
BOARDING SCHOOLS, AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOLS AND HOSTELS REPORT

Madame President, distinguished guests, fellow members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Boarding Schools, Agricultural High School and School Term Hostels Report.

On behalf of ICPA-NSW, I would like to welcome and thank the Boarding School representatives for attending this conference - your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank Richard Stokes and Thomas Dunsmore from ABSA for all that you and your team have done to help us out during these trying times.

Highlights for 2020:

Well, where do I start!

Due to COVID-19, Our annual State Conference was cancelled, Boarding School Expos were cancelled, state borders closed, and students were sent home to attend schooling online.

Attending schooling online has had an impact on families, it has been a very long, emotional and financial toll on all families trying to educate their children, a basic, necessary and essential need. A big thankyou again to all the schools who have worked so hard during this time to try and minimise disruption to our children's education in so many ways.

ICPA-NSW has been lobbying hard on behalf of families affected by boarding interstate.

After COVID began to affect our boarding school students ICPA -NSW formed a COVID committee to deal with the NSW student border issues, because NSW is sandwiched between three states. Thank you to our Committee members, Bree Wakefield, Claire Butler and Libby McPhee who spent many hours working on strategies to deal with the border restrictions.

In May 2020, ICPA-NSW did a boarding school survey regarding COVID-19 to gauge what the return to boarding was actually looking like. The survey was well received, with a total of 517 responses. Out of those responses, 55% had not returned to their boarding houses and 45% of those had not returned due to social distancing restrictions in the boarding houses.

87% of students had spent the last 14 days prior on their properties anyway due to geographical isolation. During this time, 64% had nil cases of COVID-19 in their shire. 5% of students who did return to school had to quarantine for 14 days.

The survey was a very valuable tool in our advocacy for 'No borders for boarders'.

At the start of the school year 2020, ICPA-NSW followed ICPA-QLD's lead and wrote to the boarding schools, thanking them for the support they give to our member's children. We highlighted the experiences children across rural and remote NSW had over the 2019

summer holidays, with the catastrophic bushfires, and the drought that was ravaging the state.

Many thanks to the boarding schools for distributing this letter throughout your boarding houses so that staff were aware of what these students were going through. You took this information on board and embraced it in the spirit that was intended.

At the October Deputation ICPA-NSW raised the issue of a need for Girls Agricultural Boarding facility in the Northern NSW region as this has been a motion raised at numerous conferences previously. If members have any case studies on this issue, please contact me.

Currently plans are in place for the Boarding Schools Expos to be held in 2021 and we look forward to seeing our members at these events.

Dates for the Boarding Schools Expos for 2021:

Dubbo Expo – 14-15 May 2021

Griffith – 3 June 2021

Wagga Wagga – 4-5 June 2021

Narrabri – 23-24 July 2021

Looking forward we are hoping that our boarding students will not have as many disruptions as experienced during 2020, but we are prepared to deal with any issues that arise and support our members to the best of our ability.

Monique Watkin

Boarding schools, Agricultural High Schools and Hostels Portfolio

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