

ICPA WA strength shines through COVID.

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of WA (ICPA WA) advocates for access to an equitable education for all families outside of the metropolitan area. The COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges for regional, rural and remote families. Some of the quick decisions made by government departments, in a constantly changing environment as the pandemic escalated, had major ramifications for the education of regional, rural and remote families causing great anxiety. ICPA WA raised members' concerns with the Minister for Education and Training resulting in:

- Increased flexible flight arrangements for boarders returning home to the Defined Remote Areas of WA
- Exemption from 14 days self-isolation for boarders returning home to the bio-security areas in the Kimberley
- Adjustments to stringent Residential College restrictions for students returning to boarding facilities

Schools quickly adapted to providing online learning which has presented a great opportunity to build on this digital platform. Learning from home has highlighted the importance of face to face teaching and the difficulties faced by families in accessing education in this manner; something that regional, rural and remote families are constantly dealing with.

The on-going education conversations between ICPA WA and the Department of Education favours schools and students should the pandemic reignite in WA.

The continued reduction to the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) and issues regarding the Road Travel Subsidy scheme continue to present difficulties for our members, and ICPA WA will continue to advocate for change in this area.

The advocacy of ICPA WA benefits every child outside of metropolitan Perth and as a voluntary organisation relies on membership for financial support. We encourage all families to **JOIN US** and help in our quest being '*Your Voice for Regional Education*'. www.wa.icpa.com.au

The 2021 ICPA WA Annual State Conference will be held in Perth on Friday 19th March.