



ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION  
OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED  
**MINUTES**  
OF THE  
**50<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE**



**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**HELD**

**Online via Live Streaming**

**HOSTED BY**

**WA STATE COUNCIL**

ICPA (WA)

KINDLY THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS AND DONORS OF THE  
2022 STATE CONFERENCE

**Partner:**



**Sponsors:**



ICPA (WA) would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the Department of Education, WA.

Thank you.



Department of  
Education

GOVERNMENT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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**ICPA (WA) STATE COUNCIL 2021 – 2022 (March 2021 AGM)**

**PRESIDENT**

Sally Brindal

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Naomi Obst

**SECRETARY**

**WEBMASTER**

Kym Ross

**TREASURER**

Michelle Abbott

**PUBLICITY OFFICER**

Jane Hughes

**LONES OFFICER**

Samantha Greay

**COMMITTEE**

Kym Burns

**COMMITTEE**

Chandra Ridley

**COMMITTEE**

Jane Cunningham

**COMMITTEE**

Louise Ford

**COMMITTEE**

Lee-Anne White

**ICPA (WA) STATE COUNCIL 2022 – 2023 (March 2022 AGM)**

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Michelle Abbott

**PUBLICITY OFFICER**

Samantha Greay

**COMMITTEE**

Chandra Ridley

**COMMITTEE**

Jane Hughes

**COMMITTEE**

Louise Ford

### **CONFERENCE PROGRAMME**

- **Greeting** Sally Brindal President ICPA (WA)
- **National Anthem** Penrhos College Choir
- **Presidents Welcome** Sally Brindal President ICPA (WA)
- **Hardly a History at All** Louise Ford State Councillor ICPA (WA)
- **Official Opening** Hon. Sue Ellery, MLC Minister for Education
- **Introduction of Guests/Delegates** Kym Ross Secretary ICPA (WA)
- **State President's Report** Sally Brindal President ICPA (WA)
- **Branch Report** Mrs Jen Critch Midwest Branch President
- **Portfolio Report** Samantha Greay State Councillor ICPA (WA)
- **Speaker** Ms Cat Aniere CEO Millennium Kids, WA Local Hero Nominee
- **Portfolio Report** Jane Cunningham State Councillor ICPA (WA)
- **REVISE Report** Naomi Obst On behalf of Chairperson REVISE
- **Portfolio Report** Louise Ford State Councillor ICPA (WA)
- **Branch Report** Mrs Claire Mahony Meekatharra Air Branch President
- **Portfolio Report** Chandra Ridley State Councillor ICPA (WA)
- **Federal ICPA Report** Mrs Alana Moller Federal President ICPA (Aust)
- **Speaker** Mrs Roma Heath
- **Federal Conference Update** Jane Cunningham Local
- **Speaker** Ms Lisa Rodgers Director General, Department of Education
- **Speaker** Mrs Roxanne Morrissey ICPA Federal and WA Life Member
- **Speaker** Mr Richard Stokes CEO Australian Boarding Schools Association
- **AGM of ICPA (WA)**
- **Door Prize and close of business.**

▪ **Confirmation of 2021 Conference Minutes**

**Moved:** Kym Ross (State Council)

**Seconded:** Jane Cunningham (State Council)

**CARRIED**

Business Arising

Nil

## CONFERENCE MOTIONS

### Agenda Motions: Allowances

**A1** Eastern Districts Branch

*Allowances*

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Minister for Education and the State Government to reverse the decrease in the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) and increase it in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) annually to support families impacted by increases in boarding fees, charged by all boarding facilities.”**

**Explanation:**

The State Government is decreasing the Royalties for Regions (RfR) component of the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) by 37% over five (5) years. This allowance has already decreased from \$2,105 in 2017 and will reduce to \$1,320 in 2022.

This decision is heavily impacting our isolated families due to boarding schools, both Government and Independent increasing their fees annually. The gap between what parents pay and the allowances received from both the Federal and State Governments is widening. We therefore request that ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government to reverse this decrease and to help minimise the financial pressure put on parents from rural and remote areas who have no other option than to send their children away to school.

**Moved:** *Samantha Greay (WA State Council)*

**Seconded:** *Coby Smith (Eastern Districts Branch)*

**CARRIED**

**A2** Lakes District Branch

*Allowances*

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Minister for Education and the State Government for an annual increase to the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).”**

**Explanation:**

The BAHA is an important subsidy that assists families living in remote areas of our State who send their children away to school. The allowance provides financial relief for those eligible families who are constantly having to find money within tight budgets to cover the ever-increasing cost of school and boarding fees.

Boarding fees continue to rise on average by 2-8% per annum and the continued reduction of the BAHA allowance, increases the financial burden on parents accessing an education for their children.

The reduction of this allowance has seen rural and remote families leave and relocate to larger centres to ensure their children have access to affordable secondary education. For families who have no choice but to send their children away to boarding school, the increase in the gap fee; between what is charged, and the amount parents receive in financial support continues to widen.

For the 2022 school year, there is a gap fee of \$4,647 between the boarding costs at a Residential College in WA and the AIC and BAHA payments that an eligible family receives from the Federal and State Government. This is an increase in the gap payable up from 2021 by 4.97%.

<b>Fees &amp; Allowance</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Rate Variations</b>	
Accommodation	\$14,461	\$14,823	Increase	2.50%
AIC Allowance	\$8,557	\$8,856	Increase	3.49%
BAHA	\$1,477	\$1,320	Decrease	10.63%
	\$4,427	\$4,647	Increase	4.97%

We therefore request that ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government for an increase to the BAHA on an annual basis in line with the CPI increase as is applied to the Federal AIC allowance; to minimise the financial impact on rural and remote families.

**Moved:** *Fiona Hopley (Lakes District Branch)*      **Seconded:** *Jane Cunningham (WA State Council)*      **CARRIED**

**A3**      **Meekatharra Air Branch**      **Allowances**

**“That ICPA (WA) continues to lobby the Minister for Education and the State Government for an increase in the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA), to bring it back in line with the consumer price index (CPI) annually.**

**Explanation:**

The BAHA is an important subsidy that rural and remote families rely heavily on each year when sending their children away from home to provide them with an adequate education. An increase in this allowance would significantly help rural families as boarding fees are ever increasing annually.

**Moved:** *Natalie Bevan (Meekatharra Air Branch)*      **Seconded:** *Lauren Lewis (Meekatharra Air Branch)*      **CARRIED**

**Agenda Motions: Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum**

**A4**      **Meekatharra Air Branch**      **Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum**

**“That ICPA (WA) requests ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby the Minister for Families and Social Services, the Minister for Regional Education, Senator the Hon, Fiona Nash Regional Education Commissioner and the Federal Government, to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role home tutors play in educating geographically isolated students via distance education.”**

**Explanation:**

Due to their age, many children are reliant on home tutors to assist with their education. Home tutors are not considered teachers or education assistants. They are, however, accountable for the delivery of face-to-face educational support and supervision of students undertaking a compulsory government education program.

Following the COVID lockdown period, understanding the extent of the role a family member assumes when school must occur from home must now be clearer.

**Moved:** *Louise Ford (WA State Council)*      **Seconded:** *Natalie Bevan (Meekatharra Air Branch)*      **CARRIED**



### **Agenda Motions: Teacher Training**

#### **A5 Lakes District Branch**

#### ***Teacher Training***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA) for the hours REVISE tutors work with students and the Professional Development they carry out to be recognised as counting towards to their hours for meeting their full registration requirements.”**

#### **Explanation:**

REVISE tutors are retired teachers who assist parents with the supervision of children’s education through the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) and regional Schools of the Air (SOTA). Though they may be retired teachers, REVISE tutors may want to remain fully registered with the TRBWA which requires teachers ‘*teach*’ at least 100 full working days since registration was last granted or renewed (usually 5 years for full registration).

In the *Professional Engagement (for the Renewal of Registration) Policy*, it states that ‘*teach*’ is defined as:

- (a) the delivery of an educational programme designed to implement a prescribed curriculum and the assessment of student participation in such an educational programme; or*
- (b) the administration of any such educational program.*

It also states that an ‘*educational venue*’ is ‘*(a) a school as defined in s4 of the School Education Act 1999*’.

The work of REVISE Tutors appears to fit the definitions of both ‘*teach*’ and ‘*educational venue*’.

The current COVID climate has highlighted the importance of retaining accredited teachers and to recognise them as a valuable resource.

**Moved:** *Fiona Hobley (Lakes District Branch)*

**Seconded:** *Jane Cunningham (WA State Council)*

**CARRIED**

#### **A6 Lakes District Branch**

#### ***Teacher Training***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA) for the hours Home Tutors who are qualified teachers working with students at home and the Professional Development they carry out to be recognised as counting towards to their hours for meeting their full registration requirements.”**

#### **Explanation:**

Throughout Western Australia, there are many qualified teachers who are currently working with their own children as they attend either the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) or a regional School of the Air (SOTA). Many of these teachers would like to retain or apply for registration with the TRBWA which requires teachers ‘*teach*’ at least 100 full working days since registration was last granted or renewed (see table below for professional engagement and various categories of registration).

In the *Professional Engagement (for the Renewal of Registration) Policy*, it states that ‘*teach*’ is defined as:

- (a) the delivery of an educational programme designed to implement a prescribed curriculum and the assessment of student participation in such an educational programme; or*
- (b) the administration of any such educational program.*

It also states that an ‘*educational venue*’ is ‘*(a) a school as defined in s4 of the School Education Act 1999*’.

The work of parents who are qualified teachers working at home with their children to deliver educational programs appears to fit the definitions of both ‘*teach*’ and ‘*educational venue*’.

Category of Registration	Minimum number of professional engagement (days taught) required
Full Registration	100 full working days or a period of time that would be equivalent in hours
Limited or Provisional granted for 3 years	60 full working days or a period of time that would be equivalent in hours
Limited or Provisional granted for less than 3 years	Calculated on a pro-rata basis for the period since the registration was last granted or renewed, to the date of application at the rate of 20 full working days for each year

The current COVID climate has highlighted the importance of retaining accredited teachers and to recognise them as a valuable resource.

**Moved:** *Fiona Hobley (Lakes District Branch)*      **Seconded:** *Jane Cunningham (WA State Council)*      **CARRIED**

**A7**      **Meekatharra Air Branch**      ***Teacher Training***

**“That ICPA (WA) approach universities who offer the Bachelor of Education to investigate whether station assignments teaching set work could count towards their practical placements as part of their degree.”**

**Explanation:**

This is a valuable opportunity for preservice undergraduates to be placed on stations and teach students rather than sit in the SOTA school and only participate with the students online. The online delivery of lessons from a SOTA may give the wrong impression of how easy it is for the parents/tutors to manage students via distance education lessons.

Air lessons with multiple students across varying age levels is very difficult as you are required to keep the other children quiet yet actively working independently; and be helping the student who is undertaking their on-air lesson. This may often be inaccurately perceived by the SOTA teacher as a break for the parents.

There may be ways for branches to assist with overcoming the issues relating to additional expenses incurred for preservice student.

**Moved:** *Natalie Bevan (Meekatharra Air Branch)*      **Seconded:** *Lauren Lewis (Meekatharra Air Branch)*      **CARRIED**

**Agenda Motions: Travel**

**A8**      **Eastern Districts Branch**      ***Travel***

**“That ICPA (WA) requests that the Department of Transport – On Demand Transport review the transport hub policy criteria for the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) - Road Travel Subsidy. The criteria should state that the nearest transport hub should travel to the nearest appropriate government school with boarding facilities.”**

**Explanation:**

The official criteria are as follows:

The Student Travel Subsidy Scheme provides travel assistance to school and tertiary students who are geographically isolated. The two main types of travel support are:

- Subsidised fares for air, bus and train travel for eligible students who live within the defined remote area of Western Australia (see map)

- A road travel subsidy for eligible students who live anywhere within Western Australia but who must be driven in a private vehicle more than 56km from home to the nearest:
  - Appropriate government school with boarding facilities offering classes in the grade or level in which the student is enrolled, or
  - Regular passenger transport (bus stop, airport, or train station- please visit the TransWA-plan your journey website for regular passenger transport hubs and routes), or
  - A school bus service operating between the student's home and the school they are attending.

Families are continuing to be refused STSS Road Travel Subsidy when the nearest transport hub is more than 56km away, for the 2021 school year and/or fails to support the needs of rural students.

Examples have previously been provided and yet still there remain as issues for our members.

Example 1:

Hyden is 192km from Narrogin Senior High School, our nearest appropriate government school with boarding facilities. There is no direct bus route from Hyden to Narrogin, so the transport hub criteria are unsuitable for our demographics.

Example 2:

A member enquired why their family application was rejected and she was advised that if you look at the TransWA map they could get their child from Kulin to Narrogin. This is only possible on two different bus routes and it may take a day and a half to make the journey. This would include a night stay in Perth with no adult supervision. The closest boarding facility (Narrogin) has no direct bus on a daily or weekly basis.

**Moved:** *Samantha Greay (WA State Council)*      **Seconded:** *Coby Smith (Eastern Districts Branch)*      **CARRIED**

**A9**      **Lakes District Branch**

***Travel***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Transport – On-Demand Transport service and the State Government for a review into the eligibility criteria of the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme - Road Travel Subsidy.”**

**Explanation:**

Families who have previously received the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme - Road Travel allowance are continuing to be rejected due to the introduction of TransWA services; as they now reside less than 56kms from the nearest transport hub, with a regular passenger transport service.

The timetabling of these services is not suitable for the transporting of rural students to and from their nearest appropriate educational boarding facility as the days these services run is mid-week and would result in the student missing up to 20 days of schooling per year.

This reduction of attendance at an educational institution is proven to have detrimental outcomes on a student's academic performance.

The eroding of allowances is an added increase to the cost of educating rural students and shows a lack of support for rural families.

**Moved:** *Fiona Hobley (Lakes District Branch)*      **Seconded:** *Jane Cunningham (WA State Council)*      **CARRIED**

**A10**    **Eastern Districts Branch**

***Travel***

**“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Transport to review their policy regarding the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) - Road Travel Subsidy to more appropriately fit rural travel situations and therefore change their criteria to enable our children to receive the education that is comparable to that of our metropolitan students.”**

**Explanation:**

Families who have previously qualified for the Road Travel Subsidy prior to 2019 are now having their claims rejected. This is due to a Trans WA bus service running through their town, or within a 56km radius. The scheduled timetables are often on days not suitable to the school timetables.

For Example: The TransWA bus travels from Perth to Esperance coming through Hyden on a Tuesday. The return bus is on a Thursday from Esperance. Meaning that students would accrue up to and including anywhere from 8 to 16 days absent over a school term. Over a 6-year period of boarding this is a minimum of 9.6 weeks of school missed. When the bus is not available on the appropriate days, students are expected to travel to Perth and stay in hotels (at parents’ expense) with no adult supervision until their school opens. This could mean 5 nights in a hotel alone. Many of these students are minors, unaccompanied by an adult and particularly pertinent as some children are still 11 years of age.

**Moved:** *Samantha Greay (WA State Council)*

**Seconded:** *Coby Smith (Eastern Districts Branch)*

**CARRIED**

**Supplementary Motions: Rural and Remote Schools**

**S1**    **Goldfields Eyre Branch**

***Rural and Remote Schools***

**“That the ICPA (WA) approach the relevant ministers in regard to the state of disrepair and lack of services offered at the Fairbridge WA run camp schools, in particular Goldfields Camp School in Kalgoorlie.”**

**Explanation:**

In 2018 the State Government handed over the running of six (6) government owned camp schools to Fairbridge WA in an attempt to save money. A media release at the time stated, *“Public school students will continue to receive priority access to the camp school sites. Fairbridge WA has committed to providing students and other members of the community access to school camps and outdoor activities that are high-quality, affordable and available to all schools. The organisation specialises in camp accommodation and outdoor education.”*

In the intervening years less and less activities, room for activities, accommodation and meal options are being offered. The state of the Kalgoorlie Camp school in particular has degraded to such an extent that many schools, including Kalgoorlie School of the Air who have traditionally used the camp school up to 4 times a year, have had to seek alternative venues and accommodation for camps at considerable cost to their schools, parents and communities.

**Moved:** *Tallaya Woods (Goldfields Eyre Branch)*

**Seconded:** *Louise Ford (WA State Council)*

**CARRIED**

### **Supplementary Motions: Student Accommodation**

**S2**      **Midwest Branch**

***Student Accommodation***

**CARRIED**

**“That ICPA (WA) requests the Minister for Education work collaboratively with the Department of Education, the Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools, the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) and the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association (ICPA) to ensure that a balanced approach to risk management within Boarding Schools is undertaken so that disproportionate restrictions are not placed on our vulnerable young children. “**

#### **Explanation**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve in Western Australia and we learn to live with COVID in our community, parents have real concerns for the wellbeing of their children in boarding schools and the disadvantage compared to their day student peers. Geographically isolated students are a vulnerable cohort who, in many instances have no choice but to attend a boarding school in order to receive an equitable educational opportunity. Their families continue to be exasperated by the conditions imposed and measures implemented to limit the spread of the virus in boarding schools.

Across our vast state in all the varying boarding environments, inconsistent, unjustifiable, and stifling guidelines, processes and rules have proven to extenuate these vulnerabilities, proving unbearable for the children and indeed heartbreaking for their families. We believe more needs to be done to ensure pragmatic solutions are implemented in boarding houses which do not further disadvantage our children.

Please consider our vulnerable young children before disproportionate restrictions to their day student peers are placed upon them.

**Moved:** *Jen Critch (Midwest Branch)*

**Seconded:** *Jackie Simkin (Midwest Branch)*

**CARRIED**

### **Supplementary Motions: Teacher Training**

**S3**      **Goldfields Eyre Branch**

***Teacher Training***

**“That ICPA(WA) approach universities who offer a Bachelor of Education to investigate whether preservice/student teachers’ time spent teaching set work on stations could count towards their practical placements as part of their degree.”**

#### **Explanation:**

By working with the universities, isolated families who educate their children through SOTA’s could offer student teachers an immersive experience that would benefit themselves, the families and SOTA’s. This scheme would likely encourage preservice and student teachers to apply for positions with SOTA’s once they graduate and would benefit isolated families by providing them with a home tutor dedicated to education who understands the system and can more confidently deliver the curriculum.

**Moved:** *Tallaya Woods (Goldfields Eyre Branch)*

**Deemed covered by A7**

**CARRIED**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Opened 1.15pm

- **Treasurer's Financial Report** Michelle Abbott

### **AGM Motions:**

#### **AGM 1** **State Council**

**"That the 2021 Financial Statement and Report be accepted as presented."**

**Moved:** *Michelle Abbott (WA State Council)*      **Seconded:** *Kym Ross (WA State Council)* **CARRIED**

#### **AGM 2** **State Council**

**"That Barris Accountants Perth WA is appointed as the ICPA (WA) Auditor for 2023."**

**Moved:** *Michelle Abbott (WA State Council)*      **Seconded:** *Kym Ross (WA State Council)* **CARRIED**

#### **AGM 3** **State Council**

**"That ICPA (WA) state affiliation fee remains at \$50 per member family for 2023."**

**Moved:** *Michelle Abbott (WA State Council)*      **Seconded:** *Kym Ross (WA State Council)* **CARRIED**

#### **AGM 4** **State Council**

**"That the amendments to Section 6.2.4 of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Western Australia (Inc) Constitution updated March 2022, as circulated, be adopted."**

#### **Explanation:**

This amendment takes away the need for Policy Objectives to be voted on at an Annual General Meeting or Annual Conference.

By voting on motions at Conference, delegates are setting the direction they require State Council to take in its advocacy for the coming year. It is therefore prudent for State Council to review these annually and update the Policy Objectives where required following Conference to reflect the motion outcomes rather than waiting until the next Conference to have the Policy Objectives voted on. By updating the Policy Objectives after Conference each year, the Objectives can be an immediate and direct reflection of the motion outcomes following Conference.

Any changes to the actual Policies will still be required to be voted on by delegates at State Conference, however, the Policy Objective review and updates should sit within the general function of State Council to reflect the outcomes of State Conference motions.

**Moved:** *Kym Ross (WA State Council)*      **Seconded:** *Michelle Abbott (WA State Council)* **CARRIED**

#### **AGM 5:** **State Council**

**"That amendments to Section 11.3 of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc) Constitution updated March 2022, as circulated, be adopted."**

**Explanation:**

This amendment defines those Executive members as referred to in Section 11.1 being President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer shall be limited to any one position to a maximum of three (3) consecutive years and removes the limitation for non-Executive members.

**Moved:** *Kym Ross (WA State Council)*      **Seconded:** *Michelle Abbott (WA State Council)*      **CARRIED**

**AGM 6:**      **State Council**

**“That all other amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association WA (Inc) Constitution updated March 2022, as circulated, be adopted.”**

**Explanation:**

Amendments to the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association WA (Inc) Constitution include several small edits, which include formatting and grammar (3.1, 3.8, 3.9, 3.15, 3.16, 5.5, 10.2.1, 10.2.2, 10.3, 11.6.5, 14.1, 15.5.7, 17.1, 17.6.1, 17.6.2, 17.7.1, 17.7.2, 17.8.1, 17.8.2, 17.8.3, 17.10, 17.11, 18.1, 18.3, 18.5, 18.7, 21.1, 21.2, 22) and the addition of rule number (3.7.3 ii, 7.9, 18.5 ii).

**Moved:** *Kym Ross (WA State Council)*      **Seconded:** *Michelle Abbott (WA State Council)*      **CARRIED**

**Election of State Council for 2022 – 2023**

All positions were declared vacant and the Returning Officer, Roxanne Morrissey took the chair.

<b><u>President</u></b> <i>Nominated: Kym Ross</i>	<b><u>Sally Brindal</u></b> <i>Seconded: Michelle Abbott</i>	<i>Duly Elected</i>
<b><u>Vice President</u></b> <i>Nominated: Kym Ross</i>	<b><u>Jane Cunningham</u></b> <i>Seconded: Chandra Ridley</i>	<i>Duly Elected</i>
<b><u>Secretary</u></b> <i>Nominated: Michelle Abbott</i>	<b><u>Kym Ross</u></b> <i>Seconded: Sally Brindal</i>	<i>Duly Elected</i>
<b><u>Treasurer</u></b> <i>Nominated: Sally Brindal</i>	<b><u>Michelle Abbott</u></b> <i>Seconded: Kym Ross</i>	<i>Duly Elected</i>
<b><u>Publicity Officer</u></b> <i>Nominated: Kym Ross</i>	<b><u>Samantha Greay</u></b> <i>Seconded: Sally Brindal</i>	<i>Duly Elected</i>
<b><u>Lones Officer</u></b> <i>Nominated: Sally Brindal</i>	<b><u>Michelle Abbott</u></b> <i>Seconded: Kym Ross</i>	<i>Duly Elected</i>
<b><u>Committee</u></b> <i>Nominated: Sally Brindal</i>	<b><u>Chandra Ridley</u></b> <i>Seconded: Naomi Obst</i>	<i>Duly Elected</i>
<b><u>Committee</u></b> <i>Nominated: Chandra Ridley</i>	<b><u>Jane Hughes</u></b> <i>Seconded: Louise Ford</i>	<i>Duly Elected</i>

**Committee**

*Nominated: Chandra Ridley*

**Louise Ford**

*Seconded: Jane Cunningham*

*Duly Elected*

**Annual General Meeting declared closed at 1.40pm**



REPORTS:

## **2022 ICPA (WA) President's Report**

**Sally Brindal**

Hon. Sue Ellery MLC, Minister for Education; Mr Shane Love MLA, Deputy Leader of the Opposition; Hon. Donna Faragher MLC, Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education; Mr Peter Rundle MLA, Shadow Minister for Education and Training; Hon. Steve Martin MLC; Hon. Martin Aldridge MLC; Ms Lara Dalton, MLA; Mrs Roxanne Morrissey – ICPA Federal Life Member and WA Life Member, Mrs Alana Moller ICPA Federal President, Mrs Lisa Slade ICPA Federal Vice President; Mrs Wendy Hick Federal Council, Guests, Speakers and ICPA members.

It gives me great pleasure to present my Presidents report.

So, here we are, still at the mercy of COVID. COVID has been the cause of much angst for parents and disappointment for students; just when we thought there was a reprieve it would rear its ugly head again. But there are some positives as a result of COVID. While to some degree COVID has kept us apart, it has also brought us together. As a result of COVID there has been an increase in collaboration between establishments, organisations and stakeholders of education. I am proud to say that ICPA (WA) have been a part of that process, giving a voice to the families from rural and remote WA; for those with children in boarding as well as those in rural schools; constantly bringing to the table the impact that decisions around COVID may have on our rural and remote children. ICPA (WA) is now a regular at Department of Education System Alliance meetings, which meets 6 times a year. Prior to the return to school we met weekly from January solely focussed on the return to school and the implication of proposed covid guidelines. ICPA (WA) welcomed the opportunity to be a part of the conversation. This level of respect for an organisation such as ICPA is testament to the years of hard work and determination of our forebearers.

Throughout COVID there have been joint submissions and joint press releases by ICPA (Aust) and the states and territory, epitomising that the tyranny of distance in a country the size of Australia is no barrier for an organisation like ICPA. There has been a big focus on the implementation of COVID related guidelines in boarding facilities. Thankfully, the WA Government have had the opportunity to assess measures that have been implemented in some areas of the Eastern States to ensure that, as the high case load environment increases in WA, our children do not suffer some of the same inequities and atrocities that have occurred there. I would like to thank Federal Council and State and Territory Councils for their continued support.

In addition to COVID, ICPA (WA) continues to advocate on the issues raised by our members through their motions and we continue to highlight the issues faced on a daily basis.

With the ever increasing cost of boarding, the continued reduction and inaccessibility to allowances continues to increase the financial pressure for families. It has previously been indicated that at the end of the RfR reduction period in 2022 there would be a review of the Boarding Away from Home (BAHA) structure. ICPA (WA) will continue to monitor this situation.

ICPA (WA) is becoming increasingly frustrated at the lack of communication and understanding from the Department of Transport in relation to the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme – Road Travel Subsidy. The continued use of eligibility criteria that has no correlation to the boarding facilities a student attends, as a reason to reject applications, is denying families of a much needed travel allowance. Despite numerous letters State Council have been unable to secure a meeting with the Department of Transport. Sorry, I will correct that. The Senior Policy Advisor for the Minister of Transport had agreed to meet with ICPA (WA) in October 2021, however, was a no show,

with no apology prior and to this day no apology post! Conversely meetings have been held with Martin White, Executive Director Transperth System, Regional Town and School Bus Services and John Bailly Manager School Bus Services; discussions have provided greater clarity and understanding of members issues.

ICPA welcomed the review into the Student Transport Assistance Policy framework, ensuring it remains fit for purpose. ICPA presented a submission to the review. Kym Ross, Jane Cunningham and I were invited to be a part of the Public Accounts Committee hearing where we discussed further matters raised in our submission.

State Council also presented a submission to the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC) into the adequacy of telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia. The vulnerabilities of our communication systems continue to be exposed in disaster situations, for example as a result of Cyclone Seroja and bushfires. Recommendations from RTIRC report will hopefully go a long way towards improving communications for regional and rural users. The Copies of both submissions can be found on our website.

The push by both the state and federal governments to attract people to the Skills Sector with additional funding and reduced or fee free courses is a welcomed investment. However, greater support is still needed for students who have to relocate to access such programs. Some head way has been made with the Relocation Scholarship and Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) but the means test criteria and association with Youth Allowance results in many students being ineligible.

It is hoped that the appointment of Fiona Nash as Regional Education Commissioner brings the national focus and direction for regional and remote education that is long overdue.

It was great to be able to have a presence again at field days in 2021 and I would like to thank members of the Midwest Branch and Lakes Branch for their efforts at Mingenew Expo and Newdegate Field Day, respectively. It resulted in 14 potential new members and helps to increase our exposure. I would also like to thank Louise Ford for the popup ICPA stand at the Landor Races.

The promotion of SIDE, as a high school alternative to boarding, was a topic of discussion from members at the field days. This was raised with Director General, Lisa Rodgers and Deputy Director General Jim Bell at our October meeting. Other areas of discussion included greater awareness and access to the School of Special Education Needs (SSEN) for Principals and parents, SOTA reviews and accountability, expectation of staff during school reviews at rural schools and the inclusion of a parent space on the Department of Education website to support parents and students in an easy, friendly manner for those at both government and non-government schools. ICPA (WA) are grateful for the respectful working relationship with the Department of Education.

I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been able to attend the 50<sup>th</sup> ICPA Federal Conference, on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> November in Longreach in person – accommodation was at a premium! Who would have thought that in an Outback town there would be two conferences on at the same time – one for education, one for health. It really was a special occasion with every State President in attendance. The lengths to which members were prepared to go to, in order to attend is a true reflection of the passion and dedication of ICPA members. There were group charter flights, personal charter flights and many long drives in between. A potential COVID emergency and an overzealous Longreach Disaster Recovery Coordinator – aka the local physio, nearly brought the whole town to a standstill. As it turned out, there was no real emergency, disaster was averted; but it did prove that the national COVID safe system worked.

The new ICPA website went live in April, and it is wonderful to see it up and running. It has enabled us to host this online Conference; something that would not have been possible previously.

As ICPA grew in WA, to cope with the increasing amounts of information to send out to branches Ruth Swan, State Secretary 1974-1975 compiled a news-sheet 'BITS & PIECES". Bits & Pieces still exists today although it has had quite a few face lifts over years, now with two editions a year. Unfortunately, our editor Mrs Raelene Hall is stepping down. Our search for a replacement has so far been fruitless and time is running out. So, if you know anyone who may be interested, please contact me.

I would like to thank the outgoing 2021/2022 State Council for their contribution in advocating on behalf of our members. At last year's State Conference, we welcomed two new councillors, Lee-Anne White – Goldfields Eyre and Jane Cunningham – Lakes Branch. I would like to thank them for volunteering their time and knowledge to such a worthy organisation, which is so well-respected Australia wide.

Thank you to the WA Department of Education for the support ICPA (WA) receives in the form of an operating grant for the purpose of advocating for the equity of access to an appropriate education for rural and remote students in Western Australia. I would also like to thank them for the collaboration and inclusivity with ICPA (WA), especially as we continue to navigate our way through COVID.

I would also like to thank our members for attending today and representing your branch, for advocating in your areas of IPCA and keeping ICPA relevant and at the forefront.

Thank you

## **Treasurer's Report**

**Michelle Abbott**

Good afternoon,

Thank you all for your time this afternoon. I would like to give you a summary of the financial statements.

There was a jump of \$25,237.00 in income from 2020 to 2021. This is mostly reflected in fundraising, donations, and conference funds.

The increase in donations can be explained by the way we are reflecting state councillors contributions. State councillors often put in a nil claim for their travel expenses, and we wanted a way to show this valuable contribution our councillors make. In turn you will note that there is slight increase in the expense side of donations, which is cancelled out by the income side.

The increase of conference funds from 2020 to 2021 is due to sponsorship for the 2021 conference and 2022 conference both being paid in 2021.

In 2021 we received sponsorship funds of \$13,640.00 which is for the 2022 conference. Most of these sponsorship funds will be carried over for our 2023 Conference where we will celebrate ICPA's 50 years face to face. The Midwest Branch are the conveners for this conference and they are well under way to making this conference one to remember.

The conveners for our 2021 conference were Gascoyne Branch where a profit was made of \$5,640.00. Thank you to Alys McKeough and her band of helpers for making that conference a wonderful day.

Once again, the Department of Education showed its support for ICPA (WA) with a grant of \$10,000.00. This grant will continue in 2022. Other sponsors to thank for 2021 include Telstra, NBN Co, Connellan Airways, ABSA, Shire of Murchison, Shire of Upper Gascoyne, GOPP and Byfield's.

We would also like to acknowledge Midwest and Lakes Districts branches for their generous donations to State Council.

There was a slight decrease in expenses overall between 2020 and 2021 with the biggest decrease being in state meeting expenses. This is due to not being able to hold a face-to-face meeting in February 2021 due to a COVID-19 lockdown in Perth. There was also a decrease in accommodation cost for State Conference in 2021.

In 2021 WA had 254 members, 5 life members, 10 school corporate members and 4 corporate members.

It is promising to note that to date for 2022 membership stands at 172; but we urge branches to please contact their past members and encourage them to re-join.

I would like to thank Nicholas from Barris Accounting for once again preparing the 2021 financial statement this year.

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1/2/2022

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**INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT 2021**

**To: The Members of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.)**

**Scope**

We have reviewed and audited the financial statements of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.) for the year ended **31st December 2021**.

The Treasurer is responsible for these reports and has determined that they meet the needs of the Members. We have conducted an independent audit of these reports in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.) only.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with relevant accounting and auditing standards to provide reasonable assurance on whether the reports are free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the reports provided. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly, so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.)'s financial position, the results of its operations and its cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

**Qualification**

Subscriptions, fundraising and grants are a significant source of revenue for the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.). As the evidence available to us regarding revenue from this source was limited, our audit procedures with respect to subscriptions and fundraising had to be restricted to the amounts recorded in the financial records.

**Audit Opinion**

In our opinion, except for the limitations described above, the financial statements represent a True and Fair View of the financial position of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.) as at the 31 December 2021.

1<sup>st</sup> February 2022

**Nicholas Barris CPA**  
**Director**  
**Barris Accounting**

 TAXATION FOR INDIVIDUALS & SMALL BUSINESS  
 SELF-MANAGED SUPERANNUATION COMPLIANCE  
 BUSINESS ADVISORY



**THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENT'S  
ASSOCIATION OF WA (INC.)  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED  
31/12/2021**

**PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT:**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Department of Education Grant	9,091	9,091
Donations, Registrations & Sponsorship	8,824	5,547
Fundraising Income	2,815	285
Interest Received	-	156
State Conference Funds	35,041	16,221
Subscriptions	18,580	17,815
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>74,351</b>	<b>49,114</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Audit Fees	470	470
Advertising	800	545
Bank Charges	42	5
Depreciation Expense	404	808
Donations	4,356	3,772
Insurance	4,007	3,618
Postage	345	994
Printing & Stationery	3,433	3,367
Purchases (including Promotional Items)	4,276	235
Room Hire	-	545
State Meeting Expenses (including related Travel Costs)	24,189	26,914
Subscriptions (Branch & Federal Council)	4,269	5,421
Sundry Expenses (Storage Costs & Fundraising Books & Mugs)	1,223	1,028
Teleconference Costs	231	332
Travel Expenses (Other)	3,511	4,336
Uniforms (Badges)	48	-
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>51,603</b>	<b>52,390</b>
<b>NET PROFIT (LOSS)</b>	<b>22,747</b>	<b>(3,276)</b>

Note: Figures above exclusive of GST

**THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENT'S  
ASSOCIATION OF WA (INC.)  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED  
31/12/2021**

**BALANCE SHEET:**

<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Bank Accounts:</b>		
Commonwealth Bank Account (018)	44,748	42,807
Commonwealth Bank Account (357)	45,004	44,185
Commonwealth Bank Account (759)	2,508	2,483
Commonwealth Bank Account (897)	3,000	0
Commonwealth Bank Account (553)	16,078	0
Paypal Account	3,028	500
<b>Australian Taxation Office:</b>		
GST Refundable (Adjustments)	-	311
<b>Debtors:</b>		
Accounts Receivable	1,650	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>116,016</b>	<b>90,286</b>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>Fixed Assets:</b>		
* Plant & Equipment (Pre 2012)	17,127	17,127
* Less: Accumulated Depreciation (Pre 2012)	(11,652)	(11,652)
Plant & Equipment	5,723	5,723
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(5,465)	(5,061)
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>5,733</b>	<b>6,137</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>121,749</b>	<b>96,423</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Creditors:</b>		
Accounts Payable	2,196	614
<b>Australian Taxation Office:</b>		
GST Payable	121	199
GST Payable (Adjustments)	1,075	-
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>3,391</b>	<b>813</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>118,358</b>	<b>95,610</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Members Funds	95,610	98,886
Current Earnings	22,747	(3,276)
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>118,357</b>	<b>95,610</b>

\* Note: Balance Sheet Contains Plant & Equipment (which represents old data prior to 2012). No historical asset register history recorded.

**ICPA  
Depreciation Register  
For the Year Ended 31 December 2021**

Equipment Description	Date	Amount	OWDV	Adjustments	Dep Rate	Business %	Dep Amt	WDV
Note: Prv 2022 Asset Register (No Details Provided)	30/06/2012	17,127	5,489	-	0%	0%	0	5,489
Equipment Purchased	16/02/2016	624	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Go To Meeting Licence	27/02/2017	624	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Canon MFC2715 Printer	26/04/2017	63	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Seagate Harddrive	19/07/2017	96	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Harvey Norman Computer for Treasurer	13/04/2018	1,206	270	-	50%	100%	135	135
2TB Hard Drive	31/01/2018	84	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Flag Pole	28/02/2019	162	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Logo Embroidery Set Coats	01/04/2019	104	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Flag Accessories	02/07/2019	547	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Portable Display	02/07/2019	1,432	538	-	50%	100%	269	269
Table Cloths	02/07/2019	676	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Display Stand	22/07/2019	105	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>22,849</b>	<b>6,307</b>				<b>404</b>	<b>5,903</b>



## **ICPA Australia Federal Council Report**

### **Alana Moller President ICPA (Aust)**

ICPA Western Australia President, distinguished guests, Federal Life Members, Western Australia State Life members, fellow ICPA members and friends, it is with great pleasure that I present the 2022 Federal Council update.

Before I begin I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands on which we meet today and I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Greek Philosopher, Epictetus once said “The key is to keep company with people who uplift you, whose presence calls forth your best”.

There is no better company than at an ICPA Conference and I feel proud and uplifted to be speaking today at the 2022 Western Australia State Conference celebrating 50 magical years, alas not in person, but nonetheless encouraged by all of you listening. Many thanks to the State Council and Conference Convenors for making this event possible and also for inviting me to speak.

Last year’s Federal update concluded with “let’s not forget that whether face-to-face, virtual or anything in between we are all here to support each other” and with ongoing pandemic impacts across the country, this continues to ring true. While we still need to hold conferences, meetings and other get togethers virtually and uncertainty remains, we continue to stand together and soldier on. This solidarity was on proud display at the 2021 50th anniversary Federal Conference, held as a hybrid event in an effort to include as many members and guests as possible face to face and online after having to postpone the face-to-face conference from its original dates in July to November. To say pulling off this event was a challenge would be an understatement and thanks must go to the Australian Boarding Schools Association, the Queensland Convenors, the Federal Council team and all who attended online or in person, getting behind the new hybrid concept, the online voting platform and so much more. The race to be first to vote certainly became a novelty in the room!

With Conference postponed due to the pandemic conditions, the 2020-2021 Federal Council year was prolonged and the phenomenal amount of work undertaken and ongoing dedication of Federal Council amidst uncertainty and tribulations is admirable.

Despite the pandemic related problems, delegations were able to be held in Canberra in May 2021 for the first time since 2019. This was a terrific opportunity for us to once again walk the halls of Parliament House and share our message with over 23 Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators. We were especially privileged to meet as a whole group in a lengthy two session roundtable with then Minister for Regional Education the Hon Andrew Gee MP.

May 2021 also saw the official launch of the new look, dynamic ICPA website and membership database, a source of pride for the wonderful web weavers and magnificent membership magicians across all states who contributed to making this happen. A particular shout out to Nikki Macqueen and Sue Shotton for their steady hand in making the new website and database come to fruition and designer Mark who continues to bear the brunt of a sometimes-feverish ICPA team. Not only has he built our Federal and State websites and database, but he has also built conference websites for both our Conference and State Conferences along with designing and perfecting an online voting platform which has proven vital in conducting conferences impacted by the pandemic.

Of course, it is impossible to report on the activities of Federal Council this past year without referring to work around the fluid pandemic impacts and though it is difficult to predict what is ahead; ICPA Australia has and will continue to ensure our geographically isolated students are remembered and supported.

Boarding has been at the coalface of the impact COVID has had on our children. While 2021 saw issues around the plight of interstate boarders which ICPA (Aust) worked on in conjunction with former Minister for Regional Education Honourable Andrew Gee MP and since July 2021 new Minister for Regional Education Senator the Honourable Bridget McKenzie, State Councils and the Australian Boarding Schools Association, 2022 has commenced with heart-breaking and confronting stories of unfair and inequitable directives imposed on already disadvantaged geographically isolated boarding children as the country continues to negotiate the ongoing pandemic. There has been a concerted effort to work towards alleviating these challenges.

What is more heart-breaking though, as you all know, is that this is just one story of inequity experienced by our geographically isolated children, not only in boarding situations and not only because of the pandemic. It also epitomises and reiterates why ICPA continues to be so important 50 years on. For if not for ICPA, who else will ensure our children are considered and their inequities addressed? For ICPA, it is all about the children and all that we do is because they are who really matter.

Thus, while we have worked fervently to address the continuing impacts of the pandemic, we have also focused on the ongoing barriers for geographically isolated students, emphasising that they are a unique disadvantage group who need specialised and targeted assistance and support across all portfolio areas.

The AIC continues to be a core focus, sitting across the Boarding/Hostels/Second Home, Distance Education and Early Childhood Education and Care portfolios. We have been focussed on the need for the Allowance to be increased to truly reflect the exponential growth in educational expenses, particularly in boarding situations, along with requests for a separate category for geographically isolated students within the AIC to ensure their unique needs are recognised and met. We have also been strongly advocating for an expansion of eligibility criteria to better support rural and remote families, including eligibility for 3–4-year-olds accessing approved distance education early childhood programs and the inclusion of a fares allowance. We are encouraged by our recent interaction with both the Minister for Families and Human Services Senator the Honourable Anne Ruston's advisers along with Services Australia and the Department of Social Services and look forward to enhancing these relationships in order to effectively raise our members' issues in relation to AIC.

In Communications we participated robustly in the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee Consultations and welcomed their report released recently and look forward to positive outcomes from this Review. Federal Council have also been focussed on sourcing internet connection solutions for geographically isolated transient families working in remote areas whose children undertake distance education and are seeking governmental support to achieve this.

Our advocacy in the Curriculum portfolio has been focussed on the Australian Curriculum Review, which allowed us to raise key concerns in this space, including the need to consider and provide specialised curriculum in unique rural and remote educational contexts. More recently, with proposed changes to NAPLAN delivery, we have requested consideration for the unique circumstances and contexts of rural and remote students when Education Ministers meet to discuss these possible variations.

Geographically isolated distance education (GIDE) is one of these unique contexts and Federal Council have continued to build GIDE awareness, with the launch of a longer-term dedicated campaign for further recognition following our second GIDE Day on the 1 December 2021. I am especially pleased to report the positive response we have received from our open letter to Members of Parliament, Senators and other education stakeholders advocating for the need for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) to remunerate families who dedicate themselves to providing a tutor when their children must be educated by distance education because of where they live. We know there is support out there, especially off the back of many families experiencing the challenges of teaching their children at home while also working during the pandemic and we believe strongly that this

momentum needs to be captured. Watch this space for more to come and don't forget to help us build this campaign through sharing your own insights.

Long term advocacy for more adequate rural and remote early childhood education and care has also continued, especially in regard to the need for In Home Care to be modified to better assist families and also the need for guaranteed future funding for mobile playgroups. Federal Council were heartened to have representatives from the Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment In Home Care management team attend conference and hear in person the arduous stories of our families in challenging early childhood education and care situations. We have been able to build on this connection over the past months and encourage members who have a story to tell to please pass it on to us so we can forward it on to the IHC team for consideration.

Telehealth advocacy within the Specific Education Needs portfolio has been assisted by citing examples of the use of telehealth during COVID, boosting calls for this service to be more widely available for GI children. Mental health concerns have also been at the forefront for this portfolio and Federal Council have collected a range of resources and links which are on our Specific Education Needs webpage.

Tertiary and training have also continued to be busy areas, with time spent on topics related to the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP), Youth Allowance and the Living Away from Home Allowance. The Tertiary Access Payment was a welcome development in 2021 and following an evaluation of the program towards the end of the first year which Federal Council were involved in, benefits were improved further, including:

- eligibility extended to eligible inner regional students,
- application and payment processes for **all** applicants, now to be solely administered by Services Australia and
- eligible students from outer regional, remote, and very remote areas, will continue to receive up to \$5,000 in two payments, and students from inner regional areas will receive a single payment of \$3,000.

ICPA Australia encourage members who have a student who has completed year 12 in 2021 to investigate the Tertiary Access Payment further on the Services Australia website. Another welcome development in the tertiary field is the new Identity Confirmation options. Previously the only option was to present in person to a service centre, however now proof of identity can be completed online, over the phone or in person. While these have been welcome developments, the need for further assistance to ensure our GI students can access a tertiary or training opportunity is clear and this is especially so for young apprentices, for whom very limited support is available despite often having relocation costs equal to tertiary students along with considerable living expenses which they struggle to meet on low apprenticeship wages.

Across all portfolios, ICPA Federal Council continue to participate in a variety of consultations, meetings and submission opportunities. A number of submissions have been lodged and most recently we have completed our 2022-23 Pre-Budget Submission raising long term requests with costings, highlighting that a small investment in education in rural and remote Australia would go a long way. We feel especially positive about the relationship we have established with the office of the Minister

for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Senator the Honourable Bridget McKenzie. We also welcomed in December 2021, the appointment of the Hon Fiona Nash to the role of Regional Education Commissioner and we have already had the opportunity to connect with her. This is a valuable development for ICPA and Federal Council look forward in anticipation to working closely with the Commissioner in the future. It has also been encouraging to maintain and build links with Services Australia, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, with regular meetings scheduled and direct lines of contact established to ensure our members messages can be relayed to those

who are at the frontline to address these topics. It is gratifying that our organisation is seen as a key education stakeholder in these spaces and we wish to show our appreciation for the recent grant assistance we have been allocated to assist us to continue our advocacy.

Federal Council also maintain relationships with many other organisations, stakeholders and groups who support our cause. I especially thank those who generously assisted us by sponsoring our 2021 Federal Conference and most importantly to the Australian Boarding Schools Association and in particular Richard, Tom and Jared.

While the days have been short, the task list has been long since our postponed 2021 Federal Conference and Federal Council hit the ground running, with all motions having been actioned. This was no mean feat; I think the stats show just how much was achieved by Federal Council in such a short timeframe.

At Conference we farewelled 4 previous Councillors, Nikki Macqueen, Kristen Coggan, Briony Sinclair and Jo Camilleri, whose time and efforts on Federal Council certainly did not go unnoticed and welcomed a number of new faces to our team, including Julia Broad who was co-opted prior to Conference, Ali Allison, Wendy Henning, Laura Stalley, Anna McCorkle and Naomi Obst. All new Councillors have brought with them a wealth of knowledge, passion and dedication to add to an already outstanding team and I feel grateful and honoured to have once again been trusted in the role as President to help guide our ship. I could not however do this role without their support, encouragement and friendship and am excited for what is ahead for #teamfederalcouncil.

ICPA would not be the incredible organisation it is today without all of our State Councils, who continue to be dedicated to advocating on members' behalf and I feel a tremendous amount of pleasure when I have the opportunity to work closely with them. To the 2021-2022 Western Australia State Council, I salute your efforts this past twelve months and look forward to working with the new Council. Sally congratulations on your tremendous efforts over another challenging year and I wish you a year ahead filled with success and a little less COVID.

To close I would like to once again thank all of you, our members who make the work we do so worthwhile and rewarding. It is such a pleasure to get to join you all at events and particularly Conferences. There are a few months to go and we can't be sure what is to come in regard to how it will occur, however I do encourage you to consider joining us for our 2022 Federal Conference, hopefully in Perth on 3 & 4 August. However, between now and then remember we all have each other's back because being isolated doesn't mean you are alone.

### **REVISE Conference Report**

**Mary Wake (Chairperson)**

*REVISE is the acronym for Retired Educator Volunteers for Isolated Students Education.*

The aim is to provide assistance to improve the educational outcomes for children studying at home in remote and isolated locations in WA. We have a group of retired teacher volunteers who travel to stations and other isolated locations to give families respite from teaching. This can be especially helpful at mustering time, the arrival of a new baby or just to give parents and children a break from each other in the school room. REVISE tutors bring a variety of skills and experiences.

REVISE liaises between remote families and teachers. It organises and funds their travel to the placement where they stay for 4-6 weeks. Sue and Allen Potter are our coordinators and they cleverly match tutors with placements. We are always looking for new volunteers and sources of funding. We have mainly primary school teachers but also some secondary teachers. Families are not always aware that we are able to provide assistance for high school students.

At our AGM in December last year, we highlighted the 30-year anniversary of the organization. In 1991 ICPA (WA) asked the late Di Forsythe to establish a scheme by which parents, generally mothers, could obtain some respite from the stress of work responsibilities in isolated locations. Di examined schemes currently operating in the eastern states including the VISE system in the Northern Territory and Queensland and more particularly, the REVISE scheme in South Australia. The latter kindly allowed the use of the name REVISE to which WA was attached.

So, as ICPA celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary, REVISE WA also has a celebration. It is 30 years since we sent our first tutor out to help an isolated family. A meeting of the steering committee on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1991, outlined the aims of the new organisation and set the wheels in motion for the start of 1992. REVISE WA was officially launched in March 1992 at a function at WA Farmers Federation. Guests included representatives of the State Government, Distance Education, Country Women's Association and ICPA (WA). The leader of the National Party, Hendy Cowan MLA, presented the first tutor, Mrs Fay Jones, with her bus ticket to Yarraloola Station in the Northwest.

To celebrate this anniversary, it is planned to hold a morning tea on 7<sup>th</sup> October for all members, past and present, ICPA members and any other interested people or families. There will be a historical display and some publicity in the media. We have wonderful archives but if anyone has relevant information or memorabilia we can be contacted via our website.

While 2020 saw the activities of REVISE severely curtailed by COVID restrictions, 2021 was quite the opposite. Requests for assistance began early in term one and steadily continued throughout terms two and three. It was noted once more that due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, station families were not able to hire their own home tutors or governesses, so they turned to REVISE tutors to help them out. Almost 75% of requests last year were in this category.

Overall, we had 20 requests for our assistance last year. Three of those withdrew due to a variety of circumstances and we successfully placed 17 tutors. This is the most tutors to be placed in the last 5 years. Placements ranged from the Nullarbor, Eighty Mile Beach Caravan Park in the Pilbara, to the Gascoyne and Murchison regions. REVISE had 29 registered tutors on our books in 2021. This number has been fairly steady for the last few years and seems to be adequate for our needs at this point in time. We accepted five new tutors last year and were able to give three of them a placement.

The beginning of this year sees two willing tutors at present in remote areas even though the weather is still hot and unpleasant. We have a sizeable group of tutors ready to help out in terms 2 and 3 and a total of 27 on the books. In line with COVID requirements, as placements are offered proof of vaccination will be a consideration for both tutors and families.

Funding – We do ask parents for a contribution towards each placement but most of the cost is funded by REVISE. We still have one year to run of our 3-year grant from the Department of Education (\$11 000 remaining). We are reapplying for more funding and seeking other sources.

At our AGM in December several of our tutors were given awards for their outstanding contributions and number of placements. We thank our tutors who were able to go out last year and we hope that we will be able to place all our new tutors this year. Thanks also to fellow committee members and those outgoing. Welcome to our 2 new committee members and a special thanks to our coordinators, Sue & Alan Potter who not only go out on placement but coordinate all the other placements.

## **PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL**

### **Allowances Report**

#### **Samantha Greay – Portfolio Holder, March 2022**

Motions A1, A2, A3 and A4 regarding an increase to the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA).

It has been made quite clear that the current Government considers the Royalties for Regions (RfR) BAHA supplement only to be funded for a finite period and is not considering reinstating it. The cessation by 2022 of the (RfR) BAHA component will result in a loss of financial support of \$785, not per family, but per student. This allowance has already decreased from \$2,105 to \$1,477 in 2021, with an overall decrease to \$1,320 in 2022. This equates to a 37% decrease over 5 years.

With the increase in costs and decrease in accessibility, education is increasingly becoming less affordable for some rural and remote families. We are seeing families having to fragment with one family member moving away from the family home to access an affordable secondary education for their children. The option of a second home allowance is often more advantageous but is also detrimental to family life, health, and well-being, not to mention the impact it is having on rural communities. When the eldest child starts secondary school, all the children from the one family move too. Coming from a small rural area, I have seen examples of this within my own community.

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance is only available to resident Western Australians who either:

- qualify for the Commonwealth Government Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) or Second Home Allowance (which is available from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink)).
- attend a Western Australian College of Agriculture
- are enrolled in a Gifted and Talented Program and reside at City Beach Residential College

#### **BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE (FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN)**

This allowance assists parents in isolated locations who do not have access to primary or secondary school with the cost of boarding.

The allowance for 2021 was \$1,477 for students who board away for the full year, with payment being made in term four of the school year. Where a student boards at a college for only part of the year, a pro-rata payment will be made based on the number of terms attended. The minimum stay with a boarding provider is four (4) weeks for a pro-rata payment.

The payment will be sent directly to the boarding provider where the student attends a Residential College (i.e. Albany, Broome, City Beach, Esperance, Geraldton, Merredin, Moora, Narrogin, Northam) or where a student attends a Western Australian College of Agriculture (i.e. Cunderdin, Denmark, Harvey, Morawa, Narrogin) and is to be deducted from the residential boarding fees only. If the student does not attend at a Residential College or Western Australian College of Agriculture then the allowance is paid to one of the following at the direction of the parent: the boarding facility, school, or parent.

**Table of BAHA Rates 2013 – 2022:**

2013	\$2,105
2014	\$2,105
2015	\$2,105
2016	\$2,105

**Table of Applications 2014 – 2021:**

School Year	Total Applications
2014	1247
2015	1397
2016	1503

2017	\$2,105
2018	\$1,948
2019	\$1,791
2020	\$1,634
2021	\$1,477
2022	\$1,320

2017	1453
2018	1244
2019	1375
2020	1338
2021	1238*

\*Applications still being accepted and paid

### **BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE-AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES SPECIAL SUBSIDY**

This allowance is to assist parents with secondary students attending and boarding at a Western Australian College of Agriculture. Claimants apply for the subsidy through the Western Australian College of Agriculture where their child is boarding.

**ELIGIBILITY:** The Student is enrolled and boarding at the Catholic Agricultural College or the Student is enrolled and boarding in a Western Australian College of Agriculture.

The student is not in receipt of:

- Youth Allowance at the away from home rate
- Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance (through the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) or
- ABSTUDY Boarding.

**Note:** This allowance is only available to students boarding at the Agricultural Colleges. If students are boarding at another location, they are not entitled to claim this special subsidy (they may be eligible for the Boarding Away from Home Allowance for Isolated Children if they are in receipt of Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) boarding or Second Home Allowance from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink).

**PAYMENT:** The Allowance for 2021 is \$1,477. The payment will be sent directly to each Agricultural College and it is to be deducted from the residential boarding fees only. If a student only boards at the Western Australian College of Agriculture or Catholic Agricultural College for part of the year, a pro-rata payment will be made based on the number of terms attended. The minimum stay with a boarding provider is four (4) weeks for a pro-rata payment.

### **BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE- GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM**

This allowance is to assist rural and remote parents with secondary students enrolled in gifted and talented programs at selected public schools and boarding at City Beach Residential College. The closing date for the Gifted and Talented Program Boarding Away from Home Allowance is 31<sup>st</sup> July. Forms should be submitted direct to City Beach Residential College. Applications must be completed annually (an application does NOT automatically cover all school years).

**ELIGIBILITY:** The student is enrolled in a Gifted and Talented Program at selected public schools and the student is boarding at City Beach Residential College.

The student is not in receipt of:

- Youth Allowance at the away from home rate,
- Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance (through the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) or

- ABSTUDY Boarding.

Note: If students are boarding at another location, they are not entitled to claim this special subsidy (they may be eligible for the Boarding Away from Home Allowance for Isolated Children if they are in receipt of Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) boarding or Second Home Allowance from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink).

PAYMENT: The allowance for 2021 is \$1,477 for students who board away for the full year, with payment being made at the end of Term 4. The allowance is paid directly to City Beach Residential College.

### **AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SKILL AND EMPLOYMENT**

The Government's Job-Ready Graduates package will see opportunities for regional and remote students to attend university, and more investment in regional university campuses.

The Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) of \$3,000 or up to \$5,000 is available for eligible students from inner regional, outer regional and remote areas to relocate to study commencing in the year following year 12.

### **SECONDARY ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

The Secondary Assistance Scheme (SAS) is available to parent/guardians with children enrolled in secondary schooling who hold an eligible concession card. The SAS comprises of an Education Program Allowance which is paid to the school and a clothing allowance that is paid to the parent. (If the student is enrolled in a public school, the parent may nominate the clothing allowance be paid to the school.)

For public schools, the Education Program Allowance (EPA) of \$235 for students in Years 7 to 10 will be paid to the school and will be applied towards voluntary contributions. Any balance will be applied against charges or as negotiated with the parent/guardian. For students in Years 11 to 12 the EPA will be applied to cover charges in the first instance.

How to apply:

Application forms are available at Secondary Schools. Students or parents need to provide proof of eligibility and a School Officer is to witness the application form. Applications must be completed in Term 1 of each school year.

ELIGIBILITY: Available to parents/guardians of secondary students if a parent is a holder of:

- Pensioner Concession Card, or
- Health Care Card (NOT children's concession card which has been issued for medical purposes) or
- Department of Veterans Affairs Pensioner Concession Card.

Note: Eligible parents/guardians that home school their children can also apply through their Education Regional Office. Parents of students in receipt of the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) ABSTUDY are only eligible for the ABSTUDY Supplement Allowance.

Available to independent secondary students if the student is a holder of a Department of Human Services Health Care Card. Independent students in receipt of Centrelink ABSTUDY are only eligible for the ABSTUDY Supplement Allowance.



## **Communications Report**

### **Sally Brindal – Portfolio Holder, March 2022**

At the 2021 ICPA (WA) State Conference the following two motions were presented:

Lakes District Branch S1

*“That ICPA (WA) lobby Telstra and the Minister for Regional Development to ensure the time taken to restore faults, and the entitlements for every working day of delay beyond an agreed repair date is within the Customer Service Guarantee guidelines, in Rural and Remote WA.”*

Kimberley Air Branch F1

*“That ICPA (WA) works with the Education Department to explore a transition from the current Education Port for accessing satellite internet across to Sky Muster Plus to provide for a more reliable and effective service for online distance education programs.”*

Motion S1: This has been investigated and Telstra continues to ensure that they meet their obligations under the Customer Service Guarantee Guidelines.

Motion F1: In relation to motion F1 Jay Peckitt stated:

*“The Department has been liaising with Clear Networks and NBN Co on recent changes to the NBN Sky Muster Plus service as part of our ongoing improvements to student connectivity across the State.*

*Some of the terms of use of the Sky Muster Plus service are different from the existing service, such as fair use, metering calculations etc. so an exact comparison is not possible.*

*We are currently confirming in writing with NBN Co a number of specific questions around metering of some remote teaching technologies used by the School of Isolated Distance Education and Schools of the Air under Sky Muster Plus as well as estimated costs.”*

There have been no further updates available on progress between the Department of Education, Clear Networks and NBN Co regarding NBN Sky Muster Plus.

### **FEDERAL CONFERENCE MOTIONS**

At the 2021 ICPA (Aust) Federal Conference the following motions were presented:

*“That ICPA (Aust) lobby nbn for all students enrolled via distance education schools to have access to the Sky Muster education port or alternative service.”*

*“That ICPA (Aust) continue to lobby nbn, relevant Ministers and departments to ensure that video streaming for educational use is included in future Sky Muster Plus plans for geographically isolated students studying via distance education.”*

*“That ICPA (Aust) lobby the Minister for Communications and telecommunication providers, to investigate the reliability and capacity of backup power on mobile towers to ensure a consistent and uninterrupted delivery of educational programs to geographically isolated children and rural and remote schools.”*

*“That ICPA (Aust) continue to lobby the Minister for Communications to ensure the retention and maintenance of landline services in rural and remote areas, until another means of reliable, affordable and appropriate voice service is available.”*

“That ICPA (Aust) continue to lobby the Minister for Communications to ensure fault restoration and entitlements for geographically isolated students and their families occur within the Customer Service Guarantee (CSG) guidelines.”

### **Regional Telecommunications Review Committee**

An independent committee was appointed to examine and undertake a review into regional telecommunications services. Regional Telecommunications Reviews are conducted every three years under Part 9B of the Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999. The 2021 Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC) has completed its Regional Telecommunications Review (the Review) into the adequacy of telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia.

The Committee held 24 virtual public consultations, targeting regions across Australia, and received over 650 written submissions from members of the public, community organisations, businesses, and local, state and territory governments.

The Committee provided its report to Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education. The Government will be carefully considering the report’s findings and recommendations in developing its new regional telecommunications agenda.

The full report is available at [www.rtirc.gov.au](http://www.rtirc.gov.au).

Recommendations (pg. 11-13 of Report)

1. Adopt a longer-term strategic approach to regional digital infrastructure and skills.
2. Increase Government investment in regional connectivity.
3. Implement a regional telecommunications resilience fund.
4. Trial emerging connectivity technologies.
5. Build connectivity literacy and digital capability among regional users.
6. Enhance NBN Co’s regional fixed wireless and Sky Muster services.
7. Implement and enforce new performance and reliability standards for wholesale and retail services.
8. Continue but reform existing universal services for the future.
9. Improve consumer information about mobile services including coverage and performance.
10. Encourage shared network access and innovative funding for mobile in regional areas.
11. Focus on the digital needs of Indigenous communities.
12. Improve affordability for vulnerable groups in regional areas.

ICPA (WA) State Council presented a submission to the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee for the Regional Telecommunications Review 2021. A copy can be found on our website <https://icpa.com.au/wa/2021-icpa-wa-submissions>.

### **TELSTRA**

Telstra is continuing its focus on:

- \* 760 WA schools getting connectivity upgrades
- \* Regional Connectivity Program
- \* STAND: Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters Program
- \* Digital Farm Grants

### **Bandwidth upgrade for WA Schools**

- Telstra will deliver a significant bandwidth boost to 766 Western Australian public schools – that is around 94 percent of all public schools in the state.

- Base bandwidth for every student and staff member will climb from 100 kbps to an average of 2 Mbps from early 2021 – a twenty-fold increase on existing capacity.
- ICPA members can contact their local school and/or the Department of Education WA should they have any queries regarding the bandwidth rollout plan and program of work.
- <https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2020/12/Massive-bandwidth-boost-for-WA-public-schools.aspx>

#### **STAND Program (Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters)**

- The Federal Government committed \$37.1 million through the Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) package to improve the resilience of Australia’s communications networks in bushfire and disaster-prone areas.
- Telstra has boosted battery backup power at 341 mobile tower sites in regional Australia from 3 hours up to 12 hours for some of the country’s most remote towns.
- Telstra will be upgrading 106 mobile base stations in WA with new 12-hour batteries.
- Link to government website [improving telco network resilience](#).
- Link to the Map of [STAND sites](#).

#### **Regional Network Advisors (RNAs) - Schedule an RNA visit**

- The aim of the RNA team is to provide an Australia wide team of regional and rural based Telstra advisors, who can work with customers in their local area on mobile issues.
- This team consists of five RNAs and approximately sixty Local Communications Advisors (LCA’s) across Australia.
- Telstra has received positive feedback from customers and stakeholders from the expansion of this team.

#### **Cyclone Seroja**

Cyclone Seroja caused a significant impact on the following Telstra services:

- More than 5000 fixed-line services located in Walkaway, Geraldton, Tenindewa, Badgingarra and Moonyoonooka.
- 315 ADSL services located in Carnamah, Mingener, Perenjori and Cape Burney.
- Up to 23,000 Telstra NBN Voice and Data services located in Moresby Range, Cape Burney, Dongara and Geraldton.
- A loss of 3G and 4G mobile services across 113 sites.

The main cause of the extensive outage to Telstra’s infrastructure and mobile services was the loss of mains power.

- The reactivation of power at the two exchanges at Eneabba and Perenjori on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April around 5:00pm had a significant impact on restoring Telstra’s services – both fixed and wireless - to Geraldton and surrounds.
- This action enabled more than 23,000 fixed-line services to be reconnected and services to be restored from 113 mobile sites down to 59 sites.

Some exchanges received some form of damage.

#### **Telstra Investment**

Telstra will direct \$75 million from the part sale of its InfraCo Towers business to further enhance connectivity in regional Australia and will be guided by the recommendations of the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC) in directing this investment.

This is a significant investment on top of their recent announcement at Beef Australia 2021 in May, that they are investing \$150 million over the next 12 months to improve regional networks in key areas, including better coverage at popular destinations, capacity upgrades, upgrading 3G-only sites to 4G and building new 4G sites, plus technology development for long-range sites and small cells with satellite backhaul. They also announced a further \$200 million co-investment fund to deliver new and improved regional connectivity over the next four years.

### **How to prepare for disaster season**

With the warmer months comes an increased risk of natural disasters – fire, heatwaves, flood and cyclones across the country. Telstra has put together a disaster preparedness checklist.

- **The prepper: five weeks out**
  - Download emergency services apps
  - Be alert to changing conditions
  - Back up your data
  - Save your emergency numbers as priorities
  - Consider a satellite phone or repeater device
  - Get a corded phone
- **The just-in-case: five days out**
  - Invest in an alternative charger
  - Know your plug for faster phone charging
  - Enable Wi-Fi calling
- **The last minute: five hours out:**
  - Charge your phone. Right now.
  - Use local information sources
  - Gather your government agencies for emergency response information

For more information go to <https://exchange.telstra.com.au/how-to-prepare-for-natural-disasters/>

### **Australian Digital Inclusion Index**

#### *What is digital inclusion?*

Digital inclusion is about ensuring all Australians can access and use digital technologies effectively. We are now experiencing an accelerating digital transformation in many aspects of economic and social life. Telstra's premise is that everyone should have the opportunity to benefit from digital technologies: to manage their health, access education and services, participate in cultural activities, organise their finances, follow news and media, and connect with family, friends, and the wider world.

#### *What is the Australian Digital Inclusion Index?*

The Australian Digital Inclusion Index uses survey data to measure digital inclusion across three dimensions of Access, Affordability and Digital Ability. It explores how these dimensions vary across the country and across different social groups.

#### *Why is the Index important?*

A detailed measure of digital inclusion for Australia allows Telstra to identify the critical barriers to inclusion. These may be related to accessing networks, the costs of devices or data, or skills and literacies. The Index can help shape initiatives to increase digital inclusion in Australia.

Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2021 key findings:

- Digital inclusion at the national level is improving

- Access is increasing at a national level, but these improvements are not evenly shared by all Australians
- The number of mobile-only users has slightly declined
- The number of Australians who are highly excluded has declined but remains substantial
- The divide between metropolitan and regional areas has narrowed but remains marked
- Digital ability has improved slightly
- Affordability remains central to closing the digital divide
- Digital inclusion remains closely tied to age, but there are signs the digital inclusion of mid-life and senior Australians is improving
- The composition of the household matters, those with children are the most digitally included Australians
- Digital inclusion increases with education, employment, and income
- The type of housing tenure matters – private vs social housing
- Australians who speak a language other than English at home are generally more digitally included

A copy of the Measuring Australia's Digital Divide report can be found at this [LINK](#).

The Digital Inclusion Index website contains an interactive dashboard. This functionality allows users to highlight areas, data sets, cohorts and more to compare digital inclusion.

### **Call Centres**

All call centres are to be onshore by mid-2022.

### **Spectrum**

Telstra has acquired 2 x 10MHz of 850MHz spectrum for \$616 million in the Australian Communications and Media Authority's low band spectrum auction. This is the maximum amount of 'low band' spectrum Telstra was allowed to bid for under the competition limits set by the Government.

Together with their existing spectrum holdings, they continue to hold lower band spectrum than any other carrier, which is important given the larger customer base.

This acquisition of lower band spectrum is a win for Telstra customers, especially for the people, businesses and communities of regional and rural Australia.

This type of spectrum is essential for carrying mobile data, particularly 5G, over the vast distances needed across regional and remote areas and also enables Telstra to provide better coverage indoors and in other difficult to reach places in metropolitan locations.

### **Regional Connectivity Program Funding**

Telstra was the only major mobile provider to win projects and commit funding to improve services in the first round. The government supported 72 of their projects, making them the biggest overall contributor to the program.

Telstra are committed to finding ways to bring the latest telecommunications to the bush but policy settings must be right to make this possible. For this reason, Telstra has encouraged universal service obligation (USO) reform for many years to improve their capacity to invest in new technologies for fixed voice services.

### **T25**

T25, Telstra's new corporate strategy, will kick-off from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 and builds on the foundations established over the last three years with T22. It will keep Telstra focused on what matters most – their customers, their people and their shareholders, and helping create a vibrant digital economy in Australia.

T25 aligns with Telstra's commitment to regional Australia. Their commitment extends beyond T25 through their focus on regional people and communities and their investment commitments. This is in addition to the \$200 million over four years toward co-investment and also directing \$75 million from the partial sale of their towers business to improve connectivity in the country announced earlier this year.

### **Moonhack 2021**

This year, Code Club Australia, powered by the Telstra Foundation, ran yet another successful Moonhack event over one week in May. Moonhack 2021 celebrated the stories and ideas that can help us improve and understand our planet by helping kids code their own planet-saving solutions. Projects included a beautiful lesson about Dhinawan, the Emu in the Sky constellation recognised by the Gomeri people.

The event had over 24,000 kids participate, 48 per cent of whom were girls, bringing the total number of kids who have joined Moonhack over the past six years to more than 150,000.

### **Environmental Action**

As a leading provider and large-scale user of telecommunications hardware, Telstra are committed to optimising the resources they use, reducing consumption and waste across their business, and investing in 'circular solutions' that are designed to be sustainable across their lifecycle.

To do this they have set three new resource efficiency goals:

- Reuse or recycle 500,000 mobile phones, modems and other devices each year to 2025.
- Ensure 100% of Telstra-branded packaging is made of renewable or recycled material and is fully recyclable by 2022.
- Increase their network waste recycling rate to 85% by 2025.

### **Telstra Payphones Free**

Telstra has made all local and national calls from their 15,000 public payphones free.

Last year alone, Australians made 11 million calls on payphones, including 200,000 calls to vital services such as Triple Zero and Lifeline. During natural disasters, Australians have been lining up to use the payphone to call home and tell their family and friends they are safe.

Payphones play such a critical role in our community, particularly in times of need. They are a lifeline for thousands of vulnerable Australians - the homeless, the isolated, those escaping domestic violence and are sometimes the only link Australians have to critical support services or to those that care about them. The payphone network that Telstra have been maintaining since the 1880s is a key part of that; it is now free for everyone to make calls anywhere in Australia.

### **Scams**

Telstra now blocks about 1.5 million suspected scam calls in Australia every week, and about 6.5 million every month. It is part of their Cleaner Pipes initiative, where they are working to reduce the harm of scams, phishing, ransomware and other malware across their networks.

They are doing a lot behind the scenes to block illegitimate activity, but there is a lot that you can do too. If you think you are receiving a scam call, the simplest advice is to hang up. But how do you know for sure it is actually a scam? Thankfully, combined with some healthy scepticism, there are usually clear signs that will help you spot a scam.

### **Here are Telstra's top five tips:**

Do not be convinced if it looks like an incoming call from a legitimate business or government organisation.

- Is the caller pressuring you and making it seem like the matter is urgent?
- Take note of the time of day – is it a reasonable time for a trusted organisation to be calling you?
- Is an unknown number or trusted brand trying to call you repeatedly?
- The golden rule: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

We know that scam callers often prey on the public's inexperience about complex or highly technical topics. They will try to confuse you and pressure you to act quickly to transfer money or share your private details without giving you time to think rationally. Your best weapon in our ongoing fight against scammers is your own scepticism and caution. Remember, Telstra's advice is simply to hang up if you think you are being scammed.

#### **FluBot – the latest cyber scam and how to avoid it**

One of the latest scams going around is the prolific FluBot SMS-based cyber-attack that encourages potential victims to install a fake security update to remove an equally fake FluBot infection. Instead, if you click on a malicious link in a FluBot-related SMS message, malware (like a computer virus) may be installed on your Android device. This malware then sends many similar text messages to other people from your phone without your knowledge, potentially infecting them.

#### **NBN CO**

For rural and remote families NBN Co has two products: Skymuster and Sky Muster Plus (you cannot apply for a satellite service if you live in metro areas).

**Skymuster** was the original satellite service offered by NBN Co where all data is metered.

**Sky Muster Plus** is an upgrade of the original Sky Muster and offers unmetered activities with only two exclusions – video streaming (Netflix, YouTube, TikTok, Foxtel, Stan) and VPN traffic – which continue to be metered. Unmetered examples include WhatsApp, Google Duo, Instagram Live, Viber, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype, Facebook Messenger, Facetime, Snapchat, GoToMeeting.

Ms Naomi Evans, Head of nbn Local WA (Regional and Community) commented Nbn are continuing to make progress in the following areas:

- NBN strengthening telecommunications in regional communities.
- Regional development and engagement.
- Supporting priority segments, of which education is one.
- Support that was offered during COVID-19.
- Sky Muster Plus satellite service.
- Ensuring Australians of any age can participate in online learning.
- Digital capability tool – understanding what digital capabilities look like across different sectors.

#### **Video conferencing connectivity guide**

Due to COVID-19, over the past year so many people have been relying on videoconferencing for work, learning, health appointments, education and more. To assist community members, health care providers, carers, teachers and others confidently utilise videoconferencing for these interactions, nbn has developed a new nbn™ video conferencing connectivity guide. The interactive guide covers common issues videoconferencing users may experience including:

- Slow internet speeds
- Video freezing or lagging
- Video dropping out
- Video not working at all

- Sound dropping out
- Sound not working

The aim of the guide is to provide quick guidance on common videoconferencing issues to help users take advantage of video calling for a whole range of activities. Users of the guide simply select the issue they are facing and will be provided with a number of troubleshooting tips to try, including directions on when they need to contact their internet provider and what information to have on hand. You can access this guide on the nbn website or the following [LINK](#)

nbn recommends users download the guide from their browser and save to the desktop in case it is ever needed.

### **Cyclone Seroja**

As a result of cyclone Seroja 13,530 services were impacted due to damage to the network and associated power loss. nbn's Satellite Earth Station (SES) at Geraldton suffered damage to its backup power supply. The Geraldton SES services many nbn™ Sky Muster Satellite customers across Australia. As a result, some satellite customers across the country – not only in Western Australia – were impacted. Wendy Hick, Immediate Past President, Federal Council, who lives in north Queensland had her satellite service interrupted due to the SES in Geraldton suffering damage!

In total, NBN Co recovered and restored nbn services to more than 16,500 premises within five days of this extreme weather event.

Where mains power outages persisted in some areas of Western Australia nbn infrastructure in these areas continued to be supported by backup generators as an interim measure until Western Power restored mains power across the region.

### **Alternative Voice Services Trial**

nbn is working with the government as part of the Australian Government's Alternative Voice Services Trial (AVST) which is testing voice over internet calling across satellite and fixed wireless technologies. ICPA (WA) were approached to help promote this valuable trial to their members.

Trial voice services operate as an additional service to the existing phone and internet services at participant premises. The participants are required to maintain their existing phone service for the duration of the trial. The trial phone service will connect voice calls using VoIP (voice calling over the internet) technology. The nbn trial will focus on testing voice services over the nbn™ Fixed Wireless, nbn™ Satellite networks, and over a new low band Fixed Wireless solution. Technology type and the location of the premise will inform the incentive the participants will receive for taking part in the trial.

Trial participants will receive:

- a voice service from a participating service provider for up to 12 months at no extra charge
- up to \$400 financial incentive
- a telephone handset
- other telephone monitoring equipment and a battery backup providing 4 hours of a power supply when their regular power source fails.

As part of the trial, nbn will be seeking real-time feedback from the people participating, via their provider. This will assist nbn and the Australian Government in developing voice solutions that help meet the needs of people living in regional and rural areas.



To find out more information and how to register customers will need to visit nbn website [Alternative Voice Services trial](#).

### **Regional Connectivity Program**

nbn is working with state and local government on a suite of applications for Round 2 of the Regional Connectivity Program. Up to \$112 million in Federal Government grant funding is available to support regional, rural and remote communities, including \$45 million dedicated for projects in Northern Australia under the Connecting Northern Australia initiative. Applications closed on 28<sup>th</sup> January with an announcement expected by mid-2022. To learn more about the program or how they can potentially partner on infrastructure opportunities please reach out to your nbn contact.

### **Scam Warning**

Members are advised that there are still scams occurring in relation to nbn. Customers are contacted by someone claiming to be from nbn asking for personal information and/or a threat to services being cut.

### **OSCAR**

Want to improve your online skills?

With more of our lives and daily activities happening online, knowing how to navigate the digital world is more important than ever.

That is where OSCAR comes in. nbn created the Online Skills Check & Resource (OSCAR) to help measure our skills and find resources to help us on our digital journey.

OSCAR takes us through four essential competencies:

- Online knowledge
- Device usage
- Sharing data and e-safety
- Online communication

Want to learn more?

**[Check your online skills and find relevant resources](#)**

## **[Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum Report](#)**

**Louise Ford – Portfolio Holder, March 2022**

At the 2021 State Conference two motions were presented.

A5 presented by Goldfields Eyre Branch

*“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Education to ensure the role of Support Teacher Learning (STL) and the funding for the position in Schools of the Air (SOTA) continues past 2021”*

A response has been received from Executive Director of Statewide Services, Mr. Martin Clery stating that: *“In 2021 each SOTA was provided with an Operational Response: Support Teacher Learning of \$114,795.12, which is equivalent to the salary rate for one FTE teacher. The Department of Education is not anticipating changes to the funding approach.”*

S2 was presented at the 2021 State Conference as a supplementary motion by Gascoyne Branch.

*“That ICPA (WA) lobby the Minister for Education to change the funding model for Schools of the Air to a service delivery model rather than the student-centered funding model (SCFM) to ensure that Schools of the Air do not have to cut services delivered.”*

A response received from the Executive Director of Statewide Services, Mr. Martin Clery outlined that:

- the SCFM offers targeted funding allocations to meet specific learning needs.
- an Enrolment Linked Base and locality allocation for each school.
- provides targeted initiatives and operational response funding.
- also supporting greater local control by Principals and school communities.

So, in all, no change to the funding model will happen.

## **CURRICULUM**

NAPLAN for 2021 moved from 11<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May. Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 sat the assessment.

NAPLAN’s transition to go fully online was delayed by one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In preparation for NAPLAN being fully online in 2022, 70% of schools participated in NAPLAN online this year.

NAPLAN online testing platforms have been strengthened to accommodate regional and remote schools with limited internet access, by including low and no bandwidth solutions. In addition, Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has implemented adjustments to cater to students with diverse learning needs and functional abilities. This includes alternative questions, rest breaks, extra time, tailored testing and magnification.

NAPLAN 2022 testing is from 10<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> May in a nine-day test window.

There has been concern from Federal ICPA that the new changes to how NAPLAN is delivered will negatively impact rural and isolated children, these points being:

- the extension of testing times at face-to-face locations.
- earlier in the year testing not being a true reflection of a student’s performance especially ones that have just started boarding and are dealing with the pressures of being away from home.
- the negative impacts small schools will face with staffing and resources needed while teaching goes ahead in the rest of the school.

The Australian Curriculum was under review with the Ministers for Education giving their consideration and endorsement to the final revisions at the end of 2021. The new updated Australian Curriculum was to be made available on a newly redesigned curriculum website at the start of 2022.

In January, Minister for Education, Hon. Sue Ellery announced the development of three new languages for Australian schools. These being Hindi, Tamil and Korean. The Year 3 syllabuses for these languages will be available from 2023 with the announcement that every student from Years 3 to 6 in Australian public schools will learn a language.

Minister for Education, Hon. Sue Ellery released a media statement stating that from week one of Term 4 2021, a COVID-19 vaccination program would commence with priority schools being Residential Colleges, Agricultural and Boarding Schools as well as education support settings.

A new board chair for the School Curriculum and Standards Authority was announced on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Ms. Pauline White will replace Professor Patrick Garnett.

## **SOTA**

Most Schools of the Air numbers show a steady average for the past 5 years.

- Meekatharra SOTA      Mean average 31.6
- Carnarvon SOTA      Mean average 34.8
- Kalgoorlie SOTA      Mean average 56.4
- Port Hedland SOTA      Mean average 18.6
- Kimberly SOTA      Mean average 27

## **SIDE**

School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) continues to self-improve with an open online question time and opportunities to give feedback with Principal Paul Mathews and Deputy Principal Shane Yardley in mid-September.

They have had a good line-up of guest speakers with Writer and Entertainer Alton Whalley, Mathematician Chris Mathews and Author Gavin Aung.

## **Early Childhood Report**

### **Jane Hughes – Portfolio Holder, March 2022**

On 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021 the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) announced the gap fee waiver provision for early learning settings had been extended nationally from 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Services directed to close by a local authority due to COVID-19 could now waive gap fees until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021 the Hon. Alan Tudge Minister for Education and Youth announced a \$1.7 billion package to make childcare more affordable for Australian families. Around half of Australian families are eligible to receive a 95% subsidy for their second and subsequent children increased from 85%. The \$10,560 per child annual subsidy cap will also be removed.

The Hon. Alan Tudge also approved an extension of the transitional provisions for In Home Care (IHC) educators working in remote and very remote areas for a further two years, until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 the new National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy, Shaping our Future was released.

The strategy aims to foster a sustainable and high-quality workforce of early childhood educators and teachers over the next 10 years.

Below is a link to their website.

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-workforce-strategy?fbclid=IwAR1XofVkn4WAP06XX6jgBxNKEqvPk1SVqk2AaYxWZv2zBlag39qjUPoX4Oc>

COVID-19 update for early childhood care and education sector:

### **GAP FEE WAIVING**

Until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022, services can waive the gap fee and receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if a child is unable to attend care for one of three reasons:

1. They, or a member of their immediate household, must isolate due to COVID-19.

Services should also, where possible, sight evidence from families required to isolate (such as an SMS or app notification) and keep this on record. This applies from 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

2. The service, or a room at the service, is closed due to COVID-19 on written advice from a state or territory government such as a health, education, or regulatory agency.

This includes where:

- A Family Day Care or In Home Care educator cannot provide their usual service because they, or a member of their immediate household, is quarantining or isolating.
  - An Outside School Hours Care service operating on a school campus is required to close as part of a direction to the school to close.
  - Where the service or a part of the service closed because educator to child ratios cannot be safely met. Services are encouraged to explore all options to remain open. This applies from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 for the duration of the closure outlined in the advice.
3. The state or territory has restricted access to childcare in a region due to COVID-19 (or has restricted school attendance in the case of Outside School Hours Care). This applies from the first day the restrictions are in force.

Services must not waive the gap fee for families in any other circumstances.

If a family chooses to keep their child at home, they may use their allowable absences but must pay a gap fee to the service.

Services must:

- keep a record of the advice by a state or territory authority advising that they close.
- accurately reflect waived gap fees in the fee statements provided to parents.

### **General information about gap fee waiving**

Families who receive CCS must ordinarily make a co-contribution to their childcare fees under Family Assistance Law. They do this by paying the difference between the provider's fee and the CCS amount. This is known as the gap fee. Website link: <https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/childcare>

The Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) are looking into the effects of COVID-19 on working families with their ability to access childcare and the effects on childcare centres with many parents losing their jobs and not being able to afford childcare so they can return to work.

The DESE announced the removal of the annual cap for all families who get CCS.

Below is an extract from the website followed by a link to the site.

*From 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021, we are removing the annual cap for all families earning over \$190,015 (2021–22 terms). This gives families more choice about work and care.*

*If a family has already reached the CCS annual cap before 10<sup>th</sup> December their CCS may have stopped. Services Australia will automatically reassess their CCS entitlement for this time. They will back pay CCS for affected sessions of care.*

*From 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022, families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care will get a higher subsidy for their second child and younger children.*

*The standard rate child will get the standard CCS rate. This is usually the eldest CCS-eligible child aged 5 or under in the family. Younger children will get a higher subsidy.*

*Families may be eligible if they:*

- *earn less than \$354,305*
- *have more than one child aged 5 or under in childcare.*

*Eligible higher rate children will receive a 30% higher subsidy, up to a maximum 95%.*

*Families will continue to receive their income tested CCS rate for all children. Children eligible for the higher rate will have the increase automatically included in their CCS percentage reported to services.*

<https://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-subsidy/higher-child-care-subsidy-and-removal-annual-cap>

## **Post Compulsory Report**

### **Chandra Ridley – Portfolio Holder, March 2022**

There were no Post Compulsory motions put forward at the 2021 State Conference.

There has been a huge push by both the State and Federal Governments to attract people to the Skills Sector with additional funding and reduced or fee-free courses being offered.

In May 2021, Premier Mark McGowan and Minister for Education, Hon. Sue Ellery announced a Skills Summit to be held in June to meet with leaders across a number of sectors including the resources, defence, construction and health care industries. The aim of the summit is to hear from business leaders as to what can be done collaboratively to address existing skills needs across WA.

TAFE fees have been reduced to make re-skilling more affordable. The McGowan Government has introduced a number of measures to ensure WA has a pipeline of skilled workers including:

- ‘Lower Fees, Local Skills’ – TAFE fees reduced by up to 72% on 180 courses.
- \$167.4 million in upgrades to TAFE infrastructure across the five WA TAFE colleges.
- Free TAFE short courses to upskill thousands of Western Australians.
- \$4.8 million for the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Re-engagement Incentive, providing financial support to employers who take on a displaced apprentice or trainee.

The 2021-2022 Federal Budget announced boosts to Skills and Training including:

- A \$12.1 million National Digital Australian Apprenticeships Portal which will be established to help employers manage their apprentice workforces and for apprentices to understand their entitlements.
- The \$1 billion Job Trainer Fund will be expanded to continue delivering low fee or free training places in areas of skills need. The Government will invest an additional \$500 million, to be matched by State and Territory Governments, to ensure Australians can upskill. This includes around 10,000 additional digital skills training places and around 33,800 additional training places in the aged care sector.

In July 2021 fifteen (15) Aboriginal and female students started a six monthly pilot program at the construction facility at South Metropolitan TAFE’s Rockingham campus. It is a partnership between TAFE and BHP in an effort to increase diversity in BHP’s Pilbara workforce. The program trains participants for a Certificate II in Construction Pathways – Building Maintenance and an additional skill set in electrical test and tag statutory compliance. Upon completion of the program, the students will take part in a recruitment process conducted by BHP, with successful applicants offered employment with the company starting in 2022.

The Careers and Employment Expo combined with Workskills Australia National Championships and Skills Show was held at the Perth Convention Centre on 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> August 2021. There were over 100 organizations with

information on Career Pathways, Courses and Training. Exhibitors included Universities, TAFE and the Defence Forces.

More than 400 apprentices, trainees and students-including over 80 from team WA - competed in National Championships across 45 skills and trades. The competition was adapted to accommodate travel restrictions with satellite competitions held in other states.

A Regional Skills Summit was held in Northam on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 to discuss opportunities to grow and sustain a skilled workforce in Western Australia's Wheatbelt. More than 30 Government and regional business leaders from a range of sectors including Agriculture, Construction, Hospitality and Healthcare attended.

Student course enrolments in the Wheatbelt have increased by 18 percent in the past year driven by affordable training opportunities through the 'Lower Fees, Local Skills' program and strong growth in employment-based training.

Construction has started on a \$4 million upgrade to the Visual Arts building at Central Regional TAFE's Geraldton Campus. The modern amenities will deliver training for fashion, textiles, jewellery making, paint and ceramics, photography, multimedia and design. It is part of the McGowan Government's \$184.3 million upgrade plan for the State's TAFE network. The project is expected to be completed mid 2022 with classes commencing in Semester 2, 2022.

The McGowan Government announced a \$121.4 million boost to training in the 2021-22 State budget. They will deliver on election commitments to ensure TAFE and training continues to be more affordable.

They will invest \$32.4 million to create 300 new jobs for apprentices and trainees with Group Training Schemes. The funding will provide small and medium enterprises with access to 150 additional and highly subsidized apprentices and trainees in 2022 and again in 2023 to work on State Government projects.

TAFE Colleges will receive \$25 million of modern equipment as part of a four year program to update and modernise TAFE equipment and facilities to contemporary industry standards.

A \$9.9 million investment over four years will support TAFE College lecturers to undertake industry placements to enable them to upskill and maintain industry standards, practices, qualifications and skills.

In October 2021, it was announced that the WA Government will match the Federal Government's second round of Job Trainer Funding which will see a \$103.5 million boost to local training.

Further expansion to the 'Lower fees, Local skills' program will mean reduced fees for a further thirty courses. The low fees courses will target specific qualifications in the key sectors of childcare, aged and disability care and civil construction which have a critical need to upskill workers.

Works started in November on a \$6 million health and hospitality training centre for North Regional TAFE's Kununurra Campus. The new facility will provide specialist training spaces for hospitality and tourism, nursing and aged and disability care to meet demand in the region.

Local businesses employing local apprentices will be used in the project.

Automotive apprenticeship and trainee commencements are at a record high due to the McGowan Government's massive investment in training. There was a 25% increase in enrolments to the end of October 2021 compared to the same time the previous year, 87% of these enrolments can be contributed to the McGowan Government's 'Lower fees, Local skills' campaign.

The opening of the new Automotive Innovation Training Centre in Balcatta will further drive skills creation and address the changing training needs of the automotive industry created by advancing vehicle technology.

In October 2021, a \$1 million partnership was struck between Shell and the WA Government to deliver state-of-the-art boiler training equipment to South Metropolitan TAFE (SMT). It will enable SMT to deliver hands-on training in steam and power generation. This will benefit the oil and gas sector as well as manufacturing, maritime and defence training.

Construction began in December 2021 on a significant upgrade to Roebourne's TAFE campus. The \$7.9 million project will deliver contemporary, multipurpose training facilities to the campus. The new buildings were designed in consultation with local Aboriginal people and the Architect was briefed to design culturally appropriate, contemporary facilities.

Construction is expected to be completed in late 2022 with training to commence in 2023.

### **Rural and Remote Schools Report**

**Naomi Obst – Portfolio Holder, March 2022**

At the 2021 State Conference the following motion was presented:

*"That ICPA (WA) lobby the Minister for Education to ensure that services such as the mobile Dental Therapy Centre (DTC) are not rationalized purely due to school population"*

After two years of lobbying between the Department of Education and the Health Department, I am pleased to advise members that this motion from the Central Wheatbelt North Branch has been successful for the intended school of Kalannie. I thank the Kalannie community and the CWN Branch for their proactive, factual and punctual responses when requested for information. The Dental Therapy Centre van attended the Kalannie school in Term 4 of 2021.

Branches are encouraged to contact State Council if their schools are having similar issues so that the same outcome can hopefully be obtained. We have heard reports of school P&C's being requested to fund facilities to enable the dental van to visit. This should not be the role of a P&C.

### **FIONA NASH APPOINTMENT**

In December 2021, Fiona Nash was appointed by Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie, to be the first Regional Education Commissioner in Australia. Fiona's appointment will oversee the implementation of recommendations from the National Regional, Rural & Remote Tertiary Education Strategy otherwise known as the Napthine Review. Fiona has a deep love for regional Australia and a strong understanding of the education sector.

The primary role of the new Commissioner will be to bring a national focus and direction for regional and remote education and champion the educational needs of students in regional communities.

The Napthine review identified country Australians are less than half as likely to obtain a university degree by the age of 35, compared to those in the city.

The Australian Government has committed \$6 million over four years to establish the role and to undertake a range of projects to significantly improve regional education outcomes by 2030.

(Ministers Media release 06-DEC-21)

Federally, ICPA has welcomed this appointment and looks forward to a successful working relationship with Fiona.

### **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TEACHER INCENTIVE**

The South Australian Education Department has announced a once-off “hard to fill” payment in an effort to try and attract teachers to schools that have teacher vacancies. Teachers would need to accept a two year contract to teach in a “hard to fill” country preschool, primary or secondary school with a \$20,000 incentive paid in two tranches. Recruiting teachers to fill country positions has been a long-running issue for the South Australian Education Department, despite already having teacher incentives in place.

It will be interesting for WA to watch this space and see if this does improve the appointment and quality of teachers in rural and remote schools in South Australia.

### **COVID-19**

As the school holidays rapidly ended, parents of students in rural, remote and city schools remained unsure of what schools would look like in 2022. Less than a week before school started Minister for Education Hon. Sue Ellery launched a safe to school plan with the catchphrase “*Schools will be the first to open and the last to close.*” By the end of the first week six metropolitan schools had reported COVID-19 outbreaks sending many teachers, students and their families into two weeks of home isolation. The entire campus of one large school shut down for two weeks.

With the continuation of outbreaks in schools and the isolation requirement of 14 days causing total devastation to affected schools, a new “*close contact*” definition was implemented, cutting the isolation period from 14 days to 7 as well as a raft of other rules on mask wearing and contact times.

For our rural and remote schools, who largely at the time of writing are unaffected by COVID-19, these rules are also required to be implemented. Air filters have been placed in classrooms with poor air quality, doors are encouraged to remain open, parents are allowed on site but not into classrooms. Assemblies and parent interviews will go online and class group play areas established.

School camps have been cancelled, but school balls and sports carnivals can go ahead amongst many other rules.

The wearing of masks is required by any teacher who has been in the Perth district in the last 2 weeks, or if you teach in the Peel and Southwest regions. Mask wearing for students in the metropolitan area is compulsory and will extend to all schools and students down to Year 3 in the event of high caseloads.

Teachers in all schools need to be prepared to teach their classes online if the need arises. There is great concern amongst rural teachers that if their school has an outbreak and teachers and students are forced into isolation the ability to find relief teachers will be difficult if not impossible.

Teachers and students, on the whole, have started school positively but there is no doubt a heightened level of anxiety amongst all involved in rural and remote schools about the prospects of an uninterrupted school year in 2022.

Best wishes to everyone involved in the rural and remote schooling system in 2022. If State Council can assist with any of your concerns as the year progresses, please reach out to us.



## **Specific Education Needs Report**

**Jane Cunningham – Portfolio Holder, March 2022**

There were no Specific Education Needs motions raised at the 2021 ICPA (WA) State Conference. However, as always, the area of Specific Education Needs remains of great importance to ICPA (WA) and its members.

At field days during the year, several parents raised issues related to students with special needs including the following:

- How do families receive help in identifying their student as having special needs (many do not understand the procedures and/or know where to start in seeking help)?
- One with a student that had been identified as likely being on the autism spectrum was then struggling with obtaining a formal diagnosis due to the lack of paediatric services in their community (Lake Grace)

The 2021/2022 year continued to be ruled by the threat of COVID-19, and as I write this report the Department of Health Western Australia has moved to the alert level of “Amber”. This level of alert prevents hospital-based therapists such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dieticians, and speech pathologists from visiting school sites to work with children.

The Department of Education continues to use the Student-Centered Funding Model (SCFM) to allocate additional funds for children with a disability, though there has been frustration with the long waits for paediatric service reports that are often required for schools to apply for these funds. Schools may seek specialist help from the following services within the Education Department of Western Australia:

- School of Special Educational Needs: Disability
- School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health
- School of Special Educational Needs: Sensory (Vision and Hearing)
- Statewide School Psychology Service
- Statewide Speech and Language Service.

### **GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Children with exceptional abilities from country Western Australia have access to the Gifted and Talented Programs.

Children who wish to participate in a Gifted and Talented Academic, Arts or Languages Secondary Selective Programs have access to a range of options:

- participate in the Selective Academic Program Online
- attend Bunbury Senior High School or Albany Senior High School, our regional schools
- study in Perth and board at City Beach Residential College
- study in Albany and board at Albany Residential College (students must live outside Albany).

Students in regional Western Australia are not required to travel to Perth for testing. They will be allocated a testing venue within their education region based on the location of their current school.

Country testing is coordinated by Regional Assessment Coordinators who organise venues based on the location of students in their region. For more information phone the Gifted and Talented Selection Unit on (08) 9264 4307 or email [gtsu@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:gtsu@education.wa.edu.au).

### **SELECTIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM ONLINE**

If you live in country Western Australia, your child can apply for the Selective Academic Program Online. Using computer links and innovative technology, your child can access the program without moving to Perth.

Each online program is managed by a coordinator from one of the schools. They conduct:

- mathematics and science from Perth Modern School
- humanities (english, society and environment) from Kelmscott Senior High School.

If your child will attend a public secondary school in a regional area, they will be able to access the online program.

Selection into these programs is based on the results of the Academic Selective Entrance Test.

For more information about the Selective Academic Program Online, visit the program's [website](#), email [PerthModern.GTOnline@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:PerthModern.GTOnline@education.wa.edu.au) or phone (08) 9392 6818.

### **RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE**

Country students offered a Gifted and Talented Secondary Selective Program placement are able to apply to board at [City Beach Residential College](#) or [Albany Residential College](#).

The Gifted and Talented Boarding Allowance is also available to those who do not qualify for:

- the Australian Government Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme
- a State Government Boarding Away from Home allowance

In 2021, the Gifted and Talented Boarding Allowance is valued at up to \$1,634 a year.

To find out more, phone:

City Beach Residential College on (08) 9237 7500, email [citybeach.rescol@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:citybeach.rescol@education.wa.edu.au) or visit their [website](#).

Albany Residential College on (08) 9842 1007, email [albany.rescol@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:albany.rescol@education.wa.edu.au) or visit their [website](#).

### **THE PRIMARY EXTENSION AND CHALLENGE (PEAC)**

The Primary Extension and Challenge (PEAC) program is a part-time withdrawal program for upper primary school Year 5 and 6 students in public schools.

Identified students are selected to participate in differentiated programs offered in a range of delivery modes.

Delivery modes include:

- regional based PEAC centres providing a series of specialist courses or programs
- co-ordinator/s who establish courses in a range of schools and/or other sites and teachers are released to teach the courses
- allocation to schools and multi-age programs operate within schools
- online delivery of programs.

Programs focus on:

- social interaction with gifted and talented peers
- intellectual rigour and challenge
- pursuit of excellence
- development of higher order process skills
- in-depth investigations of real problems
- open-ended activities which encourage choice and negotiation
- opportunities to interact with practising experts
- students working at their own pace
- self/peer evaluation and reflection of performance.

Blanket testing of all public school Year 4 students occurs each year with individual schools testing their own students. Parents who do not wish for their children to be tested can opt out by contacting their school in writing.

PEAC programs are managed at a regional level. Contact your local [Education Regional Office](#) to find out more.

### **Student Accommodation Report**

#### **Chandra Ridley – Portfolio Holder, March 2022**

Two motions were presented at the 2021 State Conference.

A7 presented by Kimberley Air Branch.

*“That ICPA (WA) work with the relevant departments to ensure that our WA children who are boarding at schools outside the state are allowed the same permissions as essential workers and granted special permission to quarantine at home rather than in a hotel away from family (if state regulations require a quarantine period).”*

Letters were sent to various Government departments with Minister for Education Hon. Sue Ellery responding stating that the Western Australian Government remains committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all students and the continuity of student learning. She also stated that the movement of individuals who are working or boarding in other states and territories and who wish to enter Western Australia is restricted under the directions of the State Emergency Coordinator and anyone wishing to enter Western Australia would need to apply for an exemption.

Ms Ellery went on to state that: *“On 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021, National Cabinet endorsed the National Code for Boarding School Students. In endorsing the Code, states and territories committed to a nationally consistent, COVID-safe approach to intrastate and cross-border movement for boarding students, and their families and carers.”* Ms Ellery will continue to receive advice from the Chief Health Officer in relation to the implementation of the Code.

A8 was presented by Lakes District Branch

*“That ICPA (WA) requests the Minister for Education works collaboratively with the Department of Education, the Catholic Education Office of WA and the Association of Independent Schools WA; and any other relevant authorities to develop policy that will ensure the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) guidelines be adhered to with uniformity and consistency across all boarding facilities in Western Australia.”*

Letters were written to various Government departments as well as Catholic Education WA (CEWA) and the Association of Independent Schools WA (AISWA). The responses received stated that Residential Colleges were following advice from the Western Australian Chief Health Officer.

Department of Education COVID-19 policies, processes, and operational advice (including those for the management of residential and boarding facilities) are currently shared with Catholic and Independent schools and each sector operationalises the guidelines at their own discretion.

The upgrade to Moora Residential College was completed and officially opened on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 with a restricted guest list due to COVID-19. At the time boarding numbers were at forty-three (43) students out of a possible fifty (50).

With the easing of restrictions an open morning was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July for the general public to see upgrades.

National Boarding Week was from 16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2021. Boarding Schools celebrated with a variety of events including invite a day student to boarding, invite a staff member to dinner and various in-house activities and

competitions.

It was a chance to acknowledge and reflect on the role all students and staff play in a successful boarding community.

From 2022 regional Year 7 students accepted into Albany Senior High School's Gifted and Talented Program that reside outside of Albany will be able to board at the Albany Residential College.

The main issue affecting student accommodation is the restrictions placed on students who attend interstate boarding schools wanting to return home for breaks. ICPA put forward a joint submission for the development of a National Framework for Students who attend boarding schools across state or territory borders. This was an attempt to bring consistency in restrictions between all states and territories.

The full submission can be found on the ICPA website.

On 17<sup>th</sup> September National Cabinet endorsed a National Code for Boarding School Students which provides states and territories with principles to develop common-sense, COVID-safe travel arrangements to help students and families navigate border restrictions. The full code can be found at: [www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/resources/national-code-boarding-school-students](http://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/resources/national-code-boarding-school-students)

All boarders over 16 years of age will need to be fully vaccinated and show proof of vaccination to participate in certain recreation activities. Residential, agricultural and boarding colleges will get priority with vaccination delivery.

There is still confusion over quarantine requirements for interstate boarding students even after the release of the National Code for Boarding School Students.

Rulings and guidelines are constantly changing in the boarding environment with most parents receiving regular updates to requirements.

## **Teacher Training Report**

**Kym Ross and Naomi Obst – Portfolio Second, March 2022**

### **QUALITY INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION REVIEW**

The results of the review into the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review, *Next Steps* Report launched by the Hon. Allan Tudge MP on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were released on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

Approximately 3,000 people contributed to this review through meetings, submissions, webinars, focus groups and surveys, including those participating in research commissioned by the Expert Panel.

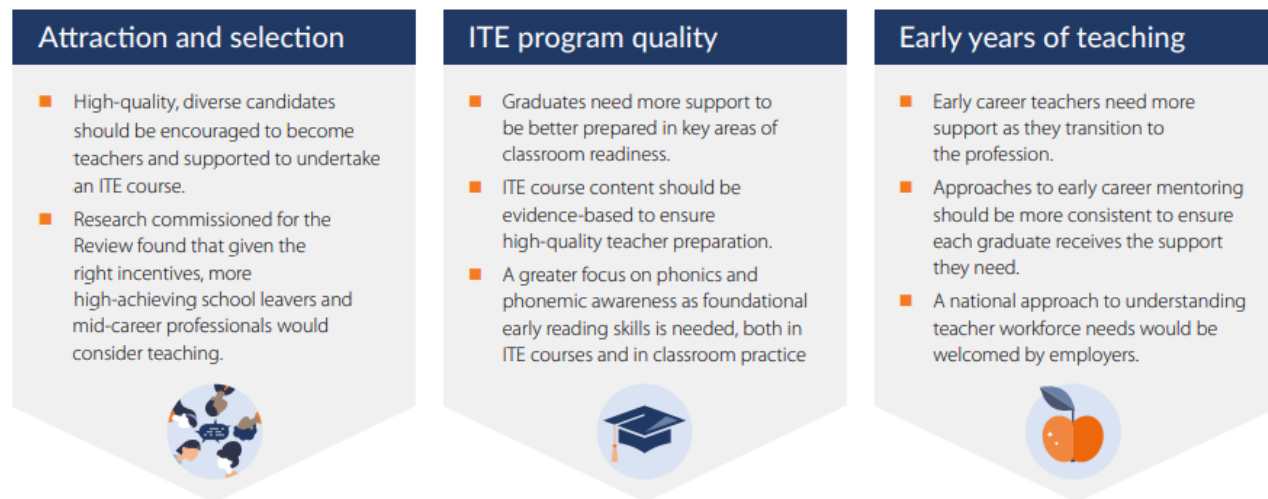
The Expert Panel made 17 recommendations and 7 findings; and consider that once implemented the recommendations will attract more highly suitable people to teaching, increase the quality of their preparation and introduction to the profession, will be more supported as they move into the classroom and teacher workforce shortages will be significantly alleviated.

Teachers hold the key to our nation's future. Preparing teachers to have the greatest impact on their students' learning is a national priority.

This report highlights three key areas to help new teachers be most effective:

- Attracting high-quality, diverse candidates into initial teacher education
- Ensuring their preparation is evidence-based and practical

- Supporting early years teachers.



**Recommendation 1: Raise the status of teaching**

Raise the status and value of the profession to inspire more people to become teachers.

**Recommendation 2: Attract high-quality candidates**

Attract high-quality, diverse candidates including school leavers and mid-career changers into initial teacher education including by providing evidence-based incentives.

**Recommendation 3: Reduce teachers' workloads**

Audit the red tape burden on classroom teachers and recommend ways to decrease this burden.

**Recommendation 4: Improve career advice**

Develop easy and reliable access to high quality career advice that promotes the teaching profession.

**Recommendation 5: Better recognise prior learning of high-quality, mid-career changers**

The prior learning of well qualified, suitable, mid-career changers with skills in areas of high demand should be better recognised, with the goal of reducing to one year the time taken to complete a secondary teaching qualification.

**Recommendation 6: Accelerate high quality candidates into teaching**

**Recommendation 7: Strengthen initial teacher education (ITE) programs to deliver confident, effective, classroom-ready graduates**

Amend the *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*, in a manner similar to the United Kingdom standards, to ensure ITE graduates are taught sufficient evidence-based practices to meet the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and empower them with the tools to lead a classroom.

**Recommendation 8: Reward good performance**

**Recommendation 9: Support families and carers to engage with teachers**

Assist families and carers to engage with teachers about their child's learning, particularly in relation to reading, through reinvigorating the existing Learning Potential platform and ensuring it is accessible for all families and carers.

**Recommendation 10: Strengthen national standard setting and moderation of Teaching Performance Assessments**

(TPAs)

Recommendation 11: Require earlier identification of suitability to teach  
Empower initial teacher education (ITE) students to identify earlier whether a career in teaching is likely to be suitable

Recommendation 12: Promote reform through the next National School Reform Agreement

Recommendation 13: Require transparency of initial teacher education (ITE) academic staff with recent teaching experience

Require higher education providers to publicly report the proportion of academic staff in ITE who have substantial recent experience teaching in schools or childcare centres.

Recommendation 14: Establish a Centre for Excellence to teach, research and evaluate best teaching practice

Recommendation 15: Strengthen the link between performance and funding of initial teacher education (ITE)

Recommendation 16: Develop national guidelines for mentors

Develop an agreed set of mentor standards that could be used by jurisdictions and schools to support early career teachers.

Recommendation 17: Develop a national approach to understanding teacher workforce supply and demand

Develop a national model of teacher supply and demand to support a sustainable pipeline of high-quality teachers in the right subject areas and locations.

As quality teaching is the most important in-school influence on student learning, it is vital to ensure that the initial teacher education ecosystem supports graduates to be confident, effective and classroom ready. The Expert Panel believes the ambitious reform agenda outlined in the report is necessary to ensure initial teacher education fulfils this ambition. Further information is available at: <https://www.dese.gov.au/quality-initial-teacher-education-review/resources/next-steps-report-quality-initial-teacher-education-review>

### **LEAP PROGRAM**

Leap is an WA Department of Education initiative for new and existing teachers who are looking to obtain further qualifications to teach in additional specialist areas, or possibly move into a new area of teaching.

Through Department-funded training and support, teachers can expand skills and knowledge, to take advantage of the exciting opportunities in our schools.

Leap provides an opportunity for:

- primary teachers to train in teaching secondary students
- secondary teachers to train in another learning area
- teachers who can speak more than one language to teach languages in a primary or secondary school
- graduate and experienced psychologists to learn about the School Psychology Service.

Further information is available at: <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/en/leap-program>

## **CURRENT TEACHER TRAINING COURSES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

### **UWA**

Study a Master of Teaching (Primary) at UWA after completing a bachelor's degree with at least one year relevant to one or more learning areas in the primary school curriculum. The Master of Teaching (Primary) course is a 1 ½ year long course.

There are also pathways at UWA for mature aged students aged 20 years or older.

### **ECU**

In addition to an undergraduate course ECU offers a 2 year Master of Teaching if you have a degree in an area other than education. A Master of Teaching (Secondary) course can be completed in 18 months if you have already completed a bachelor course as a fast-track option. You will need to attend their winter and summer teaching periods.

### **Murdoch**

Bachelor of Education graduates, graduate at the end of a 4 year program. The Early Childhood and Primary Teaching course is the only one in WA that qualifies the teacher to teach all year levels from birth to Year 6. Practical placements form an important part of the course and include metropolitan, rural, remote, international, multicultural, private and state school environments.

### **Curtin**

Offers a year full time Bachelor of Education in Primary or Secondary which can be undertaken at their Perth or Kalgoorlie campus.

### **Notre Dame**

Offers a 4 year undergraduate Bachelor of Education in Primary or Secondary. A Master of Teaching in Primary Education is a 2 year post graduate qualification completed full-time or the equivalent part-time. 20 weeks of classroom experience is a feature of this course and has a range of 24 courses.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Teachers at all Department of Education WA schools are regularly exposed and encouraged to participate in online courses that are made available on the department portal. Courses range from short 15 minute videos on particular topics to those taking a term or more to complete. Courses include curriculum updates in specific subject areas, excursion protocols, foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) information and incorporates a wide-ranging spread. Current issues are often featured to attract a wider audience, such as mask wearing.

### **Concerns**

*“Modelling done over the past two years shows that the Catholic sector in NSW will have a workforce shortfall of approximately 15% by 2030. The gaps are largely proportionate to those predicted for government schools.*

*There is a strong reason to think that currently observed and forecast teacher shortages will be exacerbated, and Australian schools will find it difficult to employ the teachers they require.*

*Aspiring teachers can either study a four year undergraduate degree, a five year combined degree or a master's degree (which takes about 2 years). A one year graduate diploma was phased out in 2013 under a new national quality reform. However, joint submissions from the Tasmania Government and the University of Tasmania said the reform has not worked. Since the introduction of the longer post-graduate course there has not been any noticeable increase in teacher quality or student performance.*

*In NSW, the number of students beginning education degrees dropped by almost a third between 2014 and 2019. Approximately half of the students that begin, do not finish, and 10% leave teaching within six years of graduating. The teacher shortage crisis is growing, putting the right of every child to be taught by a qualified teacher at risk. Uncompetitive pay and crippling workloads are the most significant disincentives in attracting and retaining the teachers we need.”* (Sydney Morning Herald, Jordan Baker 03-MAR-22)

The concerns outlined above are from NSW, but there is no reason to suggest that this is not completely relevant to all schools in Western Australia. In fact, WA is probably in a more precarious position given the vastness of our state’s rural and remote schools and the competitive pull of the financial incentives from large mining companies.

The Quality Initial Teacher Review is an important step to addressing teacher training and the predicted shortfall. I hope that the recommendations are taken seriously so that our rural and remote schools are staffed with quality educators.

## Travel Report

### **Jane Cunningham – Portfolio Holder, March 2022**

It was with much relief that student travel was less impacted by COVID-19 in 2021 than in 2020. Although our students were still restricted from travelling to and from educational facilities in states other than Western Australia, we did not have the same disruption with intrastate travel that we experienced previously.

Motion A15 was in relation to students being seen as essential workers and therefore having the same travel rights. A letter was written to the Hon. Paul Papalia and the Hon. Sue Ellery but unfortunately a response was not returned.

The Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) provides travel assistance to school and tertiary students who are geographically isolated. The two main types of travel support are:

- Subsidised fares for air, bus and train travel for eligible students who live within the defined remote area (DRA) of Western Australia (see map)
- A road travel subsidy for eligible students who live anywhere within Western Australia but who must be driven in a private vehicle more than 56 km from home to the nearest:
  - Appropriate government school with boarding facilities offering classes in the grade or level in which the student is enrolled, or
  - Regular passenger transport (bus stop, airport or train station - please visit the TransWA – Plan Your Journey website for regular passenger transport hubs and routes), or
  - A school bus service operating between the student's home and the school they are attending.

At the 2021 ICPA (WA) State Conference a number of travel motions were presented relating to aspects of the STSS.

Motions A9, A10, A11, A12, A13

*A9 “That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Transport to accept and process requests for refunds for airfares under the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) up until 31 December for the full school year when all travel has been undertaken as is the case for the Road Travel Subsidy (RTS).”*

ICPA (WA) wrote to Minister Saffioti and Alina McGlenchy (On-Demand Transport) outlining the need for flexibility when claiming the STSS.



*A10 "That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Transport to allow for special circumstances as to the location a student is flying to and/or from when applying for a refund or voucher for airfare under the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS)."*

At present, when applying for a refund or travel voucher through STSS, a student is only eligible to submit a request for flights via the most direct route by air/bus/train between the principal family home or usual place of residence and where they are being educated. ICPA (WA) wrote to Minister Saffioti outlining a need for flexibility as there are times where students may need to travel to an alternative town to meet their families if, for example, the family has been at a School of the Air camp.

*A11 "That ICPA (WA) lobby the Department of Transport to review their policy regarding the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS)-Road Travel Subsidy to more appropriately fit rural travel situations and therefore change their criteria to enable our children to receive the education that is comparable to that of metropolitan students."*

*A12 "That ICPA (WA) lobby the On-demand Transport - Department of Transport service and the State Government for a review into the eligibility criteria of the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme - Road Travel Subsidy."*

*A13 "That ICPA (WA) requests that the On-demand Transport - Department of Transport (ODT) review the transport hub policy criteria for the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS)-Road Travel Subsidy. The criteria should state that the nearest transport hub should travel to the nearest appropriate government school."*

At the ICPA (WA) State Conference A12 and A13 were deemed covered by A11. ICPA (WA) wrote to Minister Saffioti and Alina McGlenchy expressing the lack of understanding and support being offered to our rural and remote families by the STSS Road Travel Subsidy. Several cases were outlined including a case where travel claims had been rejected for children attending the closest high school and boarding facilities because a bus went through their hometown, even though it did not go anywhere near the school and boarding facility. ICPA (WA) has requested that the Minister of Transport and the Department of Transport On-Demand Transport review the transport hub policy criteria.

Unfortunately, the response from Bronwyn Grieve on behalf of Minister Saffioti was not positive or satisfactory in any way and we look forward to continuing discussions on these matters in 2022.

Motions A14, A16 and S4 were in relation to School Bus Services.

*A14 was in relation to students at times being left in the rain and not being cared for to a suitable standard and parents not having an avenue where they could a complaint or grievance to School Bus Services (SBS).*

ICPA (WA) wrote to John Bailly of School Bus Services and also had a successful meeting with him at the July face-to-face meeting. Mr Bailly explained the process on the website to follow to lodge a concern and speak with the Contact Officer responsible for the area.

*A16 "That ICPA (WA) lobby School Bus Services (SBS) to ensure that four (4) bus service routes are provided for students in the Hyden District. These routes are to be flexible when student numbers and/or residential distribution of students change. Bus routes should not be dictated or decided by the bus contractor as they have a vested financial interest."*

*S4 "That ICPA (WA) lobby the Public Transport Authority for an annual review of all orange school bus service routes."*

ICPA (WA) wrote to John Bailly of School Bus Services and also had a successful meeting with him at the July face-to-face meeting and explained that this is a common story coming out of many parts of WA. In Mid 2021 there had

been an ABC News article outlining the major impact that removing a bus route can have on our families and towns, siting Munglinup where there was the possibility that a route may close.

Unfortunately, the issue with the Hyden bus routes remains unresolved after a number of meetings. Recently the Nyabing P & C had been in touch with their Contact Officer and after consultation with community have a trial of an extra bus in place for Term 1, 2022.

Feedback from ICPA (WA) members who use the Orange School Buses suggests that there is a lot of confusion with the terms 'eligible' and 'complimentary' and this was also the feedback from Mr. Bailly. Members often feel that the rules that SBS are governed by do not fit with the complexities of distance, schools, education needs and families regional Western Australia.

In August 2021, ICPA (WA) welcomed the news that the Minister for Transport had referred the School Bus Services policy to a parliamentary committee for review. In October ICPA (WA) put in an extensive submission to the committee and have attended as witnesses at a public hearing to discuss matters raised in the submission including the operation of the Policy.

### **Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council (RREAC) Report**

**Naomi Obst – Appointee, March 2022**

Susanne Warr, CWA representative on the RREAC board, has made enquiries as to why there has been no correspondence from RREAC in 2021 and passed on the following information:

- Mike Helm, Department of Education advised that RREAC would go ahead in 2022 as Matthew Hughes who was the Chair has now stepped down from this role.
- A new structure setup and changes in Parliament since the last election has meant that it has taken a while for RREAC to get going again.
- We will be advised in the new year of when meetings are to be scheduled.

This is pleasing news as the role of RREAC is an important one which should have regular communications with the government as the purpose of this committee is to directly provide advice to the Minister for Education. Interestingly, I have heard that a similar role with Health has suffered like difficulties.

As I have not attended any meetings as a certified ICPA member I would like to continue in this role into the future. This role would be very supportive for my role on Federal Council going forward. I would be more than happy to continue to update State Council on the happenings at RREAC when they recommence.

### **BRANCH REPORTS**

#### **Central Wheatbelt North Report**

**Lisa Brennan - President**

CWN Branch appreciates WA State Council's advocacy in addressing our Branch's 2021 conference motions that rural schools do not continue to be disadvantaged by the removal of services. Thank you, State Council, for your meetings with the relevant authorities that have contributed to the mobile Dental Therapy Centre (DTC) continuing to roster their van to our small schools despite small school populations. At last year's State Conference,

Commissioner for Children; Colin Pettit highlighted the importance of dental care delivery and education in his keynote speaker address.

Thank you to Isabel Nixon (from our Branch) for being brave enough to speak in the panel session about her experience as a first-year university student in the COVID environment. Issy was joined by Madison Hall, a Year 11 boarding student, Mr. Paul Matthews Principal SIDE, Professor Stephen Winn Edith Cowan University and Richard Stokes ABSA.

Well done to the three (3) ICPA member family students who spoke to Richard Hudson on the ABC Country Hour program about their experience of boarding, university and being a governess of primary aged students in the COVID environment.

Thanks once again to State Council for being the voice for regional, rural and remote students and families and asking the questions to the policymakers. Please keep renewing your family membership as ICPA is a well-respected, unique volunteer parent body association.

### **Eastern Districts Branch Report**

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

Eastern Districts ICPA (formally Hyden Branch) celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> birthday and our annual Melbourne Cup Luncheon on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021.

We catered for fifty-four (54) members and guests with our annual lunch plus an additional sixty-five (65) takeaway meals. A big thank you goes to our members for supplying salads for the day, as always these were amazing.

Thank you to Hyden IGA for cooking the meat, Bush Bakehouse for donating the sourdough, Coby Smith for assembling the beautiful table arrangements and making all the cupcakes that went with the takeaway lunches, Jacinta Holmes from Coljac Flower Farm for the foliage for the centrepieces, Emma Miolini for the cake, the wonderful ladies who prepared all the takeaway lunches and Elders Hyden for delivering them to our local businesses.

In 2020 we presented three (3) Life Memberships but unfortunately, the badges did not arrive in time, so this year we presented Marlene Mayfield and Carolyn Burns with their badges. Gwen Walton will be presented her Life Member badge by Sally Brindal (State President) in Geraldton.

The raffle winners for 2021 were:

Baby Weber Q	Donated by Sam and Andrew Greay	Won by Monique Brown
Body Shop Package	Donated by Hyyakka Farms	Won by Merle Marsh
Bunch of flowers	Donated by Coljac Flower Farm	Won by Caroline Burns

Bursary Winners for 2021 were:

Year PP – 6	Emily Mudge
Year 7 – 9	Maddison Loftus
Year 10 – 12	Sam Ellis

This is my fifth and final year as President, I would like to thank all my committee who have helped me throughout the last 5 years Bev Airey, Cherie Walton, Bianca James, Carla Hyde, Coby Smith and Chrissie Nicholl. Without these lovely ladies I would not have been able to do this role. To my husband Andrew and children Lizzie and Mathew for

all the times I talk Melbourne Cup or ICPA at the most wrong times of the year thank you!!! And finally, to the members of Eastern Districts ICPA thank you for allowing me to do the last 5 years.

In closing, I would like to wish all our members a wonderful year and look forward to you all being a part of the ICPA Eastern Districts Branch.

### **Esperance Branch Report**

**Jane Wandel, President**

We have had another very low-key year in the Esperance ICPA Branch. We had scheduled our AGM for earlier this month but have had to postpone due to illness, we are yet to reschedule. Our membership numbers are low with currently 16 members, but with COVID numbers on the rise within our local school and the boarding schools, I am hoping we may have a numbers resurgence as people are reminded of the critical work that ICPA does lobbying on our behalf. Unfortunately, it often takes adversity or issues to remind us of the value of ICPA as an organisation. It would be great to have additional members to help reinvigorate our branch.

At our last AGM we decided to disburse our branch funds in the form of bursaries for students to assist with costs associated with transitioning to new schools. As yet we have not followed through on these bursaries but will endeavour to do so in the next 12 months. We are currently putting together the selection criteria and processes for awarding these bursaries.

As always, we would like to thank State Council for your continued support and hard work.

### **Gascoyne Branch Report**

**Alys McKeough, President**

The Gascoyne Branch convened the State Conference on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

At the end of 2020, I advised the branch that I would be resigning at the end of 2021 but was happy to stay on as Vice President or past President for a year to make for a smooth changeover; at the same time our Vice President resigned.

Jane Hughes our secretary has not been replaced and Rachael Steadman was just hanging on as branch Treasurer, but due to her personal situation it is likely to mean she will no longer continue her involvement.

The branch AGM is to be called for 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> March. There has been a decline in member support through membership payments but people still support ICPA in principle.

COVID-19 has taken a toll as we have not been able to hold our annual fundraiser which involved the low stock stress handling school for kids which was being well supported. Also, the changes to the Federal Conference and the prospect of having to quarantine has put everyone off that I had been trying to get to attend, in the hope that they may have been inspired to become more involved at a branch level.

I do not want to see our branch fall apart and given the dire situation I hope people will step up to keep it going. Obviously given the state of affairs I am not going to desert the branch and will continue to sort out the treasury side of it in the meantime, but I also think if no one steps up at the AGM then obviously they do not value the organisation and we will have to explore other options.

### **Goldfields Eyre Branch Report**

**Tallaya Wood, President**

The Goldfields Eyre Branch has yet to hold our AGM this year due to low member engagement. We have therefore made the decision to move the AGM to September, in line with the GNRBA (Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association) AGM when many of our members are already in town for field days etc.

Currently our office bearers are:

President:	Tallaya Wood,
Secretary:	Elyce Donaghy
Treasurer:	Brie Campbell
Executive Officer:	Shannon Prosser

Membership and member participation have been on the top of our list again this year. Whilst our numbers remain steady, with a core group of dedicated families and supporters, the growing demands of pastoral life have had an impact on our branch again this year. As such we produced a letter of introduction explaining who the ICPA was and how we can help parents of isolated children, which was kindly forward to local pastoralists by the GNRBA on our behalf and we are hoping to see a rise in membership and engagement from this.

The state of the now privately run Goldfields Camp School has been brought to the attention of our branch in the hopes that the ICPA can help motivate the government to step in and take control of the camp school once more. The facilities, which are used by isolated students from schools such as the Kalgoorlie School of the Air along with many schools from the Wheatbelt and Esperance regions, were found to be well below standard with general cleaning and maintenance being concerning issues. The branch, along with the KalSOTA P&C president, approached local MP Ali Kent MLA who agreed to tour the facilities with us. She agreed that the facilities were unkept and of concern and as such took our concerns to the Minister. Her office has since gotten back to us to say the Minister is working closely with Fairbridge to rectify the situation.

Our minicamp, scheduled for July 2021, was put on hold due to unforeseen circumstances but we are hopeful to be able to run it this year along with a Bushman's Ball in early September to be held at the Nullarbor Muster grounds. We are hoping that these social events will help us to share the importance of the work the ICPA does as well as offering our members and local communities a well-deserved break from the pastoral and mining grind.

I would 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 we would not be as strong as we are.

### **Kimberley Air Branch Report**

**Kirsty Forshaw, Vice President**

Report not available.

### **Lakes District Branch Report**

#### **Claire Walter, Outgoing President**

Meekatharra Air Branch held our AGM and general meeting via Zoom on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022 which was attended by ten (10) members.

We only had one change on the committee and I would like to welcome Natalie Bevan, Granite Peak Station for taking on the Treasurer position and our outgoing Treasurer Penny Johns Munarra Station. On behalf of the branch, I would like to thank Pen for her contribution and support to ICPA.

I would also like to thank Louise Ford who joined WA State Council in 2021, thank you. Chandra and Louise, this is a massive effort and commitment and we appreciate the work you ladies are doing.

As our branch covers such a huge area and some of our families are very remote, it is exceedingly difficult to have any face-to-face time for meetings let alone any traditional fundraising events; and as much as Zoom meetings are convenient, they are not very empathetic.

It was suggested that we have one (1) face-to-face meeting each year, this way all branch members can have the option to come together and raise any relevant concerns and issues with education matters and discuss what ICPA can do to help.

With COVID still front and centre of isolating our rural and remote children and families even further from their peers, our branch will be holding a camp in the coming months for all our children near and far.

Our branch was saddened to learn of the passing of Jano Foulkes-Taylor recently. Jano was a member of our branch in recent years but her history with ICPA goes back many more years.

Jano was a State President in the 70's (with her husband Michael as Secretary). She also served on Federal Council, various committees, attended State and Federal Conferences and was always passionate about education in the bush.

Jano was involved in many other organisations including the PGA and had a huge passion for the pastoral industry. Our Sympathy is extended to Jano's husband, her children and their families.

### **Meekatharra Air Branch Report**

#### **Claire Mahony, President**

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### **Midwest Branch Report**

#### **Jen Critch, President**

2021 was a busy year for our Midwest Community. Cyclones, COVID lockdowns, bumper season and preparing for the upcoming State Conference at the Pagoda Hotel in March (now postponed until 2023!)

Our first meeting was scheduled for February but postponed due to the unexpected shutdown of the Perth and Peel regions as schools were commencing. Our second effort was thwarted by Cyclone Seroja in April. We finally had a meeting on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July at the Geraldton Library. At our meeting in July, our executive stayed relatively the same with only one change. Melinda Weir stepped down and Fiona Mann took up her position as Vice President thank you, Fiona.

We moved that the Midwest Branch would convene the State Conference in March 2022 with Sam Messina taking on the 2022 Convenor role. Also, it was moved that the location would be at the Pagoda in Como.

State Conference was attended by Naomi Obst, Sally Brindal and Michelle Abbott. Unfortunately, no other members were able to attend. Naomi sent through a comprehensive report to our members on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Thank you, Naomi.

In August we had a stall at the Mingenew expo. Thank you Sally and Naomi for organizing and to Sam, Michelle, Emma, Janelle, Fiona, Nicole and Pip for volunteering hours of their day to man the booth. Having this stall has increased awareness of what we do and how we can help rural families.

Another conference update meeting was held in September where we went through sponsorship and conference jobs and administration.

Sam Messina needs a big mention in this report as she has spent countless hours and resources organizing the conference and getting big donations and sponsorship that will greatly reduce the ticket price and make the day and

night assessable for more of our members. Thank you, Sam.

Lastly thank you to Naomi for everything you do you are an amazing Secretary. I know you are hoping to step down but I will miss your knowledge and ability to juggle so many things at once. We all appreciate everything you do.

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**

**Jo-Anne Williams, President**

Nil report.

### **WA Lones Branch Report**

**Samantha Greay, Lones Officer**

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

This year we have continued to receive renewals for 2022 and now that I am in my second year as Lones Officer, I am slowly finding my feet with the amount of schools and distant members we have.

Federal Conference 2021 was held in Longreach, QLD on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> November but due to COVID-19 and work commitments at this time I was unable to attend. The 2022 Federal Conference is to be held in Perth (all fingers crossed this happens) at the Ritz Carlton, Elizabeth Quay highlighting the City of Perth.

Attending conferences give you an insight into how important our voice is and allows us the chance to discuss issues that are shared by branches and more importantly families, no matter where they are located around Australia.

### **Yalgoo Branch Report**

**Ruth Rowe, President**

Yalgoo Branch continues to tick along quietly. Thank you to all of our branch members for your continued support of our branch and the ICPA.

Following our AGM in January where we also saw Mary-Kate Walsh continue as Vice President and Roxanne Morrissey as Secretary/Treasurer, we have started a new public Facebook page as one of the few measures we discussed in promoting the organisation and the branch.

Our branch turned 50 years old in 2021, a testament to an important organisation that has stood the test of time, and ICPA continuing to improve education for Australian families despite the challenges of distance. Thank you ICPA (WA) for all of your hard work, particularly also now in the lead up to bringing conference online during these challenging times.



### State Conference Guest List

Hon. Martin Aldridge, MLC	Member for Agricultural Region, The Nationals WA
Boyd Brown	Regional General Manager WA, Telstra
Eva Colic	Regional Engagement Manager, Telstra
Lara Dalton	Member for Geraldton
Jared Daunt	Australian Boarding Schools Association
Tom Dunsmore	Australian Boarding Schools Association
Hon. Sue Ellery, MLC	Minister for Education and Training
Neesha Flint	Principal, Geraldton Grammar
Georgina Gardner	Policy Advisor to Hon. Donna Faragher MLC
Doug Hall	Policy Officer, Pastoralists & Graziers Association
Wendy Hick	Immediate Past President, ICPA Australia
Mr Shane Love, MLA	Deputy Leader of the Opposition, The Nationals WA
Nikki MacQueen	Federal Webmaster, ICPA Australia
Hon. Steve Martin, MLC	Member for Agricultural Region, Shadow Minister for Housing; Forestry, Liberal Party of WA
Alana Moller	Federal President, ICPA Australia
Catriona Nixon	Admissions Officer, Scotch College
Jordan Owenell	Head of Boarding, Scotch College
Sally Panizza	Director, Agricultural Education, Department of Education
Donna Plummer	Electorate Officer, Darren West MLC
Neil Rodgers	A/Manager Residential Colleges, Department of Education
Lisa Rodgers	Director General, Department of Education
Mr Peter Rundle, MLA	Shadow Minister for Education and Training, Sport and Recreation, Racing and Gaming, The Nationals WA
Lisa Slade	Federal Vice President, ICPA Australia
Richard Stokes	CEO, Australian Boarding Schools Association
Leah Tindale	Journalist, Farm Weekly
Pania Turner	President, Western Australian Council State School Organisation
Michael Valentine	Special Projects Officer - Remote Learning, Scotch College
Prof Stephen Winn	Executive Dean, School of Education, Edith Cowan University

### State Council Delegates

President	Sally Brindal
Vice President	Naomi Obst
Secretary/Webmaster	Kym Ross
Treasurer	Michelle Abbott
Publicity Officer	Jane Hughes
Lones Officer	Samantha Greay
Councillor	Jane Cunningham
Councillor	Louise Ford
Councillor	Chandra Ridley

### Branch Delegates

BRANCH	DELEGATE	DELEGATE	OBSERVERS
Central Wheatbelt North	Amanda Nixon	Lisa Brennan	
Eastern Districts	Coby Smith		Carla Hyde
Esperance			
Gascoyne			
Goldfields Eyre	Tallaya Wood		
Kimberley Air	Nadine Wunner		
Lakes Branch	Fiona Hobley		
Meekatharra Air	Natalie Bevan	Lauren Lewis	
Midwest	Jen Critch	Jackie Simkin	Teneale Bagley, Nicole Batten, Fiona Cosgrove, Bec Duane, Michaela Keefe, Fiona Mann, Sam Messina, Liz Sudlow, Kirrilee Warr
Pilbara			
WA Lones			Sylvia Byers
Yalgoo	Roxanne Morrissey	Ruth Rowe	

### State Conference Conveners

#### WA State Council

Sally Brindal
Naomi Obst
Kym Ross
Michelle Abbott
Jane Hughes
Chandra Ridley
Louise Ford
Samantha Greay
Jane Cunningham

### State Conference Apologies

Jessica Shaw, MLA	WA Labor Member for Swan Hills
Hollie Williams	SA ICPA Assistant Secretary
Valerie Gould	Executive Director, Association of Independent Schools of WA
David Dans	Executive Director, Projects, Department of Education

Hon Stephen Dawson, MLC	Minister for Emergency Services; ICT and Innovation; Medical Research; Volunteering, Member for the Mining and Pastoral Region
Christine Bevans	Principal, Meekatharra SOTA
Julia Broad	ICPA Australia
Hon. Donna Faragher, MLC	Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, Liberal Party of WA
Hon. John Quigley, MLA	Attorney General
Tash Johns	Pilbara Branch Member