

Rural Schools Report 2022

We were extremely lucky to have had our conference in Hay at a face to face meeting, as the rest of the year has been in and out of lockdowns for most of the state.

Since conference, I have sent a letter to Minister Mitchell with all our older and updated motions from the Hay conference.

We decided at our post conference meeting in Hay to have a mentoring program and each state councillor would mentor a branch. My branches are Boomi and Lightning Ridge/Goodooga, thanks to Gabie I used her template and sent letters to both branches. I felt slightly overwhelmed sending to Lightning Ridge/Goodooga knowing full well Kate Treweeke is a very knowledgeable participant of that branch.

I was contacted by Kimberley Taylor who was hoping to get the Premer School reopened. After some advice from Nerida Healy, Kimberley put articles in papers, on television and radio. ICPA-NSW sent a letter to Minister Mitchell on the 22nd April supporting the reopening of Premer School. On the 4th June it was announced Premer School would be reopening.

Sue Kingwell has been involved in RuralCONNECT Child and Family days in Wanaaring, Louth and Tilpa. I attended the family day in Wanaaring on the 22nd April and again on the 9th of June in Louth along with Deborah Nielsen, we met lots of families and their children from the areas. Bourke Mobile and the children from Louth Public School attended the Louth Day.

On the 8th of June, I attended the hook up of the fibre optic cable at Louth Public School. In attendance was Iva Dumanjic – Senior Client Executive, NSW Government Team, representatives from Iva's team in Sydney, IT team in Dubbo and DoE in Dubbo. This was an exciting day at Louth Public School, the teams included the students as much as they could and made the process educational by explaining to the children how it all worked. Iva Dimanjic was very keen for ICPA to be represented and involved so a big tick for us and our members for being relentless regarding better connectivity for the small satellite schools.

Many zoom meetings have been on the agenda, I have attended the following:

Thrive by Five attended with Deborah Nielsen in Oct and Dec

NESA curriculum reform parents' roundtable - Curriculum Review 20/08/21

NSW Department of Education – Kieran Morgan – The complaint handling process – Claire Butler and myself attending – 14/9/21

Rural and Remote Education Advisory Group (RREAG) 16/9/21 & 9/12/21

Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy Unit – attended by Deborah Nielsen, David Butler and myself – 10/02/22, 15/02/22 & 24/02/22

Many of the very old motions were discussed with the Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy Unit including:

“That ICPA NSW urges the Minister for Education Minister Mitchell, to ensure that there is always a 'hand over' between principals in TP1 schools, particularly in the program.”

“That ICPA—NSW requests the Executive Director of Public Schools NSW to ensure that the regional directors actually physically attend the rural, remote and very remote TP1 schools in their area, at least twice a year.”

“That ICPA-NSW requests that the NSW Department of Education directors responsible for isolated schools monitor their principals to ensure that the communities are being thoroughly included in any school decision process.”

“That an ICPA-NSW representative meets annually with each educational leadership director overseeing rural and remote schools and that these meetings become embedded into the directors’ calendar.”

“That ICPA—NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to ensure that teacher housing is maintained to a high standard in a very remote schools by insisting the relevant authorities respond immediately to any reasonable requests”

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to include an appropriate vehicle in the incentive package for the Louth and Wanaaring Principals.”

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education that procedures are followed before sending a complaint to Employee Performance and Conduct Directorate (EPAC).”

As an example, the handover between principals in TP1 schools will not cost the government any funding but needs to be embedded into policy so that when there is a change of director, educational leadership (DEL) or new principal this will continually happen. This will allow the children to start their work in Week 1 Term 1.

After meeting with the Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy unit, ICPA-NSW feel very confident that some of the older motions may finally be taken off our motion list. We are having fortnightly meetings with the unit with the hope of reducing the number of motions.

I would just like to conclude by saying what a remarkable effort everyone puts in to ICPA and I feel very proud to be part of a great team.

Annabel Strachan

Rural Schools Portfolio