



ICPA Federal Conference 2026 – Gold Coast QLD

Wednesday 29 July 2026

Day 1 of the 55th Annual Federal Conference of the **Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (ICPA)** kicked off at St Hilda's School in Southport today. Proudly hosted by the ICPA Queensland State Council and with the coastal aligned theme of *Riding the Waves of Learning*, the Conference celebrated the achievements and successes of the previous 12 months in advocacy, support and awareness for geographically isolated rural and remote students.

ICPA Federal President Louise Martin acknowledged the strong and powerful collective voice of over 210 attendees and delegates representing every State and Territory.

Conference motions and speakers on Day 1 covered an important range of topics across Boarding and Rural School access, communications and curriculum throughout distance education, specific education needs, student travel, tertiary education and training. Specifically, the importance and formal recognition and remuneration for Isolated Classroom Supervisors (RICS), as well as addressing educational disadvantage and ensuring fairness for isolated communities.

"You can see the common themes across the motions, we are a united voice", said Ms Martin.

Delegates were also welcomed via a video presentation from the Regional Education Commissioner, the Honourable Fiona Nash, who highlighted the importance of the ICPA and its achievements.

Ms Nash noted since the 2025 Conference, through the motion and outcomes of the ICPA, that policy change happens. Changes in the recognition of Tertiary access payment (TAP) allowing isolated students who take gap years after completing their secondary studies before going onto university.

"That is a real win, and that has happened because of the advocacy from ICPA, for making that happen and getting the decision makers to recognise that there was a better way than what they had in place".

"Ensuring that the views and issues are recognised. I commend the role of the ICPA in keeping myself and the Federal Government abreast of the challenges facing isolated students and its communications are by far some of the best that I receive".



Conference delegate, Rebecca Pearce from Broken Hill, spoke of the inspirational sentiment in the room. With children attending Boarding School in Tamworth as well as a son attending University in Gatton, Mrs Pearce acknowledged the inequality of support for GI students and would like to see a distance based loading added to the Assistance isolated Children Payment.

“We receive the same funding support as someone who currently resides 50km from the boarding school. Yet we are over 1,100kms from our Boarding School. Whilst the system is currently equal, it is not equitable” she noted.

The delegate from Broken Hill branch, has a background as a qualified teacher herself, will present a Motion on Day 2 for a tiered based funding support system.

Federal Council Member, Vice President QLD Nikki Mahony presented the Partnership Report and Rural Schools Portfolio Report, recognising the valuable contribution of ICPA's strategic and funding partners. Her report highlighted the importance of these collaborative relationships in supporting the Association's advocacy efforts, strengthening its capacity to deliver meaningful outcomes, and ensuring the ongoing advancement of educational opportunities for rural, remote and geographically isolated students and their families.

Members from the Bourke Branch of the ICPA raised an approved motion for improved access and utilisation of early childhood early intervention funding, currently managed through the NDIS scheme. While the South Australia State Council motioned to advocate the Federal Government, for increased training opportunities and rural placements and incentives for teachers and allied health professionals in order to improve access to specialist support for students with learning difficulties, who are not eligible for the NDIS in rural and remote areas, was passed unopposed.

National telecommunications provider and ICPA strategic partner Telstra led the afternoon session with a panel covering digital access, web safety, online literacy and resources and tools to support online learning. Day 1 of the Conference also heard reports from State Councils representing Queensland and South Australia.

Conference motions also covered isolated student travel accessibility issues such as long travel times and high flight costs for geographically isolated, the ICPA confirmed motions that will see the ICPA continue to lobby airlines and key stakeholders including Qantas and REX Airways to implement student discount considerations for students travelling to school and compulsory face to face learning sessions from their rural and remote communities.



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Day two kicks off tomorrow with Federal Council holding its AGM, and all council positions will be declared vacant. The new ICPA Federal Council will be announced and commence their new and important roles for a 12 month term, with positions being officially vacated at the close of the annual conference.

A total of 100 motions will be voted on by ICPA delegates across the two days, with each motion carried then binding the ICPA to advocate for the carried issues.

For more information, including motions, conference imagery and case studies, please see the [ICPA conference media kit](#).