



February 2025

ICPA Federal Council Meeting and Canberra Delegations

Federal Council met in Canberra in February to continue its advocacy for equitable education opportunities for rural and remote students. Council members met with 33 government officials and policymakers, engaging in productive discussions on critical key issues that affect families and students living in isolated areas to ensure their educational opportunities are not compromised by geography.

Key Advocacy Points

Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance (BBA)

- ICPA seeks to restore the AIC Basic Boarding Allowance to its original value, aligning it with 55% of the average boarding school fee, as intended when the allowance was introduced in 1973.

The rising cost of boarding school fees continues to place financial strain on rural and remote families. ICPA continues to push for indexation of the AIC BBA to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) Education Sub-Index. This adjustment would ensure that the allowance keeps pace with the actual cost of boarding and prevents further financial disadvantage for families who rely on it.

Early Childhood Education and Care – Early Childhood Teacher Pay Parity

- ICPA is advocating for pay package parity for Early Childhood Teachers working in rural and remote locations across all early childhood education settings.

ICPA continues to advocate for equitable pay packages across all early childhood education settings, ensuring that teachers in remote areas receive fair compensation that reflects their qualifications and the essential role they play. Addressing this disparity is critical to attracting and retaining quality educators in these regions.

Support for Rural and Remote Australian Apprentices

- ICPA seeks increased financial and non-financial support for rural and remote apprentices who must relocate to access their training opportunities.

For young people in rural and remote areas pursuing a trade, relocating to access an apprenticeship presents significant financial and logistical challenges. ICPA is advocating for increased financial and non-financial support for rural and remote Australian Apprentices who must move away from home for training. This includes assistance with relocation costs, accommodation, and access to programs to ensure their success in their chosen fields.

In meetings with government officials, ICPA representatives sought to secure recognition of the urgent need for these key points to be addressed as a matter of priority.

Media engagements further amplified these concerns, ensuring they remained at the forefront of public and political discourse. Federal President Louise Martin made time for media engagements to raise awareness about the challenges faced by rural and remote families. Coverage across print, radio, and digital platforms ensured these critical issues remained in the public and political spotlight.



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In addition to attending delegation meetings, we held our first face-to-face meeting with all fifteen councillors present, marking the first time since the new Federal Council was elected in 2024. This provided the opportunity to conduct detailed reviews of internal governance and strategic priorities along with general council business including:

- Strengthening membership engagement and growth.
- Planning for upcoming state and federal conferences.
- Enhancing partnerships with education providers and industry stakeholders.
- Refining policies related to council operations.

ICPA's presence in Canberra reinforces the urgent need for targeted policy changes to support the education of rural and remote students. We remain steadfast in our commitment and will continue to work to ensure that all geographically isolated students receive the support and resources needed to succeed.