by the school are supported.</p>
Allowances	
<p>2. Katherine Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT requests the Department of Education annually review the Student Assistance Boarding Allowance, including the zone methodology and allowance amounts, to ensure all geographically isolated boarding students are adequately and fairly financially supported to complete their compulsory schooling.</p>	<p>The first annual review of the simplified Student Assistance Scheme will occur in 2024.</p> <p>Planning for the Review of the Student Assistance Schemes (Stage 4) commenced in April 2024. One year after the major changes (Stage 1 and 2) were implemented and following the processing of the 2023 grandfathered applications which closed on 31 March 2024.</p> <p>The implementation review plan will include a collaborative approach and scheduled meetings with key stakeholders, including the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association.</p> <p>Future review cycles will be considered as part of this review.</p>

Motion	Department response – July 2024
<p>3. Alice Springs Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT lobbies the NT Department of Education for an increase in all allowances within the Student Assistance Scheme, including the kilometre travel rate, to more closely reflect the real cost of travel and the actual distance families must travel in kilometres instead of the radius travelled & zone restrictions which is currently being used, especially in light of the number of kilometres our members travel on dirt roads to access education.</p>	<p>As part of the simplified Student Assistance Scheme, families no longer receive allowances based on a per kilometre travel rate and instead are provided with lump sum amounts. This provides families with the flexibility to choose how best to use their funding.</p> <p>Under the new scheme, a majority of recipients receive increased support and it is expected that additional families have access to support through the new schemes.</p> <p>Implementation challenges will be considered as part of the review of the scheme.</p>
<p>4. Katherine Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT requests the NT Student Assistance Scheme includes all students eligible for the <u>Federal Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme</u> - under the <i>'Isolated Conditions - No reasonable Access to School'</i> Clause, where families are required to work onsite at various geographically isolated locations throughout the school year preventing them from being able to enrol in a conventional public school.</p>	<p>Planning for the Review of the Student Assistance Schemes (Stage 4) commenced in April 2024. One year after the major changes (Stage 1 and 2) were implemented and following the processing of the 2023 grandfathered applications which close on 31 March 2024.</p> <p>The implementation review plan will include a collaborative approach and scheduled meetings with key stakeholders, including the Isolated Children's Parents' Association.</p> <p>Guidance resources to support efficiency of the scheme will be considered as part of the review.</p> <p>The new policy and procedures for the updated Internet Subsidy Scheme for Distance Education Students includes provisions for families who work across various geographically isolated locations.</p>
<p>5. Alice Springs Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT requests that the Department of Education offer training sessions for all Northern Territory based subsidies available for Geographically Isolated students and families enrolled in schools of distance education.</p>	<p>In 2024, department representatives provided information sessions tailored to the requests of the distance education schools. One session was held in Katherine on 8 February 2024 and another held in Alice Springs on 27 February 2024. Additional information sessions can be provided upon request.</p> <p>Guidance resources to support efficiency of the scheme will be considered as part of the Student Assistance Scheme review.</p>
<p>6. Katherine Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT encourages the NT Education Department to continually improve the Student Assistance Scheme application, re-application and processing systems and ensure the scheme subsidies and assistance is appropriate to the needs of isolated students.</p>	<p>Planning for the Review of the Student Assistance Schemes (Stage 4) commenced in April 2024. One year after the major changes (Stage 1 and 2) were implemented and following the processing of the 2023 grandfathered applications which closed on 31 March 2024.</p> <p>The implementation review plan will include an engagement approach and scheduled meetings with key stakeholders, including the Isolated Children's Parents' Association.</p> <p>Guidance resources to support efficiency of the scheme will be considered as part of the review.</p>

Motion	Department response – July 2024
<p>7. Katherine Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT requests that the Department of Education extend the Back to School voucher scheme to all Northern Territory Geographically Isolated Students that are required to Board Interstate to complete their compulsory schooling.</p>	<p>The department has committed to reviewing the Back to School payment scheme policy in 2024 with the updated policy to take effect in 2025.</p> <p>The review will include engaging with stakeholders.</p> <p>The Back to School payment scheme is a Northern Territory (NT) Government initiative to assist families with certain school related costs at the beginning of the school year. The entitlement to purchase educational items can only be redeemed at the student's school.</p> <p>Students enrolled and attending a NT school are eligible for the scheme. This includes students enrolled at a NT Government school, non-government school and NT home-educated students.</p>
<p>8. Alice Springs Branch</p> <p>That NT ICPA requests that the Department of Education review the current policy that guides Schools of Distance Education for the "Back to School Voucher" scheme, to allow more flexibility for Geographically isolated families enrolled in schools of Distance Education to purchase what is needed for their remote classrooms.</p>	<p>The department has committed to reviewing the Back to School payment scheme policy in 2024 with the updated policy to take effect in 2025.</p> <p>The review will include engaging with stakeholders.</p> <p>The Back to School payment scheme is a NT Government initiative to assist families with certain school related costs at the beginning of the school year. The entitlement to purchase educational items can only be redeemed at the student's school.</p> <p>Students enrolled and attending a NT school are eligible for the scheme. This includes students enrolled at a NT Government school, non-government school and NT home-educated students.</p> <p>School representative bodies decide the appropriate goods and services on offer within their school community.</p>
<p>9. Alice Springs Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT lobbies the NT department of Education to provide student assistance scheme funding via an enrolment base model rather than state based model.</p>	<p>The Student Assistance Scheme is an NT Government scheme and is aimed at supporting families who reside in the NT. There is no plan to extend the eligibility of the Distance Education Allowance to students who reside outside of the NT.</p> <p>Families who reside interstate may wish to contact their local state government to address support for cross-border distance education.</p> <p>We understand some financial assistance is available to geographically isolated students in South Australia through the Travelling Allowance.</p>
<p>Distance Education</p>	

Motion	Department response – July 2024
<p>10. Katherine Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT ensures the NT Department of Education subsidises the full amount of school room internet to families, and remains a key participant and advisor to the Department of Education regarding the provision required for distance education.</p>	<p>Under the Internet Subsidy Scheme for Distance Education Students, geographically isolated families are provided assistance with internet costs for the purpose of accessing distance education.</p> <p>In 2023, the department conducted a review of the scheme and following consultation with principals from distance education, have developed new policy and procedures to strengthen the application and eligibility assessment process.</p> <p>The subsidy will be implemented in 2 stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● from Term 1, 2024 Katherine School of the Air and Alice Springs School of the Air will continue to facilitate payment of \$165 per month to eligible households for the 2024 school year ● from Term 1, 2025 the subsidy will be centrally managed through the NT Government’s grant management system - GrantsNT and the subsidy paid will match the applicant’s internet tax invoice of up to \$174 per month (based on Starlink Roam). <p>The department presented at the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Katherine School of the Air School Representative Board (SRB) meeting on 8 February 2024, where the SRB endorsed end semester payments to eligible families ● Alice Springs School of Air Home Tutor Conference held on 27 February 2024 and this included information on the Student Assistance Scheme on Distance Education Allowance and the Back to School payment scheme. <p>Families may be able to access additional assistance towards internet or other related costs under the Australian’s Government’s Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme or the Student Assistance Scheme the Distance Education Allowance.</p>
<p>11. Alice Springs Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT direct the Minister for Education and NT Government to ensure that Schools of Distance Education are funded appropriately for permanent and adequate Information & Communication Technology (ICT) positions within each School of Distance Education.</p>	<p>The department provides annual funding to government schools using the School Resourcing Model methodology. The School Resourcing Model methodology provides distance education schools with additional funding through the distance education weighting in the Student Needs Based Funding Model.</p> <p>Schools have autonomy about the use of school managed resources to meet the needs of their student cohort. This includes the staffing profile and operational expenditure within this funding allocation having regard to strategies and initiatives identified through strategic and operational planning.</p>

Motion	Department response – July 2024
<p>12. Katherine Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT continues to relay the importance of Northern Territory Schools of the Air to all relevant Ministers and Government departments.</p>	<p>Noted – no action for the department.</p>
<p>13. Alice Springs Branch</p> <p>That ICPA NT works with and encourages NBN to continue exploring low latency internet connection options for students enrolled and studying at schools of distance education.</p>	<p>Noted – no action for the department.</p>
<p>14. Alice Springs Branch</p> <p>That NT ICPA requests that the Northern Territory Department of Education partner with internet providers (such as NBN) to ensure educational connections are available to Schools of Distance Education.</p>	<p>The Department of Corporate and Digital Development (DCDD) manage relationships with major telecommunications providers, including NBN co., Telstra, Vocus and Speedcast. This request should be referred direct to DCDD.</p>
<p>15. Alice Springs Branch (motion lost)</p> <p>That NT ICPA lobbies the Department of Education to provide remuneration to families with students enrolled in Schools of Distance Education to cover monthly costs incurred with portable internet connections.</p>	<p>No response required – motion lost.</p>
<p>Early Childhood</p>	

Motion	Department response – July 2024
<p>16. Alice Springs Branch:</p> <p>That ICPA NT lobbies the relevant NT Government Departments to ensure registered Early Childhood Services operating in the Central Australian region are financially supported to implement their program into the geographically isolated areas of Central Australia, which are not receiving such services.</p>	<p>The department continues to liaise regularly with ICPA NT regarding access to early childhood programs. Expanded access to supported playgroups in Central Australia has been offered through Families as First Teachers (FaFT), including establishing an ICPA specific supported playgroup for families when attending Alice Springs School of the Air in-school events.</p> <p>ICPA has lobbied the department for mobile playgroups for Central Australia for many years. The department has raised this with the Australian Government, as the primary funder for these programs.</p> <p>Playgroup NT is supporting RAISEducation (a business that provides isolated families with resources to support distance education) to deliver face to face and online early learning playgroups across Central Australia under the federally funded <i>Helping Families Learn and Grow with Playgroups (FLAG) stream of the Children and Parenting Support (CaPS) program</i>. The program will run from 2024 to 2026. FaFT has supported RAISEducation through offers of training (Abecedarian, ASK-TRAK, participation in regional forums and online mentoring support), materials and scoping of areas of need in Central Australia.</p>
Miscellaneous	
<p>17. Katherine Branch:</p> <p>That ICPA NT implores the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics to increase maintenance of roads to ensure safe conditions for families travelling to attend for educational purposes and school staff.</p>	<p>Noted – no action for the department.</p>
<p>18. NT State Council:</p> <p>That ICPA NT make urgent appeals to relevant Ministers and Senators of the absolute importance of the need for the speedy installation and activation of the Tennant Creek BOM Radar.</p>	<p>As noted at the 18 June 2024 School Education Advisory Group (SEAG) meeting, the department will raise the issue of installation and activation of a new Tennant Creek weather radar at the Territory Emergency Management Council.</p>
<p>19. Alice Springs Branch:</p> <p>That ICPA NT be acknowledged and congratulated in their ongoing efforts throughout the year in attending delegations and lobbying Government on our behalf for a brighter future for our children in rural and remote Australia.</p>	<p>The department acknowledges and gives thanks to the ICPA NT for their ongoing advocacy and support to isolated children and their families.</p> <p>The department will work with ICPA executives to determine an appropriate public acknowledgement that responds to this motion.</p>

Boarding and Allowances Portfolio

Portfolio Team - Melissa Kerr, Kerrie Scott, Bec Osmotherly

Eight motions were carried under the Boarding and Allowances Portfolio at the 2024 State Conference, with lots of discussion around enrolment funding models, allowances, back to school vouchers and the Student Assistance Scheme (SAS).

The Student Assistance Scheme policy and guidelines was simplified with the introduction of GrantsNT in 2023, and allowances have been grouped to decrease the burden on applicants. With the vast distances families travel in the NT, the way the zone allowance is calculated still remains an issue for some families in 2024.

The mission statement of the Education Act 2015 is -

“An Act to provide for the availability of education in the Northern Territory and in particular to provide for the access of all children and young persons to education programs appropriate to their individual needs and abilities, and for related purposes.”

ICPA NT advocated that the NT Government’s position that it is “preferable all students should attend school within the NT, including boarding school”, is untenable and that instead their policy should work to keep families in the NT. We are aware many NT boarding students receive significant and ongoing NT Government support under the (Indigenous) Transition Support Unit to attend education opportunities across Australia. This should be available to all GI students in the NT, indigenous and non indigenous.

ICPA NT advocates that ALL geographically isolated families should be supported to choose a school with the best fit and necessary support for both the student and family.

In April 2024, after the ICPA NT State Conference, Council met with the Department of Education and Training to discuss the review of the Student Assistance Scheme (SAS) policy and guidelines, and the internet subsidy.

The SAS review was to be completed by the end of May, with no new grandfather clauses after the end of March. There was to be a 1 year review and another review within 3-5 years. ICPA NT asked if the SAS could be reviewed annually and allowances indexed to CPI. Other issues raised for the review were:

- greater clarity on criteria
- definitions of GI
- relationship to other subsidies
- contractor family eligibility
- remote transit
- attendance at school
- split parents

If contractor families are eligible for AIC, then why are they not eligible for the SAS?

We have been informed since the simplification of the SAS through GrantsNT, uptake of the interstate boarding allowance has increased from 13 family applications to 40, and over 90 for distance education. The DE allowance does not include high school or online school if you are not enrolled in a SOA.

The internet subsidy is in isolation to the SAS, and has been increased to \$174/m. Contractors with no fixed address are required to complete a statutory declaration. (Also see Distance Ed & Communications Portfolio)

Back to school vouchers are not available to students who board interstate. ICPA NT continues to challenge this ruling.

A discussion was had about resident fares, with capped affordable concessional airfare to travel to and from boarding school, within the NT and interstate. Currently, only residents of Alice Springs can access the resident fares for return flights to Darwin or Adelaide.

ICPA NT continues to advocate for concessional travel intrastate and interstate for GI boarding school students.

Federal Motions

Update from Federal Council:

ICPA Federal Council has 3 key issues for boarding and allowances:

1. Restoring the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance (BBA) to its original intent of 55% of the average cost of boarding and align it with the CPI Sub Education Index
2. Removal of Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) on accommodation provided by boarding schools for essential live in staff
3. The extension of the AIC Distance Education allowance to 3-4 year old geographically isolated children accessing an approved distance education early learning program.

ICPA Federal Council had numerous meetings with Ministers, Senators and Members of Parliament in 2024 advocating on behalf of all State Councils on these matters. Leading into this Federal election cycle, the Federal Council submitted their budget briefing papers to all MPs to move forward with solutions and reform that ensures equity to access for education for ALL geographically isolated families living in rural and remote Australia.

Communications & Distance Education Portfolio

Portfolio Team - Amanda Murphy, Danyelle Haigh, Constance Woods

At the 2024 NT state conference there were five motions carried by delegates. Most motions are expressing concern over reliability and speed of internet connection as well as the ongoing and increasing costs of providing reliable communications for our Distance Education Classrooms.

There has been traction with the increase of the Internet Subsidy Scheme for Distance Education Students but it still isn't covering the costs for a majority of families. Then there are still the costs of installation and maintenance for educational communications that are not covered by the subsidy amount either.

Given that adequate and equitable access to reliable telecommunication and internet service is a vital part of distance education for GI families, NT State council continues to work with government departments and relevant organisations to ensure that children accessing Distance Education in rural and remote areas have the best possible connections. As the world of technology moves fast, we need to ensure that education being delivered in geographically isolated areas is moving with it.

10. Katherine Branch *That ICPA NT ensures the NT Department of Education subsidises the full amount of school room internet to families and remains a key participant and advisor to the Department of Education regarding the provision required for distance education.*

In 2024 the Department of Education and Training (DOET), after consultation with principals from ASSOA and KSOTA developed new policy and procedures. The subsidy was increased to \$174 per month, but will not be implemented until Term 1 2025. For the remainder of 2024 the internet subsidy payment was facilitated by the Schools of the Air with the plan being to shift the subsidy being claimed via the Grants NT for the invoiced amount of the internet subscription with a cap of \$174 per month. The DOET also commented that additional assistance for internet and other related costs carried by families for the provision of distance education may be accessed via the Federal Government's Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance and the NT Student Assistance Scheme - Distance Education Allowance which doesn't seem fair.

11. Alice Springs Branch *That ICPA NT direct the Minister for Education and NT Government to ensure that Schools of Distance Education are funded appropriately for permanent and adequate Information & Communication Technology (ICT) positions within each School of Distance Education.*

Response from the DOET: Funding is allocated to government schools using the "School Resourcing Model methodology." This model gives distance education schools with additional funding through the distance education weighting in the student needs based funding model. The schools have autonomy about the use of school managed resources, including staffing and operational expenditure. ICPA NT are putting forward a motion re the SRS model at this conference.

12. Katherine Branch *That ICPA NT continues to relay the importance of Northern Territory Schools of the Air to all relevant Ministers and Government departments.*

The NT State council continues to advocate for all GI families, particularly Distance Education through delegations with NT policy makers and all relevant organisations. Government departments and the Education Minister are well aware and fully supportive of the importance of Schools of the Air for geographically isolated children in the NT.

Early Childhood Portfolio

2024 Early Childhood Portfolio Team - Jacinta McInnerney, Julianne Vlach, Danyelle Haigh.

There was one Early Childhood motion at the 2024 State Conference from Alice Springs Branch – that ICPA NT lobbies the relevant NT Government Department to ensure registered Early Childhood Services operating in the Central Australian region are financially supported to implement their program into the geographically isolated areas of Central Australia, which are not receiving such services. The Education Department continues to liaise regularly with ICPA NT regarding access to early childhood programs and we extend our thanks to the Department for their support. ICPA NT has been pleased that there has been expanded access to supported playgroups in Central Australia through Families as First Teachers (FaFT), including establishing an ICPA specific supported playgroup for families when attending Alice Springs School of the Air in-school events.

Playgroup NT is supporting RAISEducation (a business that provided isolated families with resources to support distance education) to deliver face-to-face and online early learning playgroups across Central Australia under the federally funded Helping Families Learn and Grow with Playgroups (FLAG) stream of the Children and Parenting Support (CaPS) program. The program commenced in 2024 and will run until 2026. FaFT has supported RAISEducation through offers of training (Abecedarian, ASK-TRAK, participation in regional forums and online mentoring), materials and scoping of areas of need in Central Australia.

ICPA has lobbied the department for mobile playgroups for Central Australia for many years. The department has raised this with the Australian Government, as the primary funder for these programs.

KICS Playgroup (Katherine Isolated Children's Services) continues to offer quality Early Childhood Services to the Katherine and greater region. This mobile model is one which we consider best practice for GI students. It is currently funded Federally under a 5 year programme but consistent long-term funding is still difficult and stressful.

Miscellaneous

2024 Rural & Remote Schools Portfolio - Moira Lanzarin

At the 2024 AGM, 3 motions were carried under the Miscellaneous heading. The need to increase maintenance on our regional road network to ensure safe travel for families and educators; urgency d for the installation and activation of the BOM station at Tennant Creek; and THANK YOU to ICPA NT State Council.

These first two motions were taken to relevant ministers and raised with whoever might be able to assist - in particular, NTCA (Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association). The more people that log a complaint about a road, the more traction possible for the issue to be expedited. All please REPORT A ROAD FAULT - by using NTCA's [reporting form](#).

The Barkly Electoral office informed us that progress was happening for the Tennant Creek weather station and that the early hurdles of land title clearance were finally dealt with and installation could go ahead. An independent review of the Barkly Regional Deal was being requested to understand why key projects like the weather radar were being delayed.

On behalf of ICPA NT State Council, it is our privilege and honour to advocate on our member's behalf.

Rural and Remote Schools Portfolio

2024 Rural & Remote Schools Portfolio Team Melissa Kerr, Jacinta McInnery

There were no Rural and Remote Schools motions at the NT State Conference in 2024, however Rural and Remote School informal discussions were held with the Department of Education, Principals, families, and NT Council of Governments Schools Organisation (NT COGSO) as opportunities arose.

On 27th November 2024 a Rural Schools Joint Council zoom meeting was held. Nikki Mahony, Federal Council Rural Schools, hosted the meeting. All states were online except New South Wales and Tasmania.

The main issues discussed were:

1. School Resource Standard – has 7 items including disability and Indigenous. ICPA advocated to include Geographically Isolated as a separate item. States deliver the education, but at a Federal level, they need the awareness to include GI as one of the SRS loadings.
2. Paid practicals for teachers.
3. Extend the skilled worker visa to include primary schools.

Rural and remote schools across Australia are disadvantaged in a number of ways and in particular by being located in geographically isolated areas. These schools are challenged to educate children and to retain experienced teaching staff often with heavy workloads in these rural and remote communities.

Adelaide River Primary School has implemented year 7 in 2024 and year 8 in 2025 to try and encourage students to remain in the school system, particularly geographically isolated students and Indigenous students from our local community. This is distinct from the dual enrollment with a Distance Ed/School of the Air which occurs in some rural schools for their secondary students. This has been successful in retaining students in the community and alleviating them from travelling hours each day to and from school.

Yarralin school in the Victoria River district was excited to welcome secondary-aged students in Term 4 of 2024. The school was proud that their high attendance and dedicated students led to the expansion of the school to five classes. Six students started in the Giduwa (Goanna) class in October last year. Well done to the principal, teachers, students, families and community in Yarralin.

Special Needs Portfolio

2024 Special Needs Portfolio - Jacinta McInnerney

The Katherine Branch moved a motion at the 2024 State Conference requesting the Department of Education and the Department of Health provide targeted support to 'Special Needs Teachers' at Schools of the Air. The Department of Education confirmed that Katherine School of the Air and Alice Springs School of the Air each have an allocated Key Contact in Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Programs and Services (**SWIPS**) Client Services team that is available to provide advice and support to the school.

The schools are able to request a service for support and this has been discussed as part of the School Service Plan. This includes planning for support to special education teachers, home tutors and students through professional consultancy, professional learning sessions and individual support (e.g. assessments and counselling) as required. The School Service Plans are reviewed regularly by the key contact and school leadership to ensure that needs identified by the school are supported. ICPA NT welcomes the allocation of the SWIPS Key Contact in each School of the Air as our geographically isolated students deserve the same opportunities as their urban peers when needing support for additional needs.

One family attending Katherine School of the Air has shared that they have received good support for their child from their inclusion support teacher while other parents in other locations have identified that there are still gaps in the support for their children. ICPA NT will continue to follow up with families to see if their children are receiving the support they need through training, coaching and mentoring of teachers and educators, adjustments to the curriculum, SWIPS team working with students (as appropriate) and referrals to other services. ICPA NT will continue to lobby for equitable access for education for all our children including children with disabilities, developmental delays, additional needs and the gifted and talented.

IICPA NT has recently shared on our socials information about the **Envisage Families Program**. This is a fully funded program for parents and caregivers raising children aged 0-8 years with developmental concerns or disability. Children do not need to have a diagnosis or be on a NDIS Plan. Families can join the program at selected locations in the NT or choose the online option for the workshops, making this program one that is really geared to our ICPA NT members being in geographically isolated locations. In the Envisage Families Program, families connect with other caregivers where they can share their experiences, learn effective strategies and access practical tools for supporting the child and family.

Tertiary & Training Portfolio

2024 Tertiary and Training Portfolio Team - Kiya Gill and Catherine Atkins

Training is vital to continue to grow and build the agriculture and rural industries. We are committed to working with stakeholders to develop programs that specifically improve our home classrooms across the Northern Territory.

No new tertiary and training motions were presented at our 2024 State Conference.

Over the past two years, ICPA NT has been working with Charles Darwin University to gain better recognition and training opportunities for Home Tutors across the Northern Territory.

Our vision is to;

- Support Home Tutors by equipping them with the necessary skills to work and travel safely remotely.
- Build opportunities for employment pathways for NT school leavers.
- Create career pathways in education, early childhood and agriculture.
- Connect a network of Home Tutors to support one another, share ideas and be resilient.
- Assist families to attract and retain Home Tutors in rural and remote classrooms across the NT.
- Assist geographically isolated students in receiving a higher educational standard.

Last year we asked friends and supporters of ICPA NT to please endorse this new initiative by writing a letter of support for funding. Thank you to everybody who took the time to support us! We were completely overwhelmed by your response, our inboxes and hearts were full! It highlights and reaffirms that we can achieve the impossible when we work together.

Late last year we successfully received funding from the Northern Territory Government to support the roll out of a new Vocational Training Program specifically designed to support Home Tutors.
VTP523 Gateway for Home Tutors in Isolated Areas

This new program was specifically designed as an introduction course with a safety focus. Students who complete this course will receive a First Aid certificate, learn how to operate a 4WD on unsealed roads and receive an introduction into workplace health and safety. Once completed they have the opportunity to further consider career pathways into education, early childhood and agriculture.

Late last year we had a soft launch of the program in Alice Springs with three home tutors enrolling in the program and completed the two 4WD units in December. We will continue to promote this program throughout 2025 with planned face to face training delivered during in-school weeks.

At this stage the program is only funded for Home Tutors residing in Central Australia and the Barkly Region. Charles Darwin University is meeting with the Northern Territory Government to negotiate expanding the scope of training to rural and remote Home Tutors.

Our friends at Connellan Airways continue to support and grow educational opportunities in the bush. We have partnered with them on a special grant to encourage Home Tutors to study the Vocational Training Program. The first 15 Home Tutors to successfully complete the program will be able to apply for a one off payment of \$300 to assist with the costs associated with studying this course.

Last year ICPA NT assisted three Home Tutors with a small grant to help them with some of the costs associated with travel and accommodation to complete their placement in Certificate IV in School Based Education Support. We are delighted to share that all three Home Tutors successfully completed their Certificate and are still working as Home Tutors in 2025. One of the Home Tutors has even continued studying and enrolled in a Bachelor of Education. This is a great outcome and highlights the importance of continuing to develop training pathways for Home Tutors.

Please see below testimonies from them we would like to share:

Lara *“The most interesting material has been learning about ASD and the various behaviours displayed by children and youth. This is something that I had limited exposure to previously, and I have really enjoyed furthering my learning and understanding in these areas.”*

Meeka *“I have been able to have a better understanding of child development which has helped me in my role as a home tutor on a remote station. I have learnt many new skills as well as been exposed to resources that would not have been possible otherwise.”*

Katy *“Hearing different ideas and methods from other people has opened my eyes to things I’d never even considered implementing in our own classroom, and it has been fantastic to have the support and friendship connections with other Home Tutors completing this course.”*

ICPA NT would like to grow and expand their engagement with Home Tutors in general across the Territory. As part of this new initiative we will be working towards releasing a Home Tutor specific grants program to assist them with study opportunities.

We also approached Alice and Katherine School of the Air in regards to establishing an annual rural and remote education award at each school. This award is to celebrate the outstanding contributions Home Tutors make to rural and remote classrooms across the Northern Territory with the recipients receiving a monetary award of \$500.00 sponsored by ICPA NT. Katherine School of the Air proudly recognised the outstanding contribution of Steph Mackenzie at their end of year celebrations. We hope this award continues to inspire Home tutors in the future.