

SPECIFIC NEEDS PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT – June 2022

At the 2021 ICPA State Conference held in Cunnamulla there were two motions carried in relation to the specific needs' portfolio. The first motion related to the inclusion of Speech/occupational therapies to be included on a permanent basis as a Telehealth Medical Benefits Scheme item. The other in regard to ensuring that all rural and remote children in all educational institutions in Qld who require learning support and assistance, receive the same level of support, at a minimum, throughout their entire education.

In 2021, ICPA Qld met with a variety of organisations who play vital roles in delivering services to our rural and remote families. ICPA QLD met with various representatives from Educational Institutions, Independent Schools Qld, and State Schools Disability Inclusion to discuss the above motions and continue to build solid relationships with these organisations and increasing our presence in the sector.

As a result of these meetings, ICPA QLD submitted a motion at the 2022 Federal conference held in Longreach, regarding the Telehealth Medical Benefits scheme. It is with great hope that our Federal counterparts will be able to assist in this area, as the Medical Benefits Scheme is a Federal initiative and I look forward to having some positive outcomes in this area to report back to our members and branches in 2022/2023.

The meetings with various stakeholders regarding motion S12 from the 2021 conference were extremely supportive with many suggestions being thrown on the table. It was identified within these meetings, that boarding students from rural and remote backgrounds could utilise more support in general, with regards to the unique and specific issues this particular group of children face upon leaving their communities and support networks and entering the boarding way of life away from all facets of life that is familiar to them. Further suggestions were made about working with ICPA Federal Council and raising awareness of the needs of rural and remote children and pushing for consideration of extra funding, to support these children entering secondary education away from home. Discussions are currently underway with ICPA Federal Council to work towards an outcome in this area.

ICPA QLD will continue to work with the various organisations in the coming year to give assurance to families that their children are receiving the required level of learning support and assistance as needed by each individual child.

After meeting with the various organisations, it was once again identified that Mental Health is an area of growing concern for our rural and remote families and ICPA QLD looks forward to working with organisations like 'Outback Futures' and 'Headspace' to ensure that rural and remote children are not left behind.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all branches that put motions forward at the 2021 conference. These motions and the feedback to support them is invaluable in our lobby to advocate for Geographically Isolated families.

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