
Boarding Schools Agricultural High Schools and Hostels Report

Madam President, Distinguished Guests, fellow State Councillors, Members, Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to present the Boarding Report for ICPA-NSW at the 2023 conference.

2022 saw the effects of the pandemic on boarding ease as the year went by, but not fully disappear in some states.

At the beginning of 2022, ICPA-NSW met with federal and other state councils to discuss the strict restrictions that state governments were placing on boarding school facilities. There were heartbreaking stories from around the country and boarding children were subject to subsequent periods of isolation or were sent home multiple times a term when presenting with COVID-19 symptoms, or when they were a close contact.

ICPA-NSW gathered data from their members through a survey which showed the real impact on boarding students' mental health and wellbeing. Although families were dealing with these issues, luckily there were no further border closures in 2022. Such a welcome relief after the horrific two years that many interstate boarders had faced previously.

Moving forward, ICPA-NSW are still hoping that state governments will put into their Emergency Management Plans that interstate boarding students are seen as Essential Travellers, if the borders were to close again in the future.

We would like to thank ABSA for their continued support of ICPA and all our boarding families. The pandemic threw many curve balls for boarding schools and their students and ABSA's guidance and support has been invaluable.

Once again, ICPA-NSW was well represented at Boarding School Expos around NSW in 2022. A huge thank you to the current and previous state councillors that gave up their time to represent our organisation. The expos are a great opportunity to catch up with current ICPA-NSW members and also sign-up new families.

A fantastic virtual event that ICPA-NSW state councillors attended in October was the Boarding Schools Summit hosted by Boarding Schools Expo. A positive of the pandemic was the increase in online events, allowing people to attend from all over Australia. A highlight was the keynote speaker, Sam Bailey, who spoke at the ICPA-NSW 2022 state conference in Bourke.

State Councillor Myfi Kellaghan represented ICPA-NSW on the Boarding Scholarships for Isolated Students Selection Committee meeting for 2022 and will do so again in 2023.

It is great to see that the construction of the new female boarding facilities at Yanco Agricultural High School are ready to commence! This has been a long time coming and something that our members have asked for and in turn ICPA-NSW state council has long advocated for. It shows that persistence pays off and hopefully Yanco students will be benefiting from these new facilities in the near future.

As we near the end of the first term for 2023, if you have children in boarding, I hope that they have settled in well and are immersing themselves in boarding life and all it has to offer.

Thank you for your time today and enjoy the remainder of our state conference here in Moree.

Bree Wakefield
ICPA-NSW Boarding Portfolio holder