

"Advocating for Rural and Remote Education"

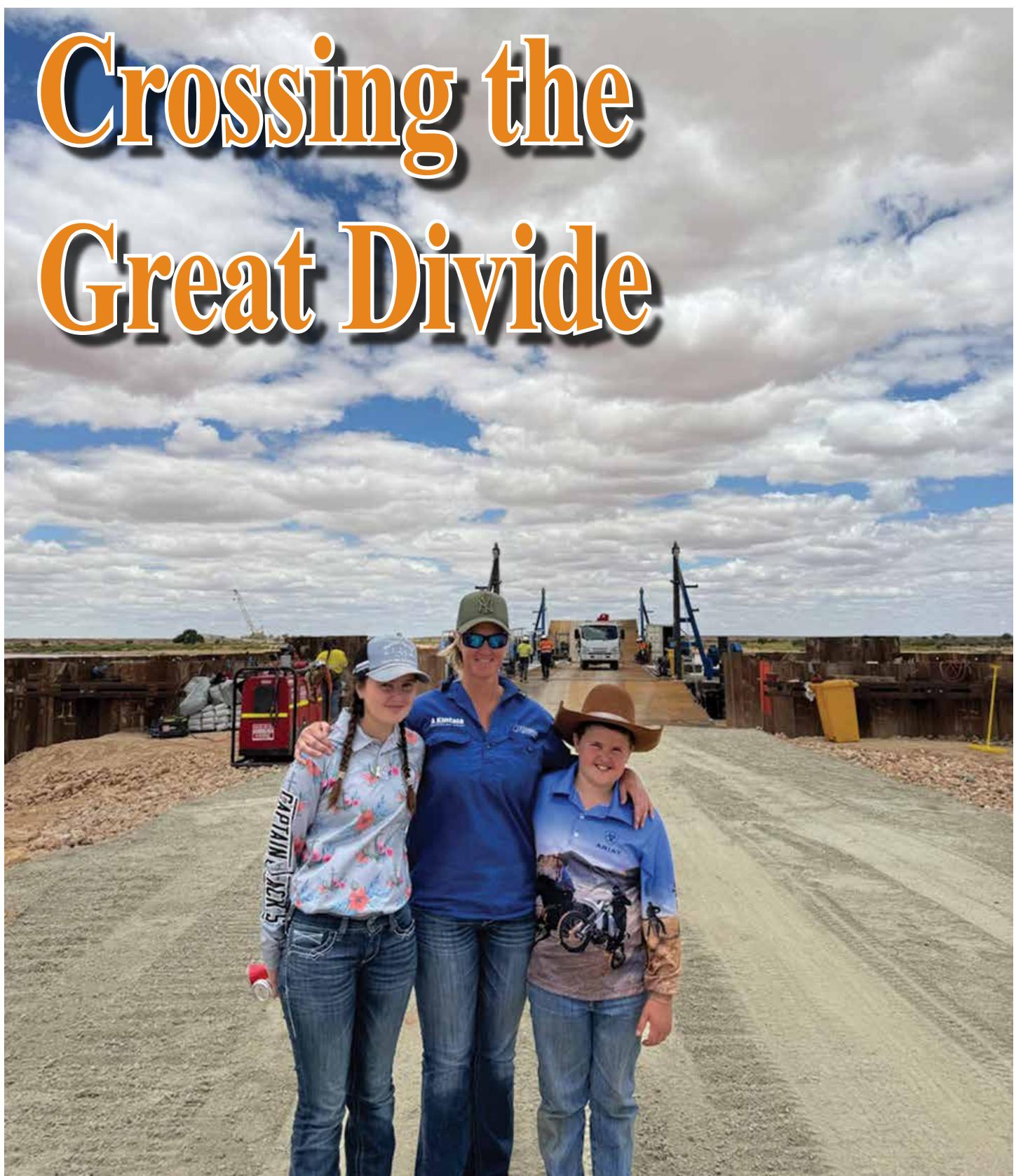
THE PIPELINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION - SA

SUMMER 2026

Edition 108

Crossing the Great Divide



Jessica Bell (centre) with children Lara and Dan at the new barge on the Cooper Creek.



From the President

Schools out for summer! By the time this edition hits your mailboxes we will be in 2026 and hopefully everyone has had a wonderful Christmas and New Year and a chance to spend time with family and friends and enjoy some festive cheer. Maybe some of you are even lucky enough to be reading this while holidaying at the beach,

up the river or even on the way to the airport preparing for a trip to somewhere much cooler than the Flinders Ranges is today! As we look forward to the 2026 school year, we can reflect on the year that 2025 was as we flick through the coming pages and see graduations, awards, school catch ups and special times for our members. For the Hatcher's, our school journey has finally come to an end. Lily's Yr 12 graduation marked the end of 10 years of being a boarding school family and 18 as part of the distance education community. We will be forever grateful for incredible times we had from being part of such a unique education journey and also for the support that has come from being a part of ICPA. Caravan adventures now await!

It has been a busy 6 months for State Council, with the second half of the year kicking off with the 54th Annual Federal Conference, which was held in Adelaide at the end of July and hosted by SA ICPA. It proved to be an amazing couple of days and Edwina, Mija and the SA team did a stellar job making sure that everyone enjoyed their time in Adelaide. Going to conference is always a great way to spend time and connect with other members from across the country and you always come away with so many memories and feeling so inspired and this year was no different.

The last couple of months has seen State Council receive responses to motions letters and delegation visits. We have been busy collating those responses and by now you should have seen our very first Brevo newsletter come out with a link to the Motion Response document. We have seen a few small wins for our members and we will continue to advocate for improving access to education for our families in the coming 12 months.

It is now time to turn our focus to next year's State Conference which is being held in Burra on Thursday April the 30th, with our hosts being the North East Branch. Plans are coming along nicely and we should be thinking about motions to submit, getting our members together to attend and supporting State Council with case studies and stories that go with motions and our advocacy work. The next few months will fly by and I look forward to catching up with many of you in April.

Wishing everyone a wonderful 2026 – I hope that all the first days, new beginnings, schools and adventures are smooth sailing for all our SA ICPA children and their families and that 2026 is a fabulous (and wet!) year for all.

Belinda

From the Editor

Welcome to 2026 and our summer edition of The Pipeline newsletter. On reflection of the past year, I realised how much SA ICPA has achieved through its dedicated members. We had a jam packed 2025 with both state and federal conferences being held in Port Augusta and Adelaide respectively. Being a part of both convening committees really highlighted for me the strength and dedication, along with the comraderie of the women who make up this wonderful association. Last year was also a year for me to personally reach some big milestones. One being the completion of my degree in archaeology which I commenced in 2020. And further, my acceptance into Honours at Flinders Uni for 2026. I couldn't have achieved this without the help of my ICPA mates taking up the slack when I headed over to residential schools in NSW. Particularly, my federal conference co-convenor, Edwina Bowie, who graciously stepped in and held the reins in support for me to complete my educational goal.

I would also like to acknowledge Hollie Williams for her ability to find and supply diverse content for this newsletter. You never fail to deliver Hollie! Lastly, you may have noticed my new headshot. Would you believe that it is AI generated?! The mind boggles. Happy reading.

Mija



THE PIPELINE

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54th Annual ICPA Federal Conference Wrap-Up

The 54th Annual ICPA Federal Conference was proudly hosted by the South Australian State Council Convening Committee at EOS SkyCity, Adelaide on 30–31 July. With delegates from across the country in attendance, this year's theme, "Education for the Heart and the Mind", set a thoughtful and inspiring tone for two full days of advocacy, connection, and celebration.

Registrations opened Tuesday afternoon, flowing nicely into a relaxed and enjoyable pre-conference drinks and nibbles event held at the SOL Rooftop Bar at EOS SkyCity. Thank you to Beach Energy and the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) for their generous support towards the night. It was a fantastic opportunity for delegates to meet new members, reconnect with others, and set the tone for a collaborative conference.

The conference opened with a past School of the Air (SOTA) governess Josie Rains singing the National Anthem beautifully followed by a heartfelt and humorous address by South Australian Federal Life Member Jane Gloster, who shared stories from her journey with ICPA, highlighting the joy and impact of her long-standing involvement. Jane's speech set the stage for a meaningful and energising event.

Federal President Louise Martin warmly welcomed attendees and launched the conference by opening the Distance Education portfolio, followed by lively discussions and motions across key areas such as Curriculum, Communications, School Travel, Early Childhood Education, Boarding, Specific Education Needs, Training and Tertiary. Each portfolio session featured thoughtful motions, reflecting the diverse challenges and solutions brought forward by ICPA branches nationwide.

Attendance was strong across both days, with Day 1 being the most attended, drawing 188 participants and representation from over 40 branches across Australia. The atmosphere was one of unity and purpose, as delegates collaborated to improve education outcomes for isolated families.

In addition to the all important conference motions presented by members, a strong line-up of guest speakers were heard across the two days, including:

- The Hon. Fiona Nash – Regional Education Commissioner
- Roger Rasheed – Tennis, Business, and Life Performance Coach
- Gavin Williams – NBN
- Megan McLoughlin, alongside Telstra Manager Michael Patterson
- Richard Stokes – ABSA
- Kellie Britnell – eSafety Commission
- The Hon. Blair Boyer MP – South Australian Minister for Education, Training and Skills

After Day 1 concluded, members and attendees got glammed up for the main conference



Federal Conference convening committee members clockwise: Hollie Williams, Kirsty Williams, Lisa Slade, Jill Greenfield, Mija Reynolds, Belinda Hatcher, Pamela Cuffe, Edwina Bowie with daughter Willa, Jodie Keogh, Katrina Morris and Michelle Hilder.

dinner proudly supported by S Kidman & Co, held in the stunning Ian McLachlan Room at Adelaide Oval, with the enchanting theme "A Winter Wonderland." The evening was full of sparkle, laughter, and great company, with many donning incredible outfits some of which were recognised with best dressed prizes. The night was one to remember with hilarious photos in the photo booth, some past SOTA students singing and a comical auction.

After the final day of conference on Day 2, the post-conference dinner was held at the Strathmore Hotel on North Terrace, proudly supported by AACo. With delicious food and drinks on hand, it was the perfect way to wind down after two busy days. The night also featured a 'Chook Lotto', where lucky attendees got to walk away with prizes.

A big highlight of the conference was the raffles and fundraising activities, coordinated brilliantly by Hollie Williams. Hollie and Kirsty Williams, as part of the convening committee's sponsorship team, did an outstanding job securing a fantastic amount of sponsorship and a range of raffle prizes and auction items. A silent auction ran throughout the conference, with a live auction held during the main Conference Dinner at Adelaide Oval on Wednesday night, both of which were very well received. We are incredibly grateful to all sponsors for their support in making the conference such a success.

Throughout the two-day conference, there was an array of excellent trade stalls from schools, businesses, health organisations, and retail therapy providers, offering valua-

ble information, resources, and products for attendees to explore and enjoy between sessions.

Kirsty Williams did an amazing job organising the partner tours over both days of conference to keep partners entertained. Day 1 included a tour of the Adelaide Oval followed by a visit to Coopers Brewery and then onto Mini-Golf – which was reported to be impossible. Day 2 was another big adventure, featuring a tour of a lettuce farm owned by T Musso & Sons, followed by a tour of the brand new Thomas Foods International (TFI) meat works in Murray Bridge. The day concluded with a Go Kart race at The Bend Motorsport Park in Tailem Bend. Fantastic feedback was received from all who attended. It provided a great way to showcase some of South Australia's best highlights.

The 54th Federal Conference was an outstanding success, made possible by the dedication, organisation, and teamwork of the South Australian State Council Convening Committee; Edwina Bowie, Mija Reynolds, Kirsty Williams, Jodie Keogh, Hollie Williams, Katrina Morris, Jill Greenfield, Belinda Hatcher, Lisa Slade, Michelle Hilder, and Pamela Cuffe. Their tireless efforts in planning, coordinating, and hosting the event ensured that every aspect from the program and speakers to the social functions and fundraising ran seamlessly. Combined with the passionate participation of our members, a truly memorable conference was had that will have a lasting impact on the future of education for families living in rural and remote Australia.

Eyre Branch News

Whilst this is exactly 12 mnths old, it's still very relevant. Great things can be achieved even where we live. This was when Jay Polkinghorne was drafted to Geelong last year. He had just finished year 12 at PAC, and was on his way to schoolies when he found out he was drafted. It became a mad dash for parents Andrea and Ben to get to Adelaide after a night of big celebrations to then pack Jayup and send him to Geelong in just 3 days. A time in all of their lives they will never forget. The family live approx 900km west of Adelaide in a little town called Penong. A true reminder that anything is possible from anywhere in Australia.

Kirralee Johns from Streaky Bay has played in the under 16's state team and soon under 18's. She has finished year 10 at Sacred Heart. At the age of 16 now, she will play seniors for Norwood women's in 2026. Pre-season kicked off in December 2025.

Di Thomas



Scout Polkinghorne with parents Cindy and John at her Year 12 Graduation, Sacred Heart College.



Kirralee Johns (kneeling) with teammates.



Jay Polkinghorne proudly holds up his Geelong guernsey after being drafted to the AFL team.



Jed Polkinghorne: Most Outstanding year 9 at Ceduna Area School. Next year, he begins year 10 as a boarder at Sacred Heart College.

Flinders Ranges Branch News



Variety Bash volunteers (left to right): Sonya Fels, Milla Ridsdale, Michelle Hilder, Jo Ridsdale, Linda Haydon, Lucy Ridsdale and Kaye Fels at Moralana Station.

A busy back half of the year for our families in the Flinders Ranges branch.

We have watched on as some of our children have completed their schooling journey. Congratulations to our students who have graduated Year 12 this year, Callie McInnis Jessica Haydon, Lily Hatcher & Riley Ridsdale. Both Jess and Lily will spend next year back in the school room as Govies. Riley has secured an Electrical & Refrigeration apprenticeship beginning early 2026. We wish them well as they navigate life outside of school.

A number of our children have had sporting successes. Riley Ridsdale enjoyed a great season which saw him play regularly in the A Grade, selected to represent Northern Areas Football Association in June (coached by fellow branch member, Keith Slade) and winning the Peter Gibb Memorial Trophy for Best & Fairest Senior Colt at the Orroroo Football Club following a season which saw them play some solid finals footy.

Lucy Ridsdale had a stellar year playing for the Orroroo Netball Club. Going through undefeated in 2025 and winning the minor premiership, they then defeated BMW in the Grand Final to secure the shield. Lucy was awarded Best & Fairest for her team at Orroroo and also won Best & Fairest in the Northern Areas Netball Association at the NANA presentation evening. In addition to being instrumental to her teams success as a key GS/GA, Lucy also played regularly in the grade above her age group and senior netball, sometimes 3 games a day.

Milla Ridsdale also won a premiership for Orroroo Netball Club, defeating Broughton Mandoora in overtime in a hard-fought battle. Milla has played above her age group this year with girls a few years older than her and was lucky enough to play in a team alongside her friend, Magenta Williams (Oodnadatta branch). A number of our members attended the ICPA Federal Conference in Adelaide in July.

Mija Pardoe (Co-Convenor), Belinda Hatcher, Lisa Slade and Michelle Hilder involved in the Convening Committee and Linda Haydon (delegate), Sonya Fels, Tracey Dewell and Bek Rasheed (delegate) all in attendance. A great 2 days and great to see our branch so represented so well.

In September our branch catered for the WA Variety Bash at Moralana Station with members supplying soups, casseroles and cakes for the lunch, co-ordinated by Carmel Reynolds and served up on the day by Kaye Fels, Michelle Hilder, Sonya Fels, Linda Haydon, Jo, Lucy & Milla Ridsdale with support from Denis Hilder & Kel Haydon who assisted with set up, clean up and delivery. Thank you to all our branch members who supplied food for the lunch and thank you too to Bryan & Sonja, Scott & Amanda Michael from Moralana Station. A great fundraising effort for our branch.

Hawker local Ollie DuBois



James Reynolds with his award.

graduated from Children's University at Adelaide University Bonython Hall. He received the National Bronze Diploma for completing 230 hours of service.

Whilst brother Will DuBois received the Principal's Award & Junior & Middle School All-rounder Award at graduation at Hawker Area School. Will starts year 9 at PAC in 2026 after receiving the Headmaster's Scholarship.

Additionally, James Reynolds received an academic award for year 7 art and design at PAC. Here's hoping the festive season and summer holidays bring some rain and rest for you all.

Jo Ridsdale



Jessica Haydon at her graduation.

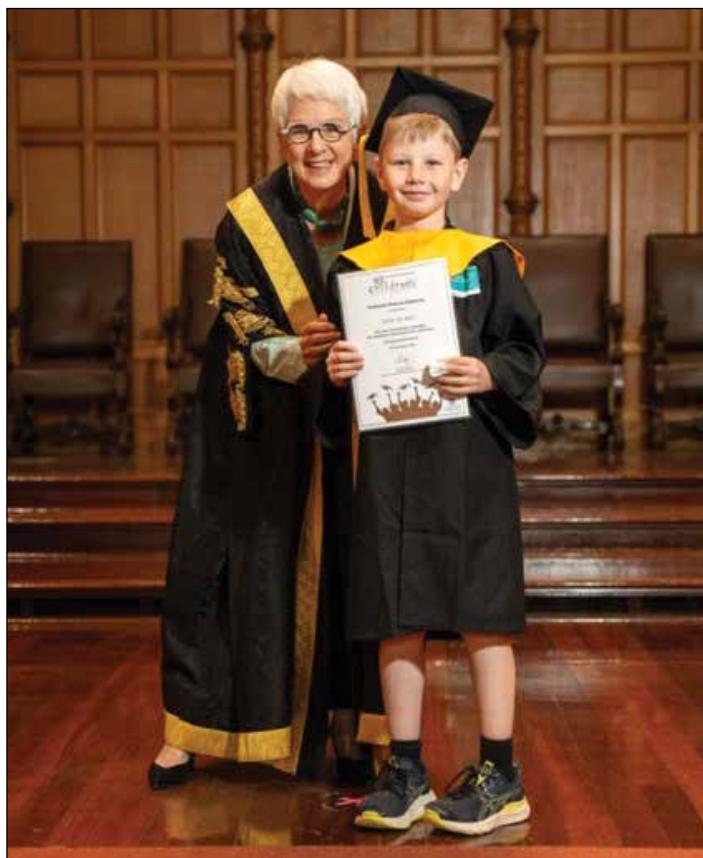
Flinders Ranges Branch News



Sharon, Alan, Callie and Angus McInnis at Callie's graduation.



Belinda, Lily and Daniel Hatcher at Lily's graduation.



Ollie DuBois graduated from Children's University.



Will DuBois with his awards from HAS.

Flinders Ranges Branch News



Flinders Ranges Branch members at the ICPA Federal Conference.



Michelle Hilder and Linda Haydon.

Hawker Area School with the assistance of the Flinders Ranges ICPA Branch was successful in gaining a grant through the Australian Schools Upgrade Fund, a joint initiative of the Federal and South Australian Governments. The result was the construction of a Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA) at Hawker that benefits our students in all climates to be able to recreate and receive curriculum in more than just HPE at Hawker Area School.

The COLA was completed in June this year and ironically in a location like Hawker the main benefit was our students being able to play outside in cold and wet conditions! Since then, students have been engaged in a variety of sports including basketball, netball and tennis and a variety of primary HPE lessons. The COLA is a huge benefit to our school, that has improved the teaching and learning for our students in Hawker and also provided potential benefits to members of our community in Hawker to mix and recreate. In a climate such as Hawker this is something we have deserved to have for years, and the efforts and support provided by the Flinders Ranges ICPA branch have been much appreciated.

Daren O'Neill



Milla, Riley and Lucy Ridsdale with their sporting awards.



Lone Members News

Hello to all Pipeline readers from the Lone Members.

The Lones were well represented at the Federal Conference this year, with delegates Jodie Keogh and Georgy Ewing attending on our behalf. It was also wonderful to see several other members there, including Trish Ellin, Walford School, Prince Alfred College, and Pembroke School.

The Nunn family have recently relocated from Wooltana Station in the Gammon Ranges to Macumba Station in far north SA. Roy will be heading into Year 3 next year and will be joined in the schoolroom full time by his little sister Ada, who will begin Reception.

The Keogh family have enjoyed a great season at Durham Downs Station after finally being able to get around again following months of flood-related isolation. Jacob has just completed Year 9 at Downlands College, Toowoomba, and loved playing rugby this year, making the U15s A squad for the O'Callaghan Cup and even playing against a visiting Argentinian team. Lachie completed his first year of boarding at Downlands, had a fantastic year, and settled in very well.

Clem headed off on his first school camp without brothers, parents, or gobies—travelling to Canberra before spending three days learning to ski at Perisher. Jodie remains actively involved with QLD ICPA and is now the Quilpie Branch Secretary/Treasurer.

The Easter family from Marion Bay also had a big year with their girls boarding at Westminster. Both Tara and Emma enjoyed successful netball seasons, representing the school across several squads. Congratulations to Tara, who received Best & Fairest for the 9B grade. Emma participated in Cut 4 Cancer, helping the school raise an impressive \$26,339 for the cause. She also showcased an incredible art collection featuring paintings of her local beaches around Daly Head. Emma has now completed Year 12 and hopes to begin a teaching degree at university next year.

The Rowe family at Almerta Station enjoyed outstanding success at the November Tourism Awards. A massive congratulations to them all for taking out top honours in both the Hosted Accommodation category and the People's Choice

Award for Henders House. Henders House is a beautifully restored cottage on Almerta Station, offering a refined off-grid escape at the gateway to the iconic Flinders Ranges. Originally one of the property's early dwellings, it has been carefully renovated to maintain its authentic charm while providing modern comfort and style.

Georgy Ewing has had two REVISE placements at The Peake Station and one at The Twins Station. REVISE is a fantastic service, and anyone interested in receiving support is encouraged to get in touch with Georgy to learn more. A huge thank you also goes to Georgy for going above and beyond to assist the SA Convening Com-

mittee at this year's Federal Conference in Adelaide. Having someone so capable on the ground in Adelaide made an enormous difference and eased the workload considerably.

Finally, as we welcome the Scott family from Quorn to the Lones Member Branch, we also farewell the Nunn family, who have moved north to Macumba Station and will now join the Marla-Oodnadatta Branch. Thank you, Anna, for being such an active and valued Lone Member!

Here's hoping that 2026 brings a positive and rewarding year to you all.

Hollie Williams

(Lones Member Officer)

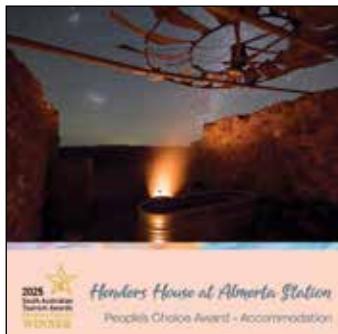


Easter Family: Tara, Allan, Angela, and Emma.

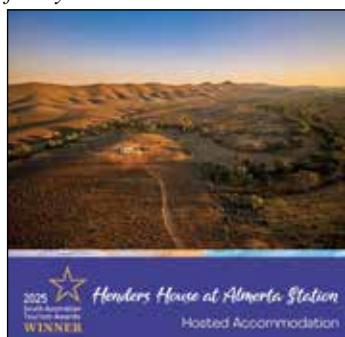


SA Lone members at the Federal Conference in Adelaide.

Lone Members News



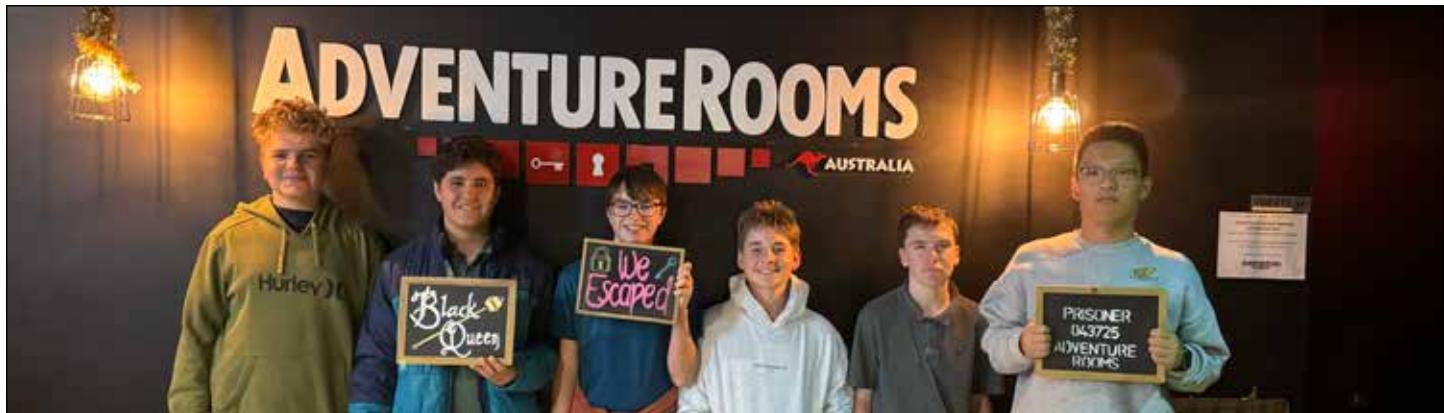
Above and below: The Rowe family's accommodation awards.



Henders House at Almerton Station
Hosted Accommodation



Clem, Jodie and Nathan Keogh at the Kidman Muster.



Aaron Hayes (second from left) from Arckaringa Station enjoyed a PAC boarding activity.



Jacob Keogh at Downlands college.



Minions: Ada and Roy Nunn.



Lachie Keogh at Downlands college.

Lone Members News



Goodbye Preschool, Hello Big School

Graduates L to R: Grace Crombie, Ada Nunn and Isabella Oldfield.

Our family finished the preschool chapter via distance education for the final time this week. No more little voices singing nursery rhymes in the background of SOTA lessons. No more tiny chairs pulled up to the school table.

This year saw our second round of preschool. It started quietly and nervously but soon became loud and fun. It brought paint on sleeves. Endless drawings and craft. Songs stuck in our heads and brought routines we did not know we needed until they were part of every week. For remote families, preschool is not just early learning. It is connection. It is structure. It is small people learning how to listen, wait, speak up, and join in. All the things that matter later.

We have lived this season two different ways. Once with a parent juggling lesson, a baby and station life and also with a governess guiding the schoolroom each day. Different setups. Same goal. Helping a small child grow ready for learning.

RICE sat at the heart of both journeys. They met our children where they were. They built confidence slowly and steadily. They turned

wriggly preschoolers into children who could sit, listen, try, and keep trying. They did it with patience and good humour. And with an endless supply of activities that somehow involved paint, movement, and learning at the same time.

They supported the adults too. On the days when nothing stuck. On the days when everyone was tired. On the days when progress felt invisible. They reminded us that learning does not rush. It grows.

It feels proud. It feels strange. It feels like another season closing before we quite feel ready for it to go but School of the Air waits with bigger lessons and bigger expectations.

To the RICE team, thank you. Thank you for the patience. Thank you for the structure. Thank you for the laughter. Thank you for giving our children such a strong and joyful beginning.

And to the families still in the thick of it, with paint on hands and songs on repeat, it matters more than you know.

Anna Nunn



Uni Hub Spencer Gulf has had an exceptionally busy year, highlighted by two Early Childhood Projects in Roxby Downs and Port Augusta. These initiatives have contributed to a growing educator workforce and supported the upskilling of existing staff. While this alone won't solve the childcare crisis, it is an important step toward building a sustainable early childhood education workforce for our regions.

Meanwhile, the Bachelor of Allied Health, delivered face-to-face in Port Pirie by Flinders University, continues to be a popular choice for school leavers who aspire to careers in Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy, or Occupational Therapy—without having to leave their hometowns.

Across our five Uni Hub Spencer Gulf locations, students have access to a wide range of pathway options, supported through face-to-face, online, and phone-based support from enquiry through to graduation.

We closed the year in Canberra at the National Regional University Study Hub Widening participation forum, which brought together representatives from across the RUSH (Regional University Study Hub) network, to examine access and equity issues for regional, rural, and remote students. Opportunities like this allow us to shine a light on the challenges facing remote South Australian communities and to work collaboratively across the network to inform policy directions and advocate for equity in education access.

I look forward to being part of the ICPA network and strengthening connections to education options across our regions.

Sue Barry

Lone Members News

SA ICPA Lone Member Boarding Schools

Below are some scholarships options that are available from our Lone Member schools.

We recommend you look on the individual school web page for more information and full scholarship lists.



Edward Hunt Boarding Scholarship - The Edward Hunt Boarding Scholarships commemorate the life of Edward Hunt (1878-1951) and have been made possible through the estate of his daughter, Mrs Torrie Chapman (1921-2016). The scholarships support students who are considering pursuing a career in agriculture, primary industry or a related field.

Ken Lord Family Boarding Scholarship - The Scholarship has been made possible through the generosity of Mr. Ken Lord (PAC 1940-44) and his family and supports boys from remote areas for whom distance is a factor in their education. Preference will be given to applicants from remote regions of South Australia and from the Tibooburra, Wentworth, Broken Hill and other western New South Wales regions, Alice Springs and regional Northern Territory, Birdsville and South-west Queensland.

After many years of attending the ICPA state conference, I was absolutely honoured to attend my first Federal Confer-

ence in Adelaide. Being able to listen to and connect with families from all over Australia and hear their stories was amazing as always. The resilience, advocacy and support of every committee and region across our big, beautiful country and the challenges we all face, was something that has inspired me to continue to support and fight for opportunities for all families in our care.

As the Director of Boarding at Prince Alfred College in Adelaide, I am truly blessed to have students from the remote and isolated parts of Australia, who started their educational journey with SOTA and now get an opportunity to finish their schooling with other country and rural kids. These families add unique value and character to our boarding and schooling community. I love it when a local Adelaide or international student travels home with our SOTA boys to visit their remote places and properties. It allows their story to be heard and for other kids to get an insight into the hard work and sacrifice these families make for their children.

Our school will continue to celebrate and support as many ICPA families as we can and continue to support the Federal ICPA as they advocate for fair and equal educational opportunities and health services for their kids and families. I want to acknowledge and congratulate the SA committee for putting on an outstanding Federal conference, connecting people and advocating for every child, regardless of geographical location, to deserve equitable access to opportunity.

Phil Nobble
(Prince Alfred College)



Walford

Rural and Remote Boarding Scholarship - The Walford boarding community has a long history of supporting girls from rural and remote Australia, providing a home away from home while they immerse themselves in all the outstanding academic and co-curricular opportunities the School has to offer. In response to the challenges faced by families residing in isolated locations, we would like to provide fee relief to the family of an exceptional student who may otherwise be unable to attend Walford. This scholarship is available for new boarding students entering Years 7 to 12, providing remittance of 60% of tuition fees per year.

A Boarding Scholarship provides remission of up to 50% of tuition fees for the remaining duration of the student's schooling. New students entering Years 7 to 12 are eligible to apply.

It has been a pleasure connecting with the ICPA in 2025. As a boarding school, Walford is eager to do what we can to support our regional families. This year, after reviewing the ICPA's State Conference motions, we introduced a Rural and Remote Scholarship to help alleviate the cost barrier of a boarding education for country girls. Our current boarding students are also passionate about support-

ing the education of children living remotely. As part of their Boarding Week celebrations, the Walford Boarding students decided to raise funds for the Country Education Foundation. Through their efforts, more than \$2,500 was donated to support rural and regional youth. Finally, it was a privilege to sponsor and attend the ICPA Federal Conference, and learn more about the challenges facing isolated families, and what we as a boarding school can do to support them. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable holiday break, and look forward to being involved with the ICPA again in 2026.

Tiffany Keller (Walford School)



PEMBROKE SCHOOL

Boarding Scholarships - Boarding Scholarships are open to students with a consistent record of sound academic achievement and a readiness to contribute widely to the School's Co-Curricular Program. 50% remission of tuition fees for the duration of the enrolment while boarding.

Isolated Students' Scholarships and Bursaries are awarded to students who have a consistent record of sound academic progress and are eager to contribute to the School's Co-Curricular Program. Scholarships Up to 50% remission of tuition fees for the duration of the enrolment while boarding. Bursaries 25% remission of tuition fees for the duration of the enrolment while boarding.

Marree Air Branch News

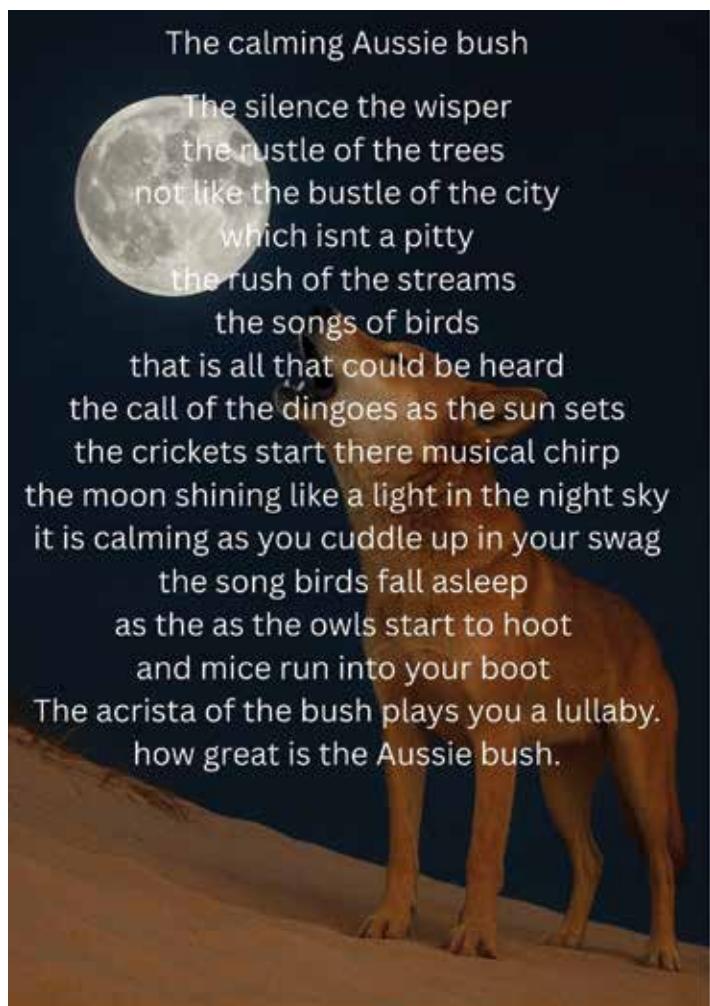
The Marree Air branch was thrilled to see our members attend the Federal conference in Adelaide this year. For some it was their first federal conference and the branch was active throughout the conference with a few motions, talking to motions and bringing up some of the urgent issues facing our families as a result of the cooper flooding. The cooper creek flooding has seen two of our families cut off for months and having to use a boat to get to educational and medical services. This relatively small group of people being hugely affected highlights the importance of ICPA's role in advocating for all families to have equal access to education. Without organisations like ICPA these issues would struggle to find their voice. We would like to thank the ICPA and our community for working together with all relevant stakeholders to get the barge across the cooper allowing access for our families.

We have had a busy year with families dealing with dry conditions on most of the stations and all that comes with that pressure. We would like to congratulate all our graduating children and we have a few kids going away to School next year. Good luck to Wyatt Morphett, Gracie Crombie, Dusty May and Isabelle Oldfield who start school in 2026. Good Luck to Lara Bell who is heading off to boarding school in Adelaide in 2026.

Ellen Litchfield

The calming Aussie bush

The silence the wisper
the rustle of the trees
not like the bustle of the city
which isnt a pitty
the rush of the streams
the songs of birds
that is all that could be heard
the call of the dingoes as the sun sets
the crickets start there musical chirp
the moon shining like a light in the night sky
it is calming as you cuddle up in your swag
the song birds fall asleep
as the as the owls start to hoot
and mice run into your boot
The acrista of the bush plays you a lullaby.
how great is the Aussie bush.



Poem by Sydney Litchfield



Wyatt and Huxley Morphett.



Daisy and Dusty May.



Jase and Charlotte Edwards.

Marree Air Branch News



Olivia and Sydney Litchfield.



Ella Ridsdale with baby sister Amelia.



Reeva, Missy and Pippa Reynolds.



Alfie Nicholls always rides in style.

Marla Oodnadatta Branch News



Community Christmas party hosted at Nilpinna Station.

A warm hello to you all from the Marla Oodnadatta Branch. We blinked and 2025 is ending. As usual we have all been busy bees between Oodnadatta and William Creek. Two Bronco Branding events and two large scale catering opportunities to name a few happenings.

The Oodnadatta Racing and Horse Sports Club hosted its annual Bronco Branding weekend in July. Bronco Branding winners of the day included DK Pastoral in the Novice, Mt Barry for the Singles win and DKLBW took home the Doubles champions. One of our branch members and Oodnadatta Bronco Branding Secretary Jackie Williams was presented with ORHSC Life Membership.

The William Creek Sporting Club welcomed Variety SA's Variety Bash mid-August, catering for 390 guests for dinner and breakfast. What a fantastic bunch of humans they all were! The William Creek Progress Association was awarded an extremely generous grant by

Variety SA that evening. The grant is to go towards a rage cage in the township of William Creek. Proceeds raised from this event by the William Creek Sporting Club have also been put towards the project. We are beyond grateful for Variety SA's generous donation and the opportunity to host their stay.

Less than three days later we were all back in William Creek hosting the annual Bronco Branding weekend. Novice won by Jamie Kunze and his crew, Singles taken home by Billa Kalina and Doubles champions were the Mt Barry team.

We would like to extend a warm welcome into the Community to Justin and Anna Nunn. Justin and Anna together with their two children have moved to Macumba Station taking up the reins from long standing Community members Eddie and Gerry Nunn. Eddie and Gerry, we will all miss you greatly and wish you all the best as you settle into life

outside of the Oodnadatta area. In October our Branch, alongside the Oodnadatta Racing and Horse Sports Club travelled to Oodnadatta to welcome the Shitbox Spring Rally participants, catering three meals for 488 people. A massive effort made look effortless by all the amazing volunteers.

Oodnadatta hosted a Towns V's Stations football match in October also. Stations for the win this year!

Christmas parties are now lighting up our weekends. Together, the Marla Oodnadatta Branch members and the wider community attended the Community Christmas party hosted by Nilpinna Station in mid-December. Santa made a jolly appearance and a jolly time had by all! The branch received much appreciated funding towards this event from Variety SA Kids. Thank you, Variety SA.

I'm sure I have missed a few milestones for the second half of the year to which I apologise.

In Term 4 I took to the school room like a whirl wind looking forward to aiding my kids learning. Not having been in the school room for quite some time, years, I notice a lot of change. To those that have been aiding their kids in the schoolroom thus far excuse my ignorance that is forthcoming as you read on!

We are privileged to have a governess provided by our Employers. I have always kept busy with the day to day running of the homestead complex, never daring to reach out into the schoolroom except to work through kids attitudes at times. This term I found myself stepping in and learning the ropes all over again which was long overdue.

The interactive online learning via zoom facetime allowed for meaningful connection and community within the school space for both the kids and me as their home tutor. I was surprised at how I felt connected from just one term and enjoyed seeing the growth in our kids

Marla Oodnadatta Branch News



Winning Mutton Buster, Lenny Williams.

learning immensely.

As a millennial vintage I found the technology of uploading videos and photos to the correct location challenging.

Time spent in the school room didn't come without pitfalls.

The old saying, you rob Peter to pay Paul aptly applies to your time spent. Time teaching is time away from your work or business. It is not recognised as the same but requires a lot of time.

With three school aged kids the schoolroom is a full school day. A lot of outside jobs dropped for a later date and ringers became weekly lawn mowers. I thought I could bring my office work to the school room and would be able to juggle my time between the kids and the office, lets just say things didn't go quite as I had planned! I remember growing up learning via School of the Air and doing a lesson or two each day over the two-way radio. If you got started

early and got all your work done you could be out of the school room before lunch. Fast forward to now, not so easily done. How far distance education has come with reliable internet access.

My most precious memories this past few months have included sitting on the beanbag with my youngest girls listening to Bonnie in year 1 read The Billie B Brown Collection like a boss and Olivia in year 2 sitting beside pronouncing a word Bonnie has found slightly tricky at times. Watching our eldest Gracie interacting with her teachers and classmates with confidence.

I would have to say I am probably the messiest governess ever to be in the schoolroom in our time. Wearable Arts costumes ready for the end of year concert had the room looking like a bomb had exploded with paint and recyclables scattered across the room.

It's been a privilege to be



Ada Nunn, Drew and Asha Coleman and Alice Quinn at the RICE tent in William Creek.



Oodnadatta Football Town V's Station.

able to spend the time in the schoolroom with our kids and although I am stepping out of the schoolroom next year I will be back.

As we wrap up the year, we

wish our extended community families and fellow ICPA members a wonderful Christmas and holiday period.

Chantelle Williams

SA ICPA Members Shine in the 2024/2025 Bronco Branding Season

SA ICPA members continue to be proud and active supporters of Bronco Branding, with around 50 members across four branches regularly taking part—whether as competitors, volunteers, or enthusiastic spectators. Bronco Branding events are a family day out, where skill, teamwork and good humour come together in the dust of the yards and amongst the crowd. This season, the race for the 2024/2025 SA Singles and Doubles Bronco Branding titles took competitors across four events: Aileron in 2024, then this year - Oodnadatta, William Creek and Quorn.

The Mount Barry team (Marla—Oodnadatta) dominated the Singles Championship, finishing the season with 34 points. The experienced crew of Tony Williams and nephews Matt, Cameron and Logan secured victories at Aileron, Oodnadatta and Quorn, along with a third placing at William Creek. A strong season from Chris Reynolds (Marree Air) earned him second place overall, while Colin Greenfield (North West) was extremely consistent rounding out the top three.

The Northern Flinders team claimed the Doubles Championship with a total of 21 points, thanks to consistent performances across the season. Catchers Chris Reynolds and Bridie Ferguson (Marree Air) were supported by a variety of ground crew including David May (Marree Air), Harvey, Logan and Cameron Williams (Marla—Oodnadatta), Jono Leonard, Dylan Nicholls and Alistair Sheehan. Their season recorded two third placings, a fourth, and a win secured the title. Second place on 17 points went to Mount Barry and the Billa Kalina team

claimed 3rd on 14 points, both showcasing their ongoing depth and talent.

SA ICPA members in the novice section had a great year. Harvey Williams claimed his second Australian Doubles title at Jundah QLD as a catcher and the singles title as a back leg man. Not to be outdone by his big brother, Logan won the Novice section at the championships with his all SA ICPA ground crew (Aunty, Uncle and Brother), he also claimed third in the doubles as a catcher and was in the winning doubles team as the brander. Kaeli May (Marree Air) was consistent collecting a second and two third placings throughout the season, and Laura Hewitt (North West) took out third

at Quorn. Meanwhile, Justin Nunn (Lone Member) showcased his catching skills by making the Open finals at William Creek. Bronco Branding is more than a sport; it teaches lessons that reach far beyond the arena. It's a hard, physically demanding sport, yet rewarding. The skills required can't simply be taught in a day; they come from years of working stock, learning to read livestock, and developing timing, trust and determination. Those who live and breathe this lifestyle often thrive in the sport, carrying their natural instincts into the yards and bringing pride to their teams, families and communities.



SABB Singles 2025.



Team LBW 1st Novice Australian Championships Jundah QLD



SABB Doubles 2025.

North East Branch News

The North East Branch has had a good year, with members and families busy with work, schooling, sports and day to day life. Another dry year has seen many stresses and strains, but we are always hopeful better days are just around the corner.

In April we held a very successful canteen for the AWI Merino Field Days here in Burra. We are excited to have been asked to run the canteen again next year. Our branch also enjoyed participating in the RRED day and hope it continues to grow and spread the importance of education, no matter your location or number.

Then in July we were delighted to have a number of our members attend the Federal Conference hosted here in Adelaide. Well done to the SA convening team! It was a proud occasion having our very own Jane Gloster as a guest speaker at the conference. Well done and congratulations to Jane for her outstanding effort as a long time dedicated member of the ICPA.

Congratulations on another successful State Conference this year – well done to the Flinders Branch. Sadly, a number of our members couldn't make it this year. Next year the North East Branch are thrilled to be hosting the SA State Conference, on Thursday the 30th of April 2026 in Burra. We are well into the planning and organising stage. Thank you to our convening committee, led by Leisa Breeding and Katie Robinson, on all their efforts thus far. If intending to attend next year's SA State Conference, please be sure to book

accommodation via Burra Caravan Park & Paxton Square Cottages – they are expecting you, so be sure to mention you are attending the ICPA SA State Conference. Like wise,

the Burra Motor Inn is offering a 2 night reduced rate stay, for the dates 29th & 30th of April, when you book with them online.

Sincere apologies that neither

Kristina or I could attend the AGM. Wishing everyone a very merry and safe Christmas and New Year. Here's to a wet and bountiful 2026!

Josephine Williams

**2026 ELDERS SA MERINO EXPO
BURRA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**COMMERCIAL FLEECE
COMPETITION**

ICPA NORTH EAST BRANCH FUNDRAISER

CHAMPION HOGGET FLEECE
\$1000 CASH
2ND \$150 CASH
3rd \$100 Elders Voucher

EWE FLEECE (FINE, MEDIUM & STRONG)
1ST \$300 CASH PER CATEGORY
2ND \$150 CASH
3rd \$100 Elders Voucher

CHAMPION EWE FLEECE
\$1000 CASH
JUDGING WEDNESDAY 11TH
MARCH

Fleece to be delivered to Elders Burra, SA by 5pm, Monday 9th March

Presentations at the AWI Woolgrowers Dinner Wednesday 11th March at 6pm

Join our Facebook Event for further details

2026 Elders SA Merino Expo

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Elders

awi Australian Wool Innovation Limited

SA MERINO EXPO BURRA

North West Branch News



James and Joanna Gibson received life membership of GDSC at this years Glendambo Gymkhana.

Hello from the North West Branch.

In July, we were fortunate to have a good group of North West members attend the Federal Conference in Adelaide. It was lovely to see our members and their partners (if they could attend) together away from their busy work lives on the stations. In August, our members came together for the Variety Bash at The Twins Station. Petie and Ryan Rankin generously hosted lunch for the large group who came through. Thanks to Petie's hard work and special hospitality, the day was a great success, and an excellent profit was made for our branch.

October saw the Glendambo Gymkhana, where our branch runs the Friday night BBQ. A big thanks to Toby and Shona Amos, North Well Station, for coordinating the evening, and to all our members who pitched in to help feed the crowd. It was a great turnout and it's always good to see what we can do when we all work as a team. On the Saturday of the event James and Joanna Gibson, Yudnapinna Station, received life membership from the Glendambo Districts Sporting Club for all their efforts and hard work. Well done to them. We have just enjoyed the North West Christmas Tree gathering on the 13th of December at Wilgena Station. We saw lots of the North West families come together

for an afternoon/evening of catching up, with Santa making a special visit to spread some cheer and gifts to all the well-behaved kids (thanks to Petie's fantastic shopping skills). We were lucky to have a cooler day after an incredibly hot spell. It was a special farewell to our North West members Joanna and James Gibson, who after many many years in the North West are settling into farm life down in Mount Pleasant. We will miss them so much but know they will return for social gatherings like the Gymkhana and Xmas Tree.

Well done to all the children who have completed their learning through School of the Air and are on to boarding school or the like in 2026. Well done to Eli Rankin who won the Lion's Club award at the School of the Air Get Together in December. We wish Eli the best of luck with his transition into boarding school at St Peters Anglican School for Boys, we know he will love that new environment. Well done to Hayden Rankin on completing her Year 12 studies at Pembroke, congratulations on all the hard work and effort you have put into the past 5 years away from home and family, we are all very proud of you.

Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year to everyone from the North West.

Edwina Bowie



Hayden Rankin graduated from Pembroke.



Eli, Petie and Lawson Rankin at SOTA Get-together.



Candice Brown, Edwina Bowie, Jill Greenfield and Megan Henderson at Glendambo Gymkhana.

North West Branch News



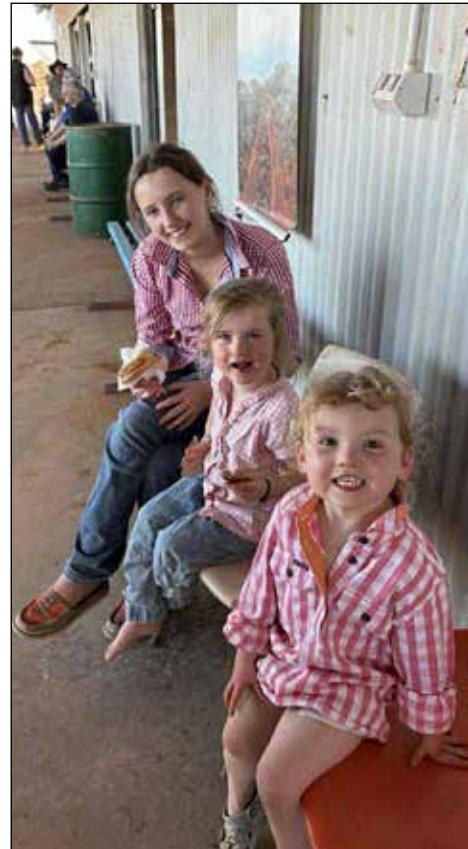
Education for the
heart and the mind
ADELAIDE SA 2025



North West Branch members attended the ICPA Federal Conference in Adelaide at the end of July.



North West Branch Christmas Tree gathering at Wilgena Station.



Winnie and Willa Matheson with Tanner Crowell at Glendambo.

Port Augusta Branch News

Wow, what a year it has been. Time really does fly by when you're having fun — and when you're surrounded by passionate, driven people. Pamela and I were incredibly fortunate to be part of the convening committee for the Federal Conference in Adelaide. Being involved in the planning and delivery of such an important event was both inspiring and rewarding, we both learnt so much. It was a privilege to work alongside an outstanding group of women, each bringing their own experience, energy and commitment. We were also fortunate to have the ongoing support of our secretary, Michelle Lord. Although it had been a long time

since Michelle last attended a Federal Conference, she came away truly amazed and inspired by the passion, dedication and energy of those involved.

The partners' tour brought our husbands along too, and while they were there supporting us through the conference, they also got to enjoy their own experience. They loved checking out a few local businesses and definitely had some fun along the way — especially the go-karts, which were a big hit.

We all loved attending the conference dinner at Adelaide Oval — it was such a wonderful showcase of our state. We also brought along our daughter, Madison, and she had a

lovely time reconnecting with the School of the Air mums who have watched her grow into a young woman now pursuing teaching at university. It meant a lot to have Madison there showing her support, and she — along with all our kids — truly embodies what we are advocating for.

All of our branch kids have had a truly wonderful year pursuing their education. They have been supported every step of the way by an incredible network of teachers, governesses, and parents, whose dedication and care make all the difference. Our kids have approached their studies with enthusiasm, managing to balance work, play,

and learning in a way that has taken them across the country and even around the world. It's been so rewarding to watch them spread their wings, discover new places, and experience things they might never have imagined. Each adventure, lesson, and connection is helping them grow not just academically, but personally, building confidence, curiosity, and a love for learning that will stay with them for life.

We look forward to an exciting year next year, hopefully lots more rain to come for everyone. See you in 2026.

Katrina Morris



Port Augusta Branch at the federal conference dinner.



Hudson and Michelle Lord.



Geoff Brock with Alex O'Neill on her year 12 graduation.



Phil and Payton Lord.

Port Augusta Branch News



Alex O'Neill and mum Rachel Smart.



Bonnie Morris.



Pamela Cuffe, Michelle Lord and Kat Morris.



Waylon Cuffe.



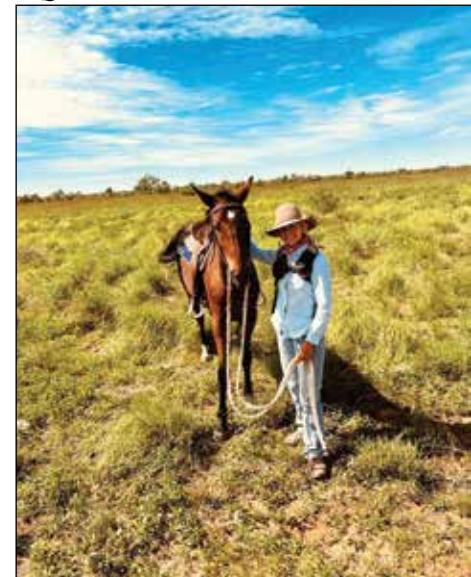
Above and below: Eli Cuffe.



Above and below: Georgia Anderson at her graduation for Agribusiness; and mustering in QLD.



Memphis Cuffe.



Port Augusta Branch News

Get ready, GRPA community — our biggest fundraising event of the year is back, supporting the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and this time we're "Going on Safari"! It's a night packed with fun for everyone — bush dancing, yabbie races, a lively auction, and live music from The Incredibles to keep the party swinging. Delicious

meat will be generously supplied by Nonning, and with tables of 10 and 12, now's the time to round up your crew and make it a night to remember.

Sponsored by BHP and AI Carbon, this black-tie bush camping experience comes with all the comforts — showers, toilets, and plenty of space to enjoy the evening

under the stars. Whether you're reconnecting with the community or discovering new adventures, it's the perfect chance to dress up, have fun, and support a fantastic cause. So get your group together, bring your safari spirit, and join us for a night of laughter, giving, and unforgettable memories!

"STEP INTO THE WILD"
JOIN THE GRPA ON
Safari
FOR THE
OUTBACK BALL



SATURDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2026

**6PM START - DRESS-BLACK TIE
\$170 INCLUDES 4 COURSE MEAL - SOME BEER & WINE**

LIVE BAND - THE INCREDIBLES

BEAUTIFUL FOOD CREATED BY - HEAD CATERING

Life Members

Federal Life Members

Julia Materne

Jane Gloster

State Life Members

Bob Baker

Lorrayne Balharry

Glennis Crawford

Jane Gloster

Julia Materne

Lynn Nagel

Sharon Nutt

Joanna Gibson

Jill Greenfield

Lisa Slade

Port Augusta

Lynn Nagel

Colleen Manning

North East Branch

Julia Materne

Glennis Crawford

Jane Gloster

Dot Sandland

Roslyn Breeding

Flinders Ranges

Kaye Fels

Richard Warwick

Sally Henery

Marla Oodnadatta

Digby and Bernadette Giles

Helen Williams

North West Branch

Joanna Gibson

Jill Greenfield

Lorraine Greenfield

The Patient Assistance Transport Scheme (PATS)

The Patient Assistance Transport Scheme (PATS) is a government-funded subsidy program that supports South Australians who need to travel long distances for essential medical specialist care. Administered by the Rural Support Service within SA Health and delivered through the six regional local health networks, PATS provides financial assistance for travel and, in some cases, accommodation for eligible patients.

To be eligible for PATS subsidies, you need to:

- be a permanent South Australian resident
- be enrolled in Medicare and receive treatment claimable through Medicare
- be travelling more than 100km from your residence to your appointment or treatment location, not locally available
- have an appointment with, or receive treatment from the nearest recognised medical specialist or approved medical specialist service (unless there is a valid medical reason for bypassing this service, in which case your referring doctor must complete Part B of the application form)
- have claimed any available benefits from a private health fund first (if applicable), and not receive, or be eligible for, financial assistance for travel and accommodation through another provider
- Claims must be submitted within 6 months of appointment date with receipts for fuel/accommodation

A couple of factors for families to consider when navigating the system;

- If the specialist you see is not the closest visiting provider, speak with them to determine whether they can contact PATS to outline the medical reasons for continuing your care with them.

• If you require multiple appointments to the same specialist (i.e. ongoing treatments), you can submit several claims on the one form, reducing the need for an individual application each time. Download Form 2 – Block Treatments

- Claims can be submitted through the portal online/posted

Contact & Info: Website: www.pats.sa.gov.au

Phone: 1300 341 684

*If denied access to PATS for any reason, please contact SA ICPA State Council as this provides further information in their efforts in actioning a motion presented at the 2025 State Conference.



Alfie Nicholls - youngest person on course.

2025 North Moolooloo Golf Classic

The 14th Biannual North Moolooloo Golf Classic was held on 5 October and drew a record 30 teams and 158 players to the iconic 18-hole bush course. More than 230 people attended throughout the day, creating a fantastic atmosphere—and putting the newly installed toilet block to excellent use.

This year's auction and raffle were the biggest yet, with standout items including a red gum slab engraved with the North Moolooloo Station map, an Engel fridge, and a handcrafted Golf Day quilt. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, donors, and the many volunteers who make the event possible, the Golf Classic is proud to donate \$30,000 to the Royal Flying Doctor Service—bringing the total contribution since 2001 to more than \$250,000.

The strong turnout and outstanding support highlight the community spirit that makes the North Moolooloo Golf Classic such a success. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in 2027.



The Devils: David May, Jonothan Hatcher, Dylan Nicholls, Cameron Williams, Damian Williams.

Orroroo Football and Netball Club

Celebrating an Outstanding Season for Our SA ICPA Members

The Orroroo Football and Netball Club is proudly home to several SA ICPA members, many of whom enjoyed an exceptional 2025 season across both codes. Their achievements on court and on the field highlight not only their talent, but also the strength, spirit, and determination of our rural and remote people.

Lucy Ridsdale had an outstanding year, taking out the H grade Best and Fairest for the Northern Areas Netball Association with an impressive 29 votes. Her consistency, skill, and composure made her a standout in the attack end, cementing her role as a key future player for Orroroo.

Lucy's amazing season continued with a grand final victory in H Grade, with Orroroo edging out BMW, 29–24, in a hard-fought match at Jamestown in September. Lucy (Flinders Ranges) played strongly at GA, while Pippa Reynolds (Marree Air) was instrumental in both WD and C across the game, demonstrating versatility and determination.

In I Grade, Magenta Williams (Marla Oodnadatta) and Millia Ridsdale (Flinders Ranges) were part of an exciting grand final against Crystal Brook. The teams had been evenly matched all season, each claiming two wins apiece. After the final siren sounded with scores locked in a draw, the girls dug deep in overtime, pushing ahead to secure a thrilling 34–32 victory. The success continued in B Grade, where Eliza Rowe (Lones Branch) proved strong in the goal ring, supported by Joanne Ridsdale (Flinders Ranges) as team manager. Their team claimed a well-deserved 34–29 win over BMW. Eliza also contributed as a reserve for the A Grade side, who themselves celebrated a grand final win over Crystal Brook. On the football field, Josh Hilder (Flinders Ranges) rep-



Lucy Ridsdale.

resented Orroroo in the grand final. Although the team was unable to secure the premiership, Josh's efforts and commitment throughout the season were commendable.

The SA ICPA extends its congratulations to all players, families, and supporters who make the time and effort to travel so their kids can play a sport, be part of a team, and build the friendships and confidence that come from being involved in community sport.



Eliza Rowe with sister Courtney and nephew Alfie.



Lucy Ridsdale and Magenta Williams.

Crossing the Great Divide



Dan Bell with father David in front of a road train used to transport cattle across the Cooper Creek via barge.

March 2025 saw record-breaking rain in Western Queensland. That rain inundated the Cooper Creek Catchment area in record time. Those flood waters then make their way down through south western QLD, across the border into South Australia and terminate in Lake Eyre. The Cooper Creek cuts off towns like Innamincka as well as the stations between Birdsville and the Cooper Creek crossing on the Birdsville Track. The rains also ran the Diamantina and Georgina Rivers, both of which terminate in Lake Eyre. These rivers bring life and an abundance of vegetation perfect for grazing cattle on. The stations in this remote part of SA were stocked with agistment cattle from properties to the south in drought ravaged areas as well as with their own stock. It was a god send for those properties. However, when these three rivers flow together, it essentially creates an inland island. And 8 million plus acre island mind you, but never the less, an island. The people who reside in

this remote north east corner of SA were cut off on all sides by water. Not able to get supplies in, people in or out, fuel in or cattle out by road.

As you can imagine, this leads to all sorts of feelings and issues

for those people. What if there was a medical emergency and planes couldn't get in? What if you need to get to your local town or city for schooling? They couldn't by road.

The SA state government, with

help from the Federal government, secured funding to build a barge large enough to carry road trains across the Cooper Creek. Even though it took three long months (in which time families travelled across the creek in a 3m tinnie, ferrying supplies and people back and forth), the barge was completed at the end of October 2025. It was a mammoth undertaking and we are grateful for the team at Maritime Construction for working so hard to get this project completed as quickly as possible. A few hiccups and learnings from the online booking requirements, but otherwise has moved quite smoothly!

It really is a sight to behold and does not disappoint!

It has allowed those families to the north to access medical care, get supplies in, get fuel in and of course attend end of year activities for school and pick up those children away at boarding school in Adelaide! As well it has allowed for the movement of thousands of head of cattle into southern South Australia.

Jessica Bell



Dan Bell takes in the expanse of the Cooper whilst crossing on the barge.

State Council & Portfolio Reports

Boarding/Hostels/Second Home

Hollie Williams and Kristina Crawford

Rural and remote families in South Australia continue to face significant challenges with boarding schools:

- High and rising costs that place considerable strain on family budgets,
- Emotional and social impacts on both students and their families. A further ongoing issue is the inconsistency in boarding intake ages across Adelaide schools. Several schools only accept boarders from Year 9, despite secondary school beginning in Year 7. This gap forces many rural families into schooling arrangements that are not their first choice simply because those schools will accept younger boarders. Compounding this, the schools that do take Year 7 boarders are often the more cost-prohibitive options, placing even greater financial pressure on families who already have limited alternatives. While challenging, it remains worthwhile for families to contact schools directly, as some may offer flexibility or case-by-case considerations.

Boarding student numbers within SA ICPA appear to be increasing. Boarders Week, a national week to raise awareness and recognition for boarders and their families, was reported a success and that their children enjoyed a special week of activities and recognition.

Key focus areas this year for State Council have centred on several important issues affecting boarding families that were raised at the state conference. A major priority has been advocating for an increase to the State Education Allowance (SEA) and addressing the lack of targeted financial support through a designated bursary at boarding schools. With rural and remote families having no alternative to boarding school, adequate financial assistance is essential. Another key focus has been the introduction of a student subsidy for regional air travel to help reduce the financial burden of exeat and term break travel.

The ICPA bursary initiative has generated positive outcomes: Walford has developed a remote scholarship, Westminster continues its “Come for 6, Pay for 5” initiative, Pembroke has refined its scholarship criteria following consultation, and Sacred Heart will be discussing the ICPA bursary at its next College Executive Meeting. We thank these schools for working with us and hope that we can create a relationship with all the boarding schools in South Australia.

Additionally, two formal proposals from SA ICPA, one for an increase to the SEA Allowance and one for a Student Airfare Subsidy for boarding students, modelled on Queensland’s Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA) scheme have been submitted [GU1.1] to the Education Minister. A response was received in relation to the SEA proposal, that the allowance is under review and remains subject to ongoing discussions and further consideration.

The Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) highlighted that 75% of boarding students across Australia receive some form of financial assistance. ABSA has also offered to share resources with SA ICPA for use in Pipeline and on social media, so members are encouraged to keep an eye out for this material.

At the federal level, Amber Driver continues in her role as Federal Lead, with Kym Ross also serving on the portfolio team. At the Federal Conference in Adelaide, eight agenda motions and three supplementary motions were presented. SA ICPA put forward three motions:

- Re-establishing the Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Pro-

gram (CRSP)

- Advocating for an increase to the Basic Boarding Allowance
- Requesting a review of the eligibility criteria for the Additional Boarding Allowance.

Notably, ten of Adelaide’s twelve boarding schools, along with St Mark’s College in Port Pirie, sponsored the Federal conference. Eight schools attended in person, with several hosting trade tables or contributing goods to conference packs. This demonstrates the importance they put on ICPA, a tribute to the work people on ICPA have put in to develop and maintain strong relationships over many years.

Looking ahead, SA ICPA will continue to advocate for practical solutions that support rural and remote families, ensuring that financial assistance, travel subsidies, and targeted bursaries meet the real costs of boarding school.

With ongoing collaboration at both state and federal levels, and the continued support of schools and organisations such as ABSA, the aim is to make boarding more accessible and sustainable for all families who rely on it as their children’s second home. By addressing these key issues, SA ICPA seeks to ease the financial and emotional burden on families while ensuring students have every opportunity to thrive academically and socially.

Communication

Louise Kohler, Pamela Cuffe and Dani Chapman

The Communications Portfolio has remained relatively quiet over recent months, though several important developments were discussed at this year’s Federal Conference. A key theme throughout the conference was the ongoing decline and lack of reliable mobile and internet services across rural and remote Australia, which continues to place significant pressure on schools, families and students who rely heavily on online learning.

Telstra outlined two major partnerships with Starlink aimed at improving connectivity for remote users. The first will enable satellite-to-mobile texting for existing Telstra customers, allowing messages to be sent and received from compatible, unmodified phones outside of mobile coverage. While currently limited to text services, this technology has the potential to evolve into voice, data and IoT applications in the future. The second partnership will deliver a business enterprise-grade Starlink internet service for homes and businesses requiring fixed broadband in remote regions. Access to this service requires the purchase of a Starlink kit, offering a practical solution for those seeking reliable high-speed internet where traditional services are unavailable or inadequate.

At the end of October, Louise and Pamela met with Elise Petty from NBN via Zoom for a constructive update on upcoming product changes. NBN has partnered with Amazon to launch a new Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite that will orbit closer to Earth, significantly improving national coverage. NBN is currently awaiting Amazon’s launch timeline, with the expected rollout planned for late 2026, dependent on successful migration and testing. This new LEO service will replace existing connections such as Sky Muster and, importantly, will be Australian owned and operated, ensuring all data remains subject to Australian regulatory protections. Elise also encouraged anyone experiencing ongoing NBN issues to contact her as an escalation point once all standard support avenues

State Council & Portfolio Reports

have been exhausted.

Across South Australia, there continues to be little to report as most families have now transitioned to Starlink, resulting in fewer connectivity issues.

Distance Education

Petie Rankin, Kirsty Williams and Pamela Cuffe

ICPA Federal Conference in 2025 saw 11 Distance Education motions put forward, 9 carried and 2 lost. Whilst the ones that were debated and lost did not have achieved their desired outcome, it's still important to note the issues and branches' intent for what they are lobbying for. The motions that focused mainly on allowances and the need for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance can make you feel like you are flogging a dead horse,[GU2.1] but repetition keeps it at the forefront of the minds we are trying to change and being the squeaky wheel never hurt!

At our School of the Air (SOTA) campus, the end of term 2 saw the Head of Campus (HOC) Rachel Russel resign for another position, more aligned with her passion in policy writing. Again, staff retention is a constant issue at our Port Augusta site, but we are lucky to have some staff who have stuck around longer than most. We were very fortunate to have a new HOC starting in week 9 of term 3, Paul Pitkin. Paul is local to the area so comes with prior knowledge, experience and skills. It's been many a year since a male held this role so this will add to our male/female ratio, with our 2 current male staff happy to have some 'bro' time. 2026 will see the continuation of most of our teaching staff, which is a welcome relief to our students who need consistency and familiarity during their early schooling years. It's also a great opportunity for the teachers to get to know the students and their needs as they see them grow.

We welcomed a new School Services Officer (SSO) to SOTA to help support our students in their learning but unfortunately this position was based out of Marden, Adelaide, making it hard to connect and unable to meet the students in person. The beginning of 2026 will see a Port Augusta based SSO take on this role. Traditionally this role had been Port Augusta based, to best provide direct support to staff and students, but the right person isn't always in reach and we appreciate Julie Taylor's efforts in making sure positions are filled when a dedicated panel was also trying to fill the HOC position. We welcome having the SSO back in Port Augusta as it will be more beneficial for the children and teachers.

2025 will be Julie Taylor's last year as Open Access College's principal, after almost 20 years in that very hectic and demanding role. Julie has been passionate, dedicated, and a strong leader, seeing many changes at the SOTA campus and always finding solutions when we found ourselves in precarious situations! She leaves huge shoes to fill but is very deserving of retirement and everyone in the SOTA community wishes her well in her travels.

Early Childhood Education

Edwina Bowie

A planning meeting was held on 7 November between SA ICPA, Remote and Isolated Childrens Exercise (RICE) and the Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD) to progress the introduction

of three-year-old preschool for remote and isolated families through RICE. Building on earlier discussions, the meeting moved into the practicalities of program design, delivery options and service integration. Several models for both three- and four-year-old preschool were explored, including closer collaboration with School of the Air and the possibility of using existing government preschool sites such as Port Augusta to support quarterly face-to-face components. Considerable discussion focused on what a practical and supportive three-year-old model could look like. Elements canvassed included an initial orientation, short online sessions three times a week, a parent orientation, educator home visits each term, opportunities for additional individual learning support and access to essential technology for families. A strong emphasis was also placed on parent support, including wellbeing check-ins, parenting advice, early learning education and improved connections to child development and allied-health services. RICE also highlighted elements from the current four-year-old program they would like to replicate, such as reimbursement for family travel and accommodation, and an educator travelling with the teacher on visits. RICE will now prepare a formal proposal for the OECD detailing the preferred model, projected enrolments, timelines and any additional costs.

The meeting also addressed service-integration needs. SA ICPA and RICE shared positive past experiences with child-development checks, and Child and Family Health Services (CAFHS) indicated a willingness to strengthen its support for remote families. OECD will further explore whether a maternal and child-health nurse could travel alongside RICE teams to ensure more consistent face-to-face care.

Discussions then turned to the suggestion that RICE revisit the possibility of transitioning Outback Child Care to the In-Home Care model. To better understand the cost viability, a formal quote was sought on 10 November using real household income data. The modelling showed weekly family gap fees of around \$1,000–\$1,300 for one child, even after the child care subsidy (CCS) was applied, with additional requirements for live-in board, holding fees and penalty-rate hours. Under current settings, IHC remains financially unviable for most remote families without significant additional government support.

Looking ahead to 2026, RICE preschool enrolments appear strong, with five children confirmed for Semester 1 and six for Semester 2, with more likely to join as the year progresses. These numbers reinforce the need for accessible, fit-for-purpose preschool delivery across remote SA.

SA ICPA continues to be engaged with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) to inform national early-childhood policy, with further discussions scheduled next year. The Minister for Education, Blair Boyer, has confirmed there is currently no funding available to extend the Early Years Allowance to pre-compulsory kindergarten, and further engagement is recommended with Nicole Lynch, Executive Director of Policy, Planning and Provision.

At the November Minister Early Childhood Advisory Forum (MECAF), discussion focused on the Preschool Outreach initiative, which aims to reduce participation barriers related to transport, food insecurity and access to essential items. In 2026, each Preschool Plus enrolment will attract \$1,700 in outreach funding, with the possibility of further expansion in 2027. While outreach currently targets lower social economic areas (SEIFA 1 and 2), SA ICPA continues to highlight the equity gap for remote families, who often face greater barriers despite not being captured within standard so-

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ocio-economic measures (SEIFA). MECAF identified its priorities for 2026 as

- Workforce
- Aboriginal co-design
- The rollout of three-year-old preschool

The QualifySA program continues to support the early-childhood workforce, offering substantial scholarships for approved qualifications, with additional support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and for those living in regional and remote areas. Funding is paid across study milestones and early employment, and applications remain open year-round.

At the federal level, ICPA continues its involvement in early-education reform efforts, including work across Thrive by Five and the Department's Safety and Quality Framework. Announcements at the Early Childhood Australia National Conference included the reaffirmation of universal access, a national child-safety investment package, a 15% educator pay rise, additional CCS savings, the 3-Day Guarantee and ongoing expansion through BEEF and the Community Child Care Fund.

Rural Schools and School Travel

Di Thomas, Belinda Hatcher and Michelle Hilder

This year's Federal Conference saw strong representation across the Rural Schools and Travel Portfolio, with ten motions presented. Two of these motions focused on the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate, while seven highlighted the ongoing need for more affordable airline travel for rural and remote families. A further motion called for the introduction of incentives to encourage experienced teachers to relocate to rural and remote schools, where staffing shortages continue to be a significant concern. This year's conference once again demonstrated the importance of strong advocacy and collaboration to ensure rural and remote students receive the support and opportunities they deserve.

The Federal Portfolios are well supported, with the School Travel Portfolio led by Tim Fletcher and supported by Melissa Kerr, Amber Driver and Jill Greenfield. The Rural and Remote Schools Portfolio is led by Nikki Mahony alongside Anna McCorkle and Anne Chater.

In July, the SA ICPA State Council met with several key stakeholders during our annual delegation meetings. One of the matters raised was the ongoing issue of bus driver accreditation. It was noted that Uni Hub does not currently offer this accreditation, and Council agreed that further exploration with Access Training Centre (ATC) and Construction Industry Training Centre (CITC) [GU3.1] is required. Additional research will also be needed to identify suitable course providers capable of supporting the needs of rural communities.

State Council also met with the Hon. Geoff Brock to discuss the motions put forward. Concerns were raised around travel grants and allowances, which were acknowledged as outdated and no longer adequate to meet the real costs faced by rural families. Delegates highlighted that travel associated financial barriers are preventing children from attending school camps and important early learning assessments. The issue of kindy-aged children using school buses was also discussed, emphasising the need for transport policies that reflect the realities faced by remote families and ensure equitable access to early education.

Further meetings were held with the Australian Boarding Schools Association, who provided valuable insights into initiatives operating in other states. Queensland's Bush to Boarding Scheme, developed in partnership with REX Airlines, was presented as a strong model for reducing airfare costs for rural families. New South Wales was also highlighted for its portal system that provides school children with free travel on public buses and trains. ABSTUDY was also noted, which provides Indigenous students with free travel, and it was agreed that similar support would be of great benefit to rural and remote children.

Discussions with the Hon. Blair Boyer focused on key issues affecting rural and remote students. Delegates raised concerns about the significant barriers faced by preschool-aged children who are not counted in bus route planning and may only travel if a seat happens to be available. This uncertainty results in many families driving long distances or withdrawing their children from preschool altogether. A policy change was advocated to ensure preschoolers in remote areas have reliable and consistent bus access. Delegates also discussed severe staffing shortages in rural and remote schools and the limitations of the current Country Incentive Zone Allowance, which applies only to teachers. Council proposed considering ways to extend support to SSOs and experienced local parents, helping to bolster workforce capacity in remote communities.

In November, State Portfolio leaders met via Zoom to share updates and discuss emerging national issues affecting rural school travel. At the federal level, progress has been limited, although there appears to be some interest within government departments in extending PACER loadings or formalising the currently increased rates, which have helped boost regional participation. The Commonwealth continues to focus on teaching scholarships and paid practical placements as its primary strategy for improving teacher attraction and retention.

Cross-state discussions highlighted several common challenges. Declining enrolments are affecting the viability of services such as bus routes and staffing, and many states are finding it increasingly difficult to secure meetings with their transport departments to address these concerns. Participants also raised significant worries about the lack of rural proofing in policy development, noting that initiatives such as free kindy or swimming programs often function well in metropolitan settings but do not translate effectively into remote areas. The meeting also identified opportunities to share successful models between states, particularly around bus systems and bypass arrangements, to help strengthen outcomes for rural and remote students nationwide.

Specific Education Needs

Hollie Williams

Addressing specific education needs in rural and remote South Australia continues to be challenging and requires a tailored approach. It requires increased investment to ensure students in geographically isolated areas receive equitable support.

On the federal front, Prue Vaschina has taken on the role of leading the Specific Needs Portfolio, supported by Jen Ruska. At the Federal Conference, five Specific Needs agenda motions and one supplementary motion were presented—and all six were success-

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fully carried.

A proposal was submitted to the PATS (Patient Assisted Travel Scheme) Director seeking a change to eligibility criteria under PATS, aiming to improve access to specialist appointments for remote families. Many families have been unable to claim PATS due to being deemed ineligible when bypassing the closest visiting specialist location to group multiple appointments in a more practical centre, often Adelaide. As a result, students from rural and remote areas are missing numerous school days to attend short, mid-week appointments instead of being able to cluster these appointments during school holidays.

During delegation discussions with the RFDS, significant concerns were raised about delayed or inconsistent access to allied health services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and dietetics in remote communities. While urban families receive timely bedside support, regional families often do not. Referral pathways for OT and speech services can take weeks to months, and many providers offer only virtual support with minimal in-person outreach. Accessing services such as the NDIS can also depend heavily on local staff advocacy and, at times, sheer luck, rather than a reliable and consistent system.

Further meetings with Blair Boyer, Minister for Education, Training and Skills, and the SA Department for Education highlighted ongoing gaps in developmental support for remote families. The reduction of CaFHS nurses and paediatric services has contributed to delays in identifying speech and developmental issues, limited early intervention opportunities, and increased risk that parents may not recognise developmental concerns due to isolation and limited peer comparison. Speech delays were emphasised as a critical issue, with early checks becoming increasingly difficult to access.

The discussions held with government, health, and education stakeholders reinforce the need for practical solutions that recognise the unique challenges faced by isolated families. ICPA will continue working closely with all sectors to push for improved access, early intervention, and meaningful policy change to support every child, no matter where they live.

The Specific Needs Portfolio remains essential as families in rural and remote South Australia continue to face significant barriers in accessing developmental, health, and educational support. The issues discussed with PATS, RFDS, and the Department for Education highlight just how crucial it is that services are flexible, accessible, and responsive to the unique needs of isolated students. Moving forward, the Specific Needs Portfolio will continue to advocate strongly for improved pathways, earlier intervention, and equitable service provision, ensuring that children living in remote regions are not disadvantaged simply because of where they call home.

Tertiary

Katrina Morris and Dani Chapman

There have been several important developments within the Tertiary Portfolio this year. The most significant is the introduction of the Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP), which commenced in July. This payment supports students undertaking mandatory practical placements as part of a Bachelor's or Master's degree in teaching, nursing, midwifery or social work. Eligible students

now receive \$331.65 per week, benchmarked annually to the single Austudy rate as at 1 January. Students are encouraged to contact their higher education provider to apply and can also access eligibility information through the "For Students" page. Those completing a Diploma of Nursing through TAFE or another Registered Training Organisation can find relevant details on the Your Career website.

Families are also reminded that helpful information regarding boarding allowances and tertiary financial support is available on the ICPA Australia website. One such allowance, the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP), continues to play an important role in assisting regional, remote and very remote students as they transition into further education. TAP provides a total of \$5000, delivered in two instalments. To receive the second instalment, students must complete an online review process and provide an up-to-date Proof of Enrolment. This document must include the student's name, education provider, units enrolled or confirmation of full-time study, the study period, and a document issue date that falls after the relevant assessment period. Reviews can be submitted before the document is uploaded, however the required paperwork must be provided within 28 days to avoid payment delays. If documents are submitted within 90 days, students may request a re-assessment. This process ensures that students receive the support needed to continue their education while maintaining necessary accountability.

Training opportunities also continue to expand across regional South Australia. The Port Augusta Access Training Centre (ATC), located at 20257 Augusta Highway, offers industry-relevant training for students from Port Pirie, Whyalla, Roxby Downs and surrounding regions. Courses currently available include chainsaw maintenance, confined space training, various crane licences, dangerous goods handling, dogging, earthmoving, first aid, forklift training, height safety, load restraint, white card training, temporary traffic management, and several others. Training can be delivered at the Port Augusta site, at workplaces, or at alternative locations as required. For more information, families can contact the Regional Area Manager in Port Augusta on 08 8642 6146 or the Adelaide office on 08 8169 9800.

The new Port Augusta Technical College (PATC) has also officially opened, providing an exciting addition to the region's education and training options. PATC offers part-time industry-based training programs across four key sectors: civil, resources and infrastructure; cookery and tourism; health and social support; and multi-trades. These programs have been co-designed with leading employers to ensure students graduate with the skills and experience needed to thrive in their chosen fields. Training is delivered in week-long blocks by registered training organisations, industry trainers, teachers and employers, supported by a combination of VET qualifications, SACE subjects and employability skills. The college is open to students across the Upper Spencer Gulf, Eyre Peninsula, Mid North, Yorke Peninsula, Far North and the APY Lands. For those who cannot travel daily, supervised overnight accommodation is available onsite. Students attend PATC for their scheduled training blocks and then complete the remainder of their SACE subjects through their home school.



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SA ICPA State Council 2025

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Early Childhood Education	Edwina Bowie, Ellen Litchfield			Specific Education	Hollie Williams, Ellen Litchfield, Jo Drennan
Rural Schools/School Travel	Di Thomas, Michelle Hilder, Belinda Hatcher			Tertiary Education/Career Pathways	Katrina Morris, Dani Chapman
Communications	Louise Kohler, Pamela Cuffe, Dani Chapman				



Save The Date

S A I C P A
S t a t e C o n f e r e n c e



29th & 30th
April 2026

B U R R A

For more information contact Leisa or Katie
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THE PIPELINE Next deadline - **5th JUNE 2026**

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