



ISOLATED CHILDRENS PARENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED
MINUTES
OF THE
48TH ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE

Theme: "Building a better world, one student at a time."

13th MARCH 2020

HELD AT THE

Rendezvous Hotel, Scarborough Perth

HOSTED BY

MEEKATHARRA AIR BRANCH



ICPA (WA)

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Department of
Education

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ICPA (WA) STATE COUNCIL 2019 – 2020 (March 2019 AGM)

PRESIDENT

Tash Johns

VICE PRESIDENT

Sally Brindal

SECRETARY

Amanda Nixon

TREASURER

Bianca James

PUBLICITY OFFICER/WEBMASTER

Kym Ross

LONES OFFICER

Sandie McCombie

COMMITTEE

Elyce Donaghy

COMMITTEE

Naomi Obst

COMMITTEE

Chandra Ridley

COMMITTEE

Kym Burns

COMMITTEE

Jane Hughes

ICPA (WA) STATE COUNCIL 2020 – 2021 (March 2020 AGM)

PRESIDENT

Sally Brindal

VICE PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

WEBMASTER

Kym Ross

TREASURER

Michelle Abbott

PUBLICITY OFFICER

Jane Hughes

LONES OFFICER

Kym Burns

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Tash Johns

COMMITTEE

Naomi Obst

COMMITTEE

Chandra Ridley

COMMITTEE

Samantha Greay

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

- **Welcome** Sally Brindal Vice President ICPA (WA)
- **Welcome by Convener** Mrs Raelene Hall Meekatharra Air Branch
- **National Anthem** Meekatharra School of the Air (SOTA) Students
- **Official Opening** Mrs Annie Fogarty AM 2020 WA Australian of the Year
- **Introduction of Guests/Delegates** Amanda Nixon Secretary ICPA (WA)
- **State President's Report** Tash Johns President ICPA (WA)
- **Speaker** Hon. Sue Ellery MLC Minister for Education and Training
- **Speaker** Mr Stephen Baxter Deputy Director General, Public Schools
- **Branch Report** Mrs Alys McKeough Gascoyne Branch President
- **Portfolio Report – Travel** Elyce Donaghy State Council ICPA (WA)
- **Speaker** Mr Boyd Brown Regional General Manager Telstra Countrywide Platinum Sponsor

- **REVISE Report** Mrs Mary Wake Chairperson REVISE
- **Speaker** Mr Richard Stokes CEO Australian Boarding Schools Association
- **Federal ICPA Report** Mrs Alana Moller Federal President ICPA (Aust)
- **Branch Report** Mrs Samantha Greay Hyden Branch President
- **Keynote Speaker** Ms Claire Eaton ROC – Resilience, Optimism & Confidence
- **Speaker** Ms Teneeka Hill Transition Facilitator
- **AGM of ICPA (WA)**

- **Presentations, close of business.**

▪ **Confirmation of 2019 Conference Minutes**

Moved: Amanda Nixon (State Council)
Business Arising Nil

Seconded: Elyce Donaghy (State Council) **CARRIED**

CONFERENCE MOTIONS

Agenda Motions: Allowances

A1 Lakes District Branch

Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Education and the State Government for an annual increase to the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA).”

Explanation:

The BAHA is an important subsidy which assists families living in remote areas of our State who send their children away to school. The allowance provides financial relief for those eligible families who are constantly having to find extra money within tight budgets to cover the ever-increasing cost of school and boarding fees.

Boarding fees continue to rise on average by 2-8% per annum and the continued reduction of the BAHA allowance increases the financial burden on parents accessing an education for their children; particularly for some families who are struggling with rural hardship.

The reduction of this allowance has seen rural and remote families leave and relocate to larger centres to ensure their children have access to an affordable secondary education. For families who have no choice but to send their children way to boarding school, the increase in the gap fee; between what is charged, and the amount parents receive in financial support, continues to widen.

For the 2020 school year there is a gap fee of \$4270 between the boarding costs at a Residential College in WA and the AIC and BAHA payments that an eligible family receives from the Federal and State Governments, this is an increase in the gap payable up from 2019 by 8.65%.

We therefore request that ICPA (WA) lobbies the State Government for an increase to the BAHA on an annual basis in line with the CPI increase as is applied to the Federal AIC allowance; to minimise the financial impact on rural and remote families.

Moved: Claire Walter (*Lakes District*)

Seconded: Kym Ross (*SC on behalf of Lakes District*)

CARRIED

A2 Pilbara Branch

Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the State Government to reverse the decrease in the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) and instead increase it in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) annually to accommodate the significant increases in boarding fees charged by all boarding facilities.”

Explanation:

The State Government is decreasing the Royalties for Regions component of the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) seeing an overall reduction of 37% over five years. This allowance has already decreased from \$2,105 in 2017 and will go down to \$1320 in 2022.

This decision is impacting heavily on isolated families due to boarding schools, both Government and Independent, increasing their annual fees significantly each year. The gap between what parents pay and the allowances received from both the Federal and State Governments is widening. We therefore request that ICPA (WA) lobby the State Government to reverse this decrease to help minimise the financial pressure put on parents from rural & remote areas who are providing their children with an adequate education.

Moved: *Pippa Johns (Pilbara)*

Seconded: *Karen Watherston (Pilbara)*

CARRIED

A3 Central Wheatbelt North Branch Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the State Government to increase the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) annually.”

Explanation:

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) has decreased from \$2,105 in 2017 and will reduce to \$1320 in 2022. Families will have to pay an extra \$785 per child per year for boarding fees after that period. We request that ICPA (WA) lobbies the State Government to increase the BAHA in line with the CPI annually, to lessen the financial strain on parents from rural and remote areas.

Moved: *Isabel Nixon (Central Wheatbelt North Branch)*

Deemed covered by A1

CARRIED

A4 Meekatharra Air Branch Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the State Government highlighting the importance an increase to the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) would make to our drought stricken rural and remote families.”

Explanation

The current drought in rural and remote areas of Western Australia continues despite recent rainfall in some parts of the state, financial hardship due to dry conditions will be ongoing and the BAHA is a vital allowance that rural and remote families rely heavily upon to assist with education costs.

Moved: *Clare Mahony (Meekatharra Air)* **Seconded:** *Penny Johns (Meekatharra Air)*

CARRIED

A5 Meekatharra Air Branch Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the State Government to increase the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) to bring it in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) annually.”

Explanation:

This allowance is vital in assisting parents who need to send their children away from home to continue their education. With the State Government cutting the allowance by 37% over 5 years (2018 -2022) the allowance will be reduced to \$1320 in 2022. In the same five years the cost of boarding at both public and private schools will have increased substantially.

This leaves parents even further out of pocket in trying to educate their children. Given the number of WA students who can access the BAHA allowance is relatively small, it seems small minded of the Government, to take funds from these families.

Moved: *Clare Mahony (Meekatharra Air)*

Deemed covered by A1

CARRIED

F2 **Gascoyne Branch**

Allowances

“That ICPA (WA) request ICPA (Aust) to continue lobbying on our behalf for the Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA).”

Explanation

For several years branches of ICPA across Australia have asked ICPA Australia to lobby the Federal Government for a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA). Recently it was suggested that the States lobby for this at a state level. Whilst we absolutely support the intention of DETA and would embrace its introduction we feel that dealing with this at the State level could detract from the importance of such an allowance and potentially leave a situation where some States have a version of DETA and others do not. We feel that Federal ICPA representing all the States on this issue will, if DETA is adopted, support ICPA members fairly across Australia.

Moved: *Alys McKeough (Gascoyne)*

Seconded: *Mary Wake (Gascoyne)*

CARRIED

Agenda Motions: Communications

A6. **Central Wheatbelt North Branch**

Communications

“Central Wheatbelt North Branch would like ICPA (WA) to support ICPA (Aust) in lobbying the Minister for Regional Development and telecommunication providers to investigate mobile call dropouts and restoration times on mobile tower backup batteries.”

Explanation:

Members still report significant issues with call dropouts and timely restoration of the backup battery on mobile towers during extended power outages. We request that these concerns are raised when in meetings with telecommunication providers.

Moved: *Isabel Nixon (CWN Branch)*

Seconded: *Nancy Werder (CWN Branch)*

CARRIED

Agenda Motions: Distance Education

A7 Goldfield Eyre Branch

Distance Education

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Department of Education to ensure that the role of Support Teacher of Learning (STL) and the funding for the position in Schools of the Air (SOTA) continues past 2020.”

Explanation:

ICPA have lobbied for the recognition from the State Government of the importance of the STL position within SOTA's. There have been instances in the past where the Department has considered removing this position. Continued lobbying has shown the importance of this role within the context of our schools.

With the closing of the Chidley Education Centre in 1998, ICPA (WA) lobbied hard to ensure there was a service to replace it and today's STL is the result.

The role of the STL is to provide a support service for those geographically isolated students studying via school of the air, with specific learning requirements including learning difficulties and gifted and talented programs.

The STL teachers:

- Are specialized and highly trained.
- Support teachers in developing, implementing and evaluating individual educational programmes (IEP)
- Assess and evaluate students, using second and third tier assessments and implement interventions.
- Provide detailed assessment records for the entire school
- Provide a link between outside organisations and the school community through referrals to specialists.
- Visit students in the home learning environment to do assessments and support the implementation of IEPs.
- Facilitate individualised lessons for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. These lessons are offered in addition to the student's regular class lessons.
- Develop and provide professional learning for teaching staff and home tutors.
- Source materials and resources to cater for students, staff and home tutors.
- Are a vital, confidential and personal link between school and home, between child, teacher, home tutor and parent.

In the past numerous students have benefited directly from this service. It is imperative that the STL service is not diminished in anyway.

Moved: *Elyce Donaghy (State Council on behalf of Goldfields Eyre)* **Seconded:** *Bianca James (State Council)*

CARRIED

change their criteria to enable our children to receive the education that is comparable to that of our metropolitan students.”

Explanation:

Families who have previously qualified for the Road Travel Subsidy prior to 2019, are now having their claims rejected. This is due to a Trans WA bus service running through their town, or within a 56km radius. The scheduled timetables are more often than not on the days not suitable to the school timetables.

For example: The Trans WA bus travels from Perth to Esperance coming through Hyden on a Tuesday. The return bus is on a Thursday from Esperance. This would mean that students would accrue up to and including anywhere from 8 to 16 days absent from school per term. Over a period of 6 years of boarding school this is a minimum of 9.6 weeks school missed. When the bus isn't available on the appropriate days, the expectation is that students travel to Perth and are accommodated as a minor, unaccompanied by an adult. Other than a boarding school, what facility is available to provide this service? This is particularly pertinent when many children are still only 11 years old.

Moved: *Samantha Greay (Hyden)*

Seconded: *Carla Hyde (Hyden)*

CARRIED

A11 Hyden Branch

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) requests that The Department of Transport – On Demand Transport review the transport hub policy criteria for the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) – Road Travel Subsidy. The criteria should state that the nearest transport hub should travel to the nearest appropriate government school.”

Explanation:

The official criteria is as follows:

The Student Travel Subsidy Scheme provides travel assistance to school and tertiary students who are geographically isolated. The two main types of travel support are:

- *Subsidised fares for air, bus and train travel for eligible students who live within the defined remote area of Western Australia (see map)*
- *A road travel subsidy for eligible students who live anywhere within Western Australia but who must be driven in a private vehicle more than 56 km from home to the nearest:*
 - *Appropriate government school with boarding facilities offering classes in the grade or level in which the student is enrolled, or*
 - *Regular passenger transport (bus stop, airport or train station - please visit the [Transwa – Plan Your Journey](#) website for regular passenger transport hubs and routes), or*
 - *A school bus service operating between the student's home and the school they are attending.*

Families are being refused STSS Road Travel Subsidy when the nearest transport hub is more than 56km away, for the 2019 school year.

Example 1: Hyden is 192km from Narrogin Senior High School, our nearest appropriate government school. There is no direct bus route from Hyden to Narrogin so the transport hub criteria is unsuitable to our demographics.

Example 2: When the rejection of a claim was queried by a member that is from Corrigin where there is a district high school with no Year 11 or 12 available. The response from an ODT Customer Service officer to a member was as follows: -

“I understand that the school year your child attends is not available in Corrigin, however the nearest bus service, is less than 56kms. With our assessment to be eligible, you need to reside more than 56kms from the nearest Government Boarding facility or Regular Passenger Transport Service. We therefore pay the allowance to the closest facility/transport hub whichever comes first. To be able to claim the allowance, you must live more than 56kms and each kilometre after, you will be paid rate of \$0.2038 per kilometre.”

The nearest bus service doesn't go to the closest appropriate government boarding facility at Narrogin, it goes to Perth; the opposite direction.

Example 3: Another member enquired why her application was rejected, she was advised;

“That if she looked at TransWA map that she could get her child from Kulin to Narrogin.” Turns out she can - just on two different bus routes and it may take him a day and half to make the journey!

The closest Boarding facility (Narrogin) has no direct bus on a daily or weekly basis.

Moved: *Samantha Greay (Hyden)*

Seconded: *Carla Hyde (Hyden)*

CARRIED

A12 **Kimberley Air Branch**

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Transport to increase the payment per kilometre for the Public Transport Authority (PTA) Conveyance Allowance.”

Explanation

In previous years, the payment per kilometre travel paid by the Public Transport Authority (PTA) Conveyance Allowance was sufficient to cover the costs associated with transporting children to school when there is no access to school bus services. However, in the past two years, the cost of fuel and parts to remote areas has meant that this allowance no longer contributes even 50% of the cost families incur transporting our children to school.

We ask that the Department review the current rate of this allowance and increase it greater than the current CPI so that the cost burden on families to transport our children to school is reduced.

Moved: *Connie Wood (Kimberley Air)*

Seconded: *Kirsty Forshaw (Kimberley Air)*

CARRIED

A13 **Kimberley Air Branch**

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Transport to review the current WA Student Travel Subsidy Scheme for geographically isolated students to allow for discounted fares for students who are required to travel home by air, bus or train at times additional to those already provided for in the scheme.”

Explanation:

The current Student Travel Subsidy Scheme provides a number of travel supports each academic year and these allow for students to travel home at school term breaks and at the start and end of each school year. There is no subsidy provided however for mid-term breaks where most boarding houses close and alternative arrangements need to be made for students to return home at these times.

Students who receive other subsidies such as Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY and AIC Second Home Allowance are not eligible to apply for subsidies under the scheme.

We ask that the Department of Social Services review the current scheme to provide for a student discounted fare rebate for travel additional to what is already provided and also for those who are ineligible for full subsidies under the scheme.

The discount would assist in reducing the fare costs incurred so that the burden of cost on families to transport our children to school is reduced.

Moved: *Connie Wood (Kimberley Air)* **Seconded:** *Kirsty Forshaw (Kimberley Air)* **CARRIED**

A14 **Lakes District Branch**

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Department of Transport and the Minister for Transport for a review into the eligibility criteria of the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) - Road Travel Subsidy.”

Explanation:

Families who have previously received the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme - Road Travel allowance are being rejected due to the introduction of Trans WA services; and that they now reside less than 56kms from the nearest transport hub, with a regular passenger transport service irrespective of whether services from that transport hub travel to the nearest appropriate boarding school.

The timetabling of these services are not suitable for the transporting of rural students to and from their nearest appropriate educational boarding facility as the days these services run are mid-week and would result in the student missing out on up to 20 days of schooling per year.

This reduction of attendance at an educational institution is proven to have detrimental outcomes on a student's academic performance.

The eroding of allowances is an added increase to the cost of educating rural students and shows a lack of support for rural families.

Moved: *Claire Walter (Lakes District Branch)* **Seconded:** *Kym Ross (State Council on behalf of Lakes)* **CARRIED**

S1 Pilbara Branch

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Department of Transport to accept and process requests for refunds for airfares under the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) up until 31 December for the full school year when all travel has been undertaken as is the case for the Road Travel Subsidy (RTS).”

Explanation:

The STSS provides travel assistance in the form of a fares allowance and/or a road travel subsidy subject to a number of eligibility criteria being met. The STSS is available to eligible students who:

- hold Australian Citizenship or permanent residency status
- are below the age of 26
- are dependant financially on their parent(s)/guardian(s)
- are not receiving Youth Allowance or Abstudy
- had a gap of no more than 12 months between secondary and tertiary study
- **To be eligible for air, bus or train fare allowances**, the student and parents must ordinarily reside in the ‘Defined Remote Area of Western Australia’

Eligible applicants are entitled to:

- 8 round road trips per family under the RTS
- 4 return air/bus/train trips for school students under a subsidised fare
- 4 return air/bus/train trips for first year tertiary students (less than 20 years old) under a subsidised fare who have not claimed previously
- 3 return air/bus/train trips for first year tertiary students aged less than 20 years of age who have claimed previously
- 2 return air/bus/train trips for all other tertiary students

The subsidised fare is limited to the cost of the air/bus/train fare for the most direct route by air/bus/train between the principal family home or usual place of residence and Perth. Any additional cost must be borne by the parent(s).

Subsidised fares can be accessed using a travel voucher or by requesting a refund. If a family chooses to book and pay for air, bus or train travel rather than applying for a travel voucher, they may apply for a reimbursement; however, completed refund applications for airfares must be submitted no later than one month after the last date of travel on the e-Ticket or tax invoice.

Families should be allowed to submit refund applications up until the end of the calendar year in order to maximize the advantage of the subsidy. When managing the logistics of secondary students boarding away from home from remote areas, circumstances often change during the year altering plans of transporting students to and from boarding school.

One of the key objectives of the scheme is to alleviate the difficulties associated with access to secondary/tertiary education related transport in regional and remote WA. One of these difficulties is funding transport to and from

boarding school. The flexibility of allowing airfare refunds until 31 December ensures families are receiving the entitlements the scheme has been designed for. We therefore request the Department of Transport to remove the strict one-month time constraint.

Moved: *Pippa Johns (Pilbara)*

Seconded: *Karen Watherston (Pilbara)*

CARRIED

S2 **Pilbara Branch**

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Department of Transport to allow for special circumstances as to the location a student is flying to and/or from when applying for a refund or voucher for airfare under the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS).”

Explanation:

When applying for a refund or voucher through the STSS, a student is only eligible to submit a request for flights via the most direct route by air/bus/train between the principal family home or usual place of residence and Perth.

These two circumstances may affect the location a student flies to:

- 1) Weather events such as flooding and fires may cause road closures between a family home and their nearest airport; however, roads between the family home and an alternative airport may be open, allowing the opportunity for students to fly to the alternative airport.
- 2) Families in remote areas can travel large distances to access needs and services for a variety of reasons, such as student pick-ups from school camps for younger siblings and/or medical services.

If a student is flying to a location from boarding school that is more practical or feasible to be picked up at an airport other than the airport located nearest to their usual place of residence, the family should be entitled to a voucher or refund equivalent to that of the fare to the airport nearest to their usual place of residence.

For example, if a family’s nearest airport is Paraburdoo but they are attending a School of Air Camp in Karratha with younger siblings, it makes sense that their child attending boarding school would fly to Karratha rather than Paraburdoo. The current scheme does not allow for a voucher or refund for this situation.

A student should be eligible to request a voucher or claim the amount of a fare to their usual place of residence regardless of the location they are flying to.

Moved: *Pippa Johns (Pilbara)*

Seconded: *Karen Watherston (Pilbara)*

CARRIED

F1 **Kimberley Air Branch**

Travel

“That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Department of Transport Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) to review their policy regarding the eligibility criteria for families in receipt of the AIC Second Home Allowance in relation to accepting the principal place of residence as the address of the claimant rather than the second home address.”

Explanation:

Presently the eligibility criteria for the AIC Second Home Allowance and the Department of Transport Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) contradict each other and make it difficult for the recipients of the AIC allowance to

comply. You meet AIC eligibility criteria if the main purpose of you maintaining a second home is to make it easier for the child you're claiming for to go to school, and the principal family home is the family's usual place of residence, with at least one parent or guardian living there for more than half the time they're getting the allowance where the child you're claiming for usually spends school holidays.

On the contrary, to meet the Department of Transport Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) must be living in a Defined Remote Area (DRA) to qualify and living in a second home in Perth makes you ineligible. This means that families in receipt of AIC 2nd home allowance are not eligible to claim assistance to meet air travel costs for children comply with AIC ruling and to return home during term breaks.

Moved: *Connie Wood (Kimberley Air)* **Seconded:** *Kirsty Forshaw (Kimberley Air)* **CARRIED**

Agenda Motions: Miscellaneous

A15 **Central Wheatbelt North Branch** *Miscellaneous*

“That ICPA (WA) investigate the logistics involved in offering the State publication “Bits & Pieces” to members in electronic format with the default option being paper format.”

Explanation:

We understand that some members may wish to receive paper copies of ICPA (WA) publications. We ask that the option of electronic publications is offered to members. Electronic distribution aids timeliness of information provides convenient access with handheld devices, cuts the cost of publishing and is an environmentally sustainable option.

Moved: *Isabel Nixon (CWN Branch)* **Seconded:** *Nancy Werder (CWN Branch)* **CARRIED**

S4 **Gascoyne Branch** *Miscellaneous*

“That ICPA (WA) ask Federal Council to consider adding a recurrent payment option to memberships when the ICPA website and membership portals are revamped.”

Explanation:

Many companies offer ongoing annual payments of membership fees, which give the organisation the authority to write to members to remind them their memberships are due, offer the option to request cancellation and if this is not taken up take payment. There are many advantages to having this as a membership option. It saves the treasurers at all levels of ICPA chasing payments from long-term members who may have overlooked payment (this regularly occurs especially in our branch because January is when everyone is on holidays). It ensures continuity of memberships of long-term supporters of ICPA and I personally would be more than willing to sign up to this system as I have been a member for many years. It would save transactions at a branch level for life member payments. It also captures those people who may or may not renew – I am guilty of having recurring payments I forget to cancel then do not worry about it because I have already paid.

Moved: *Alys McKeough (Gascoyne)* **Seconded:** *Kelly Hopkinson (Gascoyne)* **CARRIED**

F3 **Gascoyne Branch**

Miscellaneous

“That Gascoyne Branch convene the 49th Annual ICPA (WA) State Conference in 2021.”

Moved: *Alys McKeough (Gascoyne)*

Seconded: *Mary Wake (Gascoyne)*

CARRIED

Agenda Motions: Post Compulsory

S3 **Gascoyne Branch**

Post Compulsory

“That ICPA (WA)) approach universities who offer the Bachelor and Master of Education to investigate whether station placements could count towards their practical placements as part of their degree.”

Explanation:

At Carnarvon School of the Air we have the most home tutors we have had in quite some time. Home tutors with varying qualifications from student, graduate to experienced teacher, made some comments at our recent meeting. They have asked our branch to ask this question because they think it would have been a great learning opportunity while they were studying. There are many modern technology tools that could assist with assessment of students in these situations and if this model is a possibility the logistics would need further refinement and our branch would be more than happy to assist.

Moved: *Alys McKeough (Gascoyne)*

Seconded: *Mary Wake (Gascoyne)*

CARRIED

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Opened 4.00pm

▪ **Treasurer’s Financial Report**

Bianca James

▪

AGM Motions:

AGM 1

State Council

“That the 2019 Financial Statement and report be accepted as presented.”

Moved: *Bianca James (State Council)*

Seconded: *Kym Ross (State Council)*

CARRIED

AGM 2

State Council

“That ICPA (WA) state affiliation fee remain at \$50 per member family for 2021.”

Moved: *Bianca James (State Council)*

Seconded: *Kym Ross (State Council)*

CARRIED

AGM 3

State Council

“That Barris Accountants Perth WA is appointed as the ICPA (WA) Auditor for 2021.”

Moved: Bianca James (State Council)

Seconded: Kym Ross (State Council)

CARRIED

Election of State Council for 2020 – 2021

All positions were declared vacant and the Returning Officer, Roxanne Morrissey took the chair.

President

Nominated: Kym Ross

Sally Brindal

Seconded: Kym Burns

Duly Elected

Vice President

Nominated:

Seconded:

Duly Elected

Secretary

Nominated: Sally Brindal

Kym Ross

Seconded: Kym Burns

Duly Elected

Treasurer

Nominated: Sally Brindal

Michelle Abbott

Seconded: Kym Ross

Duly Elected

Publicity Officer

Nominated: Naomi Obst

Jane Hughes

Seconded: Amanda Nixon

Duly Elected

Webmaster

Nominated: Sally Brindal

Kym Ross

Seconded: Kym Burns

Duly Elected

Lones Officer

Nominated: Chandra Ridley

Kym Burns

Seconded: Kym Ross

Duly Elected

Immediate Past President

Tash Johns

Ex-officio position

Committee

Nominated: Jane Hughes

Naomi Obst

Seconded: Amanda Nixon

Duly Elected

Committee

Nominated: Kym Burns

Chandra Ridley

Seconded: Kym Ross

Duly Elected

Committee

Nominated: Roxanne Morrissey

Samantha Greay

Seconded: Kym Ross

Duly Elected

Annual General Meeting declared closed at 4.15pm

REPORTS:

2020 ICPA (WA) President's Report

Tash Johns

Hon. Sue Ellery MLC, Minister for Education and Training, Hon. Donna Faragher MLC, Shadow Minister for Education and Training, Hon. Mia Davies MLC, Leader of the WA Nationals, Peter Rundell MLA, WA Nationals, Mrs Roxanne Morrissey – ICPA Federal Life Member and WA Life Member, Mrs Raelene Hall – WA Life Member, Mrs Alana Moller – ICPA Federal President, Representatives from ICPA Federal Council, Guests, Speakers and ICPA members. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the 48th Annual Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Western Australia State Conference.

Welcome to the beautiful waters of the Indian Ocean. Our theme this year is "Building a Better World, One Student at a Time", this theme, I feel, is so very appropriate. Especially when I read the issues our members will raise and highlight today. It is incredibly important that in a world where Mental Health is at the forefront of the issues our students face on a daily basis, be it from either rural areas or the metropolitan area, we are able to nurture and support our youth to grow into tomorrow's leaders with the confidence and assurity they require to succeed.

According to the Mission Australia 2019 Youth Survey; 25,126 young people responded and 8,817 of those from regional areas, the two most cited barriers to achieving post-compulsory study/work goals were academic ability and mental health. The third top barrier for young people from metropolitan areas was financial difficulty, whereas respondents from regional areas, it was where they live.

Two of the policy recommendations from the report that I would like to highlight are: -

- Young People should be supported to remain engaged in education and to transition to further education and employment.
- Investment is required in improving mental health supports for young people with a focus on prevention and early intervention.

I cannot emphasise how important it is, that our rural and remote children receive the support they are entitled to, either through wellbeing and/or financial support, to continue their education from primary school to compulsory secondary education and through to post-compulsory.

2019 continued to highlight the importance of receiving the Boarding Away from Allowance (BAHA) for rural families. Although the Government continue to emphasise the importance of reducing budgets, when you look at the total cost of the allowance - \$231,049, for 2019 alone, the saving to the Government seems quite minimal compared to how many students benefit from this much relied upon allowance.

I can say that by the number of motions received regarding the BAHA this year, it is still a major issue for our members and that their frustration towards the Government must be heard.

I would like to also mention, that this morning at the South Australian State Conference, it was announced that the SA Education Minister has said that they will be doubling the state funded State Education Allowance (SEA) from \$2149.99 to \$4299.98. This is wonderful news for South Australian members and ICPA SA. Well done and

congratulations for the hard work in advocating for an increase to this allowance. I only hope that our Education Minister will follow suit!

The Midwest Branch raised a motion at last year's State Conference requesting that ICPA lobby the Minister for Education and Training for a review into the varying and inequitable fee structure at the Geraldton Residential College.

State Council raised this issue with the Minister during delegations to Parliament in July. ICPA WA was invited to take part in a review, with ICPA WA asking that all students, no matter what school they attend, have access and at the same cost as those students attending government schools to the Residential Colleges. State Council feel that with so many vacant beds within the Residential Colleges, it is important to fill beds and not have numbers reduce. This could in the long run, cause reductions in programs, staff and services within the Colleges.

With the final decision expected towards the end of term three, it was welcome news when Minister Ellery requested a very prompt and thorough review into the fee structure for non-government schools to access places at all Government Residential Colleges, with a decision made by the end of the second term holidays.

The Minister's final decision was *"that from 2020, all students, both public and non-government, will be able to access the regional student residential colleges in accordance with the criteria outlined in the School Education (Student Residential Colleges) Regulations 2017"*, and that *"all current financial agreements requiring the payment of maintenance levies will be discontinued. Non-government school students will pay the same costs and charges for accommodation as public-school students"*.

I would like to thank the Minister for this very quick action, which helped ease our members concerns, and to help keep their children in the regions.

State Council have received a number of reports from members in recent months concerning the Department of Travel, Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) Fares Allowance and Road Travel Allowance. There have been instances where families have previously received the Road Travel Allowance but are now finding their 2019 claims being rejected due to new timetabled bus services being introduced into a transport hub within 56 kilometres from their home.

State Council met with members from the Department of Travel's On Demand Services team to discuss the concerns of our members.

During the meeting it was highlighted that the Department has not changed their guidelines, they are just adhering more closely to the rules to help save taxpayers money.

Vice President Sally Brindal and I recently travelled to Melbourne for the annual Federal Joint Councils meeting.

This meeting gives each of the State Councils the opportunity to come together to discuss the issues and successes with each other and Federal Council.

Areas that were covered were the AIC and issues with renewals, Federal Council working together with each of the States, passing on information and meeting regularly via teleconferences.

With the current website being obsolete by December 2020, Federal Council are currently working with each State to develop an improved, modern and user-friendly website. State councils have had the opportunity to provide

input and be a part of discussions into their future requirements. A number of web development providers have been approached and work is progressing.

State Council acknowledge the frustration members are experiencing when renewing their 2020 memberships online and hope moving forward, that with the development of the new website this process will be more user friendly.

As this is my final report as State President, in recent weeks I have reflected on the past three years with much pride, knowing that the work State Council has undertaken, has resulted in some amazing outcomes for all. On reflection of the Education Cuts in 2017, I found it astounding that my daughter Pippa, who is a third year Political Science student at university, was lectured on the techniques of grass roots advocacy, with her lecturer using ICPA WA as a successful example. Even though she, along with the rest of my family lived and breathed the Education Cuts campaign, she didn't quite realise the enormity of it all and the significance ICPA WA made to the outcome, in particular to the closure of the five Schools of the Air until that moment in the lecture theatre.

I would like to thank the outgoing 2019/2020 State Council for their contribution in advocating on behalf of our members. At last year's State Conference, we welcomed four new Councillors, Kym Burns – Hyden Branch, Jane Hughes – Gascoyne Branch, Naomi Obst – Midwest Branch, Chandra Ridley – Meekatharra Air Branch and returning Councillor, Sandie McCombie – Pilbara Branch.

I have watched each of these ladies grow within the past twelve months and have been impressed with their knowledge, their growing confidence and their passion for education in rural and remote WA. I would also like to express my gratitude to the whole of Council for their wonderful support, their incredible work ethic and friendship not only from this year, but during my entire time on State Council.

Thank you to ICPA Federal Council for their continued support in the governance of our association, for promoting open communication and sharing of ideas and information amongst States and for attending our State Conference.

I would like to acknowledge the support ICPA WA receives from the Department of Education in the form of an operating grant, for the purpose of advocating for education in Western Australia.

I would like to thank our members for attending today and representing your branch, for advocating in your area on behalf of ICPA and for keeping ICPA relevant and at the forefront.

And lastly, I would like to thank our Conference Convenor, Raelene Hall and the Meekatharra Air Branch for the wonderful job they have undertaken in convening the 48th Annual State Conference. You have done an amazing job Raelene and your team, so thank you for the outstanding work you have done.

Treasurer's Report

Bianca James

Good Afternoon Everyone, wow my last report to conference and it is with mixed feelings that I deliver it to you.

When I first joined WA State Council in 2015 it was an OMG what have I just done moment, but over the years my personal and professional growth has grown so much. I no longer dread getting up in front of people and

speaking. I feel confident and sure of myself when I am asked questions about ICPA and have had the occasional radio interview, although I have not yet heard myself!

I put this down to (well maturity for one!) but the great organisation that we are involved with, the willingness of people to embrace your strengths, not knock you for your weaknesses, but encourage and support you to do what needs to be done to run ICPA (WA) and all 12 of its branches. This support is what makes us who we are and one of the reasons ICPA (WA) and ICPA around the rest of Australia successful advocates for quality and equity in all areas of rural education.

2019 went by so fast although for those around Australia that have been faced with the adversity of drought and then devastating bush fires, I am sure that it did not seem so for you. In the recent weeks it has been awesome to hear that some of us have had some much waited for rain. For those that were not so blessed we hold you all in our thoughts and hope that it comes soon.

The Audit report for 2019 looks spectacular doesn't it? However, that huge total of net profit down the bottom can be partly accounted for in sponsorship income for the 2020 conference. We now run all the incoming and outgoing conference financials through State Council, as we are registered for GST, and the majority of sponsors these days request an invoice including or plus GST and the invoices we pay for conference we can then also claim the GST.

I would like to thank the Department of Education for their continued support of ICPA (WA), for the grant we have received annually to assist us with our running expenses. We were also fortunate to secure a grant of \$3585 to assist with display items to be used to promote ICPA (WA) at field days and other such events.

I would also like to thank Midwest and Lones Branches for their donations in 2019 and the Foulkes-Taylor family for their very generous donation.

Member numbers for 2019 did not quite hit 300 which is disappointing, down 34 on the year before. Most people that join ICPA will pay their membership each year, some slip through the cracks and just forget. We regularly send out reminders to members from the previous year. As treasurer I sent out several direct email reminders to past members, we put the link in the monthly Tidbits newsletter and Federal ICPA regularly have the link in the Branch Bulletins. I encourage all branches to remind members as well. Maybe make 2020 the year to do a membership drive in your district. Each year there are new students that start early learning, head off to boarding school or embark on post compulsory learning of some sort. We need to actively seek these members at branch level. ICPA is run by members for the members, and the more members we can say we have the more pull we have in putting issues to the relevant people/parties and getting results.

With the addition of the display items, depreciation is higher for 2019. Our State meeting travel costs are a lot lower this year as most of our councillors generously donate their travel to and from meetings and field days etc. As a councillor this is not expected but greatly appreciated as a not for profit, volunteer organisation. Most other items are on a par with the previous year.

I feel comfortable that ICPA (WA) in the future will continue, but this is only if we all put up our hand and work together to achieve this.

I wish the 2020 State Council all the best. I may have stepped down from State Council, but I am by no means leaving ICPA. I feel blessed in having been an integral part of this great organisation and will miss the monthly meetings on Zoom and the times we get together for F2F meetings. The friends I have made over the past 6yrs

(only 5 on SC but I first got truly drawn in to ICPA when I went to Federal Conference in Tasmania in 2014) will be with me forever.

My first Federal Conference was awe inspiring, I met some truly passionate and humble people, and this is where I felt WOW! One of the things I still remember from this Federal Conference was that even though where I live is classified as remote and rural, we are by no means remote. I listened to people and their issues, their emotion and passion for these issues got me well and truly in my heart.

I encourage everyone to go to a Conference, whether it be State or Federal. You will be amazed at the tenacity and dedication that is there throughout the whole conference.

It is a big wide world out there and the people you meet are like-minded people. Ones that often will end up being friends for life.

So, I thank you all for the support you have given me as Treasurer over the past 3 years and in other roles that I have held while on WA State Council.

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INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT 2019

To: The Members of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.)

Scope

We have audited the financial statements of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.) for the year ended **31st December 2019**. The Treasurer is responsible for these reports, and has determined that they meet the needs of the Members. We have conducted an independent audit of these reports in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.) only.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing standards to provide reasonable assurance on whether the reports are free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the reports provided. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly, so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.)'s financial position, the results of its operations and its cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Qualification

Subscriptions, fundraising and grants are a significant source of revenue for the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.). As the evidence available to us regarding revenue from this source was limited, our audit procedures with respect to subscriptions and fundraising had to be restricted to the amounts records in the financial records.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, except for the limitations described above, the financial statements represent a True and Fair View of the financial position of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA (Inc.) as at the 31 December 2019.

30th January 2020

Nicholas Barris CPA
Barris Accounting

TAXATION FOR INDIVIDUALS & SMALL BUSINESS
SELF-MANAGED SUPERANNUATION COMPLIANCE
BUSINESS ADVISORY



**THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENT'S
ASSOCIATION OF WA (INC.)
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED
31/12/2019**

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT:

INCOME	2019	2018
Department of Education Grant	9,091	9,091
Donations, Registrations & Sponsorship	4,413	4,810
Fundraising Income	1,055	1,655
Interest Received	516	908
State Conference Funds	28,461	18,236
Subscriptions	25,551	25,314
Sundry Income	3,585	2,290
TOTAL INCOME	72,673	62,303
EXPENSES		
Accounting & Audit Fees	450	450
Advertising	1,401	2,445
Bank Charges	109	3
Computer Repairs & Maintenance	117	-
Depreciation Expense	2,491	211
Donations	1,023	-
Federal Conference Costs	4,483	4,147
Insurance	3,530	3,482
Legal	-	1,603
Postage	348	268
Printing & Stationery	130	434
Purchases (including Promotional Items)	375	2,313
State Meeting Expenses (including related Travel Costs)	20,664	27,679
Subscriptions (Branch & Federal Council)	10,253	9,654
Sundry Expenses (Storage Costs & Fundraising Books & Mugs)	4,815	4,913
Teleconference Costs	214	-
Travel Expenses (Other)	1,447	3,840
TOTAL EXPENSES	51,850	61,441
NET PROFIT (LOSS)	20,822	862

Note: Figures above exclusive of GST

**THE ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENT'S
ASSOCIATION OF WA (INC.)
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED
31/12/2019**

BALANCE SHEET:

CURRENT ASSETS **2019** **2018**

Bank Accounts:

Commonwealth Bank Cheque Account	40,221	22,540
Commonwealth Bank Term Deposit Account (557)	44,079	43,563
Commonwealth Bank Friends Account	2,483	2,358
Paypal Account	4,970	3,176

Australian Taxation Office:

ATO GST Refundable Account	134	-
GST Adjustment Account	-	46

TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS **91,886** **71,682**

NON CURRENT ASSETS

Fixed Assets:

* Plant & Equipment (Pre 2012)	17,127	17,127
* Less: Accumulated Depreciation (Pre 2012)	(11,652)	(11,652)
Plant & Equipment	5,892	2,866
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(4,253)	(1,762)

TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS **7,114** **6,579**

TOTAL ASSETS **99,000** **78,261**

LIABILITIES

GST Payable	-	196
GST Adjustment Account	114	-

TOTAL LIABILITIES **114** **196**

NET ASSETS **98,886** **78,064**

EQUITY

Members Funds	78,064	77,202
Current Earnings	20,822	862

TOTAL EQUITY **98,886** **78,064**

**ICPA
Depreciation Register
For the Financial Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Equipment Description	Date	Amount	OWDV	Adjustments	Dep Rate	Business %	Dep Amt	WDV
Note: Pre 2012 Asset Register (No Details Provided)	30/06/2012	17,127	5,499	-	0%	0%	0	5,499
Equipment Purchased	18/02/2016	624	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Gas To Meeting Licences	27/02/2017	624	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Cannon MG8785 Printer	26/06/2017	63	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Seagate Harddrive	19/07/2017	95	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Harvey Norman Computer for Treasurer	13/04/2018	1,206	1,080	-	50%	100%	540	540
2TB Hard Drive	31/01/2018	84	0	-	100%	100%	0	0
Flag Pole	28/02/2019	162	162	-	100%	100%	162	0
Logo Embroidery Set Costs	01/04/2019	104	104	-	100%	100%	104	0
Flag Accessories	02/07/2019	547	547	-	100%	100%	547	0
Portable Display	02/07/2019	1,432	1,432	-	50%	100%	357	1,075
Table Clothes	02/07/2019	676	676	-	100%	100%	676	0
Display Stand	22/07/2019	105	105	-	100%	100%	105	0
Total		22,849	9,605				2,491	7,114

ICPA Australia Federal Council Report

Alana Moller President ICPA (Aust)

Western Australia State ICPA President, Distinguished guests, Federal Life Members of ICPA, Federal and Western Australia State Life Members, fellow ICPA members and guests, it's my pleasure to be joining you here today at your State Conference and to have the opportunity to update you on the work of Federal Council.

Since the last Federal Updates at State Conferences, there has been some changes for Federal Council. At the 2019 Federal Conference in Adelaide, I was honoured to be elected as Federal President, taking on the role from Immediate Past President Wendy Hick, after completing four years in the role. I would be remiss not to mention and thank Wendy for her impeccable leadership and hard work and determination in leading ICPA Australia since 2015. I would also like to express my gratitude to Wendy for her ongoing guidance and support for myself and the Federal Council as a whole.

Along with myself as the new President, Federal Council welcomed a mixture of experienced Councillors, as well as new faces, all who have their own strengths, abilities and experiences ensuring that Federal Council can continue to represent our members successfully and effectively. For those of us who have been learning our roles, we are so very lucky to have longstanding Councillors to guide and teach us.

Federal Council is acutely aware that the past twelve months have been challenging for many of our members. On top of the harrowing drought continuing unabated in many areas, fires have devastated many communities as well, amongst other difficulties. We, on Federal Council, are not immune to these life events, and sadly, due to extenuating personal circumstances, three Councillors have had to stand down from Council since Conference. I wish to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge those Councillors for the time and commitment they have given to the Federal Council.

Federal Council is committed to supporting and advocating for all in our community suffering challenges and hardships. In the last year, the impacts of flood, drought, fire and so many things in between have been at the forefront of our minds. ICPA Australia has continued to pursue the introduction of a Rural Hardship Education Fund to ensure geographically isolated children can continue their education unhindered at any time of rural hardship. It was encouraging to see our call for a Rural Hardship Education Fund put as a motion in by Senator

Pauline Hanson in October and given unanimous support in the Senate. Although at the time of writing, we are still awaiting further action from the Federal Government on establishing such a fund, Federal Council have continued to build momentum off this, with continued contact with Federal Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators, media coverage, most recently with Alan Jones and through the ongoing support of members, State Councils and other supporters of ICPA Australia.

Early Childhood Education and Care and specifically In Home Care (IHC) and the role it plays for geographically isolated families continues to be an area which Federal Council has focussed our attention. With many concerns being raised around the impacts of changes to the IHC guidelines since the inception of the new program in July 2018, we were pleased that as a direct result of our advocacy the In Home Care transitional provisions around qualification requirements would be extended for remote families until the end of 2021. Federal Council is well aware of the many ongoing concerns for our members who have relied on the In Home Care Scheme and continue to be in close contact with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment in an attempt to deal with these ongoing issues. As we all well know, for those of us that are rural and remote, we have unique education, and child care needs due to our geographical isolation and Federal Council are adamant that we need to continue to advocate for unique programs to be put in place for our members to assist them in providing equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for our children.

Similarly, issues with the Assistance for Isolated Children have been at the forefront of Federal Council advocacy, from concerns around the eligibility criteria for the allowance through to the application and renewal processes. The original intent of AIC was to assist with alleviating costs associated with educating geographically isolated students. We have continued to call for a review of the allowance to ensure that the scheme is meeting the needs of geographically isolated families, especially with members raising concerns around this. In pursuing the call for a Review, we have reiterated that the current eligibility criteria for the Assistance for Isolated Children should neither be removed nor diminished. Federal Council maintains contact with the Department, now known as Services Australia and urge any members with issues around their current allowance to make contact with us so we can assist you.

Individual federal portfolios have been working hard to follow up on Branch motions and issues arising since Conference. To ensure members and others are aware of our full range of advocacy, we have recently changed the name of the Boarding portfolio to Boarding, Hostels and Second Home. This was put in place after concerns were raised that it did not appear as though we supported Second Home families. Although we have always included Second Home families in our advocacy, a simple name change such as this ensures that our members can see that we support them. We have also been working on consciously promoting that ICPA supports all rural students, from early childhood and rural schools through to tertiary, no matter what type of schooling they undertake, in attempt to alleviate misconceptions that we only assist distance education/school of the air families or boarding families. I encourage all current members to help further this message.

The Tertiary portfolio continues the ongoing call for extra assistance to be given to rural and remote tertiary students, through a tertiary access allowance (TAA) and other arrangements. Recommendations for the introduction of a tertiary education access payment as well as many other positive recommendations for rural and remote tertiary students in the National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy Final Report also known as the Naphthine Report, were very encouraging, however, we continue to await action on these from the Federal Government.

In the school travel realm, Federal Council has welcomed the continued commitment to and extension of the discounted residents' fares scheme and capping of airfares by Qantas. There is still a way to go; however, it is encouraging to know that our members' situations are being considered and action is being taken to assist them.

Communications continue to be an area which requires attention and work, and ICPA has been participating in a range of activities associated with ensuring rural and remote communication and the role it plays in geographically isolated education is recognised and always considered. In what is a tremendous opportunity for ICPA Australia, we have recently been appointed to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, TIO for short, Consumer Panel, allowing us a direct voice on rural and remote education in the communications sphere.

Along with the specific topics I have mentioned, Federal Council has continued to engage in all relevant activities to put our member's concerns and priorities forward. Submissions seem to be the favoured method for the government to gain comment and information on topics across many areas and Federal Council feels it is essential that we make comment wherever possible across all sections of interest and concern for our members. In 2019, Federal Council compiled 16 submissions and in 2020 already have completed six submissions on topics from communications and specific needs, from early childhood education through to tertiary and most recently submitted comment to the Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments, and the Senate Inquiry into the Provisions of the Australian Education Amendment (Direct Measure of Income) Bill 2020 which are especially pertinent for our members. These submissions have allowed us to mention many aspects of our advocacy, from longstanding issues through to current prevalent concerns.

ICPA Australia also continues to maintain relationships with other individuals and groups to enhance our advocacy and has continued to connect with organisations such as the National Farmers Federation and other agricultural groups, Dolly's Dream, the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA), the Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia team (BIRRR) Telstra, the Australian Curriculum Assessment & Reporting authority (ACARA), the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA), the National Broadband Network (NBN) and the Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA) to name a few. We feel privileged to have positive relationships with all of these organisations and others and thank them for their interest in and support of ICPA.

Even more so, Federal Council recognises the importance of working cooperatively with state councils across Australia and recently representatives from all State Councils met with Federal Secretary Suzanne Wilson and myself in Melbourne for face-to-face joint council meetings. I think I speak on behalf of all ICPA Councils when I say that it is imperative that we seek to maintain common ground and support each other across all of Australia and joint council meetings are an effective way of facilitating our collective efforts. Over the two days of meetings, we were able to discuss where our advocacy can link together and made plans moving forward to work together and support each other, with discussions encompassing everything from the Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) lobby, to membership, drought and other rural hardship advocacy to website development and everything in between. In the words of Helen Keller, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much".

ICPA Australia is a member-based organisation and welcomes any contact from our members. Our membership base is strong, and it is important that we recognise that ICPA would not be what it is today without our grassroots members. May I take this opportunity to thank Federal Membership Officer Jane O'Brien, treasurers and membership officers for their time and diligence in managing memberships.

Federal Council wanted to let members know that we are working on a new ICPA website that will hopefully meet members' and ICPA's needs better. Discussions are well underway for the new website and we are working

together with State Councils to ensure the new website will work well for members and Councils, so watch this space.

Recently, branches and state councils have received motion updates off the back of the 2019 Federal Conference, and I would like to express our appreciation to all for bringing your issues and topics forward, so we can advocate on your behalf. With this in mind, I would like to welcome any Branches or State Councils to submit motions on any Federal issues you may have to our upcoming Federal Conference in Hobart. I would also like to personally invite and encourage any interested members to consider coming along to Hobart; I can promise you that you will not regret it. It is at Conferences, Federal or State, where our advocacy is decided on and where you can have your say, tell your story and put forward your suggestions. Most of all though it is an opportunity to meet and mingle with a group of likeminded people who understand exactly what you face as the parents of isolated children because they are most often in the same boat. We are all here to support each other, and this is no more obvious than when we come together at Conference because as I have said before, being isolated should not mean you are alone.

REVISE Conference Report

Mary Wake (Chairperson)

REVISE is the acronym for Retired Educator Volunteers for Isolated Students Education.

REVISE consists of a group of dedicated retired teachers who volunteer their time to assist in the education of students enrolled with Schools of the Air around WA. Wherever possible, parents who request our help are provided with an experienced teacher to help them in their schoolroom for up to a month at a time.

I attended my first meeting as REVISE Chairperson in July last year and it is wonderful to be able to give back to an organization that was so helpful to me and my family in the past. The people who do all the work in this organization are the tutors, coordinators and the committee. The coordinators, Sue & Alan Potter have provided most of the information for this report.

Throughout the 2019 year there was a steady request for assistance from parents in remote areas of the State. The first request was received very early on in the year from two families at Purnululu National Park in the Kimberly. These families were new to REVISE and tutors were found who were willing to make the trek all the way up to the National Park. This placement held many challenges, the least of which being that there were 5 children. It's quite a trek to the National Park and we are lucky to have tutors willing to undertake this assignment.

As term 2 progressed there was a slow but steady stream of stations requiring help. We sent 5 tutors on placement during term 2 and 8 in Term 3. Unfortunately, we were unable to find tutors for 2 families. The low number of placements reflect the trend of the last few years. However, there is still an ongoing demand for REVISE services, and we are still able to help almost all the families who seek assistance.

We have also noted that there are a considerable number of families requesting the return of tutors from previous years. We always try to accommodate this request as it ensures a successful placement. Some of our placements made this year were with new tutors experiencing their first time, helping families in the remote parts of our State.

At present we have 32 tutors on our books. 4 of these are new to REVISE WA.

Of the 19 tutors who made themselves available for placement last year some of them were not placed with families as requests from families are down. We are looking at ways to increase awareness of REVISE.

As some requests have been difficult to fill, we have been sending out blanket requests to our members as a tutor who was previously unavailable for the year can find their situation has changed.

We would also like to inform families that we have a number of tutors who are secondary teachers. These tutors are able to assist families who have students at high school and are enrolled with SIDE. Often, secondary students need assistance with, not only their class work, but with strategies to help them organize their time and lesson schedules – a mentor, even. Our tutors can help in this regard.

Evaluations -The more information we collect via the feedback forms from both tutors and families, the better informed we are in the future placement of tutors with families. We continue to have only a very small number of parents who complete the feedback forms online. However, when approached for comment, they are all very happy with the service we provide. We will encourage all parents to provide feedback in the future as we are able to use their positive comments to assist us when seeking future funding from the Education Department. We also need parents' honest evaluation of our tutors, for future placements.

Having all our archives in digital format has been a worthwhile strategy. This system gives us easy access to our historical records when needed. We are indebted to Sue and Alan Potter for their time and commitment to this task.

The Committee is actively seeking new sources of funding to keep us in the black. Fees for placements remain unchanged. Having said that, no family will be denied access to a tutor.

We received a donation from the Murchison Polo X carnival. Thanks to Alan and Sue for their assistance that weekend.

Some years ago, funding was received from the Education Dept. We are trying to reestablish this grant.

Another focus of the Committee has been the updating of the Guidelines for REVISE. This is being done in consultation with State Council.

Lastly, but most importantly, I would like to thank Sue & Alan, the Committee and the tutors for a job well done. I commend our tutors on their willingness and cooperation. They continue to perform in their usual dedicated and professional manner, allowing mothers and home tutors to have a well-deserved break from the normal routine of the school room.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL

Allowances Report

Sally Brindal – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

Allowances Report

There are a number of allowances available to students throughout their compulsory and post compulsory education.

The following are governed by the Federal Government:

- Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance
- AIC Additional Boarding Allowance (parent income tested)
- AIC Second Home Allowance
- AIC Distance Education Allowance
- Youth Allowance dependent and independent
- Start Up Loan – Youth Allowance Recipients
- Relocation Scholarship – Youth Allowance recipients
- Fares Allowance – Youth Allowance recipients
- Living Away from Home Allowance – apprentices only

The following are governed by the State Government:

- Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA)
- Student Subsidised Travel Scheme (SSTS) – Department of Transport
- Conveyance Allowance – Public Transport Authority (PTA)

Allowances motions raised at the 2019 State Conference sought to have ICPA (WA) continue to lobby the State Government for the reinstatement of the Royalties for Region (R4R) component of the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) in addition to seeking a substantial increase.

BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE (BAHA):

In response to the motions raised, letters were sent to the Minister for Education and Training, Hon. Sue Ellery MLC outlining the important role the BAHA plays in providing additional assistance to families who have to send their children away to boarding school. In response, whilst Minister Ellery understands our concerns she stated “... the State and Commonwealth Governments provide financial support to rural and remote families through a variety of mechanisms, including the BAHA.” Although acknowledging “boarding fees for the Department of Education’s Residential Colleges have increased in recent years, the State Government continues to subsidise a significant portion of the operating costs of the colleges thus ensuring the boarding fees are maintained at a more affordable level for regional families. The boarding fees are also reviewed to ensure they remain comparable to the living costs of a student residing at home.”

Unfortunately, it would seem the one factor that has been overlooked is that the Government Residential Colleges are all situated in regional areas and due to location and logistics that option is not available to many families. Where Perth is the only feasible option for some families, there are no Government Residential Colleges available. The only Government Residential College in Perth is located in City Beach and is offered to Gifted and Talented students only. Consequently, remote, rural and regional families have no other choice but to send their children to private boarding schools, at considerable expense, so every cut no matter how big or small is severely felt.

Minister Ellery was kind enough to meet with the State Council delegation in July, where the issue of the BAHA cuts was again raised and discussed. The Minister made it quite clear that the BAHA reduction would continue as planned until 2022 however is happy to examine the structure at that time. In January of this year the WA

Nationals announced a new policy to more than double the BAHA if they form Government in 2021. This shows that the BAHA is still clearly on the political agenda.

Boarding fees in the Residential Colleges continue to rise, up just over 2% in 2020. The Federal Government increases the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) payment each year with CPI, but unfortunately this is soon eroded by the reduction in the BAHA. By 2022 the BAHA payment will be back to \$1320, back to where it was 12 years earlier!

The reduction of the R4R component over 5 years equates to an annual increasing reduction of \$157 per child per year. For the 2019 school year the reduction in the BAHA has saved the Government \$231,049.

Year of Schooling	Number of Applications
2019	1357*
2018	1348
2017	1453
2016	1503
2015	1397

*applications still being accepted and paid

BAHA is available to:

- students who qualify for AIC
- students in respite because of physical or intellectual disabilities, health related conditions or learning difficulties
- students attending and boarding at a Western Australian College of Agriculture
- students enrolled in a gifted and talented program at a public school and is boarding at City Beach Residential College

As we all know the cost of boarding both public and private is continually rising leaving remote, rural and regional families even more disadvantaged.

	(net cost)	AIC	BAHA	Parents (pay annually)
2013	\$11,550	\$7,487	\$2,105	\$1,958
2014	\$11,780	\$7,667	\$2,105	\$2,008
2015	\$12,660	\$7,897	\$2,105	\$2,658
2016	\$13,510	\$8,015	\$2,105	\$3,390
2017	\$13,660	\$8,095	\$2,105	\$3,460
2018	\$13,900	\$8,249	\$1,948	\$3,703
2019	\$14,143	\$8,422	\$1,791	\$3,930
2020	\$14,461	\$8,577	\$1,634	\$4,250
	25% increase			

The announcement from Minister Ellery in August, that from 2020 non-government schools will no longer pay more for their students to board at the Residential Colleges in regional Western Australia was however a silver lining. ICPA (WA) would like to thank the Minister for conducting a very prompt review of the financial arrangements by which students attending non-government schools access the Department's regional Residential Colleges. ICPA (WA) thank the McGowan Government for listening

to our members concerns and the value regional parents place on boarding their children in regional boarding facilities to keep families in regional areas.

ASSISTANCE FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN'S ALLOWANCE:

Recently the implications of receiving the First Home Owners' Grant (FHOG) on the eligibility for AIC was brought to State Council's attention. It is something that has been in the system for quite some time, but a lot of people are unaware. From 1 January 2011, those who have received a financial concession during the purchase of their family home (including, but not limited to, the First Home Owners Grant, state-based first home owners incentives, and stamp-duty concessions) will not be eligible for the AIC Second Home Allowance. The eligibility criteria for the FHOG is that it must be your principle place of residence, therefore it cannot also be the second home. The similar eligibility criteria apply for rent assistance. So, if families are choosing to purchase their first home in order to relocate to access appropriate education it is important they assess their eligibility for AIC before choosing to accept FHOG.

STUDENT TRAVEL SUBSIDY SCHEME - ROAD TRAVEL SUBSIDY:

Although the Road Travel Subsidy (RTS) comes within the travel portfolio there is an overlap with Allowances. Recently, it would appear that members' who previously qualified for the RTS have had their claims for 2019 rejected. There seems to be some conjecture with the calculation of routes and distances, especially to transport hubs. Further details can be found in the Travel Portfolio Report.

FEDERAL UPATE:

Federal Conference:

A number of allowance motions were presented at Federal Conference, concerning areas such as;

- an increase to the AIC,
- ensuring the AIC current minimum distance criteria not be increased,
- establishment of a Rural Hardship Education Fund
- the removal of the fringe benefit tax (FBT) for employers wishing to assist with education expenses of children of employees,
- affordable student concessional fares
- residents fare scheme continuation
- tertiary access allowance
- relocation scholarship criteria
- Youth Allowance criteria, parental thresholds,
- Centrelink Call centre staff training, call, waiting times and call back service.
- Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarship eligibility criteria

Federal Council have lobbied the Department for Human Services for a long time to improve the Assistance for Isolated Children's application process. The Department are working towards online renewal and application coming mid 2021-2022.

Tertiary Access Allowance (TAA):

- TAA remains Federal Council's primary lobby. The TAA is aligned with the Relocation Scholarship amounts. Federal have received motions that ask that the Relocation Scholarship be available to

applicants even when not eligible for Youth Allowance. The Department of Human Services has informed us that the Relocation Scholarship is not available as a stand-alone payment.

Communications Report

Sally Brindal – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

Communications motions raised at the 2019 State Conference sought to have ICPA (WA) continue to lobby Telstra, the Minister for Regional Development and telecommunications service providers to ensure:

- the time taken to restore faults, and the entitlements for every working day of delay beyond an agreed date is within the Customer Service Guarantee Guidelines.
- the retention and maintenance of landline services in rural and remote areas, until another means of reliable, affordable and appropriate voice service is available, in rural and remote WA.

WA State Council raised these issues as communication motions at Federal Conference in 2019. In addition, motions were presented relating to:

- equity of internet access with adequate speed, quality, capabilities, download limits and costs
- all students enrolled in Distance Ed to have access to the Skymuster Ed port
- Sky Muster Ed port to have multicast capabilities
- video streaming for educational use to be included in future Sky Muster Plus plans
- Sky Muster Ed port to include tertiary students
- Sky Muster plus installation
- phone line installation and repair priority when for education
- supplier details for battery backup units for mains power nbn equipment
- VoIP as a back-up service

Federal Council attended the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC) meeting in Canberra. This was followed by a day of delegation meetings in Parliament House, with politicians, to discuss regional, rural and remote communication and connectivity issues.

SKYMUSTER EDUCATION PORTS:

Federal Council continues to follow up on concerns that not every distance education student can access an Ed Port. It does vary from state to state. In WA currently, if a student has a distance education student ID number they can apply for an Ed Port. If a student **does not** have a working service or access to the state provided service, they are eligible to apply for an Ed port. The process is as follows-

1. Contact a Skymuster provider with student ID number and request an Ed Port.
2. The provider will then apply to NBN for the service, NBN will investigate and ensure the ed provider service cannot be accessed for whatever reason.
3. NBN will then authorise the provider to supply the ed port.

<https://birraus.com/2016/02/28/what-is-the-nbn-sky-muster-educational-port/>

In WA the Education Department pay for student's internet only if enrolled in SOTA or SIDE.

If anyone knows of any families having trouble with this, please contact State Council and we will let Kristen Coggan (Federal Communications Portfolio Leader) know and she will contact NBN to escalate. She will need the student ID numbers, names and provider the family has applied through.

SKY MUSTER PLUS:

ICPA (WA) were approached by Jane McNamara, head of nbn local WA seeking families currently using nbn Sky Muster to be part of their Sky Muster Plus trial. Five families from the Kimberley to the Goldfields and in between took part in the three-month trail. nbn™ sought feedback in relation to any noticeable changes to download and upload speeds, dropouts and other improvements.

Sky Muster Plus is now available through a number of ISP providers. The big advantage for Regional, Rural and Remote users will be greater data capacity and data allowance exemptions for key functional uses of the nbn™ access network.

While the unlimited data for certain activities is welcomed (when the kids have used all your data) for things such as general web browsing, checking emails, common critical software updates for PC and smart phone operating systems, banking and visiting social media, there are some very specific limitations to what data is and isn't unmetered.

Web browsing – using HTTP or HTTPS protocols. Only text and static images are unmetered, not video and audio content. Downloads and uploads of text and imagery are also unmetered unless they are to or from cloud storage or file-sharing sites like Dropbox, YouTube or Spotify.

Social media

This only applies to text and static images on the following platforms:

- Facebook Facebook Messenger Instagram LinkedIn
- Snapchat Twitter WhatsApp

Email

This only applies to sending and receiving emails from the following services:

- Gmail Hotmail iCloud email Outlook.com
- Outlook 365 email Yahoo email

PC/smartphone updates

This applies only to operating system updates for the following systems:

- Android Apple iOS Apple OSX Huawei
- Linux Microsoft Windows

Any data routed through a [Virtual Private Network \(VPN\)](#) will be counted against your monthly cap, even if it falls into one of the above categories. Peer-to-peer file transfers are also metered, as is any video/audio streaming, online gaming and [Voice over IP \(VoIP\)](#) phone calls.

Gaming and video streaming will still contribute to data download allowances, and if the overall monthly limit is reached, the services will be slowed. The non-metered exemptions will continue to be delivered at wholesale download speeds. Unfortunately, unlike other NBN Co wholesale internet services, the Skymuster satellite service

has regulated the data allowance that a dwelling can access with SkyMuster Plus plans still only having a maximum of 150GB of peak data. Hopefully, with rapid advances in technology some of the limitations will be decreased and potentially unlimited download plans.

ICPA (WA) would like to thank nbn™ Local for considering us to be a part of their trial program.

Skymuster installs

Did you know that there is no cost to have the hardware required for a Skymuster NBN™ internet service installed at your place? This government funded incentive is only guaranteed until 2020. ICPA Australia urges members to take advantage of this while they can. Information on providers and plans can be found here. <https://birraus.com/satellite/satellite-providers/>

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR OFF-PEAK DATA

Sky Muster™, along with many other ISPs, off-peak timings are between 1am to 7am every day. There are many ways to make the most of your off-peak data, without interrupting your sleep. Here are three ways to do it.

Install a Download Scheduler

One of the easiest things to do to make the most of your off-peak data is to check out the many download schedulers available online. Download schedulers work by allowing you to schedule large file downloads in off-peak hours. There are many free download schedulers available.

Synching Cloud-Based Applications

We all use a lot of cloud-based applications these days, such as drop box and google drive. There are ways to set your computer to schedule the synching of these cloud-based files at off-peak times, reducing your data usage during peak times. Instructions are included below:

All operating systems on all devices: <https://www.multcloud.com/tutorials/dropbox-schedule-sync-1234.html>

Google drive: https://www.maxsyncup.com/how_to/setup_google_drive.html

Windows: <https://www.howtogeek.com/123393/how-to-automatically-run-programs-and-set-reminders-with-the-windows-task-scheduler/>

Software Updates

Updates are another sure-fire way to eat into your usage allowance but are necessary to ensure your computer or mobile device is secure and running smoothly. The most popular operating systems will allow you to schedule updates for a later time. All you have to do is make the changes to your device. For instructions on how to reconfigure your software download preferences, have a look here:

For Apple IOS <https://iphone-tricks.com/tutorial/3869-how-to-install-ios-updates-overnight-automatically>

For Windows <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/4028233/windows-10-manage-updates>

MOBILE BLACK SPOT PROGRAM (MBSP) APPLICATIONS/ROUNDS:

Under round 4 of the MBSP Telstra will remove 131 network black spot locations. The locations will benefit from a mix of new mobile base stations and small cells. By the end of round 4 Telstra will have contributed over \$280 million and built more than 780 new sites. The Guidelines for Round 5 were released on Grant Connect on 5 April 2019 and the Grant Opportunity (GO2529) was opened for applications. Up to \$80 million in funding has been

allocated for Round 5. Mobile Network Operators and Infrastructure Providers had until 26 July 2019 to submit their application.

TELSTRA 3G SERVICE CLOSURE

Telstra has announced that the 3G mobile network will be switched off in June 2024 to free up spectrum to make way for 5G. Between October 2019 and now, Telstra will have to upgrade its 4G coverage to ensure regional customers in an area totalling around 770,00 square kilometres across Australia do not lose network access. Although this is almost a third of the total area Telstra covers, currently 0.3% of the population has 3G only coverage.

There has been concern from members that 4G will not provide the coverage of 3G. However, WA State Council have been assured that Telstra will deliver like for like coverage when 3G is switched off. 5G is predominantly about larger metro/regional areas. 5G piggy backs off 4G and has no reliance on the 3G 850mhz spectrum. So 5G will be able to utilise that 850mhz to reach further afield.

All wireless communications rely on radio frequency or "spectrum" (measured in megahertz bands). Spectrum is a fixed resource. The amount available to use is determined by the physics of radio waves. Telcos buy access to "lots" of spectrum that they use to build their network, but once a band is full, that's it. We can't add more. As such, telcos have to make the most of the spectrum they have. For example, if a provider no longer runs 3G services on a certain band, it can redeploy that spectrum as faster 4G. Think of spectrum like a farm. You can change how you use your land - you could turn your apple orchard into a vineyard - but you can't plant outside of your property. Not a perfect analogy but hopefully provides some clarity.

ILLEGAL REPEATERS

Illegal repeaters continue to cause problems of intermittent mobile coverage for both Telstra and consumers. The best way to report issues is:

- Telstra page service status page. <https://outages.telstra.com.au/>
- Report on phone 13 22 03
- Regional page: www.telstra.com.au/regionalaustralia
- Reporting illegal repeaters: through faults line
- State Council/members can contact and ask directly

SIGNAL DROP OUT

Telstra has received, and members have raised, greater issues with call drop out. Congestion is one factor attributing to the issue with data usage increasing by 40% per annum. In addition to our reliance on mobile phones for calls and internet, there is an abundance of Internet of Things (IOT) that are also using the system. This includes things such as watches, sensors, weather stations, ear tags, water tanks etc. They do only require a lower speed of data and do not report back (ping) as often. Telstra continues to make improvements to its extension equipment (external antennas, TGO antennas etc) and the availability to customers at a rebated cost, in order to help extend coverage.

Telstra is continuing with the launch of its Mobile Satellite Small Cell solution which is funded by co-contributions from Telstra and the customer. The customer pays an initial amount to cover the cost of installation and Telstra build and maintain the small cell, reducing the cost of gaining access to new coverage from hundreds of thousands

of dollars for a new base to tens of thousands. Unplanned mobile outages may result in additional issues, sometimes involving loss of significant transmission points. Smaller sites have banks of batteries all with life span and age variation, which impacts battery backup response times. Technicians may have to deal with extra issues when at site. Ideally there would be good battery back up at transmission sites.

SCAM WARNING

It seems that these scams are forever continuing. Members are advised that there are still a number of scams occurring in relation to nbn™. Customers are contacted by someone claiming to be from nbn™ asking for personal information and/or a threat to services being cut.

ICPA (WA) State Council met with Boyd Brown, Area General Manager WA and Naomi Evans, Regional Engagement Manager at our July face to face meeting. State Council would like to thank them for their willingness to meet with us and discuss the issues and concerns that are affecting our members.

Distance Education, SOTA & Curriculum Report

Chandra Ridley – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

At the 2019 State Conference **Motion A7** was presented relating to the Distance Education/SOTA/Curriculum Portfolio concerning funding for the position of Support Teacher Learning (STL) in Schools of the Air (SOTA).

This issue was raised at a meeting with the Minister for Education and Training, Honourable Sue Ellery, MLC, during State Council's July face to face meetings. The Minister would not guarantee the position but did state that it was funded for twelve months at a time and the role would not be diminished.

CURRICULUM

In 2019 the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) was completed online by over 50% of students Australia wide. There were over 350,000 tests submitted successfully on the first day, but though a number of schools experience technical difficulties. The remainder of the week went smoothly with a total of 1.5 million tests submitted online.

In WA 40,000 students from 300 schools were affected by technical difficulties with 17,000 students choosing to resit the writing component. In September Minister Ellery stated that no student would be disadvantaged by technical difficulties and their highest test score would be recorded, regardless if it was on the first or second test. Other States chose to use the score from the second test.

At least two Schools of the Air (SOTA) successfully completed NAPLAN online in 2019. This was completed during school camps, so tests were conducted in a formal setting at the same time as mainstream schools. This was advantageous for teachers administering NAPLAN online as they had the support of the Education Department call centre.

The School of Isolated Distance Education (SIDE) completed paper-based NAPLAN tests in 2019 and will be doing the same in 2020. There were issues with the online format including difficulty of access for overseas students.

The move to NAPLAN being solely online has been delayed until 2021 in an attempt to fully overcome the technical difficulties experienced last year.

To view the 2019 NAPLAN summary results, visit <https://reports.acara.edu.au/NAP>

SOTA & DISTANCE EDUCATION

Meekatharra SOTA celebrated their 60th Anniversary in September 2019. A function was held at the school on the Saturday, followed by an informal get together on the Sunday. Feedback was positive from both events with past and current students, home tutors and teachers attending.

SIDE had a very successful orientation day on 13th December for those enrolling in 2020. Around one hundred parents and students attended, with families offered the opportunity to tour the SIDE campus, talk with school leaders, the student services team and teaching staff. Students also participated in online learning activities.

Early Childhood Report

Jane Hughes – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

As semester one the 2019 student census there where:

- 17 Kindergarten students at Western Australian Schools of the Air (SOTA)
- 19 Pre-primary students at Western Australian Schools of the Air (SOTA)
- 2 Kindergarten students at the Western Australia School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE)
- 10 Pre-primary students at the Western Australia School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE)

A Parliament of Australia media release on the 4th December 2019, from committee chair member Mr Andrew Laming MP, stated there will be an inquiry into the performance of the Australian education system in remote and regional areas. Areas of interest for Early Childhood were:

- How families of vulnerable young children can access, enrol and remain in early learning, and the collaboration between early and primary education.
- The performance and monitoring of those in home-schooling to maintain national minimum standards.

In Home Care transitional provisions have ~~has~~ been extended for an additional 2 years. The Government has extended the deadline for IHC educators to earn their qualification to December 2021.

To meet the transitional requirements IHC educators must:

- Access the expertise of an educator with at least a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care, for at least 20 percent of the time care is provided, or
- Have been continuously employed at an early education and care service in a remote or very remote area for at least 15years.

For more information visit <https://education.gov.au/in-home-care>

The Department of Education have raised concerns with Wanslea IHC Support for allowing distant educator supervision as Child Care Subsidy claimable hours although not being “on air” hours. According to the Department of Education six hours per school day has to be allocated for non-claimable formal school hours. This is severely reducing the hours IHC educators have been claiming which may affect a family’s eligibility for IHC. It is important that the current guidelines are clearly understood to maintain the integrity of the subsidies received.

This is taken from the National IHC Guidelines:

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND HOME SCHOOLING

Commonwealth funding is provided to state and territory governments for the purposes of providing distance education, including School of the Air (on air and off air) arrangements. *Families cannot receive child care subsidies during the time a child is engaged in formal schooling, including for a tutor or governess to supervise the provision of distance education where the care (or part thereof) is for the purpose of the child to undertake a state or territory education program.* This longstanding policy is stipulated in section 85BA(1) of the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999* and further clarified in Part 2, Section 8 of the *Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017*. Care provided while a child is completing homework does not constitute formal schooling.

Wanslea will be going through all DE Supervisors to ensure that they have either completed a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education or are in the process of completing this course.

Community childcare funding for special circumstances has been extended into 2019-2020, where Child Care Centres, IHC providers etc. can apply to receive up to \$10,000 to help with viability issues, drought etc. For more information see <https://www.education.gov.au/community-childcare-fund-cccf-special-circumstances-drought-support>

The Hon Dan Tehan MP announced on the 3rd December 2019, that early childhood students with a disability will be assisted through the Inclusion Support Program, which provides more than \$500million to help education and care services include children with additional needs alongside their peers.

ICPA Federal Council continue to work towards kindergarten students being eligible for AIC allowance and a National Working with Children Check.

Post Compulsory Report

Elyce Donaghy – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

There were no Post Compulsory motions raised at the 2019 ICPA (WA) State conference, however it was still an interesting year for the Post Compulsory portfolio.

TERTIARY/TRAINING DOCUMENT

A document was made available to ICPA members containing useful websites and resources for students to help plan their futures, whether that be through university, VET courses, apprenticeships and heading straight into the workforce.

https://www.studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/files/beyond_school_study_guide.pdf

REGIONAL HUBS

In November 2018, the successful grant recipients of the Regional Study Hubs program: 16 Hubs in 22 locations were announced by the Western Australian Government. These Regional Study Hubs will deliver educational services and provide infrastructure such as study spaces, video conferencing, computing facilities and internet access, as well as academic support for students studying via distance at partner universities.

UNIVERSITY COURSE WEBSITE www.courseseeker.com

A recommendation from the Admissions Transparency Implementation Plan is the new national Higher Education information website, *Course Seeker* launched late 2018, a one-stop website which will enable students to find, compare and apply for over 7000 HE courses. The information enables direct comparison of admission criteria and application processes across different courses and providers.

ABC NEWS

The lack of communications technology and digital literacy education investment in Australia is causing Australia to fall behind in the Global Ranking of Digital Competitiveness. Australia has dropped one place to 14th out of 63 countries. Universities have had funding cuts and a lack of support from the Federal Government when it comes to digital education. Australia's communications technology is ranked 54th out of 63, our internet bandwidth and speed is ranked at 38.

CHEAPER TAFE FEES

On the 14th October 2019, the West Australian Government announced a \$53 million package that will cut TAFE fees for 34 high priority courses to make training more affordable. Some of these courses include nursing, aged care, disability support, hospitality, tourism and engineering. The cuts are designed to coax young people back into training to fill emergency skills shortages.

- TAFE fees for 34 high priority qualifications will be halved from January 1, 2020
- The fee reductions will make training more affordable for thousands of students
- The 50 per cent fee reductions have been targeted to align with emerging skills shortages, the State's economic diversification strategy and important sectors of the local economy including aged and disability care, METRONET and civil construction, defence, hospitality and tourism.

<https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2019/10/McGowan-Government-reduces-TAFE-fees-by-50-per-cent.aspx>

Rural and Remote Report

Naomi Obst – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

There have been motions over the past years concerning the lack of training by the Education Department for new Principals into our small rural schools. 2019 has seen the beginnings of a program for new Principal's which will hopefully see better retention rates for Principals and teachers ensuring that they are "ready to go" on day one in their new school.

Small communities endeavour to support new Principals however ICPA members have increasingly expressed concern that many of these new Principals lacked the required training to confidently lead their school from the very first school day.

In 2019 the Esperance Branch submitted **Motion A8** " That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Education to provide relevant Professional Development Training in areas such as online budgeting, Human Resource Management Information Systems (HRMIS), Policy requirements and School Council Training to all new Level

Three School Principals that have not had previous Principal or Deputy Principal role/s prior to beginning their position.”

Motion S3 also from the Esperance Branch “That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Education for the role of an Executive Principal being trialled with the Esperance Mallee Schools; to provide an overarching supporting role for new Principals.”

In relation to Motion S3, Minister Ellery said that there had been a trial in 2016 in the Goldfields region. This trial was disbanded as it encountered major issues with the model of accountability and who was responsible for what.

In July 2019 State Council members met with Minister Ellery during our Face to Face meetings in Perth. Minister Ellery was receptive to Motion A8 and agreed that an educative program for beginning Principals would benefit all in these small school communities.

From 2019 the current programs as explained by the Minister are as follows;

- 1) *The Principal Eligibility Model*; This is an online professional learning module designed for aspirant Principals to develop the necessary knowledge and skills in managing a workforce, student services, financial resources and risk.
- 2) *Leading School Improvement in Small Schools*; is designed for Principals and their leadership teams to strengthen work relating to leading whole school improvement and building on current practice. The majority of attendees are Level three Principals.
- 3) *Launch*; A newly appointed Principal Program is for Principals in their first three years in the Principal role or with a fixed term contract of six months or longer. 49 beginning Principals completed the programme in 2019, of which 21 are Level 3 Principals.

In recognition that Principals need to be in their schools as much as possible Launch incorporates mixed modes of delivery.

- a) Four days of face to face workshops.
- b) 12 months of mentoring support and additional coaching support in school.
- c) Webinar modules (delivered in school/regional offices) presented by department staff across business units such as workplace policy, industrial relations, performance management and employee support, student centred funding, information and communication technology, legal services and infrastructure.

Since our July Face to Face meeting ICPA have continued to have discussions on this topic with Director General of Education Lisa Rogers and Melesha Sands Director of Leadership, Innovation & Strategy. Both Lisa and Melesha have been extremely receptive during our conversations and we thank them for this open dialogue.

Melesha has provided us with some statistics which we hope will be improved upon in 2020 and beyond.

- In 2019, 75 Principals completed the Launch program. 43 were from regional areas. (Kimberley 3, Midwest 9, Pilbara 4, South west 7, Wheatbelt 19 and Esperance/Goldfields 1.)

The Department also trialled a WA Future Leaders Framework program in 2019. 138 teachers expressed an interest in participating in this program of which 29 were from the regions. (Kimberley 4, Pilbara 5, Midwest 3, Esperance/Goldfields 1, Southwest 11 and Wheatbelt 5)

All teachers who expressed an interest in the trial were provided with travel and accommodation funded by the DoE.

We look forward to 2020 and hope that many more of our rural school leaders take up this opportunity and that the program continues to be refined to ensure that it meets the needs of the very valuable role Principals play in our rural schools and communities.

In September 2019 State Council was requested by ICPA Australia to contribute to the issues paper requesting the establishment of the (RHEF) Rural Hardship Education Fund, which is designed to assist families in times of rural hardship (drought, flood, fire, cyclone, industry impact) when their income is severely impacted through no fault of their own. We were specifically asked to give examples of how our children are impacted during these times and how this might be addressed by government. Thank you to those members who contributed.

Special/Specific Needs Report

Kym Burns – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

Special Education, as always, continues to remain a great interest to ICPA.

In June at the Liebe Field Day Professor Lyn Beazley spoke about a program called “Coderdogo”. <http://coderdogo.org.au/>

Professor Beazley was promoting this for use within WA schools, especially as a tool for autism. Dojo provides a fun, free and social learning environment where young people can meet others with similar interests. It is not a class or workshop, there is no curriculum. Instead Dojo offers open, free and unstructured club settings in which young people can follow their own interests and develop self directed learning habits with the support of mentors.

2019 saw no changes from the Student Centred Funding Model (SCFM) in regard to funding towards English as a second language (EAL) . This has been a concern as it was felt a clearer understanding of who was eligible was required.

In 2020 the department will be implementing changes in funding for the EAL allocations. The savings created by the changes will be reinvested to enhance the scope of EAL funding to include:

- Pre-primary students
- Aboriginal students whose first/home language or dialect is not standard Australian English
- An additional year’s support to the current settings for all students yet to demonstrate proficiency.

The start of 2020 sees the Special Education Funding Rates available for viewing on the Department of Education website, <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/>

Also available now is the 2020 updated guidelines for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. NCCD.

By continuing to update this information the Australian Government will use this information to repair inconsistencies from previous arrangements across the states and territories.

What is hoped to be achieved is a 5.1 per cent growth each year for the student with Disability up until 2029.

NAPLAN online testing still remained a concern in 2019, especially where it concerned a student with disability.

It is stressed by the Education Department that adjustments can be made to each individual student with a disability to encourage maximum participation. Updated information is available on the Education Department website to schools, students and their parents/guardians.

Student Accommodation Report

Kym Ross – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

At the 2019 State Conference a motion was submitted requesting that ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Education and Training for a review into the varying and inequitable fee structure at the Geraldton Residential College.

As a result of this motion the Minister advised the Director General, Department of Education to immediately conduct a review of arrangements with non-government schools to access places and the variety of agreements that existed; and invited ICPA (WA) to consult on this review.

This review examined the:

- Historical context for the current arrangements.
- Equity, fairness and suitability of the current arrangements for all parties.
- Current practices in relation to Abstudy payments, if applicable.
- Possible modifications to legislation arrangements or practice; and
- Financial implication for government of any proposed changes.

To ensure a comprehensive report be presented ICPA requested individual case studies and supporting information from members. As ICPA advocate for all rural and remote students who attend a residential college, it was imperative that the outcome achieved would not be to the detriment of families in other regions around the state; and that ideally no additional levies or charges be incurred.

Delegates from ICPA (WA) State Council met with Minister Ellery on 3rd July 2019 to discuss our concerns in relation to the fee structure. Additionally, at this time, our submission and comments into the review were presented and we were advised that the anticipated date for a final decision on the outcome of the review was expected to be released during Term 3 2019.

Shortly after on 19th July 2019 State Council received notification that the review had been completed and the key findings were:

- Parents in regional locations value highly the opportunity to place their children in regional boarding facilities, rather than having to send them to Perth.
- The School Education (Student Residential Colleges) Regulations 2017 gives equal access to regional Student Residential Colleges for public and non-government school students.
- There is ample capacity at the regional Student Residential Colleges to accommodate non-government school students.
- The additional costs to non-government school students are influential in parents deciding to send their children to Perth because of the low-cost differential. This results in loss of income to the regions and exacerbates family separation.

With the final decision being *“that from 2020, all students, both public and non-government, will be able to access the regional student residential colleges in accordance with the criteria outlined in the School Education (Student*

Residential Colleges) Regulations 2017”, and that “all current financial agreements requiring the payment of maintenance levies will be discontinued. Non-government school students will pay the same costs and charges for accommodation as public school students”.

ICPA (WA) welcomed this positive decision and acknowledges the work undertaken by both our State Council and members of the Midwest Branch.

On 27th September 2019 work commenced onsite on the redevelopment of Moora Residential College, the expected completion date for the project is October 2020 and we await further information from the State Government.

For the 2019 academic year a comprehensive list of all:

- Secondary government and non-government boarding facilities; and
- University student accommodation options

has been compiled detailing the capacity and associated costs of each facility. Data collected has found that when comparing this information against figures for the 2020 academic year, boarding fees have increased on average by 2% compared to the National average of 3%.

Federally, a key point of discussion throughout the past 12 months has been the tough financial conditions being experienced by families due to the ongoing drought and the impact this is having when sending students away to school. Members of ICPA Federal Council have heard stories of families who cannot meet the costs of boarding and are removing students from schools or trying to decide which child will be educated and which child will not.

Whilst some have proposed a HECS style scheme for farmers for expenses such as private school fees, others want the network of government boarding schools extended.

Boarding schools have been supportive of rural students during the current drought; however, they must run a business, and many are finding it difficult to continue to assist multiple students whose families cannot pay the required fees over a long period. The concern that resonates across rural and remote Australia is, how does a geographically isolated student access schooling if their family cannot afford to pay the excess costs associated with their compulsory education?

Although boarding schools in eastern states of Australia are still receiving enrolments, overall the number of students from rural and remote areas is decreasing.

Teacher Training Report

Kym Ross – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

Prior to graduation, all initial teacher education students are expected to sit the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students (the test) to demonstrate that they have been assessed as being in the top 30 per cent of the adult population for personal literacy and numeracy. The test is an online assessment that examines aspects of an individual’s personal literacy and numeracy skills.

Between 2016 and 2018, over 59,000 individuals have attempted one or both components of the test. The table below shows the number of new candidates attempting each component of the test one or more times and the percentage meeting the standard each year.

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Total test candidates	% met the standard	Total test candidates	% met the standard
2016 first time candidates	13,083	95.2%	13,084	94.2%
2017 first time candidates	23,387	92.0%	23,466	92.3%
2018 first time candidates	22,066	90.4%	22,011	90.0%

2019 results are expected to be available around April 2020.

Federal Media Announcements

6th December 2019 - Teacher reforms delivering improvements

The Morrison Government’s reforms to teacher training are delivering improvements.

According to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Initial Teacher Education: Data Report 2019 shows:

- 87 per cent of employers were satisfied with the performance of teaching graduates.
- 86 per cent of undergraduates and 81 per cent of postgraduates reported their qualification prepared them for employment (for non-ITE programs – undergraduate: 69 per cent; postgraduate: 75 per cent).
- 64 per cent of ITE entrants had an ATAR higher than 70, up from 58, of entrants who entered ITE using an ATAR.
- Over the past decade, there has been an increase in the number of ITE students who commenced a master’s qualification (eight per cent in 2008 to 21 per cent in 2017).

Teachers can make the biggest difference to a student’s education and that is why the Government introduced reforms to improve teacher education. Mr. Tehan said, “We are starting to see the benefits of those reforms with more confident teachers entering the classroom and nearly nine out of ten employers expressing satisfaction with their teacher’s performance.”

As part of the government’s focus on literacy, they are working with providers to ensure that trainee teachers learn how to teach phonics to their students; and have asked that states and territories deliver learning progressions to empower teachers to better deliver highly-personalised, informed teaching plans.

16th October 2019 – Supporting more teachers in very remote communities

Students attending very remote schools will benefit from teachers staying at their schools longer.

The Morrison Government introduced legislation to waive the HELP debt for teachers who worked at very remote schools.

The program has also been extended to cover early childhood teachers.

Minister for Education Dan Tehan said the Morrison Government would wipe up to five years' worth of HELP debt from students who spend at least four years working in very remote education settings.

The program will also assist more than 3,500 educators in very remote settings annually by removing indexation on their HELP debt.

To be eligible teachers must work in an eligible location for at least four years, commencing on or after the start of the 2019 school year, with an equivalent pro-rata rate for part-time teachers. Eligible areas are those defined as very remote by the Australian Statistical Geography Standard.

Up to a maximum of five years tuition fees could be waived for initial teacher education which was deferred as a HELP loan. This includes a HECS-HELP loan, a FEE-HELP loan, or a combination of both.

31st May 2019 - Literacy and numeracy tests ensuring high-quality teachers

The literacy and numeracy test for teaching students is ensuring that graduate teachers have the necessary skills required in the classroom. Teaching students are required to pass a literacy and numeracy test with a score that puts them in the top 30 per cent of the Australian adult population.

In 2018, 90.4 per cent of teaching students met the literacy standard and 90 per cent of students met the numeracy benchmark.

Minister for Education Dan Tehan said the test was working as intended by ensuring that graduate teachers had a high level of the essential skills needed to teach children.

"We have also introduced a high-quality teaching performance assessment that students must pass prior to graduation that demonstrates graduate teachers are classroom ready."

"Higher education providers need to take responsibility for the teaching of students that do not meet the standards by ensuring they receive additional support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The onus is on universities to ensure the graduates they are producing meet the high standards expected by parents and the standards that our children deserve."

Travel Report

Elyce Donaghy – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

The 2019 WA State conference saw fewer travel and transport motions raised than in previous years. The motions raised by ICPA (WA) members asked State Council to lobby for an increase to the per kilometre payment received when applying for the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS) Road Travel Conveyance Allowance; a full policy review of the "Orange Bus Service" for rural students; and a review of the Public Transport Authority (PTA) Operational Policy Manual.

Road Travel Subsidy

Motion A9 was raised at conference requesting an increase to the payment per kilometre for the STSS Road Travel Conveyance Allowance. This motion actually relates to the STSS Road Travel Subsidy, as provided by the Department of Transport, which is different to the conveyancing allowance provided by the Public Transport Authority in relation to school bus services.

In a letter to the Minister for Transport, Hon. Rita Saffioti MLA, State Council advised that in previous years, the payment per kilometre for travel paid by the Department of Transport's Subsidy was sufficient to cover the costs associated with transporting children to boarding school where there is no access to school bus services. It was highlighted that, in the past two years, the cost of fuel and parts in remote areas of WA has meant that this allowance no longer contributes even 50% of the cost families incur transporting children to boarding school. State Council asked that the Department review the current rate of subsidy and increase it greater than the current CPI so that the burden of cost on families to transport children to boarding school is reduced.

A letter of response from Minister Saffioti was received stating that the Road Travel Subsidy was adopted in 1999 and was based on making a contribution to car running costs and not to totally recompense car running costs. The Minister then went on to state that the current rate of 21.50 cents per kilometre is still within a range comparable to other similar State transport assistance schemes and therefore no increase will be made.

Recent concerns from members has been brought to State Councils attention in relation to the rejection of applications for STSS – Road Travel Subsidy for the 2019 school year. Delegates from State Council have met with the Department of Transport – On Demand Services to discuss or concerns and to clarify the departments guidelines for eligibility.

Orange Bus Service Policy Review

A letter requesting a full policy review of the "Orange Bus Service" for rural students was sent to the Minister for Transport, Hon. Rita Saffioti MLA. The letter conveyed that one of the greatest challenges for regional, rural and remote families in accessing appropriate education, for their children, is the tyranny of distance. ICPA (WA) acknowledged that the Department of Transport greatly assists in minimising that disadvantage. However, there are still a number of situations where families are at a great disadvantage under the current Orange School Bus Policy. The policy has not been reviewed for many decades and no longer covers all contingencies.

Minister Saffioti gave the following response; *"The Orange School Bus policy is provided according to published criteria and a set entitlement framework. It is applied in a manner that is reasonable and equitable for all communities in Western Australia and does not allow exclusivity by establishing rules for some groups or to give preference for school of choice consideration. The rules governing school of choice are covered by the granting of complimentary status and, as such, complimentary rules cover students who have no eligibility to transport assistance but can access the school bus network on a case by case basis. As the Government funds the orange school bus network to provide a reasonable level of transport assistance, there is currently no intention to change the current policy. While school of choice poses many different transport scenarios, any decision to alter the current policy for the provision of transport assistance for all students in Western Australia by allowing school of choice, would be cost prohibitive. The Government has to manage a balance between a reasonable level of student transport service to the community while operating within budget constraints.*

In respect to any specific cases questioning the application of the Student Transport Assistance Policy, ICPA (WA) should liaise directly with Mr John Bailly, Manager of School Buses at the Public Transport Authority (PTA). While families will not necessarily get a school of choice outcome, Mr Bailly can ensure there is flexibility in decisions

made by the branch for better transport solutions for eligible students under the operational rules used to deliver orange school bus services”

Public Transport Authority Operational Policy Manual Review

Motion F2 requested that ICPA (WA) lobby the PTA to review the Operational Policy Manual with a view to ensure more remotely affected families can get better transport solutions under the existing policy transport assistance framework. State Council wrote a letter to Mr John Bailly, Manager School Bus Services, Public Transport Authority asking for a review of the Operational Policy Manual.

In response, Mr Bailly requested case studies to further investigate where the Operational Policy Manual needed reviewing. State Council approached the branch that raised the motion requesting such case studies and Member contact information that could be passed on to the PTA. The limited information State Council received was shared with Mr Bailly, who then consequently investigated the members’ application for 2020. There has been no application made for 2020 by the member and ICPA (WA) have been advised that there will be no further investigation made by the PTA.

BRANCH REPORTS

Central Wheatbelt North Report

Amanda Nixon - President

CWN Branch has had a quiet year in regard to organised events. Numbers in our small rural schools fluctuate with families moving from town due to educational needs of their children.

Field Days: Sally Brindal and I attended the Moora Show on the 21st September 2019. The ICPA stand had many visitors. Relief was shared by many on the decision to keep the Moora Residential College open. Thank you to ICPA members for joining the many proactive organisations in the grass roots community campaign to secure the boarding facilities at Moora. Thank you to the Federal Government for the \$8.7 million in capital funding and the State Government for committing to providing the operational and staffing costs going forward.

We didn’t have enough volunteers for Dowerin Field Day in 2019. We have had a presence at Dowerin Field Days for 5 years, maybe a biannual presence is an option to help volunteer fatigue in the future.

At the 2018 Dowerin Field Days some of our members met Teneeka Hill. Teneeka has assisted many of our branch and other branch members and their families in their transition to high school through the ‘student connect program’. We feel very fortunate to have her attending and presenting at this year’s state conference to speak about her new endeavour ‘parent connect’.

Telecommunications: CWN had a member family involved in the trial for the nbn ‘skymuster plus’ product before its release to the general public. The mobile black spot in the Goodlands region has been addressed with the forthcoming installation of the “co-funded” Telstra Tower. This will make a significant difference to bus runs, staff, student and community travel and connectivity in this region. Members still report significant issues with coverage and call dropouts. We try and promote stationary (home) and mobile repeater kits to help extend coverage.

Maintenance of services remains an ongoing issue to our rural schools. We are concerned about the erosion of services to rural schools and thank ICPA State Council for advocating on our behalf so that rural schools do not continue to be disadvantaged by the removal of services.

Esperance Branch Report

Kath Fowler, President

Having hosted conference in 2019, the Esperance branch has improved its financial situation and was able to sponsor book prizes for the smaller schools in our region; Condingup, Munglinup, Scaddan, Salmon Gums, Cascade, and Esperance Residential College. We plan to expand this to include Esperance town schools this year, because we felt that parents and carers consider ICPA irrelevant to them if they are in town, and this exacerbates the issue.

Our AGM was held in December, and we have had both changes and stability on the executive. We were drafting a motion to present at State Conference, but in the meantime the decision has been reversed - thank goodness. State Library has been under pressure to cut costs, and they in turn have been pressuring regional libraries to cut costs by reducing services. They tried implementing no more interlibrary loans as a policy, but this was fought successfully. Unfortunately, they implemented a directive that no children's literature could be interlibrary loaned. I met with the Esperance President at that time and she took the issue up with State Council. I started to draft a motion for State Conference and sought further information/updates this week. Fortunately, the decision has been reversed and the only ban that remains in place is for children's fiction less than 12 months old. The library officer mentioned she thought the reversal may be due to ICPA involvement.

Our membership numbers are currently low - only 9 have renewed for 2020. So, our focus for this year is to raise the profile locally and attract more members.

Gascoyne Branch Report

Alys McKeough, President

2019 was a quiet year for our branch after our big fundraising efforts in 2018.

2019 began with our AGM in February in Carnarvon at Home Tutors Seminar. We had a few new families at the School of the Air who joined our branch, which was great. We held our annual school photo fundraiser as well.

No new issues have been raised at a branch level during the year, but we are still concerned with:

- * The funding model being used to fund Schools of the Air and the budget decreases that are affecting delivery of programs that are unique to SOTAS
- * The erosion of BAHA funding

During the year we sent delegates to both Federal and State Conferences.

Our second meeting was held in December 2019 to coincide with Christmas and was well attended by members and guests which is a great way to raise awareness of the role of ICPA.

Our cookbook is still progressing. At our upcoming AGM we will be choosing a cookbook company for the printing. We have held our cookbook fundraiser in the past with great success. We will also be planning our fundraising for the upcoming year to fund our awards, bursary, attending conferences and making a donation to the Carnarvon P & C for their Canberra Camp 2021.

Most schools in the Gascoyne received SPIRIT of the Gascoyne book awards. Our SPIRIT of the Gascoyne Bursary (\$1000) went to Sharna Abbott a Carnarvon School of the Air student. Her article will be in Pedals at some stage during the year.

I thank our hardworking committee for all their support during the year to keep our branch active and vibrant - Jane Hughes our Secretary who has also taken a position on State Council which is awesome, Rachael Steadman our hardworking Treasurer and Kristie DePledge our Vice President. We also as a branch thank State Council who work tirelessly on our behalf.

Goldfields Eyre Branch Report

Elyce Donaghy, President

This year's AGM is yet to be held as the Kalgoorlie School of The Air annual Home Tutor Seminar is still a week away. Our current office bearers are President: Elyce Donaghy, Vice President: Shannon Prosser, Secretary: Tauri Simone, Treasurer: Brie Campbell and Assistant Secretary: Ashley Skillington.

Last year we gratefully received a generous donation from the Nullarbor Muster Club. Their ongoing support allows us to continue sending delegates to both State and Federal ICPA Conferences.

Our issues predominantly centre around School of the Air and the past 3 years have been our most challenging. The Department of Education's cuts came as a huge shock to our members and united our branch in the fight to save the Schools of the Air, WA Camp Schools and Residential Colleges. We are about to embark on our annual Home Tutor Seminar at The Fairbridge Camp in Kalgoorlie, this is our second year with Fairbridge as our local camp managers. Hopefully this year will see some of the teething issues with the new management transition ironed out.

I would like to thank all Goldfields Eyre members for your ongoing support and contribution to the branch, without you we would not be as strong as we are.

Hyden Branch Report

Samantha Greay, President

2019 was quiet but productive. We had a total of 47 members. We started with our AGM and General meeting at the Hyden Community Resource Centre. Nicole Thompson (Kulin) Kym Burns (Hyden) and I attended the 2019 state conference at the Scarborough Beach Rendezvous. Kym Burns was elected onto State Council and we hope she has enjoyed her first year on council.

In July I attended Federal Conference in Adelaide with Bianca. It was held over 2 days. There were many speakers. One of the guest speakers was Olympian cyclist Anna Mears. I got to hold her gold, silver and bronze medals from the Olympic games she attended.

This year also saw Hyden do two raffles. A Tupperware Package kindly donated from Jennifer Szczencinski and a Mother's Day Cake kindly donated by Bev Airey. The winner of the cake was Amanda Soper and the Tupperware were won by Cameron Finney!

We also had the privilege of decorating the Hyden Recreation Centre for the Eastern Districts Football League Millar Medal night. We had many high praises for the decorations.

The beginning of November sees the biggest week for Hyden Branch with the annual running of our Melbourne Cup Luncheon. We catered for 60 ladies and gentlemen who came from all around our district. Members are asked to supply a large salad to share and our local IGA cook and slice all the meat for this lunch. A huge big thank you to Colin and Heather Muir for this each year. We greatly appreciate it, Hyden Bush Bakehouse for kindly donating the bread rolls. Along with a sit-down lunch we cater for the local business with a takeaway lunch. This year we made up 42 takeaway lunches which are also delivered by our dedicated members. Thank you to our wonderful members who help out on the day with kitchen duties, Diane Mortimer for packing and delivering lunches to our local businesses, Clare Hyde on the door, Beverley Gangell in the bar, Lisa Billingham and Gen James for doing the sweeps and pick your own horse and Bianca James for selling raffle tickets. Thanks to Cherie and Sophie Walton, Bev and Jaidyn Airey for assisting myself with decorating the Rec Centre. Some would say it looked FAB! We had many wonderful raffles kindly donated by local businesses. Congratulations to all our winners. . Thank you to the Shire of Kondinin who supplied us with a guest speaker; Claire Eaton- author and ROC (Resilience, Optimism, Confidence) Mindset Coach for Youth and Parents. Claire spoke about her book ROC and Rise. All guests received a free book.

We are coming up to nearly 40 years of the Hyden Melbourne Cup so if anyone has any photos or memories please contact a member of the executive committee.

Hyden Branch also does a bursary winner for each year group of members children. The bursary winners this year were:

- * Pre-Primary to year 6: Olivia Hyde \$100 Hyden
- * Year 7 to Year 9: Gemma Rogers \$250 Hyden
- * Year 10 to year 12: Leah Varone \$250 Hyden

The year ended with a bang! With members' Student Transport Subsidy Scheme (STSS) –Road Travel Subsidy being rejected. This meant holidays were a little cramped. A big thank you to State Council Kym Ross and Elyse Donaghy for helping us get through this. This year we have submitted 2 motions on to address this.

A big thank you must go to my outgoing Secretary Cherie Walton and Treasurer Bev Airey. It's been a pleasure working with you both and wish you all the best for the coming year. I look forward to working with the new executive committee, Secretary Carla Hyde and Treasurer Chrissie Nicholl.

In closing I wish all our members and guests attending conference a safe and a wonderful 2020.

Kimberley Air Branch Report

Connie Wood, President

Lots of changes have occurred within our little branch since the last state conference. During our AGM held mid-2019, we had a change of office bearers namely – me, (Connie Wood) stepping up as President and Barb Mckimmie

as Secretary. We are very fortunate to have the ongoing service of Nikki Elezovich as Treasurer and Kirsty Forshaw as Vice President. Outgoing Branch President, Jo Camelliri has shifted to a mentoring role, giving the newbies such as myself much needed guidance on all things ICPA. At 2019 Federal Conference, Jo was appointed to Federal Council and is currently serving within the Rural Schools and School Travel Portfolio. Congratulations on your new position Jo and many thanks for your continued service within our branch.

We were fortunate to be the beneficiary of two fundraisers during the course of 2019, namely the Kimberley Picnic Races and Pilbara Kimberley Cattlemen's Association Ladies Luncheon. Being a branch with a comparatively small membership base, covering a large area with a very isolated demographic, every bit of fundraising is very much appreciated and needed to send delegates to state and federal conferences.

We have experienced some significant growth to our membership base with current membership numbers up to 13 paid members, the most in a long time! Perhaps this number may not sound much but in previous years the numbers have been so low that the executive positions were merged, and things were looking quite dire for our branch. The boost in membership numbers is quite exciting and has meant that we now are able to have a full executive team, spreading the workload in a much more manageable way!! We have lots of new young families and fresh faces coming on board, signifying a positive change for our region and the hope that things are picking up in regional areas.

Traditionally our membership base has consisted mostly of School of the Air Families. We are aiming to spread our membership past this demographic and reach out to our wider community. Hopefully we can continue to spread the word about the fantastic work of the ICPA throughout the Kimberley Region and get a few more members on board.

In addition, and probably complimentary to our membership drive, we have also been exploring opportunities with regards to online and mobile playgroups and investigating ways to get more young families engaged and involved with School of the Air. It is an exciting and invigorating time to be involved with the Kimberley Air Branch and we are very much looking forward to seeing our branch grow. Things are looking up!

Lakes District Branch Report

Claire Walter – President

First, I would like to thank state council for all their hard work over the last year. Their energy and passion should not be underestimated.

The last year has proven to be a harder year than normal for our rural families with a lot less rain than usual, causing a lot of water and stock feed problems. Saying that it is amazing what a good crop you can grow on a little bit of rain as long as it falls at the right time and the prices are right. While driving through Central Australia with my husband I realised the whole country was dry but, was still stunning and dramatic like a movie set. The locals all appeared happy and super friendly, tough and resilient. I would encourage everyone to get out there and see your own country and spend a bit of money in these small isolated and rural towns.

I would sincerely like to thank Kym Ross, treasurer and Helen Kirby, secretary for the amazing job that they do in supporting me and Lakes District. Also, all the people who helped out on the donut stall at the Newdegate Field Day. These are the people who hold our branch together and provide us with the funds to send our delegates to conference to represent and speak up for us all.

In 2019 Lakes sent 3 members to state conference: Jodie Dunkeld, Lynette Gittos and myself. We were lucky enough to have Kym Ross and her husband represent our branch at federal conference as well.

We haven't had our AGM yet, but we are hoping to see some new members in the executive positions and with new blood comes new ideas and passion so look out 2020 and keep up the good work ICPA.

Meekatharra Air Branch Report

Claire Mahony, President

Our branch has had a quiet year with most members still suffering from drought conditions. Some got relief early in 2020 with rain but others went from drought to flood, so the tough times continue for some.

Having a branch spread over such a wide area, which ranges from Newman in the north to Wiluna in the east, south to Mt Magnet, west to the Murchison region, means our members have children in all stages of the education timeline. From babies and toddlers to kindergarten and primary school, high school students at rural schools and boarding schools as well as tertiary students at TAFE and University.

Following the 2019 conference which was attended by Chandra Ridley and Anna Tierney as delegates and Raelene & Clyde Hall as observers, we put our hands up to convene the 2020 conference. Hard to believe it is almost here.

We had incredible success with sourcing sponsorship, with all members reaching out to their connections. We only had a couple of meetings online and the rest of our convening discussions were done, very successfully, via email. Meekatharra Air branch would like to thank all those who so generously sponsored this conference.

We look forward to welcoming members and guests to conference on 13th March 2020.

It was also a big year for most of our branch with the 60th celebrations of Meekatharra School of the Air occurring in September. Members Lara Jensen and Louise Ford did a magnificent job of compiling a book of memories. Past and present students, teachers and parents enjoyed the two days held at the school and the Geraldton Yacht club, with lots of reminiscing going on.

At the end of 2019 we presented our usual bursary to a Year 6 student leaving Meekatharra School of the Air. Thank you to all office bearers and members.

Midwest Branch Report

Jen Critch, President

As my first Branch report I would like to give a heartfelt thank you to the outgoing Branch President Mrs Emma Foulkes-Taylor and Branch Secretary Mrs Miriam Barnetson for their years of experience and contributions to the Midwest branch. We have a new treasurer Mrs Sam Messina. We look forward to working together as your executive team for the Midwest branch.

Networking and talking amongst ourselves was integral to the motion that we put to State Council about the inequity of the boarding fees at the Residential College in Geraldton. This progressed to meetings with the Minister and the State Council had a group working on the motion. Through the hard work of our State Council there was

a positive outcome of equitable fee structure at the Residential College. This is another collective win for our branch and state ICPA.

We had a stall at the Mingenew expo organized by Sally Brindal and Naomi Obst. This was a great success. Thank you to all the volunteers who manned the site over the two days. Thank you to the Expo for letting us have the site at no charge. Having this stall has increased awareness of what we do and how we can help rural families. Susanne Warr put together two brochures that she sent to schools throughout the area. This advertising brought in 3 new members.

Thank you very much to our State Council for all their hard work and lobbying. To all our members thank you for all your support and contribution to the Midwest branch.

Pilbara Branch Report

Abbra Slocombe, President

The Pilbara branch membership has remained reasonably static with 20 members including our life members. It is concerning to note that only three of the SOTA families are members of the ICPA a fact which we will try to address by addressing the group at the upcoming seminar.

We have had some opportunities for fundraising which as we all know we need to make the most of. The Marble Bar races which we have a sausage sizzle and sell raffles is our major fundraiser of the year. This is well supported by the community both in providing goods for a raffle and by patronage on the day. There is a core group of members who assist with this day. We have been lucky enough to have donations from Coolawanyah Station and the Parsons family who provided some catering for Quadrant Australia a cattle group travelling around the Pilbara from the Eastern States and donated the proceeds to the branch. Mark Bettini from De Grey Station also donated a sum that a production company had given him for use of his property in a production.

We have donated to Queensland branch to enable members who would not otherwise afford to attend conferences or pay subscription to do so. REVISE has also been the recipient of a donation to help recognise the good work they do for our members. The Bursary this year was won by Jessica Percy who is off to St Marys to board in Perth. This is the culmination of over 20 years in the school room for mum Julie Percy – now that is a lot of set work completed over the years.

We have some exciting fundraising opportunities ahead so hope we can “galvanise to action station’s” some of our other members and not rely on those who always put their hands up.

We would like to thank Bianca James, State Council, for her help with live streaming to enable a virtual meeting platform (Zoom), although it is not perfect it is far superior to the old radios and “over” at the end of each conversation!

WA Lone Members Branch Report

Sandie McCombie, Lones Officer

The Lones Branch has maintained a good membership over the years and continues to do so.

This year we have already received 12 renewals for 2020. This has been my first and only year as Lones Officer. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances I will be stepping down from this position on the 13th March at State Conference. I will remain supportive of ICPA through my branch - Pilbara as I have done for 15 years.

Federal Conference will be held in Hobart this year so the opportunity for a Lones member to attend will again be offered. This will include airfares, accommodation and registration for conference. Having attended many State and Federal Conferences I found the opportunity to meet with other members from all over the country is an amazing experience. Attending conference gives you such an insight into how important our voice is and also allows you the chance to discuss issues that are shared by branches, and more importantly families, no matter where they are located.

Yalgoo Branch Report

Ruth Rowe, President

The Yalgoo Branch has continued to tick along quietly. The branch was represented at State and Federal Conferences by Roxanne Morrissey. Thank you for your time and effort in attending on our behalf Roxanne.

Since the education cuts and change of hands with regard to Camp Schools we have been observing the impact of this, which appears has not been entirely positive with some incidents being reported that have affected the quality of the camps.

Meekatharra School of the Air celebrated their 60th Anniversary in 2019. The celebrations in Geraldton were attended by many, with SOTAs being such a crucial lifeline for education in the bush over so many years. The Anniversary events were a great success and thanks must go to all involved, as well as to the ICPA for the crucial link in supporting and lobbying for SOTAs over the years.

State Conference Guest List

Hon. Sue Ellery MLC	Minister for Education and Training
Hon. Donna Faragher MLC	Shadow Minister for Education; Training; Women's Interests
Hon. Mia Davies MLA	Leader of The Nationals WA
Hon. Kyle McGinn MLC	Member for Mining and Pastoral Region
Peter Rundle MLA	Member for Roe, The Nationals WA
Pam Moss	Director, Public Schools Planning. Dept of Education
Stephen Baxter	Deputy Director General, Public Schools
Daniel Sudlow	Manager Residential Colleges, Dept of Education
Fiona Preston	Dept Training & Workforce Dev
Annie Fogarty AM	Fogarty Foundation
Claire Eaton	Guest Speaker, Mindset Coach
Teneeka Hill	Transition Facilitator, Parent Connect
Alana Moller	ICPA Federal President
Nikki Macqueen	ICPA Federal Council
Jo Camilleri	ICPA Federal Council

Boyd Brown	Regional General Manager- Telstra WA
Nick Stacpoole	Telstra, Regional & Rural Team, Melbourne
Richard Stokes	CEO - Australian Boarding Schools Association
Tom Dunsmore	General Manager – Australian Boarding Schools Association
Eloise Jansen Van Vuuren	Principal Kalgoorlie School of the Air
Paul Noble	Principal, Kimberley School of the Air
Christine Bevans	Principal Meekatharra SOTA
Nardine Bilston	Manager, Rotary Residential College
Anthony Cattai	Operations Manager; School Bus Services, PTA
Sue Potter	Coordinator REVISE WA
Alan Potter	Coordinator REVISE WA
Brad Downing	Christ Church Grammar School
Tom Floyd	Head of Boarding, Mazenod College
Liz Langdon	Director of Boarding, PLC
Catriona Nixon	St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls
Claire Hanson	Director Community Relations, Great Southern Grammar
Tara Ball	Head of Boarding, Great Southern Grammar
Rachel Stenslunde	St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls
Bennet Andrews	St Stephen's School
Dean Carslake	Principal, WA College of Agriculture Morawa
Beth Herbert	Dymocks Busselton

State Council Delegates

President	Tash Johns
Vice President	Sally Brindal
Secretary	Amanda Nixon
Treasurer	Bianca James
Publicity Officer	Kym Ross
Councillor	Elyce Donaghy
Councillor	Naomi Obst
Councillor	Chandra Ridley
Councillor	Kym Burns
Councillor	Jane Hughes

Branch Delegates

BRANCH	DELEGATE	DELEGATE	OBSERVERS
Central Wheatbelt North	Nancy Werder	Isabel Nixon	Naomi Purser Dani McCreery
Esperance	Kath Fowler		
Gascoyne	Alys McKeough	Mary Wake	Kelly Hopkinson

		<i>(Gascoyne Branch Life Member)</i>	
Goldfields Eyre			
Hyden	Samantha Greay	Carla Hyde	
Kimberley Air	Connie Wood	Kirsty Forshaw	
Lakes Branch	Claire Walter		
Meekatharra Air	Claire Mahony	Penny Johns	Raelene Hall <i>(State Life Member)</i> Clyde Hall Natalie Beven Tracie Blair Louise Ford Jareth Forrester Kelly Hall
2020 STATE CONFERENCE CONVENING BRANCH			
Midwest	Tanya Kitto	Julie More	Michelle Abbott Liz Sudlow Bennet Andrews Dean Carlslake
Pilbara	Pippa Johns	Karen Watherston	Molly Johns
WA Lones			
Yalgoo	Roxanne Morrissey <i>(State & Federal Life Member)</i>		

State Conference Conveners

Meekatharra Air Branch

Raelene Hall
Clyde Hall
Clare Mahony
Penny Johns
Louise Ford
Tracie Blair
Natalie Beven

State Conference Apologies

Hon. Alannah MacTiernan MLC	Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food; Ports
Hon. Mick Murray MLA	Minister for Seniors and Ageing; Volunteering; Sport and Recreation; Member for Collie-Preston
Hon. Simone McGurk MLA	Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services

Hon. Dave Kelly MLA	Minister for Waters, Fisheries, Forestry, Innovation and ICT Science
Hon. Melissa Price MP	Federal Member for Durack, Minister for Defence Industry
Hon. Martin Aldridge MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Hon. Jacqui Boydell MLC	Member for Mining and Pastoral Region
Kyran O'Donnell	Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Member for Kalgoorlie
Adele Farina	Member for South West Region
Ken Perris	Regional Executive Director Goldfields
Milton Butcher	Regional Executive Director Kimberley Regional Office
Neil Milligan	Regional Executive Director
John Bailly	Manager, School Bus Services Public Transport Authority
Elizabeth Moody	College Manager, Merredin Residential College
Tracy Webster	Head of Boarding, Santa Maria College
Sally Sullivan	Federal Vice President ICPA Australia
Jane Morton	Federal Committee ICPA Australia
Edwina Bowie	ICPA SA State Secretary
Jill Greenfield	ICPA SA State President
Kelly Oswald	ICPA QLD State Secretary