

## **BRANCH REPORTS**

### **CENTRAL WHEATBELT NORTH REPORT**

#### **Lisa Brennan, President**

There has been a lot of gratitude from our branch members for the 'continuation of services' to our small rural schools, especially the on-site dental van service. Thanks to ICPA (WA) State Council for your continued advocacy on this important issue. At the 2021 State Conference, Commissioner for Children and Young People Mr Colin Pettit mentioned the important impact of dental care delivery on student education.

Thank you to State Council for their ongoing advocacy around issues that face access to education, especially in the portfolios of Rural Schools, Allowances (AIC, BAHA and post-compulsory allowances), Accommodation and Curriculum.

Amanda and Lisa attended the Federal Conference in Perth in August 2022. It was professionally convened by WA State Council, with interesting speakers, motions and debates. Keynote speaker Craig Challen evoked empathetic floor discussion about resilience, hope and overcoming seemingly impossible challenges and expectations!

Our Branch has had a change of office bearer positions for 2023. Thank you to outgoing office bearers Lisa Brennan and Amanda Nixon, and welcome to Kate McCreery and Jane Lang. Thank you for taking the positions on.

We appreciate the efforts of the State Council in hosting the annual State Conference. It provides a crucial space to bring rural, regional and remote families together to discuss and discover the realities of access to education.

### **EASTERN DISTRICTS BRANCH REPORT**

#### **Samantha Greay, President**

It is with great sadness to report little has been done in the branch over the past 12 months. I stood down as President in 2022 hoping to find a new person to fill this role, without any luck.

The annual Melbourne Cup luncheon branch fundraiser was cancelled due to a lack of members committing. This is only the second time in our 40 years that this has happened.

Eastern Districts Branch without a President faces either amalgamation with another branch or going into recess after the AGM scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023.

We wish all State Council and all branches a wonderful 2023.

### **ESPERANCE BRANCH REPORT**

#### **Jane Wandel, President**

The Esperance Branch is due to hold its AGM on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

During 2022 we attended the local Esperance Residential College end-of-year function to present an award and were given the opportunity to speak about the incredible work the ICPA does over all levels of Education.

## **GASCOYNE BRANCH REPORT**

**Alys McKeough, President**

Nil report

## **GOLDFIELDS EYRE BRANCH REPORT**

**Tallaya Wood, President**

The Goldfields Eyre Branch held our AGM in October 2022 in conjunction with the Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association (GNRBA) AGM, an event many of our members come to Kalgoorlie to attend. Those who could not be there in person attended via zoom, and it was nice to see various interested parties such as representatives from our local Elders branches and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) stay to see what we were about.

Currently, our office bearers are:

President: Tallaya Wood  
Vice President: Elyce Donaghy  
Secretary: Katherine Hall  
Treasurer: Madeline Wildy

We were all very proud when Jasmine Carmody put her hand up for State Council and have been impressed by her hard work and dedication to her role this past year. It is invaluable for branches to have members on the State Council, and we would like to thank Jasmine for stepping up to represent our kids and our families on a state level. Whilst rewarding, it can also be very daunting to take on a role such as a state councillor, especially for a mum of three very little girls with a station to run as well. Thank you for being a voice for our kids, Jasmine.

Jasmine Carmody as a State Councillor, Katie Hall, Karen Forrester, Elyce Donaghy and I attended the Federal Conference in Perth this year. A very successful conference with much debate, discussion and plenty of networking. All motions presented by the branch were carried, and we came home feeling invigorated and ready to take on the world for our kids.

Aside from conferences and debates over pending motions, we managed to fit in some fun with our inaugural Kids Fun Day and Glitz and Glamour Bushman's Ball. We had hoped to use the event to increase membership and whilst we had one family renew their membership after many years, we were a little disappointed not to get more isolated families on board. Despite our low membership numbers, we were able to raise our profile and our bank balance, raising \$7727 from the ball and live auction which means we can comfortably send delegates to both State and Federal Conferences again this year. We were also thrilled to see so many local kids participate in the Kids Fun Day that took place before the Ball. We are currently in the midst of organising another ball for August this year.

With membership in mind, we produced a pamphlet to disseminate to isolated families and small schools in our catchment area and have a meet and greet organised in Coolgardie for early Term 2. We are hoping to organise similar events in other Goldfield towns in the hopes of raising our profile and reach, thus helping families understand the importance of what we can do to support their families and their children's needs.

We have had some movement around members' concerns with the Fairbridge run Goldfields Camp School. With many thanks to the hard work and constant pressure of State Councillors; Fairbridge and Kalgoorlie School of the Air (KaSOTA) have been able to come to an arrangement in terms of the rooms and facilities the school would have access to on a camp, and as such our Home Tutors seminar will once again be held at the camp school. Our branch is cautiously optimistic that the camp school will once again be fit for purpose,

making school camps for isolated children the safe haven it once was. Again, we thank WA State Council for all its hard work in this area.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all Goldfields Eyre members for their tireless work and ongoing support and contribution to the branch, without you our children would not have access to the educational opportunities they currently do.

### **KIMBERLEY AIR BRANCH REPORT**

**Kirsty Forshaw, President**

Nil Report

### **LAKES DISTRICT BRANCH REPORT**

**Fiona Hobley, President**

Last year I attended the ICPA Lakes District meeting in Pingrup wearing a homemade mask that the kids and I had busily made before school commenced in February 2022. Our WA state borders were opening and COVID-19 was on the rise. What a year for 2022 and navigating COVID with school children and especially our boarding school kids.

At the Pingrup AGM last year, I listened to Claire Walter's President speech and her intention to step down as President, a mum with 3 boys who had finished their education years, the same as me a mum with 3 boys. She spoke about how much ICPA and the networking had given her that by the end of the meeting, I found myself accepting the President role.

One year on as President, I have not been able to give as I would have liked. Our State Conference held in March was held via Zoom which prompted me to install Starlink. It was amazing to finally have speed and data and attend a remote log-in meeting without dropping out and delays. I was very unsure about the conference expectations and how to read out motions and as luck would have it, I was the first cab off the ranks to read out a motion. Many thanks, Jane Cunningham and Kym Ross for helping me, I was a deer in headlights. The stories shared about the 50 years celebration were so heartfelt and really reminded everyone just how important it is to represent regional and isolated children and the challenges faced. The perfect opportunity was then on offer to attend the Federal Conference in August; however, I was robbed of my mid-year 'holiday' and networking chance as I caught COVID three days before the conference.

What I have done is actively listen to educational concerns, TAFE travel issues, teaching frustrations, and educational inequality in our regions, chatted to home-school mothers, boarding school students and parents, and have been progressively learning the ICPA ways.

I did see the strong relationship that ICPA developed with the Minister for Education during the height of COVID and between Director General Lisa Rodgers and Sally Brindal ICPA (WA) State President. To be at weekly meetings affecting boarding schools during the COVID peak was great to see. Plenty of parents needed support with protocols and navigating the pandemic implications.

A remarkable effort goes into the State team and we are lucky to have Jane Cunningham and Kym Ross at this level. We at the Lakes District Branch met twice last year and were once again able to hold our major fundraising effort at Newdegate Donut stand. This fundraising event enables us to send delegates to both State and Federal Conferences. I wish to acknowledge the incredible job that Claire Ness undertook in running the 2-day fundraiser, which is a hectic stand to work in and needs more support in 2023 from branch members from surrounding districts to assist over the 2 days.

While I felt lost at my first meeting, I am still not found, or comfortable in my role, yet I am keen to do more for our regional children. We need to find opportunities despite our distance to ensure our small schools are supported, as all children deserve a quality education no matter their residential address.

I was impressed with one article in Pedals magazine that spoke about mental health and the TidBits edition with a focus on homesickness written by a boarding student. While we look for the positives in children starting high school, for many this means a loved one leaving the family home to board away. It really is some of the hardest times in people's lives (for both parents and kids). The more we can do to support families and children in this transition phase and in the first few boarding years should be a high priority.

Nyabing has been a direct beneficiary of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association when lobbying for teacher housing over 5 years ago (finally the houses were tenanted in February this year) and is thankful to ICPA for their support with school bus services to enlist a third school bus in the area.

A big thank you to the current committee for being patient with me this year, especially Claire Walter and Kym Ross for their guidance. Let's keep our voice heard for the children learning in isolated and distanced regional locations.

## **MEEKATHARRA AIR BRANCH REPORT**

### **Claire Mahony, President**

Meekatharra Air Branch membership numbers have remained steady with nearly 20 members.

Our AGM and general meeting was held via Zoom quite late this year on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023. We have had one other general meeting which was held via Zoom in October 2022 and all branch correspondence between members is sent via email.

Our branch held a 2-day camp in July last year which the Ford family kindly hosted at Paroo Station. This brought together eight families with 10 adults and 21 children. Each family brought an evening meal and smoko's to share. All the kids enjoyed creating keepsake decoupage art projects, tie-dying shirts, an evening disco and playing quite a few games of capture the flag which was a great team event for all the kids.

August saw a record number of our branch members attend the Federal Conference in Perth and we thank State Council for their efforts in obtaining travel funding for us.

The only fundraising this past year was kindly undertaken by Natalie Broad at the Landor Races held in October where she raised a whopping \$2540. Natalie donated \$500 of this to REVISE and \$2040 to our branch. Thank you Nat for the huge effort.

Lauren Lewis has set up a Containers for Change account for the branch which should be well received after having a stinking hot summer which in turn quenches the thirst!

In December, Meekatharra Air Branch awarded a bursary prize to a year six student from Meekatharra School of the Air (MSOTA), the leaving students were asked to write about their favourite memory with MSOTA and our branch members would vote on whom they thought deserved to win the award. Last year the award went to Christabella Pumpa from Murgoo station, Murchison.

On behalf of our branch, we would like to thank State Council for their ongoing hard work.

## **MIDWEST BRANCH REPORT**

### **Jen Critch, President**

A very busy year for our Midwest community.

Our first meeting took place at the Geraldton Library on 7th February 2022, where we were all masked up or zooming in. Naomi Obst stepped down and Jackie Simkin stepped into the role of secretary. Thank you, Naomi, for all you do for our organisation. She is still heavily involved and is now a Federal Councillor with ICPA (Aust).

At the meeting, we were still planning for the State Conference, but waiting to see if we could proceed due to rising COVID-19 numbers. The conference was moved to an online format the next week. The online conference was well attended with 12 attendees from Midwest - thank you to all that logged on.

Midwest had one supplementary motion about boarding houses' 'disproportionate restrictions on boarding students to their day student peers' and the motion was passed.

We held another meeting on 8th June at the Geraldton Library. The Federal Conference was the main discussion topic.

Federal Conference was on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> August at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, which 9 Midwest Branch members attended. What a great event, well done to the WA State Council for their organisation. The Federal Conference is in Darwin in 2023.

We did not have a stall at the Mingenew Expo in 2022 due to the change of format for the Expo. This stall has in the past increased awareness of what we do and how we can help rural families and increased our membership base. We hope to have a stall in 2023.

Thank you so very much to our State Council for all their hard work and lobbying. To all our members, thank you for all your support and contribution to the Midwest Branch.

## **PILBARA BRANCH REPORT**

### **Robin Pensini, Treasurer**

The Pilbara Branch membership was down from the previous year from 20 to 15 in 2022 (including three life members). It is concerning to note that only two of the Port Hedland School of the Air (PHSOTA) families are members of ICPA. It has been challenging to maintain Branch momentum and attract new members with so few PHSOTA based face-to-face opportunities over the past two years due to COVID.

The Branch did not hold an AGM in 2022 and is currently operating with the previous year's Vice President, Julie Percy and Treasurer, Robin Pensini. The President and Secretary resigned during 2021. There has been no interest in any members stepping up to take on executive roles.

The Branch held two meetings in 2022. One meeting was held over Zoom in August and the second was conducted as an e-mail meeting whereby an agenda and notes were e-mailed to members, and they were given seven days to comment on items and motions. Through that meeting, a motion was passed for the Branch to refund new members \$25 from the 2023 membership fee in an effort to attract new families to ICPA. The total current Pilbara Branch membership fee is \$100.

To aid in recruiting members and raise awareness of ICPA, Sally Brindal, ICPA (WA) State President, travelled to Port Hedland in December to attend a PHSOTA end of school gathering to offer information to prospective members. Thank you to State Council for organising this. It was greatly appreciated.

There were no major fundraisers held during the year but fortunately, one member listed the Branch as the beneficiary for Containers for Change which brought in limited funds. We are hopeful the Marble Bar Races Sausage Sizzle fundraiser in July will restart this year provided members living around the area are available to organise it as that has been the major fundraiser in previous years.

The next meeting will be held face-to-face at the PHSOTA Home Tutor's Seminar in Port Hedland during the second week of March.

Special thanks also to Kym Ross for your encouragement.

### **WA LONES BRANCH REPORT**

#### **Michelle Abbott, Lones Officer**

The WA Lones Branch has maintained a steady membership over past years and continues to do so.

In 2022 WA Lones Branch had 19 members and in 2023 at the time of writing this membership stands at 8, but I am positive that with the reminders that have been sent out that this number will increase up to 2022 levels.

With members spread all over the State, the WA Lones Branch is a unique and diverse group. Many members are grateful to be able to support ICPA (WA) through this Branch. We encourage Boarding Schools and Residential Colleges 'to get on board' and support this amazing organisation which does so much for many WA children and their families.

The 2022 Federal Conference was held in Perth, and Jennifer Pitman attended as a WA Lones Branch member. Federal Conference will be in Darwin this year and there will be an opportunity for a Lones member to attend with funding offered.

This is my first and only year as Lones Officer. I have been on State Council for 3 years as Treasurer, and it is now time for me to step down. Best Wishes to all.

### **YALGOO BRANCH REPORT**

#### **Ruth Rowe, President**

The Yalgoo Branch has been a small branch for a considerable period of time; however, we are now in a position where we are struggling with membership numbers to remain a viable branch.

On a much more positive note, we are proud to have had Roxanne Morrissey and Erica Kellock become honorary Yalgoo Branch Life Members in early 2022. This is in recognition of the considerable time and effort contributed to the branch over several decades by both Roxanne and Erica representing the branch as Branch Presidents, various office bearer positions, fundraising, branch promotion, memberships and the list goes on.

A huge thank you on behalf of our Branch to you both for your contribution to the ICPA. Thanks also to ICPA (WA) for all of your brilliant work over the last year supporting WA families and for once again bringing another State Conference together.