

QUEENSLAND PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Louise Martin

Federal President Alana Moller, Federal Life Members, State Life Members, Branch Life Members, Distinguished Guests, fellow ICPA members, ladies & gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to present my 2021 President's Report.

Wow, what a whirlwind my first term as president of this amazing organisation has been. It really seems only moments ago that State Council was gathered in Toowoomba delivering Queensland's first and hopefully last virtual conference. It has been an action packed 7 months attempting to squeeze in as much activity as possible during that time frame.

It was fantastic to be back in Brisbane for delegations in February this year, 12 months since the last visit which occurred just as the state was closing due to COVID-19. Whilst we have held many zoom meetings in the interim, there is no real comparison to meeting in person face to face.

Thanks must go to Dr Regan Neumann, Kym Turner and Julissa Vasquez from the State Schools Rural, Remote and International team at the Department of Education for facilitating the meetings with all the relevant departments. Following conference, all the motions are collated and sent to the rural and remote team who then forward the issues to the relevant areas for consideration. As a result, State Council has been able to meet with the right people to discuss the issues across all our portfolios and in many instances, issues have been resolved quickly.

Following our October conference, we updated our Position Statement Flyer with our Key Issues for 2020/21. Our key issues are: prioritising Geographically Isolated Students at Distance Education Schools, Reinstatement of the Schools Touring Program, Financial Assistance and Attraction and retention of quality teachers in rural and remote areas. We have emailed this document far and wide including all parliamentarians and key stakeholders. These key issues continue to be current.

Delegations proved to be reasonably fruitful. We had the opportunity to discuss our key issues with the Minister for Education, Grace Grace and the Assistant Director of Education, Peter Cook. State Council has been assured that the overcrowding of DE classrooms will be addressed, and a review of the Schools of Distance Education is underway.

Our meeting with the IT department had positive outcomes as they confirmed to State Council that the increased bandwidth provided to the DE schools during COVID-19 will continue and be the new norm. The IT branch also announced \$400 million over 5 years to upgrade connectivity to Queensland State Schools. This will leave only a very small number of remote schools on Satellite and even they will get an upgrade to a business service rather than Sky Muster.

ICPA's relationship with the department continues to reflect the high value they place on our organisation – we are represented on many stakeholder groups including: the Joint Parent Council, the Rural and Remote Education Reference Group, Early Years Forum and the Senior Assessment and Tertiary Entrance Implementation Taskforce, to name a few. I also sit on the Telstra Regional Advisory Council and more recently the newly formed Agforce Social Policy group. Thanks, must also go to the other parent groups with whom we work closely – P&Cs Qld, Catholic School Parents Queensland, and Queensland Independent Schools Parent Network.

Queensland Council continues to have joint meetings with Federal council and the other states. Our zoom meetings over the past year have been invaluable, with each council offering support to each other and

the sharing of ideas. Kelly Ostwald and I attended two meetings this year. We remain hopeful that we will be able to gather as a group in person for a weekend meeting in the not-too-distant future.

ICPA Queensland held its 50th State Conference in Cunnamulla on the 1st and 2nd of June. It was a wonderful couple of days and organized magnificently by the convenor Rhiannon Newsham and her band of helpers. We welcomed back over 40 past councillors, all of whom has a great time reminiscing and some who have not forgotten how to put their hand up at conference to add to the debate. Many words of wisdom were uttered, and our current members learnt a lot from those who have gone before us.

We had 72 motions on the agenda and an additional 7 floor motions. This year, 24 of those motions were related to the Distance Education portfolio. There is a real concern amongst our members that our GI students are not being prioritized at Distance Education Schools. There were 10 motions relating to the closure of onsite accommodation facilities at Longreach and Emerald, and yet again motions requesting more classroom space at Rockhampton. There is also concern that mini school clusters away from the centre are not taking place. Small Schools portfolio had motions around the lack of permanent water supply and the need for teacher/student ratios to be adjusted in 1 teacher schools where state delivered Kindy has been introduced. Travel motions were all about legitimizing Kindy kids on school bus runs, dangerous state of some routes and a consideration for remote bus runs to be administered by the education department rather than being lost in the mammoth Translink department. The Tertiary Trade Training portfolio is continually frustrated from the lack of revolve to the repurposing of the closed Agricultural colleges at Longreach and Emerald as well as the need to have support networks for our young apprentices. There has been a call for an increase in the ICT subsidy for DE students to reflect the cost of broadband and increased usage as well as an easier process to access a second telephone line in DE classrooms. As always, we are seeking an increase in the Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme which continues to erode having dropped from covering 50% of costs to 41%. Finally, having reviewed the Education Department's strategic plan for the next few years, State council was shocked to find that Racing and Industrial Relations had also been included, due to the Education Minister also holding those additional portfolios. This prompted State Council to put forward a motion requesting that Education should be a stand-alone portfolio.

Thank you to all our sponsors, many of whom support ICPA Qld year after year. ICPA Qld is immensely proud of the fact that we have never needed to source government funding or grants to survive and for this we are incredibly grateful. This enables us to remain apolitical and not beholden to any other organisation in our advocacy.

Thank you to our councillor team. There have been some hard yards done to make it here today in one piece, following a very hectic 7 months. Not only have we been advocating on behalf of all the members through delegations and stakeholder meetings, but there have also been several other significant activities that we have been attending to. We have submitted a grant to the Regional Arts Fund to raise funds to produce a Golden Jubilee book, celebrating 50 years of ICPA in Qld. We have attended Beef week promoting ICPA and selling close to \$5,000 worth of personalised Cattle Tags, which is also earmarked for the book, no pun intended! Thank you to Allflex and Nutrien for the opportunity. Thanks to Councillors Amanda Clark and Rob McArthur, for pulling this together and all the Qld ICPA branch members who volunteered.

There has also been the huge undertaking of building the new website and transferring all our data from the old site to the new one. Melissa Iland and Tammie Irons have gone way over their usual time remit in making our new Qld page look amazing. In fact, Tammie has enjoyed it so much she has officially become our Web Tech Officer!! Thanks, must also be extended to our unsung heroes working behind the scenes in off council positions.

This year saw 4 of our councillors depart as they take on new challenges. We appreciate all the contributions they have made for the betterment of our children. We welcome on board 6 new councillors, as we prepare to tackle the next 50 years of ICPA Qld. It is wonderful to have a full council for the first time in a few years.

Finally, I cannot reiterate enough to you all, the importance of keeping this organisation strong and robust for the next 50 years. Our children need us to have a voice with the decision makers, now more than ever. Every day that we, State Councillors and Federal Councillors, are advocating on behalf of you, our members, we see the lack of understanding of our unique circumstances. Yes, over the years ICPA has had considerable influence in improving the quality of education for our children, however we must not rest on our laurels and assume that everything is ok, because it is not. Each year new challenges arise, and we must be there on the front foot ready to fight the good fight for our kids.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sally Brindal

Madam President, distinguished guests, Federal Councillors, ICPA members and friends. It is with great pleasure I present my report as President of ICPA WA for the 2020/2021 year.

During May and June, I was on a camping road trip with my husband through beautiful areas in the north of our State. As many members can no doubt attest to, WA, especially in the north, is a vast State with great distances between the better-known attractions. As you travel along the highways and dusty dirt tracks, to the untrained eye, the landscape and scenery may seem the same stretching relentlessly for kilometre after kilometre. However, if you look more closely, it is easy to see the idiosyncrasies that makes a landscape that appears to be the same, different. I could not help but draw an analogy to ICPA. The ICPA journey has been, and continues to be, a long road travelled by so many and some of the issues that we still advocate for appear to be the same. But just as with the WA landscape, there continues to be little idiosyncrasies that brings an individuality to what may seem an issue of old.

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) reduction by the WA State Government from \$2105 to \$1320 by 2022, continues to be a concern for our members and remains high on the agenda for WA State Council. It has been made quite clear by the Minister for Education that there is no intention to reverse their decision but may review the structure at the end of the reduction period in 2022. The BAHA reduction was explained by the Government as being a necessary part of reducing budgets, however given the announcement of a budget surplus of \$3.1 billion this year, the continued annual reduction seems inequitable for families and students who benefit from this much relied upon allowance, especially with the continual annual increase in boarding fees.

The issue of what is considered a transport hub affecting member's eligibility for the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme – Road Travel Subsidy remains to be an issue for our members. Despite meetings and many letters from WA State Council the continued reference to a transport hub as a means of rejecting travel subsidy claims, irrespective of the transport route, the frequency of that route or even when the transport goes in the complete opposite direction continues to frustrate families.

At our October face to face, delegations raised both of these issues with Mr Peter Rundle, Nationals Spokesperson for Education and Donna Faragher, the then Shadow Minister for Education. Other topics of discussion included: the request for additional help with the transition to further education and apprenticeships from the State Government for regional, rural and remote students post Year 12, Education Funding Model changes to be introduced between now and 2029 using the direct measure of income formulae potentially costing many schools millions of dollars, which will impact boarding families, and the WA State Government Wander out Yonder program varying eligibility between city and country.

A delegation also met with Hon Sue Ellery, MLC, Minister for Education where we discussed the Special Education Needs program (SSEN) and the need for greater awareness of the assistance available to families, the Government's professional development program offering support to new Principals and the reduction of services to rural schools, such as dental therapy vans. Support for our Schools of the Air and rural schools, and the loss of services is an increasing concern as numbers in rural areas continue to decline with an apparent direct correlation between school numbers and a reduction in programs and services.

Boyd Brown, Regional General Manager, Telstra and Eva Colic, Community Engagement Manager joined our State Council face to face and discussed the 3G closure in 2024, Telstra's Emergency Preparedness Plan, network resilience, the black spot program, and the new regional network advisors' program.

Naomi Evans, Head of Regional Community Affairs WA, nbn Local also attended and discussed the new segment team – education strategy, both Sky Muster and Sky Muster Plus, Ed ports and their Illuminate program.

Upon invitation, WA State Council were involved in a regional and rural distance education round table with Nbn conducted online. The discussion evolved around Satellite connectivity for distance education; what is working well, what challenges members were facing, the best format for distributing helpful information and the best channel for distribution to members.

In November, Hyden Branch changed its name to Eastern Districts Branch to better reflect the geographic area of its members. Prior to its name change Hyden Branch awarded Branch Life Memberships to three of its founding members: Mrs Carolyn Burns, Mrs Marlene Mayfield and Mrs Gwen Walton, and presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Mrs Kath James.

Just when WA thought life was returning to some form of normality our February face to face was cancelled at the last minute due to a 5-day lockdown starting on the Sunday and we were to meet on the Tuesday. The two-day meeting was shortened to a half day Zoom meeting to mainly discuss 2021 WA State Conference matters.

It was disappointing that the February Joint Council meeting was also cancelled. Although a Zoom meeting was held in its place, you cannot replace the valuable opportunity of meeting face to face to learn of the accomplishments and issues experienced by the other States and to connect with Federal Council and fellow inter-state councillors.

Gascoyne Branch convened the 49th 2021 WA State Conference, “Educate not Isolate”. Given the events of the previous twelve months, due to COVID-19, it was a particularly apt theme. The task of remote learning online from home had presented many parents with different challenges in accessing, facilitating and supervising the online learning. At State Conference members particularly enjoyed a panel discussion looking at the impact of COVID-19 on the deliverance of education from the point of view of a university professor, the Principal of SIDE (School of Isolated and Distance Education), a second-year university student and a Year 11 boarding school student. Thanks must go to Richard Stokes, CEO, ABSA (Australia Boarding Schools Association) for facilitating the panel discussion. We welcomed members from around the State, members of parliament, Department of Education representatives and representatives from secondary and tertiary, both Government and non-Government.

The week before conference was the WA State election. Labour was successful in their re-election as the WA State Government with most Ministers retaining their portfolios. ICPA WA will continue their relationship with these Ministers to lobby for change.

The Director General of Education, Ms Lisa Rodgers addressed conference, highlighting the importance of making sure that children have foundation skills, access to the senior secondary curriculum and having students equipped with work skills to enter the workforce. Ms Rodgers also discussed whether we need to look at changing the way we deliver education, the quality of Distance Education and SIDE being a first-choice option (as opposed to a second choice) for students in offering access to specialised courses and provisions.

ICPA WA continue to be in discussions with the Department of Education on ways to improve the deliverance of online education to strengthen both SIDE and SOTAs to capitalise on the upskilling of staff and the school system as a result of COVID-19. Ms Rodgers has a very high regard for ICPA and the quality knowledge and the ability of the organisation.

Motions presented by members were in relation to:

- Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) reduction and asking for the Government to increase the allowance in line with the consumer price index (CPI).
- School of the Air (SOTA) funding model
- Support Teacher of Learning (STL) and ensuring that the role and funding for the position in Schools of the Air (SOTA) continues past 2021.
- Education Ports and Sky Muster Plus.
- Telecommunication restoration times and entitlements.
- Loss of services to rural schools, such as dental vans.
- Travel permissions for WA children at boarding schools interstate.
- Travel permissions for boarding students within WA.
- Policy relating to AHPPC guidelines in relation to all WA schools.
- Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) – Road Travel Subsidy application criteria.
- School Bus Services contractual obligations and recourse for breaches
- School bus routes.
- Refunds for airfares under the STSS to be processed up until 31st December, as is the case for the STSS Road Travel Subsidy, not within one month of travel.
- Special circumstance provisions under the STSS Fares Allowance as to the location a student is flying to and/or from, for example due to flooding.

At conference we said goodbye to Immediate Past President Tash Johns. In her role as Immediate Past President, Tash has been a great support not only to myself but to all of State Council. Tash has always only been a phone call away should I require any help, guidance, or just want to run something by her. I thank her for her support and everything she has given to ICPA. We welcomed three new councillors at conference to State Council: Louise Ford, Meekatharra Air Branch; Jane Cunningham, Lakes District Branch and Lee-Anne White, Goldfields Eyre Branch. This means we are a full State Council which is fantastic. I would like to thank Federal Treasurer Lisa Slade, Federal Publicity Officer Jo Camilleri and Federal Councillor Briony Sinclair for attending on behalf of Federal Council and presenting the Federal Report.

WA State meet for three face to face meetings, usually in Perth, during the year and monthly via the ZOOM online platform.

WA State Council met for their first face to face meeting since conference on 23rd and 24th June in Perth. During these two days State Council met with John Bailly, School Bus Services, to discuss a number of school bus issues. Unfortunately, we did not receive a response to a request for meetings with the Minister for Transport concerning the on-going Student Travel Subsidy Scheme – Road Travel Subsidy issues that members are experiencing. We will continue to lobby in this area.

Promoting membership is an on-going task for State Council. WA has seen an increase in new members in 2021, however the challenge remains in continuing membership into the future. Hopefully, the new website will assist in this process.

It is wonderful to see the new website up and running. On behalf of State Council, I would like to thank Federal Council and all the State Webmasters for the time, energy and commitment they have given to what has been an enormous task. I would also like to personally thank our Webmaster Kym Ross for her contribution. Kym is also our secretary and, in the lead, up to our State Conference also continued to dedicate a huge amount of her time to the website development.

I would like to acknowledge the support ICPA WA receives from our generous sponsors including Telstra, nbn Co and the various schools and businesses. Also, thank you to the WA Department of Education who

through the provision of a grant, support us in advocating for the equity of access to an appropriate education for rural and remote students.

I would like to thank my fellow WA State Councillors, without their hard work and commitment we could not continue. I would like to thank them for volunteering their time and knowledge to such a worthy organisation, that is so well-respected Australia wide.

As we celebrate 50 years of ICPA (Aust), I would also like to thank Federal Council and each of the other State Councils for their continued support, camaraderie and friendship.

Thank you and we look forward to welcoming you to Federal Conference in Perth 2022.

NORTHERN TERRITORY PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sarah Cook

Madame President, distinguished guests, Federal, State and Branch Life Members, Federal Councillors, ICPA members and guests.

On behalf of ICPA NT Life Members, NT Branch Committees, Territory Members and our State Council, I feel very honoured to be presenting my third Northern Territory State President Report at the 50th ICPA Australia Federal Conference.

As State President, my focus is on advocacy, both with stakeholders who have the power to make wholesale changes on behalf of members, and with members, so they understand the work ICPA does and they continue to support this fantastic organisation.

In the Territory, we have several challenges in advocacy, the first being to adequately convey the responsibility and financial costs carried by rural and geographically isolated families, who access education in the bush, as a reason for asking for the changes we do. The sum of our contribution to education is enormous and incredibly out of balance both in financial terms and in personal contribution, compared to urban families.

Across Australia, the divide, distance and disconnect between urban and rural is increasingly evident. Perhaps the Territory is no different despite our small population size, geographical spread, and that about 40% of our population live remote or very remote.

Many of our motions request the introduction of a new policy or a review of existing, ill-fitting policy to reduce this cost/responsibility for families. Delegation after delegation, and before anything else, we (ICPA NT) find ourselves with the task of educating new, usually very senior, decision-makers on the realities of living and working in the bush while raising a family.

From issue identification to delivery, the Territory government policy cycle can take years, which is relatively standard for most governments, I would think. That is assuming we manage to keep any advancements around policy on the agenda. The Territory government is traditionally a place for career progression, especially with people coming from Canberra, and key staff change every 18 or so months, taking any knowledge they have gained and progress we have made with them.

How do we shorten the distance in relationship, understanding and willingness to action, that must be covered before issues experienced by our members can be fully appreciated by policy advisors? Policy advisors from city suburbs, who graduated from inner-city universities, worked in capital cities and who prefer holidaying in European counties over Australia's vast, yet beautiful outback? It's our home but to many Australians, our way of life and therefore our issues, are hard to grasp.

Bureaucrats love 'quick wins'; making easy decisions with low budget impact, gives the Minister good media and makes everyone happy. Ironically, our members and government share the same dilemma; we would give them quick wins if we could, but most of our issues involve a cost and are not actually ours to fix.

On social media, bush people do an amazing job framing our love of the land and the joys of living in the Territory. Maybe we give the impression we do not need as much help as we are asking for? We post strong, capable, and enabling humans, stunning places to live, with an abundance of sunsets, helicopters, hobbies and sports that unfortunately, many people associate with affluent and fortunate societies. The

dichotomy of our vibrant lifestyle and the challenges we experience in education is difficult for people to reconcile.

NT State Council had a very personal experience during a meeting with a Minister; we were discussing home tutors and the actual cost of providing this compulsory resource for the delivery of public schools of the air, and the Minister responded by saying “but you choose to live there”, implying the cost was entirely our decision.

The NT Education Act states, “government school education is free for Australian citizens or permanent residents..... Government schools cannot charge for any instruction, materials or administrative or other services or facilities provided as part of the standard curriculum program.”

While clearly, we are Australian citizens, our government school education is not free, and what our members actually provide on a voluntary or self-funded basis is very different to what the Education Act outlines. Of course, to accept this requires a fundamental shift in policy, perhaps across Australia, and understandably no one wants to be the first mover, including the Territory Government. Nevertheless, we have costed it out, and our advocacy continues.

Last year we ran what I thought was a well-balanced story around boarding. ABC Rural picked up the story, but my excitement was quickly dampened as a string of nasty comments discussed our fortune to afford boarding and our poor decision to send children to boarding school in the first place. If only they knew the layers behind the story.

In the NT, we have one government boarding house; it has a waiting list. We have three boarding schools (if you only count those who accept both indigenous and non-indigenous enrolments), and they are good - if not very good - schools. Unfortunately, our boarding story is also complex, and we recently escalated the issue of personal safety for boarding students at some of those schools to our Minister and Department of Education.

The Territory government will support students who board in the NT with a \$600 Supplementary Boarding Allowance. Students who board interstate may or may not receive a \$2,000 Interstate Boarding Allowance. This allowance has been problematic, and many applications are denied on a technical issue around criteria. In a nutshell, we have hardly any local choice, so most of our students board interstate, but Territory government support is pretty poor either way.

With our students boarding across Australia, COVID-19 lockdowns are confusing for our members. However, we have muddled through the complexities of different positions taken by various state governments. For this reason, once COVID-19 hit, ICPA NT immediately took the position to advocate for a single, national framework for all boarding students. We were pleased when this became the shared position for ICPA (Aust), and all ICPA State Councils, in our joint submission to the Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education, the Hon Minister Gee’s office, *“Recommendations towards the development of a National Framework for Students who attend Boarding School across State borders, especially in the context of COVID-19.”*

Student travel concession is a state-based scheme that Territory geographically isolated secondary and tertiary students might never use, despite the enormous cost of travel to access education. Boarding & university students continue to be disadvantaged because they necessarily travel at peak (school holiday) times and, although they are students, there is no student concession for airfares. ABSTUDY students have their fares booked, paid, and managed through a central booking agency, meaning the cost of their fares are probably not as lumpy as peak fares. Still, we have found it difficult to get any solution-focused discussion with our Territory Government and Airline contacts around a ‘fair airfare’. I do wonder what

came of the *"Inquiry into the operation, regulation and funding of air route service delivery to rural, regional and remote communities"*.

Despite all the positive progress around nbn and Sky Muster, I am disappointed to report that our school hardware and technology policies to enable the delivery of education in home schoolrooms still creates quite a bit of feedback to ICPA, and we have unresolved motions. However, I'd also like to touch on the point that parents remain hesitant to have this and similar conversations with their school, even through the school council, for a good reason.

Parents want to preserve a positive relationship with their school. In a small community, their relationship, where they necessarily communicate with teachers daily, comes up time and time again as the main reason parents would prefer to talk to ICPA confidentially, through case studies and motions, instead of raising challenging issues with the school or at school council meetings. Families report feeling like they have too much invested and too much to lose, to want to have hard conversations that could get their teacher or principal off-side. In a small community, this is not easy on the school, or the parent, or ICPA for that matter, but expecting more open communication between the parent and the school is not the only solution. We must respect that there are many more layers at play than simply following processes or encouraging open-door policies.

Before I close off, I would like to brief you on some of our issues in early childhood, special needs diagnosis and treatment. It is utterly inequitable that, geographically speaking, about half of the Northern Territory has no outreach early learning or mobile playgroups for non-aboriginal families. There are early childhood programs in many remote aboriginal communities, but they do not extend to non-aboriginal families outside that community.

ICP NT's last survey identified over 50 children, less than 5 years old, with no access to these services. I would like to say these children can access early learning or playgroups by other means, but that is not so. While there is a lack of early learning centres in other remote Territory towns, the fact is, children living in regional centres have more chance of peer-to-peer socialisation opportunities and easier access to appointments, just as urban parents have more opportunities to receive respite, support and mentoring etc.

You would expect all Territory families would be able to access their local remote health clinics, but ICPA continues to receive case studies from non-aboriginal families who have been turned away from basic triage, specialist, and allied health provision, despite these services being provided at the 'local' clinic.

Equally concerning are the examples of NT SOA students receiving specific needs diagnosis in grade 2, 3 and 4. There are several very sad examples where students receive their diagnoses quite late and geographic isolation apparently has played a part in this. It's hard to find words to describe just how valuable, accessible early childhood and allied health services are to the bush.

You might have picked up that within ICPA's remit, geographically isolated non-indigenous families are often noticeably overlooked or perhaps not considered. There is certainly a lot of data on geographically isolated indigenous Territory families, but not a lot on non-indigenous, so this could be the reason. ICPA NT absolutely agrees that all remote Territorians have needs, fundamental rights, and experience inequities in service provision. These gaps are across the scope of delivery and all demographics in our regions but excluding or further disadvantaging non-indigenous people is as concerning as disadvantaging indigenous people. ICPA do not stand for the inequities, regardless of your demographic.

I hope I have not given you the impression that the Territory is not a great place to live; quite the contrary. But the government must deliver on education, especially in their rally to develop the regions. Education is a fundamental right, and if health and education are delivered well, the regions will speak for

themselves. I believe ICPA's solution-focused advocacy is an asset to any government, and we continue to work in partnership to action our motions.

As a last word to regions, the bush is a small community. Please support the cause if the cause is worth investing in, regardless of who/what/why is driving it. The bush is simply not big enough in numbers or votes to let an opportunity pass.

I wish to pass on my heartfelt appreciation to our State Council, whom I am very proud of: Vice President Suzanne Wilson, Secretary Jule Vlach, Treasurer and Public Officer Moira Lanzarin, Publicity Officer Amanda Murphy, Assistant Secretary Katie Payne, Councillors Lauren Hoar, Lisa Kimlin, Kerrie Scott and Kiya Gill; Archives Ruth Worle, Financial Support Officer Helen Harding and Editor and Webmaster Annika Bell. Thank you for all the work you do for our members.

Thank you also to our Branches for supporting NT State Council to advocate on their behalf and to all our members for being the voices that feed good advice into the halls where they often don't appreciate your plight.

NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Claire Butler

Madam President, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the President's report on behalf of ICPA NSW.

State Conference 2021

The much-anticipated ICPA NSW State Conference was held in Hay on 10 and 11 March and it was wonderful to have an attendance of 170 people - considering the year before we had to cancel the conference in Moree, it really was just the medicine we all needed to see each other face to face again. The theme "Thrive in Isolation" was very fitting - Ironically, isolation is now a word that sits more prevalently in everyone's minds no matter where we live, and this word "isolation" is now much more understood by our metro counterparts. On the afternoon before conference a Q and A Distance Education Session was held between parents and NSW Education staff where technology issues were addressed. The NSW Distance Education Survey conducted earlier this year identified a number of pressing issues relating to slow internet experiences by NSW Distance Education students. Currently, NSW Distance Education is delivered by an ageing Optus Satellite and the much-anticipated arrival of NBN Satellite into the NSW DE School room is well overdue. ICPA NSW understands this roll out should be in place by the end of this school year. Members have been raising the internet issues for a number of years with NSW Department of Education and it is not without some level of frustration that improved internet is occurring very late in the game.

Conference was very well attended, and it was fantastic to see so many retired Councillors in attendance. This was due to a very well-orchestrated and long kept secret to witness the award of ICPA NSW Life Membership to past President David Cameron. NSW Education Minister Hon Sarah Mitchell was in attendance along with Senator Perin Davey, Helen Dalton MP and Roy Butler MP. With two years' worth of Conferencing to catch up on, I am pleased to say we were very relieved when we managed to get through the 80 motions and 15 guest speakers over the two days without a minute to spare! It is also pleasing that as a result of conference the Minister for Education's office has monthly telephone meetings with State Council to try to tick off the many items that were on the agenda at conference. This is certainly helpful if we can continue to keep the ICPA conversations at the top of the pile.

Some highlights from the conference were positive commentary from Transport for NSW regarding the long-awaited School Drive Subsidy for Preschoolers and an update from Telstra advising that the final 12 Satellite schools in NSW are being transferred to Fibre Optic and by early 2022 all schools will be off the Satellite. Small Schools continue to be included in the Mobile Footprint, with both Clare and Naradhan now being in areas with mobile phone service. Some of you in this room will recall the Balranald branch motion back in 2013 at Federal Conference and it was lost but a year later carried, so please do not get disheartened if you lose a motion today, as this is what can be achieved if you stay focused and not take no for an answer. Many thanks to Federal ICPA for their advocacy for these small remote schools.

Mini Deputation 2021

To follow up from the Hay conference and keep the momentum going, on 21 June our State Secretary Deb Castle and Treasurer Shennah Joiner represented State Council in Sydney for mini deputation. They furthered the conversation with Transport about School Drive Subsidies and also met with NSW Education officials, the Minister for Mental Health Bronnie Taylor, the Minister for Education Sarah Mitchell and Roy Butler MP. There are a few key priorities that ICPA-NSW would like to see fixed as a matter of priority, issues that continually come to conference:

- Better internet technology for DE students
- School Drive Subsidy for Preschooler

- Mental Health for Youth
- Early Childhood education in remote areas

The solutions offered by ICPA-NSW are pragmatic and discussions have been positive, however it is a continued frustration for our members that things take years to be implemented and that means that for many children, the gaps in their learning and development remains.

A special mention must go to Deb and Shennah who, as a result of attending NSW parliament on 21 June, found themselves having to isolate for 14 days on their return home due to the COVID-19 restrictions affecting Sydney. I would like to publicly acknowledge both Deb and Shennah for their voluntary efforts amid yet another random outbreak. It really is testament to the commitment that they have to ICPA.

On the topic of COVID-19, with NSW sandwiched between three states, we continue to update and assist members who, due to border closures, find themselves anxious about their children's access to interstate boarding schools. We have managed to build trusted relationships with authorities in SA and Victoria and we thank ICPA Qld for being an advocate for our members with Qld authorities. The recent outbreaks have again highlighted the need for a national framework for the movement of boarding school children and we thank ICPA (Aust) for the work that continues to be done on this. The standout for us is that we surveyed members to find out where they lived so that we were armed with information to give authorities. The information we collected was invaluable as we knew that at some point the authorities would ask how many children? Where do they live? What school do they attend? And whilst the list produced is by no means exhaustive, it gave a very good indication to authorities that we knew our members and we knew what we were talking about, especially in the context of Isolation and Social Distancing due to these children living on remote properties.

There were some silver linings out of COVID-19. Being without events to attend State Councillors kept themselves busy deciding on a new logo for NSW. This circular logo builds on the previous one and is easy to use on social media platforms. We thought a calendar would be a nice little boost for everyone and ran a photo competition for member's children to produce a great calendar where a little bit of ICPA-NSW can be in everyone's homes. Plans are underway for a 2022 calendar following the success and positive feedback received. We have been able to fund this little promotion by using funds from the success of boarding schools advertising in Top Wire Magazine.

The 50th NSW conference will be held in Bourke next year. Bourke is the birthplace of ICPA, and I would like to acknowledge the work of the original founders of ICPA (Aust) in Bourke in 1971 and then of course in 1972 one year later the ICPA NSW State Council was formed, so we look forward to going back to Bourke next year for our State's 50th celebration.

Current memberships for NSW are 712. Our challenge is finding ways to keep members staying on whilst new ones join. With limited resources as volunteers, we need to do some thinking around how to keep members once their child's education is completed. We have designed some new flyers and are encouraging branches to take them to local preschools and schools – and if time permits do a small presentation to parent groups, however we are mindful of the time this takes for our volunteer branches to do. There is a sense of volunteer fatigue and on the back of COVID-19 and natural disasters in NSW the toll on our branches is evident.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the remarkable team of Councillors on ICPA NSW State Council. We currently have a full State Council and due to my own work commitments, I am often absent, this year especially I have had to step back and what I have found in doing that is others have stepped in and I feel deeply privileged to have a team of 15 strong people who continue to inspire me with their energy and passion. I feel State Council is in good hands when the team can run like this and that is despite

their own challenges with Drought, Bushfires, Floods, Mice Plagues, and family commitments, they continue to inspire me every day with their willingness to volunteer to help our members.

Thank you also to Alana Moller and her Federal team for being supportive mentors to us throughout what has been a very interesting time. The unwavering support from ICPA (Aust) has been such an incredible strength to us in NSW.

I will leave you with wise words said by Dr Lilian Katz at the ICPA (Aust) Conference in Brisbane in 1974: “Keep your eyes and thoughts on the children, they have no union, they cannot strike, they have no power – they deserve our thinking and our deepest reflections”.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jill Greenfield

Madame President, Federal councillors, ICPA members and guests, it gives me great pleasure to present my President's report for South Australia ICPA.

In 2009, I attended the Federal Conference in Longreach. Three children in tow, Col and I packed up the Jayco and headed over the border. As I watched on in awe, while listening to the speakers and motions, I never would have imagined that I would be in front of you presenting my third SA President's report all these years later.

This year's SA State Conference was held on Friday the 12th of March in Port Augusta, hosted by the Marree Air branch. The theme was Helping Young Minds Grow. We had approximately 80 attend the conference, with a wide range of speakers and a speaking panel consisting of representatives from SPELD, RFDS and Headspace.

We had 14 motions presented on the day and all motions were successfully carried. They came from a wide range of portfolio areas and included issues such as:

- Distance Education Teaching Allowance.
- The need to Implement high-quality, evidence-based literacy programs in schools.
- A nationally consistent and long-term approach to border restrictions and guidelines for those students who board interstate.
- The need to conduct health checks on all remote and isolated children.
- Early identification and intervention along with adequate and sufficient support for children with learning difficulties studying via Distance Education.
- To install small cell towers at properties to provide better access to communications which are vital for distance education.
- Rural school zoning and bus seat availability.
- AIC extending to 3–4-year olds.

The State Council executive elected at conference are: President - Jill Greenfield; Vice President - Lisa Slade; Immediate Past President - Kerry Williams; Secretary - vacant; Assistant Secretary - Hollie Williams; Treasurer- Michelle Hilder and Publicity Officer- Katrina Morris.

Appointed positions for 2021 are: Pipeline Editor - Lynly Kerin (off council position) and Layout Designer - Mija Reynolds (off council position); State Webmaster - Jodie Keogh; E-Newsletter Editor - Penny Rasheed; REVISE rep - Candice Brown; OACGC rep - Petie Rankin (off council position); Lone Member officer - Jodie Keogh.

We complete our State Council with: Candice Brown, Jess Barry, Belinda Hatcher, Di Thomas, Emilee Warnest, Melanie Lewis and Helen Williams.

Thank you to those state councillors that have stepped off State council: Kate Greenfield, Paulaine Vermeulen, Edwina Bowie, Petie Rankin, Mija Reynolds, Leisa Breeding and Stefanie Roeske. Your volunteer time has been much appreciated by all ICPA families.

A special thank you to Kate Greenfield who joined State Council in 2007 and has been a committed councillor over many years. We say farewell to Edwina as secretary; I would like to thank Edwina for

her hard work and dedication. There were many late-night emails and early morning messages to keep the show running.

Joanna Gibson was awarded State Life membership at our conference. Joanna has been a wonderful source of information and assistance to many. Joanna joined the North West Branch in the early 2000s and soon stepped onto State council. She filled numerous positions both on State Council and in the North West branch over many years. Joanna joined Federal Council in 2013 for four years where she was the Communications portfolio leader. Joanna continues to remain passionate about ICPA and is an excellent support and source of information for me and our state.

State council have sent out motion letters and we were able to hold a productive delegation in late June in Adelaide. We met with The Hon John Gardner (Minister for Education), The Hon *Dan* van Holst Pellekaan (Member for Stuart), Child and Family Health Services (CaFHS), the Department for Education representatives and Livestock SA. We were guests of the Hon Dan van Holst Pellekaan where we had the great pleasure of dining at Parliament House. Face to face meetings are certainly an excellent and positive way of advocating for our rural and remote families.

SA ICPA have a new Membership form: <https://form.jotform.com/202696771063056> This form will give State council vital information to help us advocate for our members. The form is able to be completed when members either renew their membership or join up for the first time.

We have been extremely fortunate to have received two wonderful donations, from the Indulkaninna Foundation and Sandys Memorial Trust. State Council have put together bursary applications so that member families can benefit from these very generous donations. The categories in which members could apply are:

- Primary Schooling SPELD SA Literacy Intervention
- Kindergarten Bursary
- Primary Schooling Bursary
- Secondary Schooling Bursary
- Tertiary Education/Trade Bursary
- Creative Arts Bursary

We are once again fortunate to have been gifted a donation from the Indulkaninna Foundation and we have SPELD and education bursaries open to our members for the 2021 year.

The new ICPA website looks fantastic. Thank you to all who have put so much work into making it a wonderful one stop shop for us all to use. A special thank you to Jodie Keogh for her hard work uploading and filling the SA page with exciting content. It has been a learning curve for Jodie and one that she has tackled head on.

ICPA (SA) is fortunate to work with many government departments and organisations. Some of the projects and meetings that we have been fortunate to partake in are:

- Parent Engagement Project with the Department for Education
- Year 7 to High School with the Department for Education
- ACCAN / nbn local SA and NT Roundtable “No South Australian or Territorian Left Offline”
- Boarder/border round table meeting with Minister Gee, Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education
- Broadband Access Guarantee
- Emerging Minds podcasts released in July 2020

- Telstra Roundtable Meeting
- Joint Council Meetings
- Boarding House letter (on website)
- Portfolio Meetings
- Telstra Mobile Blackspot proposal
- CaFHS / RFDS / ICPA joint meetings
- Telstra Small Cell tower project
- Telstra "SA Far North communications upgrade"
- Country and Digital Strategies consultation meeting

Thank you to those councillors who have been able to attend meetings on behalf of ICPA (SA).

ICPA (SA) State Council wrote a submission for the Review of Regional Schooling Resource Standards Loadings in November. We based our submission on the point that rural and remote schools are more costly to resource. They need to be resourced in a unique way, so that students do not miss out on vital learning opportunities.

A letter from ICPA (SA) was sent to all boarding schools in South Australia outlining the need for our children to be caringly nurtured particularly through a difficult time of drought. Many children return to boarding school, or maybe for the first time, with a great weight of guilt for not being at home to help or knowing that there is a financial burden placed on their family. We thank the SA boarding schools for their continued support of our ICPA families and students.

Communications issues continue to be at the forefront of ICPA (SA). We have been fortunate to be invited and involved in many exciting ventures and meetings. We have joined Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN). I attended the ACCAN /nbn local SA and NT roundtable "No South Australian or Territorian Left Offline" roundtable meeting. ICPA (SA) and Telstra are currently working on the capacity to deliver small cell towers to remote properties. This is a very exciting venture, so watch this space.

ICPA (SA) were invited to be involved in a Parent Engagement Project with the Department for Education. The Department for Education want to explore how they can better support and encourage parents to engage in their children's learning. ICPA (SA) main focus is that many of our remote schools are unique, especially School of the Air, so this brings its own challenges.

We were fortunate to be involved in the creation of the "Talking about Drought" series of podcasts. Annabel Axford and Drew Radford joined us last year at our state conference and were able to hear stories and firsthand accounts from families who were living in drought with their family. There were eight Podcasts in total with topics ranging from 'Looking after yourself', 'Supporting your child's social connections' and 'Focussing on the positive future'. I personally enjoyed working with Annabel and seeing the podcast develop from an idea to become a useful tool for parents as they navigate hurdles. We were able to share these podcasts with our networks and they were listened to, far and wide.

SA State Council presented a motion last year at Federal Conference regarding the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) for students travelling to Canberra to enhance their learning in civics and citizenship education. Federal Council have recently given us the positive news that there has been a 50% increase in the PACER rebate for students. Thank you ICPA (Aust) for your continuous hard work and persistence with our motion, and all the motions that were presented at conference.

We have continued to share information with members through our e-newsletter. We send out a MailChimp approximately every eight weeks which keeps our members up to date with conference

information, applications for bursaries and news from State Council. Thank you to Penny who collates these editions and is always striving for members to open them with a catchy heading or photo.

The Pipeline magazine continues to go from strength to strength. Lynly Kerin is great at sourcing stories, podcast ideas, kids work, recipes, book reviews and up to date information for members to read. Whilst Mija Reynolds has stepped off State Council, she continues to do the layout of the magazine.

Sadly, one of our long-time members, Janne Warwick passed away in June. She was a life member of the Flinders Ranges branch and a convenor of three Federal Conferences all held in Adelaide. Janne was a passionate supporter of ICPA.

2022 SA State Conference will be hosted by the Port Augusta Branch, in Port Augusta on Friday the 1st of April. We look forward to welcoming members and guests to our 50th year of SA ICPA.

Thank you to the convening committee for the wonderful conference. Once again, my husband and I, minus the kids (who are now adults) have trekked up the Birdsville Track and over the border to join you all in Longreach. Thank you to the sponsors, your assistance is greatly appreciated by all.

Thank you to Alana, Federal Councillors, and my fellow Presidents for your continued support with all things ICPA. Have a wonderful day.

WEB MANAGER'S REPORT 2021

Sue Shotton

Distinguished Guests and fellow ICPA Members, it gives me great pleasure to present the 2021 Web Manager's Report and Longreach is a fitting venue to discuss the exciting news of ICPA's new website.

I was on Federal Council the last time conference was held in Longreach and the exciting discussions then revolved around a new website that was in the process of being created, which we now refer to as the old website.

What a busy 18 months since we were informed our old website platform, Breeze, was going into retirement. First there was the canvassing of developers and platforms and the decision made by all state bodies on what direction we would go. It was decided that the platform Drupal would be used, and we would engage the services of Enrega to develop the website. According to our old developers, Clear Pixel, we chose wisely as Drupal is a developer's platform and it would be easy to make the website do what the organisation wants it to do. They were correct and it has done that with some minor hiccups but everything we have asked for was achieved. ICPA would like to thank Lee of Clear Pixel for his years of support and wish him well in his retirement.

As Lisa has mentioned the cost of this development has been covered in part from a grant and the remainder of the cost covered by ICPA (Aust). I am certain all members and state bodies acknowledge the financial assistance of our parent body and thank them for this which has ensured all members have access to a modern, state of the art website.

The main objective of this development was to allow each State to make their website their own and the best way to do this was to involve the States in the development and to be hands on. So, I thank our web development team Nikki Macqueen, Alana Moller, Anika Bell, Sarah Cook, Claire Butler, Gabie Le Lievre, Jill Greenfield, Jodie Keogh, Kate Thompson, Kym Ross, Louise Martin, Melissa Iland, Sally Brindal and Tammie Irons, commonly referred to as the "Website Wonderwomen" on our Messenger chat.

What an achievement this group of busy women has done to create pages that are informative and appealing. If they felt an improvement could be done, then the developer created this change to the benefit of all. I encourage all members to look at every state's pages to view what has been done and more importantly find relevant information for your situation. If you do come across something you feel is not right or missing, please contact your state web person in the first instance or the Federal web team. This is an easy process by selecting "our Team" on whatever site you are on. Click on the web person then send them a message directly.

The website itself is a one stop shop for all things such as surveys, online payments, donations, merchandise and memberships. Do you like the Federal Conference website? This was developed for Longreach, but it is actually a template on the website so if other states would like to use this for their State Conferences, the backbone structure is there to be modified with the state branding and specific information.

The database has been created and is a different format than our previous one so this is to allow the two members of the family to have their own email addresses on the database to be used for mailouts if they wish this to happen. As this change was a massive change, only members from 2020 onwards are contained on the database on the website. Previous archival membership information is available, and this can be supplied on request. I would like to thank, Assistant Web Manager, Nikki Macqueen

for her tireless effort to ensure all members that were uploaded are correct. She has done a massive job. I would like to also thank Federal Membership Officer, Jane O'Brien for learning on the run how to put manual members onto the system. This too was a massive task, but I think we have it up to date now. Please if any member has an issue and feel information is not correct, please contact Jane for her to update.

As I write this, we are still in the development stage to give all Treasurer's and state Membership Officers access to the database to search, view and export. There are some teething problems with this which I hope will be rectified by Conference. This access will be available to branch Treasurers as well on request if they wish to access the federal membership information of their branch. Please email me for access if you wish this. Blackall Branch will be trialling this when it is set up and functional. Every financial member has access to their own member's portal where they can update their details, the details of their additional person, fill out their individual state membership questionnaires, update their payment options and access member only information. Memberships can be paid online and during Nov to March there will be an option for recurring payments if a member wishes to use this facility.

Branches also have their own mini website on their state website. This consists of three pages. The right tab page is the location and is not editable and the middle one is "Our Team" which is the executive of the branch. This information when it needs changing needs to be emailed to the State web person so they can update this page. The left-hand page and the prominent first page is information about the Branch. This can be edited by the branch and can be quite individualised if the branch would like to be creative. If the branch would like to edit this information and has a web person which would like to have a go then they must contact the Web Manager or Assistant Web Manager for access and training, but the opportunity is there if a branch wishes to use it.

I will be in Longreach throughout Conference and all of Friday so if anybody or a Branch Executive would like to discuss the website or see what can be done for their branch, please come and see me.

Finally, I would like to thank the support of the current Federal Council and Federal President, Alana Moller, over this development and thank them for the faith they have had in me with some of the decisions that had to be made. Nikki has worked the "front of house" presentation with the "Website Wonderwomen" to produce a great website and this has allowed me to work behind the scenes on technical things which need to happen so everything works. This year has been a hard year for me personally, especially the last few months, and Nikki has gone beyond what is expected to give me support and help things along. They say give a busy person more things to do and they get done. This is true in 99% of the time but sometimes when you get bombarded with one crisis on top of another that busy person then delegates it to Nikki. Thanks Nikki!!

PEDAL'S REPORT 2021

Raelene Hall

As I was riding my lean, green, racing machine (an old bike from a verge collection done up!) one morning it occurred to me that ICPA could basically be the Government of Australia!

Big call I know but think about this for a minute. We have a Federal level with a President in charge, state levels, each with their own President in charge and we have the people (members) across the country.

Just imagine what we could achieve if we were in charge for just one week. Hooley Dooley. There would be some money spent but spent wisely, with consultation across Federal and States, to ensure the funds would make the most impact.

Discussions would be held, without angst and all wanting the very best for everyone, not just their state/people.

And think of the savings with no fancy aircraft/helicopters, parliament houses, dining out, overseas trips, campaigning and so much more.

Oh, please bring it on -just one week! I reckon we would sort more problems in one week than our Governments can sometimes manage in a year or years.

That is a very simplistic view I know but we are allowed to dream are we not?

So, what has that to do with the 'Pedals' magazine?

Well, I see Pedals as our version of the 'Australian' newspaper. It is our National ICPA magazine, but it is there not just to share ICPA information but to share the stories of our people. Those stories we all have, that we think no one is interested in, would never want to read and we do not have time to write anyway.

It is the stories of the smallest branches volunteering to run the largest events, it is the stories of the families who have overcome heartache and hardship to forge on, it's the stories of our kids' achievements.

I have received stories that have made me laugh and cry, stories that make you want to throw your hands up in the air and just shout 'for goodness sake someone in authority help this person/child/family' and I've even watched families' journeys through life in stories and photos.

Those photos! They are not always clear, nor large enough and sometimes I just cannot use them, but I love seeing every single one of them. They are our ICPA organisation in pictures and it is always my aim to share as many of them as possible, although I can never include as many as I would like.

Every cover tells its own story, whether it features children, teenagers, adults, males, or females. They all have a wonderful connection to ICPA and, I hope, every single one of them brings a smile to your face when your magazine arrives in the mail.

So today I come to you with a message. I am not going to harangue you all to send me your stories and photos, as I often do in these reports.

Instead, I want to thank you, one and all. Every single person who has contributed to the magazine, not just in these past years of the pandemic but right back from when I started as editor. I know you are all busy and many of you do not feel you have a story worth telling but believe me when I say it is.

Your stories are the history of ICPA, of the places where you live, work, and educate your children, what your life looked like then, now, and what it will look like into the future, as we move forward. The contributions from our young people show up the outstanding talent we often find in the bush.

Please, don't ever underestimate your contributions to Pedals magazine. Without your input there is no magazine. I have had people read the magazine who have no connection, at all, with ICPA and told me how much they enjoyed reading it.

One of the reasons for that, I believe, is because every article in the magazine is real. Whether it covers the latest branch fundraiser, a State conference or book launch, struggles with educating children, frustrations with technology or your favourite recipe it is written by an ICPA member living in the very 'real' world.

At the end of the day, you also have the 'claim to fame' that you have had your words published in a National magazine – a damn good one at that!