



Isolated Children's Parents Association Qld Inc.

## YEARLY KICK OFF - PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS 2021

**Face-to-Face Meeting:** - February 22, 2021 saw Qld State Council meet up for our delegations face-to-face meeting. This is the first-time council has been together since our Toowoomba virtual State Conference and there was much to discuss. This meeting helps to get our lobby going again following holidays by way of discussing various ways to forward motions with departments, government ministers and our external contacts. Face-to-face meeting discussions were once again held in the offices of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and we thank them for their generosity in hosting us. Topics up for discussion included ICPA Qld attending Beef Week in Rockhampton, special ICPA Qld souvenirs for sale at our 50-year Cunnamulla conference, Conference reports, pricing, registrations and speakers – there was a lot of conference preparation discussion and we hope that all attending members will be thrilled with the line-up and event that will be coming your way. ICPA Qld State Council also discussed the purchase of a Zoom licence which will allow us to host our own monthly teleconferences along with sharing this with branches so you can all host Zoom meetings either in conjunction with face-to-face meetings or instead of or as a combination. More information on this will be heading to branch Secretaries soon.

Also up for discussion was the new ICPA website that will be launching in April. Qld State Council have been busy populating the site and getting it ready. We are very excited with the fresh new look, easy navigation and great features that it will boast for you. A most important point up for discussion was vacancies on Qld State Council for 2021/2022 year. We have a number of councillors stepping down in Cunnamulla so if you are interested in joining the team your Branch Mentor can offer you further information!

The final face-to-face note is to thank our Patron, Mrs Patricia Mitchell for dropping in for a short while. Mrs Mitchell engaged with some of the 50-year Conference discussion and helped us with some historical information and stories. The 25-year celebration/history of ICPA Qld book was circulating and we look forward to bringing you the next edition – celebrating 50 years – in the near future.

Don't forget members - there is a lot happening at the moment including a photo competition for a new set of 50-year cards, the sale of Art Union tickets, registering for conference and getting motions written.

Aside from our face-to-face meeting, ICPA Qld State Council went to Brisbane to lobby and present your motions, get feedback and seek support and this little update is to let you, the members, know more about what is happening in the portfolios. Read on for a snapshot listed per portfolio.



Queensland State Council - L-R Kate Bradshaw, Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM, Melissa Iland, Rob McArthur, Tammie Irons, Kelly Ostwald, Louise Winten, Sonia Spurdle, Jessie Persse, Louise Martin, Wendy Henning, Amanda Clark, Michelle Freshwater and Kasie Scott



Dion Coghlan, Kristy Springer and Janie Valentine (Human Resources, DoE) with Rob McArthur, Louise Martin, Kasie Scott and Wendy Henning.

**Parliament:** ICPA Qld State Council met with many members of parliament during delegations including Grace Grace MP (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations & Racing), Julieanne Gilbert MP (Assistant Minister for Health and Regional Health Infrastructure), Brittany Lauga MP (Assistant Minister for Education), Dr Christian Rowan MP (Shadow Minister for Education), David Janetzki (Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Investment and Trade), Tony Meredith (Policy Advisor), Ann Leahy MP (Shadow Minister for Disaster Recovery, Volunteers and Local Government), Deb Frecklington MP (Shadow Minister for Water and the Construction of Dams and Regional Development and Manufacturing) and Jan Martin (Senior Media Advisor, Office of the Hon. Grace Grace MP).

At each of these meetings our priority discussion was the ICPA Qld Key Issues document. This document outlines our four main focus areas which include:

- Prioritising geographically isolated students at schools of distance education
- Reinstatement of the Schools Touring Program (Arts)
- Educational affordability
- Attraction and retention of quality educators

These issues were identified from our policy documents and branch motions and have been delivered to parliament and other stakeholders across the state. The document will be available for members to access within the new website!



Kelly Ostwald, Jessie Persse, Kate Bradshaw and Dr Christian Rowan MP

#### Portfolio snapshots: -

##### **Boarding & Curriculum (Kelly Ostwald):**

The Boarding Schools and Hostels team met with the Department of Education's Office of Non-State Education (ONSE), Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) and the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) at our recent delegations in Brisbane. Discussions centred around the safety and wellbeing of students at State and Non-State boarding schools.





Kelly Ostwald, Kate Bradshaw, Louise Martin meeting with May Boisen from Telstra

### **Communications (Kate Bradshaw):**

During delegations the Communications team met with Kylie Lindsay head of nbn local in Queensland, May Boisen, Regional General Manager for Telstra, and the Information Technology (IT) branch within the Department of Education. It is always nice to get an update on what is happening with Telstra and nbn and both of these will be attending Cunnamulla State Conference and are very approachable. The IT branch are working hard on getting Qlearn, the system replacing Blackboard, ready for use. The contract with Blackboard has been extended to the end of December. Most members will be interested in the Canvas component which is what will be used for lessons with the teacher. Parents will start trialling Canvas from Term 3. \$400m has been allocated over the next five years to upgrade connectivity for Queensland State Schools. The Department is looking at fibre to as many schools as possible, retiring existing non fibre solutions. It is expected that only a small number of schools will be left on satellite and those schools will be provided with an upgraded Business grade service via satellite rather than use Skymuster Plus. The Department has also submitted 36 schools to be considered for the Mobile Blackspot upgrade program.



Cathy Tully, Kasie Scott, Melissa Illand, Jacqui Wilton and Wendy Henning

**Curriculum (Wendy Henning):**

Delegations in Brisbane in March saw the Curriculum Portfolio meet with QCAA to discuss all aspects of the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). We also met with the Department in regard to First Aid training for all rural and remote students. Face to face delegations, after months of COVID restricting our lobby, allowed us to discuss many motions from previous years also.



Rob McArthur, Kate Bradshaw, Jessie Persse, Louise Martin, Martin Robbie Rosengrave and Stacie Hansel (State Schools Performance, DoE) and Wendy Henning

**Distance Education (Kate Bradshaw):**

During delegations ICPA QLD met with the Education Department. There were many items on the agenda including the issues of broken links within the resource papers provided to home tutors and students. The State Schools Performance team has assured State Council that the links have been tested and alternatives found for those not working and these have been supplied to Schools of Distance Education (SDE's). The ongoing issue of overcrowding and lack of facilities and space within SDE's remains on the agenda and unfortunately there are no quick fixes. The Infrastructure Services Branch within the Department are working on a Planning Guide detailing what the future will



look like for these schools in regard to infrastructure and increased enrolments. These guides have been done previously for mainstream schools but not for SDE's. State Council will continue to lobby and reiterate that geographically isolated students must be the priority within these schools, and that they deserve adequate facilities like every other Queensland student.



**Early Childhood (Kasie Scott):**

During our recent delegation trip to Brisbane in February the Early Childhood team had a great visit to eKindy where we saw lessons being delivered all over Queensland and some teachers packing up to do road trips visiting their students. Currently there are 196 children enrolled in eKindy. The eKindy team is working with the University of Southern Qld (USQ) on a research project focusing on what parents get out of doing kindy with their children as eKindy is the only program of its kind in the world. As always we had a great meeting with the Early Childhood & Community Engagement team to talk through motions that were brought to State Conference in 2020 around infrastructure, resourcing, staffing & kindy kids on buses! This trip we were also lucky enough to also meet with Angela Fraser from Early Years Success and discuss what the organisation has to offer our families.



Early Childhood Team, Rowena Shirtliff, Jess Dalton with Rob McArthur, Kasie Scott, Louise Martin and Louise Winten

**Financial Assistance (Rob McArthur):**

The Financial Assistance Portfolio recently met with the Department of Education and worked on progressing motions from the 2020 State Conference in regard to ensuring the continuity of the LAFHAS despite the decreasing CPI due to COVID. In addition to this lobby, we also discussed potential funding options along the lines of the In-Home Care Scheme to assist rural and remote families and this will be a work in progress. State Council reiterated the importance of students with specific talents being able to access allowances in order to realise their dreams. All motions continue to remain on the agenda and State Council will ensure these are brought forward at every opportunity.



Peter Kelly, Deputy Direct-General (DoE) and Louise Martin President ICPA Qld

**Schools (Jessie Perse):**

Delegations were quite successful this year. We were able to meet with the Department and get feedback on most of our issues (face to face as opposed to last year as COVID was hitting). Branches with 'Schools' issues will be receiving feedback on defibrillators, compulsory swimming lessons, reliable IT specialists and timely responses from the Qld Police Service. ICPA Qld will continue to lobby our key issue around the Schools Touring Program as changes to the existing program are not significant enough to see real changes in the ease at which rural and remote schools can access arts for their students.



Autism Hub and Reading centre, Vicki Booth, Sonia Spurdle, Deb Dunstan, Michelle Freshwater and Maree Neilsen



**Specific Needs (Michelle Freshwater):**

The Specific Needs team attended delegations in Brisbane and met with the State School Disability and Inclusion Branch to discuss the use of online platforms for consistent Allied Health and other specific needs services. COVID has certainly assisted in the move to more online sessions. The team also met with the Home Education Unit and Vision Australia to discuss how they operate and what supports they have in place for students with specific needs. Meetings were also held with SPELD, Bush Kids and CRU to strengthen our working relationship with those organisations.



Brittany Lauga, Assistant Minister for Education with Kate Bradshaw and Louise Martin

**Teacher Education (Tammie Irons):**

At recent delegations in Brisbane, the Teacher Education portfolio met with Departmental representatives to discuss the ongoing key issue of attraction and retention of quality teachers in our rural and remote communities. Councillors were provided information around ongoing initiatives as well as new ones which provide opportunities for current teachers in urban schools to experience living and teaching in rural and remote communities for a week at a time. Such opportunities will hopefully lead to positive messages about career progression and lifestyle choices in our beautiful outback. Our portfolio continues to work toward liaising with several Universities within Queensland in order to provide further instruction and opportunity to preservice teachers around living and teaching in rural and remote schools.





Louise Winten, Michelle Kennedy (Director of Program Design) with Melissa Iland

**Tertiary, Trade & Training (Louise Winten):**

During our recent delegations in February the TTT Team met with the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) around the Vet in Schools (VETiS) program and Apprenticeships. While it is a complex system it is a valuable contact to have made. We also met with Agforce to discuss the Schools to Industry Partnership Program and Gateway Program and discussed the future of the Longreach and Emerald Agricultural Colleges providing some form of Agricultural Training facilities.



Angela Fraser (Early Years Success) with Wendy Henning, Kasie Scott and Melissa Iland

**Travel (Kylie Camp):**

Members of the Travel Portfolio met with Translink representatives via video at recent delegations in Brisbane. We discussed bus runs as well as conveyance allowances, their calculation and eligibility for same. Translink advised that kindergarten student numbers are considered when determining the viability of bus services however these students will not be eligible for conveyance allowance whilst kindergarten remains a non-compulsory year.

State Council will be seeking further information from members to assist with further advocacy on some motions. Keep an eye out in your inbox for a short survey and please respond. Without real life examples gathered through the survey it will be challenging to progress motions further. Help us to help you.