



ICPA AUST. Federal Conference notes

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Motion Outcomes

WHAT ICPA will be advocating for (key themes for coming year)

This year, three major issues arose from Conference that ICPA (Aust) Federal Council take as targeted/ key advocacy issues to delegations in Canberra

See:

[ICPA Conference motions](#)

[ICPA Conference Supplementary Motions](#)

Distance Education

A new approach seeking recognition and remuneration for Geographically Isolated Distance Education tutors/supervisors (Motions A18, A19, A21)

Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC)

Seeking a uniform solution to restore AIC Basic Boarding Allowance to its original intent to cover at least 55% of average boarding (Motion A3)

To transfer the AIC Scheme from the portfolio of the Minister for Social Services to the Minister for Education. (Motion S5)

ECEC

For Federal Ministers to address Early Childhood Teacher pay parity to assist with access to early childhood education in rural and remote Australia. (Motion A37)

Other supplementary issues raised:

Amend payment timing of Tertiary Access Payments (TAP)

We heard from members whose children were relocating across the country and yet to receive any payment at 6+ weeks in. the whole point of TAP is to assist students with the cost of moving from a regional or remote area for higher education. Offering a one-off payment of up to \$5,000.

Making Youth Allowance more accessible to rural and remote students

Currently many, many isolated and remote kids are failing to meet the Youth allowance requirements. This is due to a number of factors that put remote kids at a disadvantage. Things such as taking a GAP year after school can make kids ineligible for the payment. It is also means tested based on parents income, yet these kids are old enough to vote, drink etc.

ICPA are advocating for a fairer approach to this payment.



Quotes from Louise Martin, ICPA Federal President

On her unchallenged position as ICPA Federal President, Louise Martin highlights the success of the Federal Conference and is refreshed and looking forward to leading the ICPA team to deliver meaningful advocacy for its members:

"We are thrilled with the robust conversation undertaken at years federal conference, which saw 180 passionate and smart remote education delegates gather on Sydney's CBD. With attendance from all states and territories in Australia. This incredible turnout reflects the commitment of our members to advocating for improved educational access and opportunities for rural students and acts as a barometer of the issues affecting our community."

"It was both refreshing and alarming to see that participants from each state highlight similar issues, underscoring the widespread nature of the challenges we face in the efforts to educate our kids. The collaborative nature of the proceedings, filled the room with a sense of power in our people and our varied discussions and shared experiences, will undoubtedly strengthen our efforts as we continue to champion equitable education access for all Australians. We look forward to building on our advocacy efforts with refreshed focus for the year."



Day 1 Summary

Number of motions

This year we have 102 motions – an average of 70 are usually observed.

Shadow minister for Early Education is present The Hon Sarah Mitchell, The Hon Fiona Nash, Australian Boarding Schools Association Education Department, representatives from NBN co, Telstra, Regional Tech Hub

Rory Treweeke – AM Federal life member opens conference

Federal President, Louise Martin introduces one of the founding fathers of ICPA. She is emotional and impassioned by Rory's lifelong commitment to education advocacy.

Rory opens strongly and states that equitable access to education is still viewed by those as social welfare – but it is in fact a right to have access to equitable education in Australia. Later that evening this point was reiterated by the Deputy Premier of NSW, Pru Carr who says that it is quite literally the law for all children to have access to education. And that is something her government takes incredibly seriously (ICPA Conference Dinner, Hosted by Pru Carr, Strangers Room, Parliament House)

Rory discusses how far ICPA has come, and shares some learnings including how ICPA's grassroots are important to them. In the past they have used professional lobbyists – but unanimously agreed that the message is most powerful when delivered by the people impacted by the people, for the people.

Rory brings up the challenges of communication back when he was president. With all communications conducted via telegram. It was the 1970s!

He then discusses special needs and the fact that 190 thousand kids need assessments and specialist help. The provisions of such are inadequate even in the metropolitan areas. Early intervention is key and fiscally responsible.

(If of interest, ICPA Case Study: Danyelle Haigh NT based, 2 small kids, one autistic and going through the system living extremely remote.)

Rory continues, we know the bush population has shrunk, at the same time the efficiency of farmers has grown. Due to the education accessed and a commitment to learning. ICPA is a vital link between these farming families and the changemakers.

Fiona Nash Regional Education Commissioner

Spoke to the importance of gatherings like this ICPA Federal Conference. A place to raise the issues and speak about solutions.

Fiona believes, that the Government has a responsibility to provide equitable access to education. It's about fairness.



Fiona is a fan of and advocate of, raising aspiration. She acknowledges that there is a gap here, especially in the bush. A lack of confidence and self-belief can be a factor, but she says that we need to find better ways to make aspiration acceptable. Later that evening we hear from Sarah Warmoll, a regional NSW raised, Founder of HR and careers startup, The Careers Department, who eloquently reiterates this notion, “what you can see, you can be.”

Sarah has seen first hand, how study hubs have been gamechangers for tertiary education in the bush. Duncan Taylor also present from the Country University Centre said there are over 30 study hubs in NSW now, and he’s looking at how he can expand this out to secondary school students.

Jana Pittman

Spoke about setting goals and why women often struggle to set goals for themselves. They set them for the family, their children, but for some reason the world seems to get smaller as we get older. As children the possibilities are endless.

Fear of failure. Fear is the number one blockage for inherently tough tasks.

For Jana, FEAR means: False Evidence Appearing Real.

We look to the worst outcome. Jana encouraged the conference members to do differently. Challenge the cons and focus on the pros, be brave and go for it.

Be brave and embrace the fear.

Lyndall Stoyles, Telstra Executive Legal, Regulatory, Government and Sustainability.

Lyndall spoke about Telstra’s commitment to listen and be clear about what is practical. Lyndall acknowledged that telecommunications is an essential service and said that Telstra wants to understand consumers experiences so that they can use the information to develop future products and services.

When asked about the 3g closure Lyndall said Telstra’s needs to work well with telcos, government and energy suppliers.

Motions Communications DAY 1

ICPA moved to advocate for a funding rebate to rural and remote people having to upgrade devices and infrastructure to access basic communication services for education.

ICPA members also moved that any outage over 24 hours a temporary network should be allocated to areas without service. Anecdotes about Wee Waa having a planned 5 day outage and Julia Creek 3 day outage where students were forced to relocate to the local café to connect and do school for the period.

Nic Stacpoule from Telstra reiterated that Telstra’s needs to upgrade towers. He said that the company doesn’t ever want to see communications down, but outages are needed to do essential maintenance and upgrade work. He says we need backup options like Starlink and



that Telstra makes every endeavour to set up temporary networks.

Telstra made the commitment to ensure 4g equivalent coverage. Equivalent coverage does not mean no black spots but recommends members using low latency and high-speed products such as Starlink, NBN Skymuster.



Day 2 Summary

Voice Recordings of presentations :

[Jennifer Medway, General Manager, Regional Tech Hub](#)

Some great advice from Jennifer, high energy and empathetic delivery from Jennifer

[Richard Stokes, Australian Boarding Association](#)

A factual update on the state of play in Australian Boarding Schools

Commonwealth Scholarships have delivered 70 scholarships for low to medium income rural and remote kids. He delivers instructions to immediately write to politicians as they are reviewing the scheme now (it is now in review.)

Value of communicating with your kids. Don't just ask how was your day. Its really easy for boarders to grunt and this is of course not conducive to building relationships with your kids.

“What you see is what you will be” Sarah Warmoll, The Careers Department

We heard from Sarah Warmoll, Cofounder of the Careers department, a program that opens school kids eyes to the possibilities of different careers.

She notes that unconscious careers bias can develop as early as eight years old. And in her line of work, she sees “what you will see is what you will be” as a common young isolated kids mantra. When it fits the persons skills, expectations and aspirations it works.

But it lacks choice and is extremely limiting when looking at industry in remote and isolated locations. Sarah adds that a careers advisor in an extremely remote area is less likely to deliver on the breadth of advice that an inner city kid might, and this is problematic. Because then this exposure is reinforcing their world view.

We heard anecdotes from school aged kids who note they are “Rio Tinto Kids” as in everyone we know works mining for Rio Tinto, so we will too. Don't have anyone in their life to tell them about other options so their options are inherently limited.



Motions (Cont.)

Tertiary

Big development has been the Tertiary Australian Universities Accord. Many of the findings look a lot like ICPA's advocacy issues in the tertiary portfolio.

Many motions to expand the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) to include remote students who take the year off (currently do not have eligibility if one year is taken off immediately after school.)

Needs to be quicker, this support is not being delivered in a timely manner.

Teaching

A motion to waive HECS debts for new grads who commit to working in a remote area equivalent to the duration of their degree was raised to some friction, with two branches highlighting the following issues:

Part time study might make the degrees 7-8 years. This might hinder potential applicants to apply for this type of study.

Another hesitancy was around the word "remote" when ICPA is for isolated and questions around the proposed payment schedule. The Julia creek branch rebuffed with the notion that each year, the HECS debt equivalent would be wiped from their accounts.

This was a contentious issue and scrutineers were called in and did four rounds of for and against. This motion was ultimately lost.

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Karen from Walgett cannot emphasise the importance of HECS debt option enough because they are desperate in Walgett. The local schools have closed down for days on end because they simply cannot get a teacher.

This motion if passed could have been advocated for using the precedent of the NSW health system which incentivises nurses, general practitioners, and allied health professionals to spend time working in rural, remote and regional areas.