

SHORT HISTORY OF ICPA

BEGINNINGS: In 1971 at Bourke in NSW, in response to the closure of the privately owned hostel for isolated children.

A local mother named Pat Edgley was so alarmed at the inadequacy of government care or assistance for isolated education that she called a public meeting. The ICPA was formed, with Pat as secretary. Branches formed quickly in NSW, QLD and SA.

WA's 1st BRANCH: Margaret Lacy from Polelle Stn, Meekatharra called a meeting of parents on the RFDS radio network on October 1, 1971 and the first branch was formed in WA.

Inaugural secretary Francis Smith wrote of Mrs Lacy: "*Mrs Lacy is our president and I might add that she is a terrific worker in this field. Started things going about five years ago and has been banging her head against a brick wall ever since.*"

OTHER BRANCHES soon followed: Gascoyne Ashburton & Kalgoorlie Air (71), Yalgoo (72), Kimberley Air (73), Murchison & Fitzroy Crossing (75), Mt Magnet, Lones, Binnu & Cue (76), Southern Gascoyne & Port Hedland (77), Southern Districts, Mullewa, Lakes District & Fitzgerald Jacup (78), Stirling, Esperance & Eneabba (79), Hyden (81), Norseman (84), Nullarbor (85), Laverton & Kalbarri (86), Kalannie (87), Pilbara (Tom Price) (90), Kondinin (91), Mt Marshall & Regions (later Bencubbin) (92), Central West Wheatbelt (97), Midwest (98).

WA's 1ST STATE COUNCIL was elected at Pastoral House in 1972, with Margaret Lacy as president, David Fitzgerald vice-president, Olive Henwood secretary, Val Jensen treasurer and George Savell of the PGA as liaison officer between ICPA and PGA. The PGA was very generous in assisting ICPA to get up and running in WA.

EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS: After 2 yrs of heavy lobbying, the Director of Education granted funding for a live-in remedial centre for isolated students, an update of correspondence courses, pre-school for isolated children to commence in 1976, and a correspondence course to be written for Yrs 11 and 12.

ASSISTANCE FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN (AIC) was introduced by the Federal Government after tireless lobbying by ICPA. However, then the State Govt decided that the State Living Away from Home Allowance was no longer needed and it was dropped.

1975 Continuing pressure from ICPA saw the re-introduction of the State allowance, and a 3rd return airfare granted to enable students to return home from boarding school for each school term.

THE REMOTE TRAVEL SUBSIDY (RTS) was introduced in 1977.

EXTRA RESOURCES such as art, music, maths and science kits were supplied to the Correspondence School and Schools of the Air.

PROGRAMMES TO ATTRACT TEACHERS TO THE COUNTRY have been introduced in response to motions put at State conference year after year.

A RESIDENTIAL CARE CERTIFICATE is now in place for boarding staff.

HF RADIO has been replaced, after 40 years of children and teachers battling to hear through static and dying batteries, by a crystal-clear satellite service for students studying by distance education.

Students with learning difficulties now have access to **SUPPORT TEACHER LEARNING** specialists.

The **REVISE SCHEME** provides relief to home tutors through the visits of retired teachers.

COMMUNICATIONS decisions have been significantly influenced by ICPA's input.

There are many other improvements that may not be directly attributable to ICPA, yet its voice has contributed to discussions on implementation, ensuring that rural and remote families don't miss out on the benefits.

WHY THE EMPHASIS ON REMOTE STUDENTS?

Many of the achievements listed above involve remote students, and that's because the original purpose of the organisation was to assist isolated families to gain equity of access to education with their non-isolated counterparts.

The focus has shifted over the years to include ALL rural and remote students in Australia, from early childhood to adulthood, living on farms, pastoral properties, mining camps, caravans, boats—in fact, any non-metro area.

If this is you, think about becoming part of ICPA.