

Rural Schools Report Moree 2023

Bourke branch of ICPA held our 50th annual conference in 2022 which was extremely successful. Many long hours go into hosting a conference, congratulations to convenors and branch members who helped put the conference together. It was very fitting that the conference was in Bourke where it all began.

After our conference in March 2022, a letter was sent with all our new and old motions that were passed at conference from the Rural Schools Portfolio to Minister Mitchell.

ICPA-NSW are having fortnightly meetings with the RRREP unit (Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy unit). These meetings have been constructive and allows us through the RRREP to contact the appropriate people who would be most able to help us with a specific motion. For instance, one meeting was with the Directors, Education Leadership (DELs) who are responsible for the remote schools in NSW. In NSW, several rural schools' motions relate to the Directors, so it was beneficial to be able to speak directly to them.

We had a long discussion on the handover motion, and after much discussion felt that maybe the Directors had not previously seen this motion and explanation. This is disappointing as ICPA-NSW councillors when collating our motions from all branches spend many hours making sure they are directed to the appropriate authority which, in the rural schools' case is the Department of Education. Moving forward with our regular meetings with RRREP and RRREP attending our annual conferences ICPA-NSW hopes that all motions will be distributed to the right people ensuring we may then shorten the longevity with which motions appear year after year.

The RuralCONNECT Child and Family days that have previously taken place have mostly been cancelled due to wet weather. Deborah Nielsen and I attended the RuralCONNECT day in June at Louth, which Barbie Bates from Paint the Town REaD attended along with Sue Kingwell from Contact Inc., unfortunately due to the weather forecast some of our outlying parents were unable to attend.

State Councillors attended the annual deputation to Sydney in June. Once again, we met with many politicians and groups in relation to all our portfolios across ICPA and put many of our motions forward. This is always a positive and wonderful way for ICPA councillors to have a face-to-face meeting with many matters up for discussion. Motions from each portfolio are put into an issues paper and distributed at every meeting attended.

Deborah Nielsen and I prepared a submission paper on behalf of ICPA-NSW to the Portfolio Committee No.3 – Education - Inquiry into Teacher Shortages in New South Wales. We were able to acquire information from local teachers, a TP1 teacher and from a teacher in the Catholic system. We added information from our ICPA-NSW motions regarding administration overload in small TP1 & TP2 schools with a teaching principal. Teaching housing needs to be a high standard, and the availability of an appropriate vehicle for schools on unsealed roads. We gave evidence to the inquiry on the 16th of August via WebEx.

Again, many of the rural schools' motions are not about funding rather that they need to be embedded in policy so that when there is a change of Director, Education Leadership or a Principal, these motions' policies will continue to happen. In many cases, the motions are supporting the incoming principal as well as the children at the small rural schools which would be a win win for both principals, student's and the Department.

Through our regular meetings with the RRREP unit, ICPA-NSW was asked to have a meeting with one of their representatives to discuss the teacher housing motions. From that meeting some of the suggestions have been applied in the "2022 Housing Package programs and initiatives".

I would like to thank the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning for replying to the letter that was sent after the Bourke Conference 2022, with all motions from the Rural Schools Portfolio. This allows ICPA-NSW to contact branches and give some answers to their motions.

Annabel Strachan

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