
Special Education Portfolio Report

Distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Special Education Report for 2023-24 year.

- During 2023 NSW State Councillors had two deputations to Sydney which saw them hold meetings with various Ministers, Shadow Ministers and stake holders with many discussion points being relevant to the Special Education space. They included the access to allied Health services for rural and remote children and the importance of early intervention. Among those meetings were:
 - Royal Far West HQ at Manly
 - Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning Hon Prue Car MP,
 - Bronnie Taylor MLC, Sarah Mitchell MLC Shadow Minister for Education, Early Learning and Western NSW
 - Natasha MaClaren-Jones shadow Minister for Families and Communities
 - Centre for Effective Reading Principal Serena McLean
 - Department of Education / RRREP Unit

In addition to the above-mentioned points ICPA-NSW continues to raise the need for a compulsory Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) specialised training module for University student teachers as part of their training. Such a module would greatly assist teachers to recognise the early signs of a child with special needs who may be experiencing problems in the classroom and therefore able to provide help for that child.

Interestingly we see the continuation of the drastic upward trend in the need for access to allied health services including speech therapy, occupational therapy, and other specialised areas. The difficulty for our ICPA families, centres around the actual access to these services. ICPA-NSW continue to voice the imperative need and urgency for the assistance families require. Our families face great difficulties in accessing these services with long wait times and the out-of-pocket expenses which are not compensated. These timeframes for early intervention critical to the child's learning educational outcomes are being blowout, resulting in unacceptable delays in assistance creating a flow on affect which further disadvantages rural and remote children.

ICPA-NSW continues to advocate for the special education needs of our rural and remote children.

I would also like to thank my fellow councillors who are an amazing bunch of people who volunteer their time for the better of all our children. Thank you for doing all that you do on a daily basis for ICPA-NSW, we sure do appreciate your dedication to "*Access to Education*" for regional, rural and remote children.

Gabie Le Lievre
Special Education Portfolio