

## **BRANCH REPORTS**

### **CENTRAL WHEATBELT NORTH REPORT**

**Kate McCreery, President**

Nil report

### **EASTERN DISTRICTS BRANCH REPORT**

**Gypsy Brayne, President**

Nil report

### **ESPERANCE BRANCH REPORT**

**Jane Wandel, President**

Nil report

### **GASCOYNE BRANCH REPORT**

**Alys McKeough, President**

Nil report

### **GOLDFIELDS EYRE BRANCH REPORT**

**Tallaya Wood, President**

After a hectic year, the Goldfields Eyre Branch held our AGM on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024 after 2 failed attempts in late 2023. Despite the delay this has worked in our favour as our AGM will again coincide with the Kalgoorlie SOTA Home Tutors camp allowing for an in-person meeting for as many members as possible.

Currently our office bearers are:

President: Karen Forrester  
Vice President: Tallaya Wood  
Secretary: Katherine Hall  
Treasurer: Madeline Wildy

Life member Jo-Anne Tonkin stepped up and represented our branch at the State Conference last year and we were very pleased that all our motions, including supplementary motions were passed. Katie Hall, Karen Forrester, Madeline Wildy and Ross Wood attended the Federal Conference in Darwin in July and again I was so proud to see WA and our branch in particular, so well represented. A very successful conference with much debate, discussion and plenty of networking. All motions presented by the branch were carried and Madeline in particular came away from her first ever conference feeling reinvigorated and ready to take on the world for our kids.

Membership and representation have again been a focus for our branch and with this in mind Madeline, Katie and I headed out to Coolgardie to head an information session at the local primary school. It was a lovely



afternoon with much discussion about the benefits and hardships kids face in rural schools and what the ICPA might be able to do to better support the local kids and their families in this community. From this session we gained three new family members and inspired new voices within our branch. Our gal on State Council Jasmine Carmody also recently presented an information session at the Laverton stakeholders meeting to much success and we hope to hear more from families in this community too.

Aside from the more formal elements of our role out here we did manage to fit in some community building and playfulness with our second ever Kids Fun Day and Winter Wonderland Bushman's Ball. Many Nullarbor locals braved the cold to frock up and dance the night away after the kids had wiped all the members out with an action packed kids fun day that included BMX races, sheep mustering, cattle roping and winter wonderland craft. Through kind donations, a fun packed live auction and a well-stocked bar we raised enough funds to send members to both State and Federal conferences in 2023 and raised our profile with many locals approaching me about what exactly it is we do and how they might get involved.

We were also lucky enough to be invited to the Meekatharra hosted ICPA camp in Sandstone in July. It was a gorgeous camp and a wonderful opportunity for our kids to meet more children in similar situations. Friends were made, fun was had and I think we all came away with our cups filled to the brim. We extend our thanks to Meekatharra for including us and are excited to host the camp in return this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to again 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 Hoble, President**

As Branch President for Lakes District, I have completed 2 years in the President's role with a prior blank canvas with ICPA. 2023 provided me with opportunities to represent ICPA Lakes District at our State Conference held in Perth in March and then at the Federal Conference in Darwin in July.

That's right, I made it to Darwin and decided to take my whole family along for the experience in the Top End. It was the first time my kids had been on a plane and they did comment the wing looked to be breaking apart as we landed the flaps were extended. We arrived at the airport at 6:00 pm and with a quick change of clothes, we were in the grand Darwin Parliament House by 7:00 pm for a formal welcome. By 8:30 pm my kids were running round barefoot on the lush lawns overlooking what I imagine was a beautiful bay view now cloaked in darkness.

The day tours organised by the Northern Territory Convening Committee for my family, while I was sitting for 2 days in conference, were lifetime memories from whip cracking, barramundi feeding, trucking tours and swimming in hot springs. As for the conference, I was once again in awe of the talented people in regional Australia endeavouring to strive for education equality from the outback to the hinterland to smack in the centre near Alice Springs. From right across Australia we all felt connected in that room with the drive for change, the prevalence of common sense and in some cases welcomed accomplishments on bettering education access, delivery and support.



It was pleasing to see at the Federal conference the appointment of Hon. Fiona Nash as the first Regional Education Commissioner. What was impressive is that not only had the Hon. Fiona Nash flown up to attend the conference she had in fact read our proposed motions for the conference and discussed several motions that she could relate to, process and even clearly see the solutions we were proposing and wondering why this had not been resolved earlier. It is this direct linkage that gives me hope for our ground issues to be heard and put on the table at a high level via ICPA.

Within our Lakes District Branch, we have exceptional people making significant changes and impact as our State ICPA members with Jane Cunningham President, Kym Ross back in the Secretary role/ State Conference Convenor and Arlene Sutherland State Councillor. The State team listens to the concerns from the regions and advocates on our behalf as Lakes members, hosts meetings in Perth with School Bus Services, members of Parliament, the Minister for Education and more.

The recent volunteer hours committed by Jane and Kym in Perth last week for meetings and then flying to Darwin over the weekend for the State face-to-face meetings must be acknowledged and we thank them for that. Of course above the State team is the Federal ICPA which is a whole layer of dedication, determination and commitment to assist regional Australian families with educational plights.

Back at our local level, the Newdegate donut stand is a definitive feature at the Machinery Field Day and our major fundraiser. To build and promote the ICPA name, flyers were added to donut bags, and when the wind wasn't howling at 50km/hr IPCA banners were in location. Claire Ness revamped the donut stand with a new fryer and sensational new donut dispenser. Volunteers from across the region helped fill rosters and for 2024 I would ask for more volunteers again to pop in for a 2-hour shift and relieve the Newdegate parents. A massive thank you to the Newdegate Field Day committee for their continued support towards ICPA.

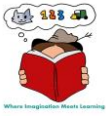
A big thank you to Kelly O'Neill as Treasurer for the number crunching and additional work invoicing members directly in the follow-up initiative towards the end of 2023. We are keen to see everyone shifting to paying online via the website which ensures volunteer role workloads are reduced.

In 2023 we raised issues on behalf of our members in relation to teacher support where leave was unable to be taken, boarding away from home allowance increase, health professionals such as Speech Pathologists and Occupational Therapists, multi-age classrooms and supporting Autism, attracting and retaining teachers and the Bus Fair report, conveyance allowance and not to mention the closure and reopening of a small rural school.

This year I find myself a little heavy-hearted having my eldest son start his first year at boarding school as a Year 9 student. The truth is he is having a fantastic time, yet I am struggling. In his second week into boarding the refurbished phone he purchased with his own money had a battery failure. For the past 4 days, I haven't been able to text or talk to him. Alas, he started emailing me from his school email account. It then had me thinking, can you imagine trying to get in touch with your child at boarding school or arranging near on anything 50 years ago remotely?

ICPA has been running in WA since 1971 and 1977 for Lakes District with the first meeting held in Newdegate. Fast forward and here we are today in a modern world with satellite communications, data, mobiles, texting, facetime and Zoom meetings. There is a bright future ahead for regional education delivery with the aid of technology.

For 2024 we need more members. Encourage those around you to join, there are fulfilling and informative roles if you wish to be more involved on a committee level with Lakes District. We should look for promotional opportunities and spread the understanding that ICPA represents our childcare, primary, secondary, boarding, TAFE and university students.



## **MEEKATHARRA AIR BRANCH REPORT**

### **Chandra Ridley, President**

Membership stayed steady last year with around 20 members.

Our 2024 AGM was held on 15<sup>th</sup> February. Claire Mahony stood down as President and I took on the role. Thank you Claire for your input during your term as President.

Office bearers are      President: Chandra Ridley  
                                 Vice President: Claire Mahony  
                                 Secretary: Tracie Blair  
                                 Treasurer: Lauren Lewis

A very successful camp was held in Sandstone over two days in the July school holidays. There was a fantastic turnout with 16 families, comprising of 38 children from Kindergarten through to Year 7, attending. They came from as far east as the Nullarbor and north from Marble Bar. A variety of activities were provided including a Story Dogs programme, cupcake decorating, Christmas decoration crafts, photography and a colour run. We are hoping this will become an annual event with another camp planned for this July. Below is a camp summary from Lara Jensen.

By Lara Jensen

Station families from the Meekatharra Air and Goldfields Eyre ICPA branches descended on Sandstone in the middle weekend of the July school holidays for a long awaited catch up and a wonderful weekend of planned activities.

Sandstone Shire President Beth Walton kindly made the old Sandstone school available as a venue and our entire group was made so welcome by Beth and the community of Sandstone who extended their signature brand of outback hospitality wherever we went. ICPA Families from as far east as the Nullarbor and as far north as Marble Bar attended the camp and there was a fantastic turnout of 16 families in total with a fantastic group of 38 bush children from Kindy right through to Year 7 in the group.

This year we were lucky enough to welcome Maree Le Moignan from Warralakin and her wonderful dog Digby to the ICPA camp for her specialized Story Dogs program designed to make reading more enjoyable, particularly for those children who struggle with reading. Digby even participated in an art session held by Maree for the younger children who made paw print painted masterpieces on blank canvases!

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July, Maree rounded up the younger children for story and art sessions that were followed by a wonderful cupcake decorating session that Blair Allan from Kirkalocka station kindly organised. The cupcakes looked sensational and were devoured promptly after being decorated!

After lunch, Jareth Forrester from Yarlaweelor station near Meekatharra organised a fantastic session decorating Christmas decorations which was a real hit and the kids all enjoyed painting their masterpieces as soon as they dried. Anna Mahony from Muccan Station near Marble Bar made a monumental effort to attend the camp with her son Bidge and took charge of a fantastic tie-dyeing workshop for the kids. Tina Vernon from Mount Jackson station organised sports activities and the dads present all helped give tips to some budding young footballers in the group.

The ICPA families enjoyed a delicious lunch at the newly opened Post Office Café in Sandstone which is beautifully appointed following its conversion from a post office to a café and were so impressed with the wonderful displays and books for sale at the Sandstone Heritage Museum and Visitor Centre.

In the afternoon, I gave a short photography session (Tips for Taking Photos) for children to prepare for the NRN Rangelands Kaz Collins Photography Competition and then everyone headed off for showers and an early dinner before walking to Sandstone Hall for a country disco.



The children and parents danced away to a great soundtrack of country music that rounded off a fantastic first day of camp.

On Sunday morning, Beth Walton gave a fantastic and informative historical tour of Sandstone pointing out all the wonderful historical buildings including the old jail, the Black Range chapel – the kids were particularly fascinated to learn that for a period of six years from 1907 Sandstone was a small city of 6000-8000 people with four hotels, four butchers, many cafes, a police station and two banks!

Following the historical walk, our fantastic ICPA State Secretary Louise Ford along with Tallaya Wood from the Goldfields Eyre Branch presented information to give parents an understanding as to the work the ICPA does for equity of access to education for all students who live in rural and remote Australia.

With help from the wonderful Louise and Olivia Ford from Paroo station, Meekatharra, hardworking Cambodia Club President Jane Forrester and her brother Treasurer Alex Forrester along with all their wonderful classmates put on a fantastic sausage sizzle at the Sandstone Caravan Park on Sunday to help raise funds for two very deserving sponsor children that attend the River of Life school in Cambodia. A whopping \$1045.75 was raised from the sausage sizzle and on behalf of all the children and parents who are part of the Cambodia Club we would like to extend a massive thank you to the community of Sandstone for their generosity and support.

A wonderful afternoon was spent playing games including 'Catch the Flag' before donning old clothes and gearing up for the Cambodia Club Colour Run which was also a charity fundraiser in aid of the Cambodian sponsor children. There was no shortage of laughs as children ran laps of the old school while being dusted with colour by parents waiting in the wings as they completed each circuit.

Following showers and a shared casserole dinner, all the children enjoyed a movie and an early night.

On Monday morning swags were rolled, bags packed, and goodbyes exchanged as everyone went their separate ways. So many wonderful memories were made on this camp that united so many bush families spread across vast distances. Old friendships were rekindled, and new ones made during the camp and one thing we all drove away thinking was that Sandstone, although small, has absolutely got it all!

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With the help of artist Anne Barnetson, we have a fantastic logo for our branch which will be used on work shirts as part of our fundraising efforts. We have also registered for Containers for Change which aids with our Fundraising.

Our branch has been well represented on State Council this past year with myself, Louise Ford and Jareth Forrester all holding positions. We had two members represent the branch at the Federal Conference in Darwin. Thanks to Tracie Blair and Olivia Ford for taking the time out to attend. As a branch, we appreciate it.

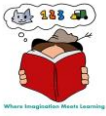
We are still pushing for an increase to the BAHA and will present a motion at the State Conference again this year.

I'd like to thank our branch members for their ongoing support.

## **MIDWEST BRANCH REPORT**

### **Jen Critch, President**

It was a busy start to 2023 for the Midwest branch of ICPA. With Sam Messina at the helm, the Midwest branch helped organise a very successful State conference at the Pagoda Hotel in Perth. To the committee who helped organise we all say a big thank you. It took teamwork to pull this off and what a team we have in the Midwest.



A great couple of days with the most attendees I have seen in my time from our branch in attendance. Thank you Sam Messina, Susanne Warr, Liz Sudlow, Jackie Simkin, Jasmyn Allen, Fiona Mann, Naomi Obst, Sally Brindal, Michelle Abbott and Teneale Bagley for attending. A special thank you to Rosco Foulkes-Taylor for being a fantastic Master of Ceremonies for the event. We raised a substantial amount of money for our branch. I hope we can use this and send many of our members to State and Federal conferences this year.

The Mingenew girls also organised another successful stall at the Mingenew Expo. Thank you to all the volunteers who manned the booth. It was well attended and again promotes ICPA and what we do.

The Federal conference was held in Darwin at the end of July. Jasmyn Allen and Sally Brindal were able to be our delegates on the ground. Our motions about increasing the AIC allowance to reflect the real cost of education and lobbying for increased funding for students with disabilities in hostels were both carried. Thank you to both Jasmyn and Sally for being our delegates at the conference and to Naomi for her help with the motions and attending the conference.

Lastly a big thanks to all the ICPA State and Federal councils for the time and effort they put into ensuring better education access for all our children.

### **PILBARA BRANCH REPORT**

**Jo Anne Williams, President**

Nil report

### **WA LONES BRANCH REPORT**

**Michelle Abbott, Lones Officer**

With members being from 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.

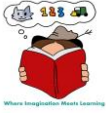
The 2024 Federal conference is in Sydney and there are opportunities for financial support if a WA Lones member wishes to attend and represent this branch.

The Lones branch has maintained a steady membership over the years but in 2023 Lones memberships dropped to 10 whereas in 2022 we had 19 members. At the time of writing this report we have had 4 member renewals but also the ICPA membership did not open up for renewal until 15 Jan 2024 , 2 months later, to realign with rolling memberships.

This year I have endeavoured to reach out to as many members past and present to remind them to renew their membership. Hopefully this will see a boost in numbers.

The most significant news for WA Lones branch this year, is that the branch name is changing to WA Collective. The role of the branch will remain the same as a place for people that want to be ICPA members but don't have a branch to attach to.

This is my final Lones Officer report. I have been on State Councillor for 4 years in various roles and it is now time for me to step down. Best Wishes to all.



## **YALGOO BRANCH REPORT**

### **Ruth Rowe, President**

The Yalgoo district is not alone in seeing a dwindling number of families out in the bush, which has over time had an effect on branch memberships. While the Yalgoo branch has continued to struggle with numbers we have continued on as the small branch that we are thanks to our dedicated members near and far.

The Yalgoo branch was represented at the 2023 State Conference by Roxanne Morrissey, thank you for your time and effort in attending on our behalf Roxanne.

Thank you ICPA WA for your tireless efforts in supporting WA families.