

**Isolated Children's Parents' Association
of
New South Wales Inc.**

**MINUTES
of the
47th ANNUAL CONFERENCE
6th and 7th March 2019**

**Held at
Buronga**

Hosted by Wentworth Branch



Convenors: Nerida Healy; Rachael Litchfield.
Treasurer: Stacey Byrnes.

These minutes are a record of the 2019 Annual Conference of ICPA-NSW Inc.

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Introduction to Conference.

Bruce Paynter, ICPA-NSW President. Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests, ICPA family and friends of ICPA. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land on which we are meeting is being held and recognised for their strength and resilience and capacities of the aboriginal people of this land. On behalf of ICPA-NSW I'd like to welcome the following people. Ada Peterson, Ambassador of the Malley District Aboriginal Services; Cherry Cullinan, Life Member, Wentworth Branch; the Mayor of Wentworth, Melissa Hendricks; Sally Sullivan, Vice President, ICPA (Aust). Joining us also later this morning is the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. It is pleasing to see so many have come together to meet in this regional area of NSW where we, once again, discuss our concerns and issues surrounding access to education for our children with you, our members, our guests and representatives of various NSW Government departments and ministerial offices. It is fantastic to see fourteen branches and over fifty members represented here this week. Thank you for giving up your precious time to represent your branch. We are all nervous and I am particularly, so we will get through this together but please remember that there is always someone to help you out. Over the next two days you will learn from one another so I encourage all attending to take the opportunity to engage in robust, passionate debates over informed conversations even off the floor and into this evening. On the conference agenda there are Portfolio reports to be presented and due to time constraints, many of the reports you will hear will be condensed but you will find the full report in your satchels and they are on the ICPA website. We are very fortunate to have representatives from the Department of Education wellbeing services and distance education. There are many other guests, organisations and schools here who are great supporters of ICPA and often work closely with our State Council. Thank you to Federal Vice President, Mrs. Sally Sullivan and to Federal Councillor, Kate Thompson, for being here today. They will be representing and putting things in place at a Federal level which you will hear about later. To date there are over forty-five conference motions to be debated and decided on. However, the floor motions can be handed in to the ICPA-NSW Secretary, Helen Ponder, by lunch time today. Only delegates can vote on the motions but we encourage guests and observers to take part in the discussions and the debate. State council has found over the years that guests might have some knowledge that, when shared with the conference, make for better decision making for state council. One of the many reasons why it is so good to have you hear this week. A reminder that delegates are given three minutes to read out their branches' explanation to their motions. At the two-minute mark a bell will be rung by the Secretary and again at the three-minute mark. Each motion's full explanation is required by State Council to help follow up actions that will take place after conference. So please don't think that your issue won't be heard. It will. Please make sure that the explanation read out on the floor is handed to Tanya Mitchell, Assistant Secretary before the end of the day or after you have read your explanation. All conference proceedings are recorded to assist in the process of creating the conference minutes so please use the microphones provided here today by Brian Cox from Rentfast. Whenever you are either presenting a motion or making a comment, to make things run smoothly, please make your way to the microphone to enable conference to proceed smoothly. Could I ask you too clearly identify yourself for the recording purposes? For example, "Mike Tom, Executive Director, Rural and Remote Education." Also, could you please read the motion from the screen provided. When you filled in your registration forms you were required to tick a box alerting State Council to not use your photo for ICPA media purposes. I hope everyone has done this but if you haven't and you do not wish to have your photograph used please let us know at the front desk. I know our hosts, Wentworth Branch members and the convening committee have

been looking forward to this day for quite some time and on behalf of State Council, I congratulate you on your preparation for the 47th Annual State Conference. Could I just ask that all phones please be switched off or switched to silent? I wish you all a very enjoyable and exciting conference. I'd like to now invite Ada Peterson, Ambassador for the Mallee District Aboriginal Services to present the Acknowledgement of Country.

Ada Peterson, Ambassador for the Mallee District Aboriginal Services. Good morning everybody. Actually, I am a Barkindji so I can actually do a Welcome to Country and welcome you onto this beautiful land here today. Hello, my name is Ada Peterson. Welcome elders, men, women and children. To the custodians of this land, the river people, I recognise their strength and resilience and pay my respects to my elders both past and present. We celebrate our continual living culture of the aboriginal people which is handed down to us. I'd also like to acknowledge any other aboriginal members from communities who are here today and I welcome you on our land. We welcome and encourage you with your ideas so move us forward with change and strengthen outcomes for our children's future. You will be inspired and challenged over the next two days to think outside the box and pass down that wisdom, knowledge and expertise aspired by future leaders. Through participating in forums and working groups I have seen cultural diversity and difference between us as individuals. By coming together to support serious issues affecting the most vulnerable children in our communities we put aside our differences and unite as one. We choose to respect one another's differences and this is unity which has influenced the drive for change to build better, greater systems of inclusion, accessibility and choice. It is also important to remember that we always push ourselves to have those goals. Looking back on my childhood, I am thankful I have been following my passion and ended up where I am today. When I was around six years old, I was part of a programme called The Harold Blair Project which organised holiday homes for rural and remote children from the outback in the aboriginal communities. This experience was unsettling for most of the children who participated in this programme. I didn't know whether to trust these people after meeting them or running away like some other children did. They weren't quite sure whether they were safe so they would usually run away but after a time frame they would come back home because they had nowhere else to go. I continued to return to the same family every year and over time they became my second family. They also embraced my community and my family. They often came here and visited me. Back then I was actually living on the mission about fifteen kilometres down the road from here. This experience was an eye opener and I had to live in two places which was a very different way of living. It was like walking in two worlds. At times it was very difficult. I had to discover that I needed to be more in life. What was that? So, at the age of thirteen while more girls were concerned about teen idols and school yard antics, life for me was mostly struggling. Being the oldest daughter in the family I held most of my family's responsibilities and with this came generational trauma, alcohol abuse and family violence. Since this wasn't the healthiest environment to live in, I moved out of home but not too far away because I wanted to make sure I was still looking after my younger siblings. I wanted to make sure they attended school each day to have an education and they needed to change their lives. I have challenged myself since the age of thirteen to follow my passion and to encourage others around me to also do that. I not encourage members of our community to also be leaders who can create change and empower other people in the community. I always encourage aboriginal youth to stay in school, educate themselves and be a role model for other youth within our community. By being a community leader, you are a person with a voice and the energy can create the community where you live. Within my own family I have created generational change, feeling deep satisfaction of my own achievements and this is in the pride of my children. I have three

children. I have one down in Melbourne University completing her last year of Uni. doing a double degree. I have one who has just finished with RMIT in Melbourne. I have actually finished a course previously but at the moment I'm still studying to do another Diploma so, I think the way for the future for children is to educate, educate, educate. Give them that change that that they can have by being a lot more prepared in life and having the strength and the willpower to carry out those dreams. Thank you.

National Anthem presented by the students of the Palinyewah School and the School of the Air.

Bruce Paynter, President. The lady who will be opening conference today is a branch member and is one of three Wentworth Branch's Life Members. Mrs. Cheryl Cullinan became involved with ICPA when educating her children via Broken Hill School of the Air. Cheryl will be sharing some words from another Wentworth Life Member and also ICPA (Aust) Life Member, Mrs. Helen Withers who cannot be with us today. Please welcome Cheryl

Cheryl Cullinan, Wentworth Branch Life Member. Good morning and welcome to everybody. On behalf of Mrs Helen Withers, I will read the following from her. "I feel very honoured to have been invited to open the 2019 NSW Annual Conference and greatly regret that due to the current status of my health I was unable to accept. My thoughts will be with you all during your deliberations and I wish you all a fruitful and enjoyable few days together. Many of us were fortunate to be involved from the beginning in this wonderful family organisation which, over the years since 1971, has achieved great educational opportunities for those living in geographic isolation across all facets of the education system. Particularly I refer to the privilege of working closely with our founder, Pat Edgely from Fords Bridge, who instilled in us the essential values of patience and persistence. These standards have prevailed over the almost fifty years of ICPA's persistence. Who would have thought that it would have taken thirty years to obtain the simple measure of achieving the fitting of seat belts on country buses to ensure the safety of children travelling daily on rough country roads to attend school? I was very pleased to be involved on NSW Council when, at a Council meeting held in the Central West area, we were approached by a cherry farmer from Orange and an offer by Kinross Wolaroi to provide a scholarship to the school annually for an isolated child to assist with tuition and boarding fees. Thus, was born the first ICPA scholarship. It is obvious from reading the now assistance list of schools generally making this same offer, how this thoughtful gesture has grown and spread across boarding schools Australia wide. One of my major interests among the ICPA portfolios was communications and it is satisfying to witness the extension of distance education and the advocacy for the use of the satellite and this essential form of education for our isolated children has finally been realised. Many and intense were the discussions held between Council deputations and the Department of Education to achieve this goal and progress from the former, often static, interrupted radio signals. While still on the subject of communication, many of you would not have realised the extent of the struggle there was to have remote areas included in the automatic telephone system. Initially those living more than thirty-two kilometres from an exchange were expected to pay thousands of dollars for this modern benefit or excessive annual rentals of five hundred dollars a year. Many years of lobbying Telecom finally achieved a fairer and manageable cost of connection. Perhaps also, not many Australians would realise that, without the extensive efforts of ICPA untied local calls would be a thing of the past. This, in spite of an accusation by one Telecom employee for pursuing the matter ferociously. Good luck with your future endeavours. It is extremely heartening to know that families are carrying on the ICPA tradition so diligently. Warmest wishes. Helen Withers." And on that note, it gives me great pleasure in declaring the 2019 Annual State Conference of ICPA-NSW hosted by the Wentworth Branch, open.

Bruce Paynter, President. Thank you very much for that and it is great to hear some of the history and where we have come from and where we are going to in the future. Now I would like to welcome the Mayor of Wentworth, Melisa Hederics. Melisa is in her second term and her third year as Mayor and leads a very vibrant and progressive team at the Wentworth Shire. The Shire's support for this conference has been absolutely fantastic and we would like to welcome Melisa to our conference.

Melisa Hederics, Mayor, Wentworth Shire Council. Good morning everybody and welcome to my Shire, the Wentworth Shire. I'm extremely passionate about this area. We cover a large area as a lot of you probably know – 26,000 square kilometres is our zone. We go half way to Broken Hill, across half way between Pooncarie and Menindee and then up to Euston. So, we do have a large area. This is fantastic! I believe the girls here and the people who are involved in the Wentworth Branch have done an extraordinary job in putting this conference together. I know how hard it is to put conferences like this together. I attend many of them. I see how much work the people do put into them so, from out here in this rural and remote area I can imagine just how much harder it is to be able to pull things together. I take my hat off to everyone who has been involved with it. I'm very pleased to be here with you today and we are delighted that the 2019 ICPA-NSW Annual State Conference is being held in our shire. I hope that you will all take the time or have some time to visit as much of our shire sightseeing as you possible can. I know and understand that the Wentworth Branch has worked tirelessly in putting this conference together and, again, I say to you, congratulations. I'm sure that everyone here will take something home from this conference today, hopefully good memories and take lots of little souvenirs from our shire. I understand that isolated access to education can be challenging. I actually grew up at a place called Werrimull which is across the other side of the river here, half way between Mildura and Renmark. An hour out of town. I spent from prep to Year 10 and I had four other students in my class right through to Year 10. I loved it. So, I do understand how the rural and remote areas work but in saying that, there's good things that can come to us in the rural and remote areas. It is also very important for families to come together and unite in these rural and remote areas whether it be through sporting clubs or sporting teams, it's how you make your families extend out there and it's how your children will grow and become part of the bigger community in this country. The Wentworth Shire supports the ICPA Committee to provide access to education. A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure to be part of the reopening of the Pooncarie Primary School which I'm sure you all heard about. It was fantastic to see firsthand the joy, the excitement, and I must say, the relief on the faces of not just the students, the seven students in the whole school, but also the parents and the community who have worked endlessly to keep that school in a condition for the past six years, to be able to be reopened. The community worked so hard in keeping that school, even though it was closed, presentable and to be reopened. It was ready to go after six years of being closed. They were still able to open those doors which was fantastic. I understand how much the reopening of that school means to that township of Pooncarie. Finally, I would just like to finish by saying access to quality education is not a privilege, it is a right and a matter of equity. I trust you enjoy the conference and I applaud you all for making the trip to Wentworth Shire and for your commitment to your rural and remote students. Thank you so much for your time today. Please have a successful conference and, as local government, you all have local government in your area, if there is something that you need please address your local government about it, go to your local councils and let them help you get into that next step of government level and let them advocate for the things that you might need. That's what we are here for and that's what we are proud to help you with. Congratulations on a successful conference and I hope you all enjoy it. Thank you.

Helen Ponder, ICPA-NSW Secretary. Good morning and welcome members and guests. For those who don't know my name is Helen Ponder and I am the current ICPA-NSW State Secretary. I'd like to introduce you to a group of volunteers who are passionate, organised and hardworking, who advocate on your behalf for approximately 900 ICPA member families so that our children can access a comparable education even though we live in rural, remote and very remote NSW. I'd first like to welcome Nerida Healy who has some conference announcements and also thank the Wentworth Branch of ICPA-NSW and Nerida, Rachel and Bree for leading a terrific team to bring this conference to you today.

Nerida Healy, Conference Convenor. Good morning everyone. On behalf of the Wentworth Branch welcome to our conference, Striving for the Best in the Far West. We are really excited to have you all here and we hope you enjoy everything that the 2019 Conference offers. If I can reiterate Melissa's words, we do live in a fantastic part of the world and we are so thankful to the Shire for the support they have given us and all the staff who have been so helpful. So, go and enjoy our region while you are here.

Helen Ponder, ICPA-NSW Secretary. I am now honoured to introduce my colleagues, the NSW State Council. Would State councillors please stand as I introduce you and while your voting card is issued. Thank you.

State Council

Bruce Paynter	President
Kate Treweeke	Immediate Past President
David Butler	Vice President and Travel Convenor
Nerida Healy	Vice President and Early Childhood Convenor
Helen Ponder	Secretary and Distance Education, VISE Convenor
Rachel Brindley	Treasurer
Irene Lund	Lone Members Officer, Membership Officer, Boarding School, Ag High Schools and Hostels Convenor
Tanya Mitchell	Assist Secretary, Committee and Allowances Convenor
Skye Bragg	Committee and Publicity Officer
Annabel Strachan	Committee and Rural Schools Convenor
Libby McPhee	Committee and Communications Convenor
Tim Fletcher	Committee and Tertiary Convenor
David Shrimpton	Merchandise Manager

Federal Council

I would also like to welcome the two ICPA(Aust.) Federal Council members who are able to be with us today.

Sally Sullivan	Vice President ICPA(Aust)
Kate Thompson	Federal Councillor ICPA(Aust)

On behalf of ICPA-NSW I am delighted to welcome our twenty-nine delegates representing fourteen branches to participate in conference here over the next couple of days. It is a tremendous effort when everything is so tough out where we live. Could delegates also please stand when I introduce you to conference and remain standing so State Council can present you with your voting cards. Each branch is entitled to two delegates each day of conference

or two votes so if you have more than two delegates only two will be able to represent your branch on any given day and those branches that have more than two delegates attending over the next couple of days have already let me know who are the delegates for today. Each branch, even if there is only one delegate representing, is entitled to two votes.

ICPA-NSW Delegates

Laura Stalley	Hillston Branch
Emma Laird	Hillston Branch
Gabie Le Lievre	Louth Branch
Clare Sandford	Louth Branch
Bernadette Maxwell	Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch
Pam Fletcher	Monaro Branch
Shennah Joiner	Monaro Branch
Jesse Donoghue	NSW/VIC Lone Members
Lindy Kitto	NSW/VIC Lone Members (Lindy had to pull out at late notice and has sent her apologies. HP)
Michelle Butler	Nyngan Branch
Sally Argent-Smith	Rankins Springs Branch
Deborah Castle	Rankins Springs Branch
Liz Powell	Walgett Branch
Sarnia Walker	Moree Branch
Bronwyn Smith	Moree Branch
Pip Ryan	Hay Branch
Caroline Booth	Hay Branch
Clare Butler	Balranald Branch
Kathleen Harris	Balranald Branch
Terri Griffiths	Balranald Branch
Britt Anderson	Broken Hill Branch
Alison Allison	Broken Hill Branch
Laura Finch	Broken Hill Branch
Hayley Woodfield	Broken Hill Branch
Sandra Hewett	Central West Plains Branch
Gus Whyte	Wentworth Branch
Amy Pollard	Wentworth Branch
Stacey Byrnes	Wentworth Branch
Clancy Griffiths	Wentworth Branch

WENTWORTH LIFE MEMBERS

Mrs. Cherry Cullinan
Mrs. Robyn Ingram

OBSERVERS

Sarah Binns	Balranald Branch
Ash Gilbee	Balranald Branch

Terri Griffiths	Balranald Branch
Ange Spinks	Balranald Branch
Sandy Pippin	Balranald Branch
Phillip Pippin	Balranald Branch
Rebel Bell	Broken Hill Branch
Juarne Reynolds	Broken Hill Branch
Rebecca Pearce	Broken Hill Branch
Alison Allison	Broken Hill Branch
Britt Anderson	Broken Hill Branch
Hayley Woodfield	Broken Hill Branch
Laura Finch	Broken Hill Branch
Fleur Cullenwood	Hay Branch
Scott Walker	Moree Branch
Andrew Lund	NSW/VIC Lone Members
Stacey Byrnes	Wentworth Branch
Tegan Douglas	Wentworth Branch
Rachel Fitzgerald	Wentworth Branch
Clancy Griffiths	Wentworth Branch
Sarah Harris	Wentworth Branch
Robyn Ingram	Wentworth Branch
Kevin Ingram	Wentworth Branch
Maddi Jonas	Wentworth Branch
Rachael Litchfield	Wentworth Branch
Lee Pollard	Wentworth Branch
Amy Pollard	Wentworth Branch
Rachel Strachan	Wentworth Branch
Bree Wakefield	Wentworth Branch
Gus Whyte	Wentworth Branch
Vicki Olds	Tibooburra-Milparinka

We are grateful to have members of the Department of Education here this morning and I'd like to introduce their team of diligent and hard-working individuals to our conference.

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

Mike Tom,
David McLeod,
Kimberley Hill
Martin Dickens,
Gaye Dunshea,
Katrina Worrall,
Erin Pilon,
Matthew Brown

ORGANISATIONS

Richard Stokes - Aust. Boarding School Association
Thomas Dunsmore - Aust. Boarding School Association

Sue Kingwill	Contact Inc
Ellen Day	NSW Dept. Of Primary Industries
Thel O'Shea	Western Landcare NSW
Marie Kelly	RAMPH - Far West LHD
Natalie Walker	P & C Federation
Susie Boyd	P & C Federation
Helen Dalton	
Heidi Begg	Spot Rural
Douglas Melrose-Rae	The Association of Independent Schools of NSW
Lindy Hall	Transport for NSW
Lewis Clark	Transport for NSW

SCHOOLS

Gillian Bale	NSW Centre For Effective Reading
Darren Beks	Monivae College
Adrian Byrne	St. Ignatius' College
Samantha Cocks	Tara Anglican School
Kylie Green	Broken Hill School Of The Air
Wendy Hay	Bourke Walgett School Of Distance Education
Kate Kovacs	Loreto Normanhurst
Kayla Martin	Wentworth & District Preschool
Kate Murphy	Broken Hill School Of The Air
Sue Newton	Ascham School
Marianne Paynter	Knox Grammar
John Reading	St. Joseph's College
Victoria Rennie	Abbotsleigh
Max Spencer	St. Gregory's College
Chris Van Styn	Ballarat Grammar
Matthew Curran	Kinross Wolaroi School

A big thank you to Brian Cox, Rentfast, for looking after our sound and recording systems again this year.

That's the introductions for today and we would like to welcome all those people and now I would like to move the following motions.

Motion 01.03.18 *“That the 2018 conference minutes as circulated electronically be accepted.”*

Moved by Helen Ponder. Seconded: by Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President. Carried

Motion 02.03.18 *“That the apologies as received and as posted in the conference room be accepted.”*

Moved by Helen Ponder. Seconded: by Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President. Carried

President's Report

Distinguished guests, fellow members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the 2019 Presidents Report. I've been delighted with the progress the ICPA-NSW has made this year is advocating the issues that our members have raised at branch, state and federal conferences. Working in collaboration with key stakeholders, ICPA-NSW has made significant strides across all areas of our portfolios. We are most proud of our work with Rural and Distant Education in Bathurst. We have brought about the Supervisor's Conference which some of you attended yesterday. We had over fifty people here and it was absolutely fantastic and thank you especially to Mike Tom for bringing that all together as a combined effort between ICPA and Rural and Distant Education. It just shows that you can actually work with Government Departments, especially the Department of Education, for absolutely fantastic results. Thank you so much. Later on this year we have teamed up again and the Rural and Remote Education Conference will be held in Tamworth, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga. These events directly reflect educational concerns from our members. To the Wentworth Branch - you have done us all proud. You've produced a fantastic conference during quite exceptional times. Well done and thank you. The dedication of your councillors to the task of advocacy for equitable education through really tough times must be acknowledged and applauded. They freely give many hours at home and away on your behalf. I'd also like to acknowledge their families who support them while they are away on ICPA business. Those State Council members not standing for re-election I say, thank you. For those staying on and those being re-elected I say, thank you. Personally, at this time I've presumed that my work would be decreasing as I near retirement and that I would be able to devote more time to ICPA. However, this is not the case. Due to the conditions across the state, most obviously the drought, my school is further increasing its programme of prayer, care and visitation for its rural families. Myself and Maryanne will, again, be very heavily involved in those visitations right across NSW. It is therefore with some regret but with no less commitment to rural NSW that I'll not be standing for re-election as President. Please read my detailed report at your leisure and contact me for any clarification. Thank you so much.

Brief over view of year 2018:

- Mudgee State Conference
- Advocacy with Full Council
- Federal Government drought relief committee – Wendy Hick (Federal President ICPA Aust.)
- Hurlstone Agricultural High School will open at Western Sydney University's Hawkesbury Campus in 2020

Quick facts:

- Mini Deputation - June
- Main Deputation – October 32 meetings in four days
- Membership increased
- In Home Care (IHC) – some improvements
- Early childhood – 600hrs, very difficult in most areas
- BSIS Scholarships – require more applicants
- AHVISE Support Aussie farming families – up and running
- Local Council steps in to save early learning – Albury area

- Rural and Remote Network Initiatives 2019
- ICPA-NSW invited to be part of Principal selection panel (may help to say which school)

Portfolio at a glance:

- Allowances
- Boarding Schools, Agricultural High School and Hostels
- Communication
- Distant Education
- Early Childhood
- Rural Schools
- Special Education
- Travel
- Tertiary
- Membership – Over 50 schools as lone members

Things you should know:

- **Rural and Distant Education – overview**

In 2018, the NSW Department of Education continued to provide a range of assistance to rural and remote school communities. A selection of key programs co-ordinated through Rural and Distance Education include:

- **2018 Rural and Remote Network Initiatives** program which has supported individual schools and communities of schools in rural and remote areas with financial assistance to develop innovative curriculum projects. These projects were evaluated by a panel of representatives, including members of the department, Secondary Principals' Council (SPC), Primary Principals' Association (PPA), NSW-ICPA and the NSW P&C. Over the course of the year, schools have been supported by Rural and Distance Education through project planning tools and resources that were used by schools on the ground and through virtual collaboration. Of the 22 projects funded, overall feedback collated indicates that schools have strengthened relationships with local industries, community representatives and have further enhanced local transition programs from primary to secondary schools. This program will continue in 2019 with additional funds to support new projects in rural school communities.
- **Rural and Remote Careers Education Initiative:** Implementing the NSW Career Development Continuum K-12 The program supported communities of rural schools to embed careers learning into the curriculum across the primary and secondary years. Throughout this 12-month program, schools in the north and south of NSW have reported that students have an increased awareness of post school career pathways and increased learning engagement. After a successful 2018, the program will continue again in 2019. This will include further interaction with School Services personnel in the department who are situated in regional and rural communities.
- **Finigan School of Distance Education** starts operation as a K to 12 school at the beginning of the 2019 school year. The new school is the combination of the two distance education centres that were originally attached to Queanbeyan Public School and Karabar High School. Mr Daniel Rattigan is the founding Principal and along with

the staff are eagerly awaiting access to the new purpose-built facilities which are nearing completion with current plans forecasting a handover of the keys on the 26th February 2019. Once completed, the school will feature purpose-designed spaces to support distance education teaching and learning, with studios providing teachers with the opportunity to engage in a range of learning opportunities.

- **NBN Co** in cooperation with the department is now in the position to start the process of a trial integration of the NBN SkyMuster service using the multicast protocol to allow more efficient use of bandwidth. The trial will determine the suitability of the service and allow both parties the opportunity to fine tune technical requirements prior to a procurement process.

In addition to pursuing the above-mentioned programs, Rural and Distance Education are planning further improvements to support for rural schools. Some of the key projects for 2019 include:

- **2019 Rural and Remote Education Conference** will be held in Term 3, Week 2. The conference will adopt a decentralised model for teacher professional learning, with a series of one day conferences being held across Tamworth, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga. Through the support of a reference group involving department personnel, Secondary Principals' Council (SPC), Primary Principals' Association (PPA), NSW-ICPA and the NSW P&C, each location will have a local conference planning team that will be coordinated by a member of Rural and Distance Education.
- **2019 Distance Education Supervisors Conference** will be held in Wentworth on the 5th March 2019. The conference seeks to connect distance education supervisors in isolated communities with learning support provided by the department along with an external speaker, Andrew Fuller, who will address key issues including neurological development and differentiation.

Overall, the department is committed to supporting teachers and students in rural and remote schools and looks forward to the ongoing support of its major rural stakeholders.

- **NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) – Curriculum Review.** The NESA NSW Curriculum Review Taskforce would like to thank ICPA-NSW for their formal submission, attendance at key meetings in Sydney, including a workshop to inform the Terms of Reference for the Review. We are also grateful to ICPA members from across NSW who attended a roadshow or made a submission. Engagement in the review came from across all parts of NSW and regions were well represented. Working together has allowed greater understanding of the needs for rural, remote and isolated families seeking education for their children.

All of the input received during public consultation is now being analysed. It will inform the development of a draft report, which is due to the Minister for Education in the second quarter of 2019. A final report is due at the end of 2019.

“Thank you to ICPA for your support of this important work. NESA looks forward to working with you again in 2019.” Andrea Frost, NESA Taskforce co-ordinator.

- **The Country Universities Centre** continues its mission to support online regional higher education students to be successful in their studies while remaining with family, friends and work in their rural communities. Online higher education is often

associated with low student retention and inferior academic success, but a CQ University Research study in 2018 indicated that online students studying through the Country Universities Centre were at least as successful, and in instances more successful, than on campus students.

- The CUC is also focussed on connecting its online students to valuable regional employment opportunities, professional and academic networks to assist students to transition into productive regional and rural workforces, and to provide lifelong learning opportunities for rural people.
- In 2018, the CUC opened facilities in Broken Hill and Goulburn in addition to its existing Snowy Monaro facility, and the CUC now has just under 300 students in these locations. The NSW and Commonwealth Government have provided the CUC with further funding to establish and operate facilities in Moree, Narrabri, Griffith, Leeton and Grafton from 2019. The Commonwealth Government has also provided the CUC with a number of dedicated Commonwealth Supported Higher Education places that universities can only access through enrolling regional and remote students studying in CUC Centres.

Consultation with Community Organisation:

- **Bush Children’s Education Foundation (BCEF)** – Rural Scholarships, Country Education Foundation’s local foundations across the country, are run by community volunteers all with one thing in common – a passion for seeing rural and regional youth succeed.

Jacob Dennis – Walgett. Jacob is excited to be named the inaugural recipient of the CEF Rising Star Alumni Award. It is fitting recognition of his passion, dedication and the very bright future he has ahead. A proud Gamilaraay man, Jacob received a CEF of Walgett grant in 2017 after overcoming many hurdles. Since then he has proved that perseverance is the key to success.

McLean Foundation Scholarship Sophie Nelson – Broken Hill. Sophie is the latest beneficiary of the McLean Scholarship which is worth \$15,000 over three years. She attended Willyama High School and completed her HSC in 2017.

- **Centre for Effective Reading** – Sylvia Pope (Principal Palm Avenue School)
The NSW Centre for Effective Reading is a joint NSW Department of Education and NSW Health initiative. This centre and site have two functions: 1) The direct assessment and intervention services for eligible students with complex reading difficulties in rural and remote primary schools, as well as support for their teachers and parents or carers.
2) A dedicated website with information about teaching, reading and supporting students with reading difficulties.
NSW Centre for Effective Reading strengthens services to students with complex reading difficulties in rural and remote NSW.
- **RAS Foundation – Rural Scholarships** are available to support individuals in NSW who demonstrate a passion for rural communities and commitment for any career that will ensure the future success of rural and regional NSW. The scholarship is valued at \$6,000 for full time study and \$3,000 for part time study. This year winners included Prue Gordon from Bourke and Erin Holmes of Mendooran.

- **The RAS Rural Achiever Award** is a state-wide leadership program run by the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW to recognise future young leaders who are working hard to make a significant contribution to their local community and to rural Australia. The Award aims to acknowledge the achievements of young people (20 – 29 years of age) in primary industry and rural communities.
Congratulation to Timothy Green from Wagga Wagga. Timothy's strong interest in research and resistance to chemicals in cropping sees him employed as a Technical Officer in the Cereal Pathology Team with the Department of Primary Industries.
- **AHWISE** is an educational volunteer organisation comprising of a dedicated team of volunteers from all around Australia, who enjoy giving to others. They support rural and remote outback families who are looking for help in their remote school rooms. These include families, mothers and fathers, who teach their own children at home due to their geographic isolation.
- **Fifty Boarding School's** support our ICPA families, including - South Australia, Victoria, NSW, and into Qld. Without these school's support offering places and scholarships / bursaries, our access to secondary education would be lacking severely. They are all "Lone Members" who provide not only education opportunities but also critical feedback for our families.

What's next:

- Early Childhood transportation
- Transport concession – University Students
- AIC / CPI developments
- BSIS awareness

Bruce Paynter, President ICPA-NSW

ICPA (Aust.) Report

Mr President, Distinguished guests, NSW State Life Members, fellow ICPA members and guests, it's my pleasure to update you on the work of your ICPA Federal Council.

Usually Wendy Hick, our Federal Council President, would have a fair hand in compiling this report. However, this year, Wendy has not only been one of the people affected by the NW Qld floods, after many years of drought, she has also been enormously involved in providing advice to government and agencies on dealing with the flood crisis and the continuing drought crisis and loses no opportunity to make sure education is right up there on every agenda and in the mix for every discussion about how to help people. I am glad Wendy is not delivering this report because it allows me to say Wendy is doing all of that on top of keeping her own family business together, supporting neighbours who lost everything and still made it to lead the State and Federal Joint Councils' Face to Face meeting in Melbourne a couple of weeks ago. The press around drought and floods has provided us with an 'in' to go hard in pursuing the establishment of a Rural Hardship Education Fund; never has the need been so obviously acute.

Federal Council's proposal has been fine-tuned and the message is being delivered to many in Canberra as well as to other organisations on similar missions.

The recent UNICEF Australia Drought Report released 18 February, 2019 has further put the spotlight on the effect of drought on children's wellbeing, and also on their education. Last year UNICEF Senior Policy Advisor, Oliver White met with ICPA and spoke with other key stakeholders determining avenues to gather information for this report.

ICPA has concerns for the mental wellbeing of our rural and remote children when facing these types of situations continuously and have been advocating for the creation of resources specific to rural and remote students and the challenges they face.

Conference 2018

At last year's Federal Conference, 'conjoined' motions were trialed to save time and in order to better present a number of the same motions. The explanations from each Branch/State Council who submitted those motions were still listed under the conjoined motion presented. This was well received and enabled branches and members to still have their say while reducing the time spent on motions and allowing more time for speakers.

For the first time in recent history, ICPA (Aust) received more Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) motions than Communications motions at the 2018 Federal Conference, due to the introduction of the New Child Care Package which saw many concerns with the changes within In Home Care as well as the usual early learning motions. The first four ECEC motions pertained to the extension of the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) to 4-year-olds studying an early childhood program by distance education and these were therefore presented together as a Conjoined motion. A second Conjoined motion was in relation to the provision of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA). Members unanimously support these long-running motions. The time is ripe for election promises! And so, the next big task for Federal Council will be to finalise our Election Strategy and work on getting some of the things we advocate for onto the radars of current and prospective members of parliament.

After Federal Conference last August, Council set to work actioning the 89 motions carried at that conference. In October we met face-to-face in Canberra for a couple of days before embarking on a delegation to the Big House and taking those motions to some 35 politicians. We followed up with meetings with the Dept of Education and Training, Dept of Human Services and Dept of Social Security. These meetings are always fruitful because the Dept personnel we meet with are in positions to effect changes to Youth Allowance applications or AIC processing for example, or to take direct feedback on the ability or not of rural/remote people to access IHC.

In dealing with motions correspondence drafted by federal councillors, our illustrious Secretary, Suzanne Wilson, in responding to 65 motions, sent 24 original letters, cc'd them 130 other people (largely politicians), with 116 pages of attachments, totalling 588 pages in 93 envelopes! That was just the hard copies. They were all emailed as well. But who's counting??

The Federal Motion Update, which outlines how Federal Council has been actioning motions, outcomes achieved and our future plans, was distributed to members via a link in the Federal Branch Bulletin on 1 March and can be found on the ICPA website. I'll only touch on a few pertinent points in this report but I encourage all members to read the motion update and contact us if you have further questions or want more information.

Submissions

Federal Council started this year with a bang lodging four submissions in the first month; adding to the 12 submissions lodged in the last 12 months. Topics range from regional airfares, satellite TV, study hubs, telecommunications, SES scores, STEM partnerships, mental health services, VET, and the big one, Submission to the Inquiry into Rural Inequality – where do you start!!

Submissions provide not-to-be missed opportunities for ICPA to draw attention to our arguments. In this electoral year it is imperative to keep our presence felt in all areas of education to ensure equity is maintained or increased, for our rural and remote students.

ICPA representatives have also made appearances at many public hearings all over the nation as well and further information has been sought from panels on several occasions; an indication we have been heard. I remember Prof Halsey saying when he was doing the Independent Review into RRR Ed wherever there was a public hearing, there was ICPA! Some of the other Inquiries have had a similar experience.

Meetings

Federal ICPA is on a number of committees, advisory groups and coalitions and works closely with many organisations with whom we have an affinity. Some of these include ACARA, the Rural Regional and Remote Communications Coalition, the National Rural Health Alliance, nbn Roundtable and the Virtual Work Experience Advisory Group.

During the year, state and federal portfolios and executives have endeavored to hold teleconferences with the view to sharing information, issues and ideas.

This year the Joint Councils meeting of ICPA state and federal presidents and secretaries was held in February in Melbourne and from all accounts was a very informative and productive couple of days. Federal continues to work closely with states on many issues and appreciate the efforts of state representatives in getting to the meeting and contributing so freely. This meeting helps to improve consistency across our processes and with our presentation as a unified organisation.

Boarding

Federal Council continues to raise the need for a significant increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance (AIC). With the severe drought continuing in many areas of Australia, (and now floods as well) the ever-widening gap between the AIC and the cost of boarding to families is ever more pronounced. Following on from motions at the Federal Conference, ICPA seeks a review of the AIC to be undertaken and Federal Council raised this at our delegations in Nov. Federal Council have also spoken extensively on the need for a permanent program to assist rural and remote families with education costs in times of rural hardship, whether this is through fire, flood, industry impacts or drought. Federal President Wendy Hick has been attending meetings with the Joint Agency Drought Taskforce and raising the need for the implementation of a Rural Hardship Education Fund (RHEF) as well as highlighting the excessive educational costs faced by our rural families in accessing schooling for their children.

Mental wellbeing, particularly for students who live away from home for schooling, has also been a focus in our boarding discussions and Federal Council has been involved in several conversations with various organisations interested in the creation of resources designed specifically for rural and remote students and their families which will help address the unique challenges they face whether they are boarding away from home, in a small rural school setting or distance education classroom. ICPA also assisted UNICEF in coordinating their trip out to rural NSW areas to talk with children to assess the impact the drought is having on them and

we welcomed their report which was released on Mon 18 Feb. Federal Council thanks NSW ICPA for their assistance in promoting the UNICEF visit out to some rural and remote areas during these consultations.

Communications

ICPA (Aust) remains a member of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition of 21 members strengthening our voice and giving us another platform for our members' issues. We continue to work with Telstra and nbnTM to try to resolve issues affecting our members and we greatly appreciate members' feedback as well as contacting us when they have a problem. We are excited to be part of the nbnTM Sky Muster Plus announcement. Sky Muster Plus is an exciting new product development for regional internet users which will provide plans with unmetered access across essential internet services including PC operating system updates, general web browsing, internet banking, smart phone and email usage. With Sky Muster Plus those downloads will not count toward monthly data allowances and will still be accessible after data plan allowances are exceeded. Sky Muster Plus is set to launch in 2019. More information can be found on our website. Hopefully these new plans will assist students who have been unable to access the education port, including tertiary students and those at small rural schools. Telstra has also unmetered a number of sites used for education. We are hopeful telehealth might be another beneficiary of some of these negotiations. We continue to advocate with stakeholders for mobile expansion into areas with a rural school. We have received support on this issue from both the government and Telstra.

We also welcomed the introduction of the Telstra regional call centre. If you are more than 100kms from a Telstra store, you will be automatically directed to a regional call centre when you call 132 200. This service operates 7 days a week. Telstra regional managers' contacts are also found on the ICPA website.

Telstra are waiving fees for drought-affected families, but you need to alert them to your situation. We have again been reassured by the Minister for Communications office that landlines will remain for rural and remote customers until another adequate, reliable and affordable service is available and proven affective.

If anyone is having communication problems in their school room please contact Kristen Coggan, who luckily for us, is also one of the BIRRR ladies.

Early Childhood Education and Care

Preschool Funding

The Morrison Government is providing more than \$440 million to states and territories for preschool in 2019 under the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. All states have now signed up for this. We'd like to let it be known parents with preschool-aged children can still receive the Child Care Subsidy even where they do not meet the activity test. All families with children attending a preschool program in 2019 should ensure their child's expected school start date is correct and up-to-date with Centrelink. For more information about the process, please refer to the [preschool exemption fact sheet](#) and the [FAQ page](#) on the Australian Government Dept of Education and Training website.

In Home Care (IHC)

An increase of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for IHC families from \$25.48/hour/family from 2 July 2018 to \$32.00/hour/family and up to \$38.40/hour/family for Additional CCS from 1 January 2019 is now available. See the latest version of the IHC National Guidelines:

https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/ihc_national_guidelines_-_december_2018.pdf

Families are encouraged to review their incomes to make sure they are receiving the correct percentage of CCS. **Federal Council would welcome any case studies to illustrate whether the increase of CCS has helped make IHC more affordable for families or not.**

Two hundred more IHC places have been provided, particularly for families in Qld. The Department of Education and Training has informed IHC services in rural and regional areas that they can apply for a once-off **Special Circumstances grant** under the Community Child Care Fund to address any current viability issues. For further information including Guidelines, a Factsheet and Application form click on - [CCCF Special Circumstances Funding](#) . **Federal Council is particularly interested to know if any of the IHC Service Providers have been able to secure that Special Circumstances Funding.** Please contact us.

Skills IQ are updating Certificate III and Diploma for ECEC training packages with submissions now being accepted until 29 March 2019. All employers and educators are encouraged to add their feedback. Note that students have to gain their Cert III in ECEC before applying for Diploma training in ECEC and that work placements for Cert III have been increased from 120 hours to 160 hours, of which 120 hours must be in a regulated ECEC service. This will make life more difficult for rural and remote families and their IHC educators. See:

<https://www.skillsiq.com.au/FeedbackForum/TrainingPackages1/CHCCommunityServices/EarlyChildhoodEducationandCareDraft2>

Rural and Remote Child Care Services

Guidelines are now available for a new open competitive grant round that will open in March 2019. The new round will help child care services in disadvantaged communities to improve access to early learning opportunities for vulnerable children and families. Further information including eligibility criteria is available at [Community Child Care Fund Round 2](#) .

Rural Schools and School Travel

As most of you know Greyhound Australia announced after last Federal Conference ‘it will no longer carry children under the age of 15 without a chaperone’. Greyhound’s cited safety of children at stops, esp. destinations, as their reason for the change. The decision by Greyhound, taken without any consultation, impacted about 250 children nationally. In response, no doubt, pressured by ICPA, the Queensland State Government now funds a ‘Chaperone’ for children aged 12-14 on regulated routes for the purpose of attending school. Other States do not seem to have felt as big an impact as Qld, maybe because Greyhound had already cut some of its routes anyway. We would be interested to hear of other people affected elsewhere.

The inquiry into the operation, regulation and funding of air route service delivery to rural, regional and remote communities reporting date has been extended to Jun 2019. ICPA (Aust) and several state councils have put submissions into this enquiry and ICPA was represented at several public hearings. Ideally, we would like to see outcomes such as student concessional fares or travel allowances included in AIC.

Specific Education Needs

Last conference two motions asked for rural, regional and remote families to access travel and accommodation assistance to attend appointments with qualified professionals in order to diagnose and manage specific learning needs. This is going to be an ongoing issue and future motions and ideas on how to further this aspiration are encouraged. These children fall into a big crack between education and health systems in regional areas across all states and

territories. We are exploring several lines of inquiry to find ways to develop mental health and cyberbullying resources for rural and remote families. While mental health resources for parents and students, especially around cyberbullying, are being developed by many organisations and government, few target geographically isolated students or boarding students specifically. We are currently in negotiations with The University of NSW's Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre (GERRIC) to deliver workshops for parents of gifted students living in rural and remote areas of Australia.

Tertiary/Training

Rural and remote students qualifying for independent Youth Allowance through self-supporting criteria have had another big win. As of January 1, 2019, the parental income cut-off for regional, rural and remote students applying for Allowance under the *Independent through work: Part-time work or earnings for rural and remote students*' criteria, increased from \$150,000 to \$160,000, plus \$10,000 for each eligible additional child in the family. There is also greater flexibility in the choice of financial year used for parental income. Federal Council has continued to work with the Department of Human Services in relation to the issues applicants have with Youth Allowance applications and navigating the website. We have provided them with documentation of the sections in the online application and they were very appreciative. As the process is reviewed our suggestions will be taken into consideration for hopefully a straightforward process.

Membership

A couple of years ago the position of Membership Officer was created to ease pressure on the Federal Treasurer. Jane O'Brien does an admirable job of keep abreast of who is and isn't a member. Online membership renewal and 'Join ICPA online' launched in November 2017 for the 2018 membership year. About three-quarters of members renewing or joining are using the online option, much to our Membership Officer's glee, so please encourage your members to use the online option. Members can still renew via the branches though and if current and potential members are experiencing difficulty, please email Jane O'Brien at fedmembership@icpa.com.au About 1500 members have signed up for this year so far (4 March).

Federal Council thanks the NSW State Council for their ongoing contribution to the furtherance of federal issues and for keeping the issues of NSW families on the table, in times perhaps more difficult than have been seen for some years (I think we should show our appreciation for the work they do with a round of applause).

And thank you to Wentworth Branch for having us here in this amazing part of the world. Coming from the Top End, I find it hard to relax in your lovely brown water. We are hoping with all our hearts for better seasons everywhere very, very soon and appreciate your being able to still dedicate some of your time and resources to ICPA.

When looking for pithy education and children quotes to end on, I found this one from Robert Frost:

"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence." Wow - that is the sort of education we need to draw on in ICPA; the resilience to battle for equity in access to education for geographically isolated children, with dignity and determination, carefully explaining our unique circumstances to those in positions of influence, who are isolated from us, year after year. Occasionally it pays off and the winners are our children of the bush and the country they love. On that inspirational note, we hope you will be

able to join us in Adelaide on 31 July and 1 Aug for the 2019 Federal Conference with the theme of “Sustain our Future, Invest in our Children”.

Sally Sullivan.

Vice-president ICPA (Aust)

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Allowances

Mr President, distinguished guests, fellow councillors and members, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Allowances Report.

Holding the Allowance portfolio, you find it is a very busy time continually learning all there is to know as the year goes on, only to find that when you finally have it figured it out, it changes. There are so many variables within each allowance and while I don't always know the ever-changing figures, criteria for eligibility, closing dates and contact details, I will seek to find out and assist you in any way I can.

Each year both ICPA-NSW and ICPA (Aust.) make representations to State and Federal Governments for increased and improved financial support through these various allowances. On behalf of all ICPA-NSW members, I would like to thank our Federal Council colleagues, NSW State and Federal Governments in working together to improve the financial support offered to our rural and remote families. ICPA families are truly grateful.

The allowances are not designed to cover all the costs associated with educating our children. Most allowances can and do provide an opportunity to support families that otherwise may never have been able to access the educational opportunities. The difference in educational outcomes between rural and remote students compared to those in metropolitan areas is well documented. The allowances that ICPA-NSW and ICPA (Aust.) advocate hard for, go a long way to bridging this educational gap, by providing greater equity and access to education for rural and remote children.

NSW State Allowances.

State Council is aware that many families mistakenly believe that ICPA administer or distribute funds for allowances, this is not the case and never has been. Rather ICPA-NSW is here to make the process easier for families by having up to date information available and fostering contacts within the relevant departments. This information is published quarterly in Top Wire or can be accessed by contacting me. Further to this, if there are specific issues or queries that families are unable to resolve themselves then the Allowance Convenor is available to assist families to get the answers they need.

There are many allowances available to families, the criteria for eligibility, dates for application and all information relating to them is ever-changing and as such we are always available to

assist members to wade through the information and we have provided a brief overview of the available allowances.

These allowances are administered by the Department of Education (DoE).

Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA): The LAFHA is an allowance granted to students in New South Wales who live in an isolated area and need to move away from home in order to obtain a secondary education.

Boarding Scholarship for Isolated Students (BSIS): Similar to LAFHA, BSIS is an equity provision for rural New South Wales secondary school students whose family has a low income, whose geographic location severely affects access to secondary schooling and whose circumstances require that they board away from home to attend a government school.

Federal Allowances:

These allowances are administered by Centrelink, which is a part of the Department of Human Services.

Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Allowance:

AIC allowances are for students who cannot attend the nearest government school due to distance, road conditions, or some other special needs categories. There are five different AIC allowances members may be eligible for, here is a brief overview of the allowances.

- Distance Education Allowance, for families who must educate their children via Distance Education due to distance, road conditions or other special needs conditions.
- Basic Boarding Allowance, a basic rate for isolated children who attend boarding school.
- Additional Boarding Allowance, an amount above the Basic Boarding Allowance for low income families.
- Second Home Allowance, a provision for families who need to rent or buy a home closer to a school in order to educate their children.

Youth Allowance:

Youth Allowance: is financial help if you're 24 or younger and a student or Australian Apprentice, or 21 or younger and looking for work. If you are applying you will be assessed as either dependent or independent.

Dependent: If you are 21 or younger, you're dependent, unless you meet one of the conditions that make you independent.

Independent: If you're 22 or older, you are considered independent. If you're 21 or younger, you may be considered independent if certain criteria apply.

Independent through work:

Full time work: You may be independent if you support yourself through full time paid work for a certain period of time. See if you're considered independent using the check independence through work history tool.

Part time work or earnings for rural and remote students: You may be independent if you meet all the following criteria:

- your parental home is in an inner regional, outer regional, remote or very remote area
- you need to move away from your parental home to study
- you've worked since leaving secondary school.

Use the Student Regional Area Search to find out which area your family home is in.

Fares Allowance:

This helps with the cost of travel between your permanent home and your place of tertiary study in Australia for one return trip. Fares Allowance covers the cost of the least expensive and most available form of public transport in Australia. Where it is not practical to use public transport, you can travel by private transport, there are further eligibility criteria to be met, for further information go to; <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/fares-allowance>

**** Secondary students and Apprentices CAN NOT get Fares Allowance. ****

When applying for any allowances, families are encouraged not to self-assess their eligibility, but are encouraged to provide all the information that is required and allow the assessment processes to occur.

ICPA-NSW continually updates and provides an annual Allowance Spreadsheet as a summary of what allowances are available; eligibility criteria, closing dates and contact details. It is available in the November and February Editions of 'Top Wire', the ICPA-NSW website page, Facebook posts or by contacting the Allowance convenor.

In closing I would like to thank my fellow State Councillors for all their assistance while on I have been on State Council and my family for allowing me the time this time and finally thank you State Council for all the time you give voluntarily to help provide assistance to our members.

Tanya Mitchell
Allowances Convenor

Boarding Schools, Agricultural High Schools and Hostels Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, fellow members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Boarding Schools, Agricultural High Schools and School Term Hostels Report.

Boarding Schools:

On behalf of ICPA-NSW, I would like to welcome and thank the Boarding School representatives for attending this conference – your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

Highlights for 2018:

- ICPA-NSW attended the Boarding Schools Expos at Dubbo, Griffith, Wagga Wagga and Narrabri

- Over 90 families visited the ICPA stand with enquiries of membership, information on allowances, and educational support and opportunities for their children.
- Meg Bennett was presented in Dubbo with a Certificate of Appreciation for all she has done for ICPA-NSW over the many years and in particular her support of ICPA-NSW at the Boarding Schools Expos.
- Of those 51 schools who are current members of our organisation, 47 advertised their Scholarships and Bursaries in the recent December and February editions of Top Wire.

The Boarding Schools Expos for 2019 will be held at: -

- Goondiwindi 26-27 April
- Dubbo 17-18 May
- Tamworth 26-27 July

Agricultural High Schools:

It was good to see plans for the new Hurlstone Agricultural High facility which will open at Western Sydney University's Hawkesbury Campus in 2020. Representatives of the school were present at all Boarding Schools Expos during 2018 to answer questions, as were representatives from Yanco Agricultural High and Farrer Memorial Agricultural High.

Irene Lund

Boarding Schools, Agricultural High Schools and Hostels Convenor

Communications Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, fellow members of ICPA, ladies and gentleman. It is with great pleasure that I present the Communications Report.

The digital world is integral to our lives. There is a huge demand for quality telecommunications across Australia, while there are low levels of digital literacy amongst consumers. In September 2018 there were 2.5 million Australians not online. Since taking office in March 2018 at the conference in Mudgee, a lot has happened on the communications front. I would like to say that Claire Butler has been a wonderful mentor and ever-ready to assist if I have or had a question. Thank you so much Claire as I was very green, but gradually turning grey!! So, what has happened...

Branch Motions from the Mudgee Conference:

There have been letters written regarding the telecommunications issues raised at the Mudgee Conference. One issue that was raised by the Balranald Branch was that the Universal Service Obligation (USO) needs to remain on all landlines in rural and remote areas. I am pleased to report on 5 December 2018 the Australian Government decided to continue the current USO contract. This contract guarantees use and maintenance of Telstra copper and wireless networks in rural and remote Australia, for the provision of voice services in NBN fixed wireless and satellite areas. There will be a continued strong focus on service reliability through the management of the USO contract. The Government does not intend to make changes that will affect regional Australians until there are robust and proven alternatives to the existing Standard Telephone Services (STS).

Black Spot funding:

The Monaro Branch at the last conference asked ICPA (Aust.) to continue lobbying for mobile service coverage in rural and remote black spot areas. During 2018 further funding was given for black spots. Work is continuing to complete the earlier rounds of funding.

Unlimited Data Allowance:

At the Mudgee Conference the Brewarrina Branch asked ICPA-NSW to continue to lobby all internet service providers and NBN to give rural isolated students unlimited data allowances. Telecommunication companies are now beginning to roll out unlimited plans. Telstra is to have an unlimited business plan out early in 2019. State Council took this issue to Sydney during the deputation week and it was also addressed at the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) Conference. State Council had a meeting at NBN in Sydney during the deputation in October 2018 where we were informed that they are investing in improving their ability to separate the types of data that flow in and out so that they will be able to start offering more unmetered options. Sky Muster Plus is also addressing this issue.

Sky Muster Plus:

In the later part of 2018, Sky Muster Plus was announced. This product will give consumers access to an unmetered monthly data allowance for web-browsing, email and software updates from 2019. NBN is also consulting with regional stakeholders to develop targeted Sky Muster services for regional education and health facilities.

Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST):

VAST service provides satellite delivery for free to air television to 500,000 Australian viewers who are unable to receive reliable local terrestrial transmission. A review of this television service happened in 2018 prior to the advance of the contracts to commercial broadcasters which are to end 30th June 2020. ICPA-NSW drafted a response and we thank all who helped with this review which closed in June 2018. On 3rd January 2019 Senator Bridget McKenzie, Minister for Regional Services, announced \$10 Million of additional funding to secure the VAST service for regional Australians until 2021. The key recommendation from the review is that the service continue to be provided through the current satellite delivery model.

Regional Telecommunications Independent Review (RTIR):

This was an extensive review and following the consultation, ICPA-NSW drafted a response. A representative of ICPA-NSW State Council attended a meeting in Narrabri, which was a great platform to speak publicly about the effects the current communications systems are having on educating our rural and regional students and rural businesses. Many members happily contributed to this review and I thank them most sincerely for their time and effort. We are still waiting to hear the final outcome of the review. One of the common threads throughout the consultation process was that consumers need education about the telecommunications available to them. This lack of knowledge is contributing to why some people are not taking up services when they come to their areas.

Next Generation Wireless Link Service (NGWL):

Customers on this type of connection are now covered by the Customer Service Guarantee (CSG) as they were previously not covered by the USO. If you are one of these customers and

your service is not connected or repaired within a specific time period, you may be eligible for compensation.

Regional Call Centre:

Members would be very familiar with the frustration of calling Telstra's 1300 faults number only to be speaking with someone who does not understand the location, let alone the problem you are experiencing. This year Telstra introduced two Regional Call Centres within Australia. These centres are located at Adelaide and Townsville. If you are located more than 100kms from your nearest Telstra Centre, you should automatically be switched through to a Regional Call Centre. There are some glitches whereby it is not working if the centre is busy. The general advice from Telstra is to try again. State Council would appreciate any feedback in relation to this service.

Telstra Go Units:

During the year members questioned the proposed deals Telstra was offering on Telstra Go Units. Consumers can only call 13 22 00 for personal account holders or 13 20 00 for business account holders to order the units to ensure they get the discounts offered to ICPA members. Telstra stores are not obligated to give customers these deals on these units. You can put a request in at the local Telstra store to get someone from the Call Centre to call you and talk about the units. Telstra are offering members a \$50 discount on the purchase of these units.

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) Conference:

In September, I had the privilege of representing ICPA-NSW at the ACCAN conference. What a mine field of information! It was also an honour to be there with Wendy Hick, Federal ICPA President and the Federal Communications Officer, Kristen Coggan.

NBN Roundtable Inaugural NSW Meeting:

I am pleased to inform you that NBN NSW has held its first meeting in November 2018 with stakeholders involved, with hope these meetings will occur quarterly. The first meeting was a great opportunity to get to know the stakeholders and who's who in NBN. ICPA-NSW look forward to attending further NBN Roundtables. NBN have regionally located managers who are very keen to cover their patch and provide information to anyone regarding the NBN products. For Information you need to call 1800 687 626.

Communications Teleconference:

ICPA-NSW and ICPA (Aust.) as well as NSW Branches are taking advantage of using the Telstra teleconference facilities. This is a great initiative for ICPA councils and members where circumstances make it difficult in having regular face to face meetings. Throughout the year members have been very helpful providing information for reviews. Thank you very much for your time as it is much appreciated. A huge thank you to all the State Councillors who have nurtured me along during my first year. All your input has been well received and very helpful.

Libby McPhee
Communications Convenor

Distance Education/ AHVISE Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, fellow ICPA members, ladies and gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to present the Distance Education/ AHVISE Report.

Many families are still feeding stock due to the ongoing relentless drought which makes less time in the actual school room. This is not that the students are not doing school, however we know that they are working from feeding trailers etc. ICPA-NSW would like to thank those schools who have been approached on an individual basis for their understanding in relation to altering programs to make education easier for these students and rural families during this difficult time.

Finigan School of Distance Education starts operation as a K-12 school as of the beginning of 2019. Mr Daniel Rattigan is the founding Principal, and along with the staff, is eagerly awaiting access to the new purpose-built facilities which are nearing completion. Once completed, the school will feature purpose-designed spaces to support distance education teaching and learning, with studios providing teachers the opportunity to engage in a range of learning opportunities.

NBN in cooperation with the Department of Education (DoE) are now in the position to start the process of a trial integration of the NBN SkyMuster service using the multicast protocol to allow more efficient use of bandwidth. The trial will determine the suitability of the service and allow both parties the opportunity to fine tune technical requirements. The trials will take place in five separate locations throughout NSW. With some technology still somewhat unreliable it will be interesting to hear from the Rural and Remote team during this testing process.

Time-tabling at Broken Hill School of the Air continues to be an issue and ICPA-NSW still believes that a second computer in the home-based schoolroom would relieve this pressure. This would be more productive for the students given the increased amount of time that students are expected to be online or using computer-based learning.

State Council is continuing discussions with DoE and other key educational authorities in relation to supporting incentives, such as recognition of work experience for graduate teachers who accept work as governesses tutoring Distance Education students in remote areas. ICPA-NSW believes that the inclusion of tutors, supported through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for students who are registered with the NDIS and live in remote and very remote areas is a priority as to allow these students similar learning support as seen in face to face classrooms.

ICPA-NSW President, Mr Bruce Paynter, is a member of the organising committee for the 2019 Rural and Remote Conference which will be held in three separate locations throughout NSW, Tamworth, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga, in late July early August.

AHVISE – Update from Lyn French

AHVISE is pleased to advise there have been many placements taking place and people are slowly understanding the new system.

If you are looking for help in the school room we still have tutors available so please go to www.ahvise.org.au and register, making sure you fill out everything required and read what is provided as some families, as well volunteers are not bothering, instead they are taking short cuts, which creates a bigger work load for our volunteers in management.

We are excited to announce that we have finally launched our new Virtual Classrooms for families and volunteers. We have tutors willing to tutor online and help as there are some who can't travel but are still willing to help other ways. Families must register by going to our web page www.ahvise.org.au and follow instructions. Virtual classroom is there for students needing some extra help and can also be accessed before and after a placement. The virtual classrooms serve as a communication tool to discuss everything school-related in one place. The classrooms are free and not compulsory to use. For the virtual classroom to be of use, both volunteer and families need to use it

Feel free to reach out to and ask any questions, as a committed team are ready to help in managing the classroom set up and training. If you require further assistance gaining access please contact the office 07 3103 2070 or email info@ahvise.org.au.

New Online Agreements have now become active.

2018 AHVISE helped

- 100 children right throughout Australia
- 50% of those families were in NSW
- 40% QLD
- 10% NT and islands of NT

2019

- we have waivers all fees for families no matter where they live in Australia, not only because of the drought but because of the generous donations we received from boarding schools, RSL and other businesses. As we are not a moneymaking business, we are a charity, it is only fair this is passed onto the families.
- tutors/volunteers can claim up to \$1,500 upon receipts
- there are no set time durations - tutors can stay four weeks, six weeks or whole term whatever suits both parties
- Donations can be made through the website.

Thank you for your wonderful support in reaching out in helping get work out there about Aussie Helpers Volunteers for Isolated Students Education (AHVISE).

Helen Ponder

Distance Education/ AHVISE Convenor

Early Childhood Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Early Childhood report.

This time last year we were hurtling towards the implementation of the new Child Care Package which meant significant changes to all forms of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Whilst the transition for the majority of Long Day Care Centres was relatively seamless, the transition for non-standard forms of ECEC like those on offer in rural and remote areas has been less than smooth.

July 2018 saw the end of the Budget Based Funding (BBF) for Services, with up to 20 mobiles who were unable to transition to the childcare model and placed with the Department of Social

Services with two years secured funding. The changes have resulted in enormous administration work and a lot of trial and error with reporting.

For mobiles that transitioned to the new Childcare Package and or preschool, the transition has also been bumpy. Some services are finding that they are no longer viable under the model and it has been a long-held concern of ICPA-NSW and other likeminded organisations that mobile services would become slowly extinct without guaranteed funding.

The National Mobile Meet was held in October 2018 with some of the key findings of Mobile Services being:

- access to care is being denied to country children. Venues have been lost due to unviability under the new funding model. Ratios have become a problem. Services didn't operate as they had been. Playgroups have been depleted.
- in some areas, parents have assigned care over to educators, rather than attending play group sessions. In other areas, parents assign care but are still present, even though they are paying for child care.
- flexibility within service to support different communities is required e.g. If one venue doesn't have the numbers, then you could open in a more viable area.

In Home Care (IHC) has also been plagued with difficulties since the transition. Fortunately for NSW places are not an issue, however increased costs, the payment system and a lack of understanding around governesses and Distance Education and School of the Air have been the main concerns. At the annual Deputation in October, ICPA-NSW was able to meet with NSW Family Day Care who are the In-Home Care Support Agency for NSW. This was a great introduction between organisations and we thank Anita Jovanovski, CEO of NSW Family Day Care and her team for the productive conversation.

Commencing in January 2019, Minister Tehan announced measures to assist struggling families with IHC, which included increased places from 3,000 to 3,200, increase in the Family Rate Cap from \$25.48 per hour to \$32 per hour, and providing \$44.5 million to increase the child care subsidy for families using IHC. ICPA-NSW thanks Minister Tehan for the changes and Minister Ley for her part in following up IHC.

In December 2018, families from seven Long Day Care (LDC) centres across NSW and Victoria were made aware that their centres were no longer financially viable and would close on December 22. The community rallied, and I'm pleased to say that the two centres in NSW remain open with management transferred to the local shire. A wonderful outcome for these communities.

Overall it has been a long, hard, dry and exhausting year for ICPA-NSW members and so with that in mind I would like the 2019 Early Childhood Report to highlight some of the positive things happening in NSW:

- the Gidgee Preschool opened in Term 3 2018 and has been operating successfully
- Louth and Wanaaring commenced discussion with Nat Heath from the Early Childhood and Education Care Directorate (ECECD) and Community Connections Solutions Australia (CCSA) about the steps to opening preschools in those communities
- the majority of drought affected preschools received drought funding to be used by the centre how they saw best. It is hoped that the Distance Education and School of the Air

preschools who did not receive any drought funding, who however have very isolated and severe long-term drought affected pre-schoolers will be offered this funding

- as of January 1st 2019, Start Strong funding will be extended to all three-year-olds enrolled in Community Preschools. This will assist rural and remote preschools who experience fluctuating four-year-old numbers
- we have also seen other services such as Royal Far West and the Royal Flying Doctor Service focus services in the early childhood and family's sector and expand further into Telehealth that will provide much needed services to remote children. We thank these organisations greatly for the contribution they make to rural and remote NSW.

There is still work to be done for ICPA, with a focus on obtaining funding for remote pre-schoolers via the School Drive Subsidy (SDS) and Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC). Also, with the reopening of the Pooncarie Public School, the community is keen to commence discussion regarding the possibility of a preschool operating from the school grounds.

In what has been an exhausting year for State Councillors facing their own problems associated with drought, I would like to thank fellow members of State Council for each other's understanding and support. To my family who put up with my absences, meetings and late nights at the computer with only a small amount of complaining – thank you for allowing me to do this. And to fellow ICPA members, I truly hope that 2019 brings a more prosperous and wet year and please don't hesitate to contact me if you or your community are in need of Early Childhood assistance.

Nerida Healy
Early Childhood Convenor

Rural Schools Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, fellow ICPA members, ladies and gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to present the Rural Schools report.

At the 2018 Conference in Mudgee there were several motions expressing concern about a variety of issues under which rural, remote and very remote schools operate in NSW. These schools are predominately Teaching Principal (TP1) schools.

In September 2018 ICPA-NSW Rural Schools Portfolio conducted an informal survey with parents, principals and staff from isolated TP1 schools. The following issues were mentioned consistently and further consolidate ICPA-NSW members concerns.

Area Directors' appropriate support for TPI schools:

State Council has begun to organise meetings with the area directors and this has been welcomed by Department of Education (DOE) but is yet to be instituted. Remote families in small communities with a new teacher or an issue with an existing teacher need to be able to genuinely consult with confidentiality with the director responsible for their school.

ICPA-NSW see a need for regular visits from the director checking that the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabus program is being delivered to children. This requires looking beyond the prepared program to actually checking student's workbooks and daily

register to see that the program is being taught in an appropriate and timely manner. In some larger schools, programs are handed in every five weeks and checked thoroughly to make sure the appropriate syllabus is being taught.

In small isolated schools this is not a routine process and therefore has resulted in there being no program. ICPA-NSW believes this has not been adequately addressed for too long a period, causing inequality for TP1 school students when compared to students in larger schools. If the teaching principal is experienced with integrity it is likely that your school will flourish. However, in many instances this is not the case.

Isolated communities, despite having been involved in the teaching principal selection process, still face a gamble when the new teacher arrives therefore ICPA-NSW recommends the following:

- On the director's regular visits, it would be beneficial if the director casually met with parents and staff giving them an opportunity to voice any concerns.

Otherwise official complaints in a school with only two staff can lead to an awkward and uncomfortable situation which not only affects staff but also affects the students. In many cases this could have been avoided if concerns were able to be aired (and dealt with diplomatically) in a casual manner, preventing what can be a tense and uncomfortable environment in the workplace.

The director should be encouraging the new principal to take part and attend community events. A principal that participates in the small community strengthens and builds resilience, this fosters an atmosphere of co-operation which will only benefit the teacher and the school. It is difficult for a person to come to an isolated community if they have no intention of participating in that community. Some of these schools are 100 kms or more away from a larger town. If the teacher does not become involved in the community it can make for a lonely existence which again reflects on the school environment.

Handover documentation for new principal from existing principal:

Whenever there is a change of the Teaching Principal role in small schools a handover document from the previous principal should be required to contain a 5-week program, knowledge of any information that would benefit a new principal regarding each student's learning, family background if necessary, what resources are available, staff information etc.

Small TP1 schools feel that if a program has not been supplied for a new principal from the previous principal it can sometimes take up to two terms before the principal is familiar or has completed the testing required to see what stage the students are up to. Making this a policy would have the students working at their level from day one. This gives the new principal the time to learn their new duties in the administration field of the principal position without students being disadvantaged. In many cases new principals come into the school buying new resources because they are unaware of what the school already has. If this was in the handover document this would alleviate unnecessary spending of funds.

Relevant information about staff and students enables the school term to begin without any disruption and affords the new principal some background knowledge and the chance to

familiarise themselves at their own discretion. This may alleviate possible conflict or unpleasant situations which could have been avoided.

Adequate training before commencing employment at TP1 Schools:

Teachers need some knowledge of community and geography of the place of their employment and what is required in rural, remote and very remote schools and communities. Teaching Principals need to have good communication skills and be able to relate to parents, staff and community as these bodies play a significant support role in TP1 schools.

ICPA-NSW acknowledges that there is too much time out of the classroom for conferences and meetings. In very remote schools it is at least a day either side to travel plus time for the event, this could mean the teaching principal is absent for a whole week from the classroom. For many isolated children in very remote schools this may be the only formal education they ever have practical access to, thus this primary schooling needs to be of a consistent standard which allows them to obtain thoroughly consolidated literacy and numeracy skills. Having casual teachers while the principal is away does not always allow for consistency.

Inadequate technologies in TP1 Schools:

Internet services in rural, remote satellite schools and very remote areas are not reliable or fast enough to facilitate real time connections. Some students are unable to access specialised services such as Royal Far West programs, using an online platform to deliver remote allied health services.

The new finance system is almost impossible to use some days as it relies solely on the internet resulting in inefficient usage of staff time.

Sustainable incentives for teaching principals appointed to TP1 Schools:

Members have expressed concern with the remuneration and incentives offered to TP1 schools. In some cases, this is resulting in positions remaining unfilled. An assistant principal in a TP4 school is remunerated at the same level as a TP1 principal but with the benefits of living in town with none of the disadvantages of living in a remote location.

A community survey recommended for consideration the following;

- A suitable vehicle provided by the DoE for the road conditions
- or incentive to use their own vehicle such as travel payments, a contribution to their insurance (the potential for expensive damage to tyres and vehicles while travelling on the local roads is significant)
- guaranteed casual relief when required throughout the terms. Assurance for principal relief time and if this is not available compensation for this
- negotiated financial remuneration as there are significant additional living expense costs when relocating and living remotely
- if teachers are seconded from other schools within the locality there should be travel costs paid and/or a remuneration package negotiated
- there needs to be suitable maintained housing for principal

- suitable casual teacher housing as separate from the principal housing.

Annabel Strachan
Rural Schools Convenor

Special Education Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Special Education Report.

In August 2018 Royal Far West announced that it will scale up services to support country children with a disability following a successful tender for \$1.339 million from the NSW Department of Industry's Disability Sector Scale Up grants. It is known that Services are scarce in rural and remote communities with long waiting lists for paediatricians, allied health and mental health professionals, so this tender will be beneficial to many.

Royal Far West CEO Lindsay Cane said, "This is great news for country families who have struggled to access local services through their NDIS package. Our disability programs will support children aged 2-12 years with autism, intellectual and psychosocial disability concerns for example", "We will use Royal Far West's expertise in allied health and Telecare to support children and families."

Unfortunately, a representative from ICPA-NSW was unable to attend the opening of the new Royal Far West Building, however State Council wish them all the best in their transition to the new premises and thank them for all the work they do in supporting rural and remote children.

Information on Disability Education and Awareness (IDEAS) have assured us that Tele Therapy, including speech therapy, is available online using video conferencing.

The Sir Eric Woodward School (SEWS) Distance Education Support Unit (DESU) is a part of the NSW Department of Education Rural and Remote Education Network. DESU is a state-wide service catering for students with intellectual and multiple disabilities from preschool to Year 12. Students enrolled in DESU are isolated from accessing a local school due to a variety of reasons including; remote geographic location, medical complexities and other complex additional learning and support needs. DESU provides innovative and flexible personalised programs for students which are negotiated with parents and, where possible, students. Programs are based on ability level and needs, providing the greatest opportunity for success for these students.

ICPA-NSW is still advocating for educators, for families in rural and remote areas who are studying under DE or SOTA, as a service provided by NDIS. Currently the Scheme will fund support services that enable participants to attend school education, where these services are required by the participant to engage in a range of community activities. A Local Area Coordinator can assist participants to make contact and discuss their needs with schools or education providers where appropriate.

During deputation in October 2018 a recommendation to the Department of Education that an online "glove box" style information pack be developed for all Special Educational Services to

be included as part of the NDIS was made. At a meeting with an educational stakeholder during deputation ICPA-NSW was advised that they are developing a similar tool.

The Centre for Effective Reading (CER) has notified ICPA-NSW that enrolments and use of these professional literacy services are now being well utilised with enrolments now at capacity. ICPA-NSW would like to wish Gillian Bale all the best in her position as Relieving Principal of the CER.

The tour of the Child Development Unit (CDU) and introduction to staff was a great start to our deputation in October 2018, which led to many questions regarding the unit and CER from the State Councillors attending. The assessment/program that takes place before children are accepted to the centre in the twice a year intake, councillors were given a greater understanding of how CER and the CDU work and what is required from schools and parents. This information will be very beneficial for State Councillors if they are asked about the CER process and we will be able to pass on this valuable information to any member who may ask.

One of our main concerns over the past few years has been that schools did not know about CER, however it was very pleasing to learn that referrals are increasing and schools that CER had not heard from before are beginning to refer to the service.

For rural and remote families, it is a great benefit that the use of video conferencing, google hangout and other means of communication are available to support the team that are helping the student. One concern however, is that satellite schools that still do not have capable technology to provide this service and in some cases parents in isolated areas do not have the technology either.

The ratio of boys and girls needing this service was a notable 4:1, but interesting to know that the problem is harder to identify in girls as symptoms are not as noticeable. Another point of interest is Year 3 being the peak time when you notice a student start to fall behind as it changes from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn'.

Helen Ponder
Special Education Convenor (Secunder)

Tertiary Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Tertiary Report.

At the State Conference held in Mudgee in 2018, there was one tertiary motion;

“That ICPA-NSW requests a progress report from the relevant ministers and agencies on the implementation of each of the government supported recommendations of the 2013 NSW Review into Agricultural Education and Training.”

In post-conference actions and correspondence State Council are still waiting for a Ministerial and /or Departmental response. This is a continuing action.

Federal Government changes:

The proposal to lower the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) repayment threshold income level from \$52,000 to \$45,800 has passed the Federal Senate. This will mean that

students will begin repaying loans at 1% (starting at \$458 per annum on a sliding scale of up to 10% as their income increases to \$132,000 or more).

Country University Centres (CUC):

The three operational centres were well supported in the 2018 academic year with 290 students enrolled at the Cooma, Goulburn and Broken Hill campuses. The CUC North West (Moree and Narrabri) will commence operation in the first semester of 2019. Clarence Valley (Grafton) and Western Riverina (Griffith and Leeton) will commence in the second semester 2019. The first centre to open in Cooma (The Snowy Monaro CUC) now has 198 registered students studying graduate and post-graduate degrees. It has seen an amazing 95 per cent completion rate for students.

TAFE:

TAFE is a big player in the provision of tertiary education to rural and remote students with around 150,000 enrolments from regional and remote areas. Services continue to evolve with *Skills Points* and *Connected Learning Centres* set up or in development throughout rural NSW. To our advantage in this area of education and training is that Mr Duncan Taylor (a past President of ICPA-NSW) is on the board.

Universities Admissions Centre (UAC):

The “elephant in the room” here is the rather stunning statistic that if a country student defers their university admission for 12 months or more there is a less than 10% chance, they will even take up the offer. I am sure you are all aware of the earning capabilities of kids in the bush if they go into shearing sheds or operate machinery and the like. Whilst it may be very beneficial in the short term, it is likely to limit their future earning potential as higher skilled or more qualified people take the best paying roles.

UAC statistics table:

In the following tables you can see that only 1/3 of country students enrol into an offer they have been given in comparison to 2/3 of metro and 1/2 of regional students.

		Number who Applied	Number of Offers	Number who Deferred	Number who Enrolled
2018	Country	3,033	2,831	845	1,004
	Metro	30,873	29,207	1,593	20,274
	Regional	10,148	9,623	1,758	5,964
	Total	44,055	41,662	4,196	27,243

2017	Country	3,239	3,037	743	1,149
	Metro	31,080	28,889	1,695	20,139
	Regional	10,546	9,852	1,500	6,116
	Total	44,865	41,778	3,938	27,404

2016	Country	3,716	3,487	1,044	1,235
	Metro	30,894	29,653	2,200	22,387
	Regional	10,824	10,060	1,781	5,966
	Total	45,434	43,200	5,025	29,588

Thank you to my fellow Councillors for their support during my first year.

Tim Fletcher
Tertiary Convenor

Travel Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Travel Report.

At the State Conference held in Mudgee in 2018, the travel motions centred on;

- Lowering student numbers to start a bus run.
- Funding to maintain unsealed roads used for bus runs.
- Preschool children to be included in the School Drive Subsidy (SDS) and the School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS).

Since the State Conference, State Council has met with;

- The Hon. Andrew Constance – Minister for Transport and Infrastructure
- Lewis Clark – A/Executive, Customer Services Division, Transport for NSW (TfNSW)
- Gail Le Bransky – Director, Transport Policy, TfNSW
- Ross Elson – Regional Manager (South), Service Procurement and Performance, TfNSW
- Lindy Hall – A/Principal Manager, Concessions Information, TfNSW
- Stephen Tonkes – Director Concessions and Customer Operations, TfNSW
- Matt Threlkeld – Bus NSW
- Phillip Whipp – Bus NSW

For many years now ICPA-NSW has been requesting the Minister for Transport to include preschool aged children in the transport subsidy schemes. With the preschool transport trials at Tenterfield and Condong coming to an end and becoming permanent runs - which do not leave the town limits, ICPA-NSW are still concerned that some preschool aged children in rural and remote areas still can't access a preschool at all due to the cost of travel. Bus services are a very important tool for preschool aged children in rural and remote areas to receive the universal 600 hours prior to starting school. ICPA-NSW will continue to request the Minister for Transport and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) to include preschool aged children in the SDS and SSTS who travel in rural and remote areas.

The SDS is administrated by TfNSW and is available to NSW residents in areas where there is no public transport, to drive an eligible student all or part of the way to school. The subsidy is only intended to partly offset the cost of using a private vehicle to drive the eligible student and

is not intended to cover all costs. The subsidy is for driving school students to school or to the nearest transport pick up point, by car, motorcycle or boat.

ICPA-NSW can confirm that those students attending Distance Education (DE) and receiving the SDS that there are no trip limits to either a DE centre or a mini school location per semester. For those still on the Private Vehicle Conveyance scheme (PVC) it is limited to nine trips to either a DE centre or mini school location each year.

For information go to <https://apps.transport.nsw.gov.au/ssts/#/>

University students are not eligible for the SDS. ICPA-NSW have and will continue to ask the Minister to include them. At present some university students may be eligible for Fares Allowance, however ICPA-NSW is working towards including all rural and remote university students in the SDS in place of the fares allowance.

Secondary students and Australian Apprentices can't get Fares Allowance.

For information go to; www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/fares-allowance

The School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS) provides eligible school students with free or subsidised travel from home to school.

For information go to <https://apps.transport.nsw.gov.au/ssts/#/>

The Department of Education Assisted School Travel Program:

This program provides specialised transport assistance for eligible students with disability to travel to and from school. The Program provides travel support services primarily between a student's permanent place of residence and school. Information can be found at: www.education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/astp.

Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS):

This is a NSW Government initiative providing financial assistance towards travel and accommodation cost when a patient needs to travel long distances for specialist medical treatment that is not available locally. IPTAAS forms are available visiting: <http://www.enable.health.nsw.gov.au/services/iptaas>

Number of students needed to start a bus run:

ICPA-NSW will continue to ask TfNSW to lower the requisite number of students required to start a bus run from 15 to 12, (the seating capacity of a category 1 bus). Currently consideration may only be given to establishing a new non-commercial school bus service where at least 15 school age students reside 3.2 kilometres or more by the shortest most practical route to their school or the local route bus service and the majority live beyond eight kilometres from the school. The number of students is to be calculated on the basis that all children use the bus each morning and afternoon. Once again if preschool aged children were included in the SSTS many bus runs would continue to run or we could see new ones commence.

Seat belts on school buses:

The installation of seat belts on school buses in rural and remote areas commenced in 2013. With the installation of seatbelts on the rural and regional bus fleet fast tracked and the program to be completed by December 2019, the Minister says that 750 busses have been fitted. With over 1000 school buses still to be fitted with seat belts and the Department trying to find a way

to have these done as local as possible without disruption, ICPA-NSW are concerned that these buses will not be fitted with seat belts by the end of 2019.

Thank you to my fellow Councillors for their support during the past year.

David Butler
Travel Convenor

Guest Speakers

Libby McPhee, State Council. It is my pleasure to introduce Ann Jakel from Telstra. She is the Acting Regional Australia General Manager for ACT and Southern NSW. Ann is enjoying being the face of Telstra organisation and has extensive media experience. Ann has been in this acting role for five months. Previous to this role Ann was the Regional Australian Senior Specialist with Telstra and held that position for almost three years. Ann is based in Canberra. Please make Ann welcome this morning.

Ann Jakel. Acting Regional Australia General Manager for ACT and Southern NSW.

Thank you, Libby and good morning everyone who is here. I'm delighted to join you today at your State Conference. This is my second State Conference as I was with you all in Mudgee last year and to see many members as well as ICPA-NSW President, Bruce Paynter. On behalf of Telstra I must say we always look forward to the opportunity to attend these conferences and discuss how we are working closely with you to make a difference with your families and communities in regional Australia. I work with another colleague who many of you will know and that is Mike Merrion and he is the other Regional General Manager in NSW. So, on behalf of him hello again and we are so happy to be here today. Our partnership with ICPA-NSW and the changes we have been able to make together is something we are very proud of. Telstra has a long tradition at events like these for acknowledging the traditional owners of the land and I would also like to acknowledge the Barkindji people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting this morning and to pay my respects to elders past and present and emerging and to welcome all indigenous people who are here today. And it was such a beautiful Welcome to Country that we heard from Ad this morning. So, thank you for that Ada. Historically Telstra has been partnering with regional and rural Australians for generations. From the very first telegraph line that connected Adelaide to Darwin and connected Australia to Great Britain in the latter part of the 19th Century. For Telstra and for Australia rural telecommunications started with telephony and we have led the way from the very first mobile base stations in Australia to, last September, launching the first regional 5G tower in Toowoomba. We have led the way in the Federal Government's Mobile Black Spot Programme launching our five hundredth base station in Clarence in Western NSW last October and we are on track to deliver 650 mobile base stations this year. Today we are all part of the global community and that demands connectivity more so in our regional communities where improving education through connectivity is essential and that is why we will not stop there but more on that a little bit later. I'd like to describe to you how, over the past year, we've been making a difference in education in NSW in particular. In addition to improving our regional and rural and remote mobile coverage network, we have specifically supported some key educational initiatives in NSW. Telstra supported more than 730 code clubs to deliver weekly coding classes to young people with 50% being in remote and regional areas. We enabled our IDX programme to take place in six locations in NSW and these were in places

like Bourke, Walgett, Wellington, Lake Macquarie, Grafton and Tamworth. I don't know if many of you are aware of IDX but IDX aims to spark interest ideas and talent of young aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in making digital technology. The programme provides a \$25,000 grant with support to community and through hands-on workshops for indigenous young people we help develop skills for local facilitators as well as equipment and educational resources. We also delivered a Young Change Workshop in rural South West, Central Coast and the Upper Hunter, NSW, and Young Change Agents Workshops provide design thinking, social entrepreneurship skills for ten to eighteen-year olds and they work to help the youth see problems as opportunities. We have a long and strong commitment to rural investment. Telstra's network is second to none and the reason for that is that we continue to invest in it and that absolutely includes investing in regional and rural Australia. No other telecommunications company in Australia can match our level of investment in regional, rural and remote Australia. In just the last three years we have invested more than \$2.2 billion dollars in our regional mobile network connecting schools, businesses, shops, doctors, farmers and many others. Through our Networks of the Future Programme we are also laying the foundation for the launch of the next generation of mobile connectivity and that is with the 5G network. Although we have the largest mobile network in this country, one that operates 17 million services to 70 million voice calls each year, we know that connectivity continues to present very real obstacles in regional Australia and that is why the Federal Government's Mobile Black Spot Programme is so important. By bringing more towers to regional Australia we are helping to close the geographic divide and service gaps experienced by many communities. Telstra has invested significantly in this programme and, as I have mentioned, we have installed 500 towers so far. Now the 2017 decision by the ACCC to confirm existing regulatory settings in relation to mobile roaming has unleashed probably the largest investment ever in regional mobile infrastructure and coverage. This investment has been a game changer. The Mobile Black Spot Programme is a fantastic opportunity of what is possible when businesses, governments and communities work together to expand coverage where otherwise it would not be economically to do so. Telstra is building 650 mobile base stations through the three rounds of the Federal Government's Mobile Black Spot Programme and that is more than triple the commitment of all carriers combined and represents a total of Telstra investment of \$260 million. In addition to the Federal Government's Mobile Black Spot Programme, we have partnered with State Governments, Local Governments, miners, indigenous organisations and co-investment programmes. The simple point here is that the only way to address the profound geographic challenges that are in Australia's vast land mass is to work with others I partnership. Alone we can do so much but together we can do so much more. Today the rough cost of a new mobile phone tower is around \$1 million but with improvements to what we have in mobile technology and some big shifts in satellite backhaul, we can put satellite small cells into a community or on an individual property for around \$70,000. With an aerial on a ten-meter pole you can probably get a coverage of around 500 meters. Get the aerial up to twenty meters and you'll probably get coverage within a radius of two to three kilometres, and if you can get the aerial even higher your coverage is then greater. Essentially the customer then determines the capacity and depth of the mobile coverage that they need and then works with us to craft the solution and, what's more, we will partner with you fifty/fifty on the costs. We will match your \$35,000 contribution with \$35,000 from us. It is a cost-effective way to handle the growing demand for increased data. Eighteen months ago, the economics of Telstra's mobile satellite small cell technology was not there but now we have new options for communities and individuals to share the cost with this smaller, lower cost version of the standard mobile tower. What's possible now is that the community of an individual can gain

high quality access to 4G data straight from their area or property and we hope to roll out more than 500 mobile satellite small cells over the next three years. Now, getting assistance from us. You and your members, it was mentioned earlier today, told us that it is sometimes very hard to get in touch with the right people in Telstra who understand your needs and the environment I which you live and work. I'm pleased to provide an update on the initiative that we've developed as a result of our discussions with you, the ICPA. For twelve months Telstra has been operating a call centre in Adelaide dedicated to helping regional and remote customers get answers and easy access to some of the consumer enquiries of issues that they have. Recognising the differences of regional and remote areas and understanding the needs of these customers requires the call centre's team of 150 staff to have a prior and detailed understanding across Telstra's consumer products and we are also improving the capabilities of our store teams to better meet your needs with enhances business in regional product training. We have launched regional Store on Wheels recently and our Telstra vans visit many regional towns which don't normally have a Telstra point of presence. These include team members to help you and to demonstrate live handsets, network extension devices and small business devices, including DART. We are also launching the Device Care App which assists in getting new mobiles up and running faster including easier transfer of content from your old phone or to backup or restore it. Importantly, it enables you to run diagnostic checks yourself and Device Care will identify any issues with your device and resolve them automatically or give you options to quickly fix them yourselves. We continue to work with you and discuss with you and are always are seeking for feedback from you and this is in order to make sure we are continuing to get regular feedback on what is working or where we need to keep improving. We have set up some additional regional forums which complement the existing relationships we have. This includes the establishment, a couple of years ago, of a National Board which is focused on better understanding and improving the experience of our remote and regional customers. This broadening of our discussions is what brought on the rural and remote call centres that I mentioned earlier. We have also set u a number of regional advisory councils which includes members of the ICPA and as additional forums to connect up with you about the needs of regional and remote families on telecommunications in this area. Through the valuable feedback of the ICPA, whether through formal forums like this or one-to-one, our ongoing partnership has greatly enabled us to focus on our efforts in the right way and we appreciate our relationship with you. So, in summary, our commitment doesn't stop at delivering connectivity, not does it stop at investing in produce innovation, or even how we convey or service our customers. We are here. We are listening to regional and remote communities and our partners so we can help bring things to life in a tangible way to make sustainable and significant differences to regional Australia. So, thank you once again for this ongoing and strong partnership that we have with you. We really do look forward to seeing what we can deliver together in 2019 and also, I have a team member from the local Mildura exchange and she is part of our team members who helps with MPS installations and customer issues and she is here today to answer any questions you might have. We also have few extension device products to demonstrate. I'm, of course, here to listen to you and I can answer any questions that you might have as well and I guess one last thing I'd like to say it that we talk a lot about resilience in the corporate sector but in this role that I am in now and some of the travelling that I have been doing around regional Australia, and meeting with people who are on the land, I know that resilience is really demonstrated through what you all are having to endure and I just wanted to really acknowledge that. Thank you.

Matthew Brown, Executive Director Rural South and West Operational Directorate, Department of Education.

What I'll do is that I'll listen to the motions and speak to those as we go but I'll just quickly introduce myself. Good afternoon everybody. It is a great pleasure for me to be here this afternoon. I'm only here, sadly, for another forty-five minutes so I believe we are going to go to the motions very quickly because I can speak to some of those. However, I need to give you a context as well. I'm one of two Operational Executive Directors who work in rural NSW or rural and regional NSW. Frank Potter is the other and he looks after what is called Rural North. My "space" is 432 schools in an area that takes in from just below Ulla Dulla on the South Coast down to Victoria then across to the South Australian border up to Queensland and captures Bourke. It does a huge hook around and takes in Dubbo, Bathurst and then comes back around and underneath Goulbourn and back to the South Coast. So, all of the public schools in that space are in, some way or another, part of my patch as they say in the classics. Some of the questions that people have got are just excellent questions by the way. I think it is really important that you understand that, while I can give you a part response, on many occasions I really need to allow Frank Potter and Dean White to speak to those. I'll give you a bit of context. Geoff Pellizzer is the Substantive Executive Director for Rural South and West. He was seconded into another role. He retires on April 26th. I am also retiring on April 26th and the new Executive Director has been appointed for Rural south and West and that person starts on the 29th April and his name is Dean White. It does seem like colours are dominating the world at the present – Brown to White – but I assure you there is nothing in particularly important about the surnames whatsoever. So, that is a bit of an introduction and a context for myself. I think it is probably best now to put those motions and for both Mike Tom and myself to take an opportunity to reply to the questions. (See Rural Schools Motions)

Bruce Paynter, President ICPA-NSW. The Royal Agricultural society of NSW Foundation's purpose is to support the development of sustainable, resilient regional and rural communities across NSW by promoting individual and community growth via educational scholarships and community grants. Since its inception the Royal Agricultural Society Foundation has invested over 3.3 million dollars into country NSW through a range of targeted grants and scholarships supporting over four hundred individuals and forty-five community regional organisations. I'd like to welcome Cicilia Logan, Manager of the Royal Agriculture Society (RAS) of NSW Foundation.

Cicilia Logan. Manager of the Royal Agriculture Society (RAS) of NSW Foundation. Good morning everyone and thankyou Bruce for your invitation to attend the annual ICPA conference. In 1882 the Royal Agricultural Society was founded by immigrants to this country who were some of the first settlers in Australia and who were struggling to adapt to their new environment and the problems they were facing with crops and farming. The emphasis at that time was on agriculture and food provision for the new colony. They needed to band together to help each other. Therefore, a group of interested agriculturalists met at the premises of watchmaker, James Robinson, and in 1822 formed the Agricultural Society of NSW. They agreed on a structure and purpose. An annual fee of five guinees and established a fund to finance the importation of quality breed stock. An attendance list of the colony's most dynamic personality elected Sir John Jamison as President. Along with Jamison four Vice-Presidents were elected and these included the Rev. Samuel Marsden. Dr. Robert Townsend regarded as the most eminent scholar in the young colony was Vice-President along with the Supreme

Court Justice, William Cox. Responsible for the 163 kilometres of road across the Blue Mountains resulting in the steep descent down Mt. York was named in his honour, Cox's Road. We can almost say that all roads lead to the RAS as our first members also included Archibald Bell, father of Bell's Line of Road, and John Oxley, surveyor of the rich Liverpool Plains. One of the aims of the Society was to exchange ideas and practices. It soon became an annual event and was a gathering to encourage and promote the rural industry. The show also gave farmers the opportunity to come together and gain firsthand knowledge of farming trends and advances. This year marks our 197th year. The ongoing benefits of the Sydney Royal Easter Show include encouraging and promoting rural industry whilst allowing the good men and women of the land to gather together and share their knowledge. Although we are synonymous with Easter, we held our first show in October 1823 with livestock and produce categories. The aim was to educate and inform the public as well as provide members with opportunity to meet, transact business and exchange ideas. The main objective of the competitions was to excite in proprietors an ambition to excel each other and so prizes were offered and judging took place in front of the public. In 1827 it was decided to hold two shows a year – one in June for cattle and one in October for sheep and horses. By 1890 we began holding the show at Easter and naming it the Grand Easter Show in 1908 and the Royal Easter show in 1918 and the Sydney Royal Easter show in 1989. A few other memorable points are that society member, Alexander Riley imported the first Saxon sheep to Australia heavily promoting them as being superior to the Merino. This claim may be one of the reasons why John Macarthur would never join the society. He preferred to go his own way although he did exhibit his sheep and his son, James, became President in 1867. In 1870 a committee was formed to produce the first horse and cattle stud books in the colony. This made it possible for livestock stewards in competitions to verify the pedigree of animals and for judges to follow breed guidelines and provide valuable feedback to exhibitors. In February 1871 our council offered medals for awards at NSW agricultural shows. As the central society of NSW there was an obligation to bring together the affiliated societies and support their activities across the state. In 1891 the society obtained the permission of Queen Victoria to add the prefix "Royal" to the name. Fast forward to 2019 and the Sydney Royal Easter Show is the largest ticketed event in the southern hemisphere and we are expecting just under one million people through the gates over the twelve days of the show next month. Country agricultural shows have an important role to play when it comes to produce, livestock, art, craft and igniting a passion in the younger generation. Although we are the biggest show in the country, we are not the governing body. This task belongs to the Agricultural Societies Council who oversees the 190 show societies across the state. We work closely with the ASC and country shows, sharing knowledge to drive the industry that nurtures us. Across all aspects of the show we try to encourage a greater involvement of young country people through various educational programmes, competitions and scholarships. The show offers a tremendous opportunity for fund raising and approximately 50% of the revenue raised by the RAS comes from the show. This is then poured back into the funding for our core objectives in agriculture and to support the RAS Foundation. The RAS Foundation was established in 2007 by RAS councillor and Vice-President at the time, Mr. John Fairfax. His motive was to establish the Foundation as a means of extending the influence that the Royal Agricultural Society beyond the Easter Show competitions and into rural and regional NSW. The Fairfax family have long been staunch supporters of the RAS with John's father, Sir Vincent Fairfax, serving as councillor for 19 years and as President for ten years from 1969. Marking 11 years in existence this year the relatively young Foundation supports students and communities through educational scholarships and community grants. Our mission is to help build strong, vibrant and resilient communities. To date we have distributed, as Bruce said,

over \$3.3 million dollars. Our scholarships offer a helping hand to students wishing to pursue their tertiary ambitions to bring new skills back to their communities. Last year we supported 56 scholars with scholarships, distributing over \$330,000. The programme encompasses the RAS Foundation Rural Scholarships, VET Scholarships, the Sydney Wine and Wine Assessment Scholarships and the JB Fairfax Award for Rural and Regional Journalism. Scholars came from all over the state from Tenterfield in the north, Broken Hill in the west and Albury in the south. Scholarships of \$6,000 for fulltime and \$3,000 for part-time study is available to partake in courses ranging from agriculture, nursing and mechanical engineering at both university and VET registered organisations. Our focus is on financial need, community involvement and the willingness to, ultimately, return to rural and regional NSW. We support school leavers right through to mature age students wishing to re-enter the workforce after raising their families. Our largest scholarship is the JB Fairfax Award for Rural and Regional Journalism. With John Fairfax's involvement with Rural Press and his background in journalism, this created an avenue of support by means of a journalism scholarship and a way of emphasising the importance of quality reporting on regional and rural issues. John feels very strongly that there is a need to convey, with insight and intelligence, the many stories that constitute rural lives often made complex through the vagaries of weather. The JB Fairfax Award offers \$10,000 cash plus internships with the media team during the Easter Show, The Land newspaper and with ABC's Landline. This year we are hoping to support another 50 plus scholars and the 2019 rural scholar cohort will be announced during the show. Further to this we have two community grant programmes. Our Community Futures Grant and our Community Kitchen Grant. Grants of up to \$25,000 are offered to support projects that involve collaboration between community members and delivers sustained and broad community benefits. This year we funded projects in Leeton, Condobolin, Coolah, Crookwell, Walbungaree and Gunnedah. The RASF of NSW covers all of the foundations of operating costs, enabling the RAS Foundation to give out via grants and scholarships, all of the money it raises. This unique funding model means that all donations received are distributed through our programmes. Our education scholarships are funded by private donations from family trusts, private ancillary funds and those communities who just want to give back. More often than not there is a link to regional Australia either through their own vocation or family ties. For our community grants we fund raise and our major fundraiser for the year is the RAS Agricultural Show. In a few weeks' time myself and about forty corporate volunteers will pack over 3,000 bags with 61,000 items of Australian made food samples from Australian owned companies and we sell these bags at the show. This is our major fundraiser and through this initiative we raise in excess of \$60,000 for the Foundation. 100% of these funds go back into our community grants. If you are at the show this year do pop in, we will be opposite the CWA Tea Rooms in the Home and Lifestyle pavilion and you may even see Bruce there, always making himself available to help volunteer on our stand when he can. Acceptance and generosity are trademarks of our rural and regional farming communities and we proudly adopt these traits in our work at the Foundation. We also continuously push to awaken those traits in others as do many charities and not for profit organisations. Our scholarships open from July and August annually for the following year and I encourage you to visit us at RASf.aug.au and share this information with your networks. Thank you.

Mike Tom, Leader, Rural and Distance Education, Department of Education.

I would like to thank Matthew Brown for actually staying back. His plane is due to fly out at five or there about so it is going to be cutting it pretty fine in terms of getting him out there in

time. But it was quite important for him to be able to comment or be able to give some background and discussion around those particular motions. So, here we are looking at a couple of things around technology to start with and rural education. Yesterday we did a presentation for some parents and some of them are here today, around how we try to support people in the department and how the department operates and the comment that I made there was that the department really is a very massive bureaucratic organisation and trying to actually get things to be co-ordinated within the department is really quite a task in itself simply because it is very, very big. The budget is absolutely massive and it is the biggest bureaucratic department in the NSW Government. We have 2,200 schools that we are servicing and they are primary, secondary, central and some of them special purpose. A special purpose example would be a school that might cater for students with disability. Other ones are schools which exist within the juvenile justice centres. All those things are serviced with the NSW Department of Education. The other thing there is that we have got around 800,000 students that we are servicing right across NSW and out of all of those 48% are not in Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong. In other words they are in a regional or rural location and so the map in the slide gives you that demography and last year at the conference at Mudgee we actually had one of the people from the Information Technology Directorate talk to you about the Connecting Country Schools Project and there were 900 schools that we actually went into as a Department and put in new wireless networking to bolster and make the internal wiring or the internal connectivity within the school more robust. What that means is that people can use things like their ipads and lap tops, all those things. What it doesn't do is address the way in which the schools were actually connected so the Connecting Country Schools Programme was around the internal network within the school walls and the wireless connectivity within the walls. This next slide shows that we were about to start in May and June, 2018, an upgrade of the wide area network and that is the network that connects individual schools together. I can report that that actually has started and they are going through a process of actually looking at the way in which schools are connected together to try and squeeze every bit of available bandwidth out of the systems. That is actually under control and starting to move along and that is being done with the help of Telstra and some of our other partners we have in that industry. This next slide shows the way in which we distribute information currently across our wide area network and what you have is a departmental school and the cloud at the bottom, BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), where the kids bring in their laptops and devices and whatever they want to connect internally in the school. Remember everything within that dotted line has just been upgraded with the Connecting Country Schools Programme upgrade that has just happened and then, basically, every request that is made, whether it is a student wanting information or whether it is an administration request for finance, or whatever, is going all the way down to Sydney and when it goes via Sydney it is actually making its way down what we call, backhaul. In other words, it is aggregated down common pathways and pipelines that are owned by the Telcos. In this case Telstra would have part of that particular process. Then it actually goes into our network and gets processed in our communication centre in Sydney. It's being filtered or whether or not that request is going to a sit that would allow them to go to. This makes sure that they can't access sites that might be harmful for them. It goes through an authentication process to make sure that they are actually departmental people that are doing it and not people poking in from outside. From there it's out to the internet. You don't need to be a rocket scientist to see that that common pipeline is easy to get clogged and that is actually what happens. At the moment most of those pipelines, those highways, are absolutely running at full capacity. They are choked. Sometimes we have schools that have quite good bandwidth to them but the system is chocking and has its choking points with

everything going down to Sydney. What we are proposing to do is a range of things. We are looking to change that right across rural schools and metropolitan schools process. We are looking to break up the way in which we send information down there. We are looking to split off the information so having a connection coming into the school from outside which will just deal with internet so it doesn't actually have to go to Sydney. Most of you will say, "Well, hang on. You said that there was filtering that needs to take place and there is authentication to take place." What they are doing is they are looking to move that from a centre in Sydney to the schools. In other words, put a box in each school which will then be able to do that and then pump that information straight out to Telstra's network and be able to actually deal with that almost immediately. On the other side, everything else that requires that "go down to Sydney and deal with it" the administrative stuff and the finance stuff and the LMBR stuff will go down that pipeline but keep the curriculum stuff separate. In doing that we are literally starting to free up some of those issues that we have seen in terms of clogging up the network and that will start to see some of those things increase in terms of speed and agility of the network and, hopefully, the robustness of the network. One of the things we start to move to then is asking what do we do for distance education and what do we do for these very small schools that have been traditionally on satellite? We have moved as many as we possibly can of the small schools that were on satellite over to something that allows a faster network other than satellite. Satellite has some inherent problems and one of them is around the laws of physics. It takes time for us to actually get a signal down then up to the sky and then back down again and nothing will change the laws of physics in terms of the time, the latency, to go up to the satellite and down again. The best solution for us is to either have terrestrial connections, optical fibre, or to use a wireless connection and there are some locations in schools like Naradhan and other places that would be in those areas where it is just very expensive for Telstra or anyone else to rip in huge amounts of fibre so we are looking for other solutions. We are looking to partner with other organisations to try and make that happen so rather than just relying on education let's try and link with someone else so that they get benefit from that fibre as well and the cost comes down and we are able to do it. In the meantime, we are now really deciding to get stuck into trying to fix up our satellite education network. We've been on a contract for quite some time with Optus. We know that there are absolute benefits in SkyMuster but what we need to do is look at a socialisation process across the network which is a quite complex network that goes to 2,200 schools that deals with administration and with all security and it deals with a whole range of things that keep your students safe and what we need to make sure is that, when we actually bring in that other component, in this case the multi satellite, you literally are making every one of those hot sites that we connect to, is literally getting a similar connection to what we would do for a class room. Effectively, School of the Air has 70 schools connected to it so every one of those families connected to it are getting the equivalent of what a school is in terms of filtering, in terms of the types of services that we put down that line. We need to ensure that we are able to get that same level of filtering, the same level of protection using the SkyMuster service and that is one of the reasons we are slightly different to the one other States offer. The other thing is, with the SkyMuster service it operates on spot beams and if you look at the way in which the spot beams work there are multiple spot beams in NSW because the population is quite dense compared to other States. If you look at the Northern Territory there are only three spot beams or there about that cover the whole of that particular Territory. So, we want to know what happens when we are actually on the boundary of two particular spot beams and we want to be able to test some of that. We also want to test the applications that we put across there, not only in terms of REACT but also all the other products that we have through a range of other companies that we use or that we want

to start using in terms of the collaborative process that links the teachers with your students in the class room to get that close couple collaboration happening. That is the way forward for us. All of those things mean that we really want to go in and do some pretty heavy testing. We want to start day one, Term 3 and run across a number of sites, probably out of Dubbo Distance Education for a few reasons and test it for ten weeks of actual learning. Quite robust testing. Are there any questions that people may have around that process?

Bernadette Maxwell, Tibooburra-Milparinka. The families that will be using the testing, will they already have the NBN in their house beforehand because they will know a bit about their network and how that is worked at their actual location? We know on the ground how the NBN works at our own house for our own personal use so whether it is a Department issue or whether it is another issue.

Mike Tom, Leader, Rural and Distance Education, Department of Education. The really neat thing is that there is a whole lot of neat stuff the NBN can provide and I have to say that the relationship we have with NBN is sitting right beside us working on the process. We want to make sure that our network works and they also want to make sure that their quality of service is maintained. The last thing we want to do is put on a whole heap of kids in terms of education and find that it mucks up the network for you people at home. The reason for that is that that brown/grey box that is in the middle there is the one same box that you have for your domestic service at Tibooburra or wherever. It has four ports in the back of it and what we would be doing is activating with NBN the second port or another port in there and that is the one we would be pumping our data through. It would be completely separate to your domestic data in terms of what we are running. That then allows us to do all sorts of really great things that Amber was actually referring to earlier and that means, for instance, on your domestic service NBN could tag the various bits of data packet going through. They know when you are actually using YouTube. They know when you are actually downloading off Netflix. We can actually say that perhaps that shouldn't be on the education port but we give you 50 gigabytes of space on the domestic side. It gives you flexibility to use your network. It gives us the space to think creatively how we can do the best type of collaboration between our teachers and your students but all of those processes have got to be worked out. But the answer is, yes, we absolutely will be doing that but at the moment the tests and the trials are likely to be through Dubbo families and the main reason being that the students are just easier for us to access and there are a whole range of areas where we can test it within the Dubbo Distance Education footprint which we can replicate the same thinking through to School of the Air, Broken Hill and also Bourke Walgett and the other places that are in the coast as well. Also, it is a good central spot for us to test.

Sarnia Walker, Moree. Once this has been rolled out in distance ed and school of the air and those other places, will there be an opportunity for home schooling families registered with the Department to take advantage of this sort of device?

Mike Tom, Leader, Rural and Distance Education, Department of Education. That is a really good question and one that I can't answer but I take the point and I suggest that that is a discussion that we can have also with the NBN process as that sits with those guys. The home schooling is actually registered through the Government but through NESA rather than the Department of Education so I would suggest that the answer would lie with those guys in terms of following it up and it is not one that I can answer but there is no reason in terms of the technical side of things as to why that might not be able to happen as long as they were registered etc.. But again, that it is a policy thing for NBN to work through.

One of the things that I really was hoping for was that we might have the principal of Finigan to come along and just talk to you about the newest school that we have just had put into distance education. Finigan School is a combination of Karabar School of Distance Education at Queanbeyan and the Queanbeyan Public School of Distance Education which was a K-6. Karabar was 7-12. Those have been taken out of those two schools and they have been combined into a new Kindergarten to Year 12 school physically located on the site of Queanbeyan High School now in a brand-new building but now with its own principal, becoming fully autonomous and gazetted as its own separate school. Finigan School of distance Education. They started operation as of the beginning of this year. They haven't yet got access to their new site because the handover of keys hasn't quite happened yet but it will in the next week and a half. They physically hand over the keys and we move them from their current site into the new building. A couple of things are important to them. They really are focusing on personalised learning. They absolutely would see themselves as leading the learning and they are rethinking the way they connect with their students. Daniel Rattigan who is the principal is also the chair of the ADIS group which is the Australasian Schools of Distance Education, a professional group, and they basically come together and look at the different ways the State and Territories are using distance education and very much inviting other states to come and have a look at the way in which we do work and critique the way in which we do work. Finally, the importance of the connectedness. The ability of us to actually make that relationship as close as possible between the teacher and the student as well as students and other students to bring them together. The Finigan model that they are working on does a whole range of things. They really want to be looking at producing quality video interactions and quality video resources. The school itself has the ability to do that at the moment in terms of resourcing and staff are undergoing a whole range of training in terms of that. Dave Foley and his team who you guys know as the people who go around and do the connections and ensures that the network runs for you and ensures that SOTA and Bourke/Walgett etc. are getting the best possible outcomes, David and his team are actually physically in Finigan. The keys haven't been handed over but they have gone and done their training and they are in there with their, I suspect, their fluoro vests and hard hats, and they are actually building up some of the studios as we speak before the teachers have moved in there. The way in which they are doing mini-schools and connecting would be reasonably similar in terms of what we are seeing happening with SOTA and the way you'll see the engagement there. The real time learning. A lot of the distance education stuff we talk about as being asynchronous and ends not to be in real time so accessing things like learning management or those mail packages that were very traditional, but doing more of the synchronous stuff, trying to actually link people into real time and link people together so that you have got detailed discussion. Learning hub. This is something that looks like mini-schools but they are permanently, three or four days a week, located in a particular location across the area that they work in, where they have a teacher based in that particular learning hub and a student might come in from that particular community and do their distance education work with a teacher in front of them. We do a lot of it in Sydney. We do quite a bit of it in the North Coast where the more populated areas are. Obviously, it is not as easy to deal with if you have a very highly isolated area where people travel but in the more populated areas such as Ulla Dulla and some of those locations, we certainly can do it if they want to use that. The formative assessment and then using task-based learning is part of that particular process. So, at the moment we talked about resources. Twenty web studios are the small studios that one or two teachers can go into and actually design lessons, design videos and all those sorts of things. They are quiet, off to the side, they are completely enclosed. Two full video production studios which are larger rooms and they can

go in with a number of staff and they can do role plays and things like that. Then one satellite lesson studio that handles REACT. Then the flexibility that David and his team are building into other places can do some of that as well. They are using lap tops not only for the staff but also for the students so we are trying to rethink the way we are doing business. And, as I said, the learning hubs and they have nine up and running at the moment. We have here a computer generated view of the school that we did about six months ago straight off the architect's plan and it is a similar sort of thing you would see on Grand Designs and the idea of this was that it allowed the staff to actually plan out what the school might look like prior to us having delivery of the building. At that stage when we gave them the fly-through and it was completely a slab on the ground as the school hadn't even been built. You can see this on the web site where you can take your time to look at it.

Video presentation at this point.

Transcript as follows: "Hello, my name is Daniel Rattigan and I am the Principal of the Finigan School of distance Education. We are busy doing the finishing touches to our brand-new distance education school state of the art school, purpose built in Queanbeyan, NSW, ready to service the south eastern part of NSW including many isolated children as well. So, Mike would have already explained to you that the school is pretty phenomenal in terms of its fit out and what we can provide in new ways of connecting with our students through technology. We know that the most important thing or the most important reason for success for students is that relationship between the teacher and the student and so we now have ways of humanising the technology and putting a face to the learning and really supporting our students. We are really looking forward to that and we are really excited about that and we will hit the ground running once we move in on the 18th March. If you are ever in the Queanbeyan area please come and have a look at our school because I think you will be pretty blown away by how amazing it is. I would like to acknowledge Caroline McDonald from ICPA-NSW because this school probably wouldn't have happened without her. The amount of work she put in, her drive, her passion, to make sure this happened in our area. Having had a couple of children of her own come through the distance education system she could see the value of this service for our students and the quality that we provide and the importance of it. So, thank you Caroline. We really appreciate that. I would like to quickly thank Mike Tom and Mathew Brown for their support to make sure this is the best school possible. Like I said, please come and visit, have a look and I looking forward to supporting our students in NSW with the best quality education possible. So, enjoy the rest of your conference. Thank you."

So, that is Daniel. And we have a few photos. ***Photo presentation of Finigan School of Distance Education.***

The breakdown of the different categories of enrolment is really interesting for you to look at. Yesterday I talked to parents about the categories and breakdown of enrolments and I said that if you go back twenty-five years ago in the Department when I talked distance education everyone said that that was School of the Air because it is home isolated. Geographically isolated students are only two percent of the enrolment and the rest are a whole range of other people who literally have some form of complexity that stops them attending a school on a day to day basis and therefore they are eligible for distance education. It is important for you guys to realise that distance education is not a provision of choice but you have to actually meet criteria in order to access distance education and one of those criteria is geographic isolation of which, obviously, ICPA have a big stake holder part. I think that is probably it so I am open for questions.

Britt Anderson, Broken Hill. I don't mean to be rude but that is a real kick in the guts saying that. For an example, people are looking for a bus for their kids just to go to school, we're looking for computers, teachers, whatever. I, myself, experience, my girls are in year three and year five, through School of the Air, and we can't have our camera on and our microphone on at the same time because it makes the microphone go crackly and to see facilities like that at multi, multi millions of dollars being spent on a state of the art building which is fabulous for the students who go there but what about the rest of us?

Mike Tom, Leader, Rural and Distance Education, Department of Education. I take your point but I would say to you that we are working equally to spend millions of dollars on a network that will give you the type of access that you are requiring as well. We are in there absolutely supporting Kylie and Wendy with her school and to give you the best possible outcome we possibly can but, quite often, we are restricted by the resources that we have that we don't own and we work to do that. I said to you earlier that we are actually making sure that we leverage off other departments and other areas to try and get that done for you as quickly as we can. An example of that is to get Infrastructure NSW to actually look at upgrading the network to ensure that that actually happens. I would agree with you. The network is not where we want it to be but we are working damn hard to do that as quickly as we possibly can.

Britt Anderson, Broken Hill. We are using our own devices in the school room because it is impossible to be able to do everything. I am in the school room most days after six o'clock just trying to get things downloaded for the girls for the following day or doing different things on the different programmes because of the slow speed of the computer.

Mike Tom, Leader, Rural and Distance Education, Department of Education. I totally agree and it comes down to the same reason that you guys have got connectivity problems for your domestic network as well. We will work as quickly as possible with the appropriate authorities to try and get that done and I've given you the background behind the NBN process and while we are working in that direction, I'm certainly happy to have a big and deeper conversation with you about anything we might be able to do that might sharpen that up for you but the reality is, for us, there is always going to be locations that are going to be tougher for us to actually get a service into but that doesn't mean, in any shape or form, that I should be apologising for making sure that we get the best possible service to the rest of the State as well. I'm absolutely committed to rural education and ensuring that we do that as quickly as we can but I also need to make sure that I take advantage of services when they become available and the new build at Queanbeyan offers quite an amazing service for a big chunk of the State that we have to service. It is about basically spreading what we have in the way of resources equally across the State. The reason I actually showed you the last slide was to give you an idea of the number of students who have to be serviced. You guys don't necessarily see that and if we look at Wendy or Kylie's profiles of their schools, what they will be doing is also servicing students who are not geographically isolated but maybe travellers or complex needs kids but you won't know that because they are very much like this analogy. It is like if a really good waiter is working at your table, you will think you are getting absolutely personalised service but in actual fact they are servicing another six or seven tables are working with at the same time and that is the sort of stuff you'll be see working through the distance education schools. Though we do the best we possible can for the clientele and the breadth of the clientele that we are actually working with. Any other questions?

Shannah Joiner, Monaro. I'd just like to respond to Britt. I think it is really important to acknowledge that the infrastructure that has been put in is something that needs to disseminate from the top down. We were in that little two percent of that little graph so the end user actually

experiences pretty much the same as what you are getting in your school room. Although that infrastructure has been built at the top end it is not through to the end user at this point and it can't get to the end user unless it is built in the first place. So, I would like to actually congratulate the Department on that and I'd also like to acknowledge Caroline McDonald because this has been an ongoing thing for over twenty years and I think she has done a brilliant job. So, thank you.

Mike Tom, Leader, Rural and Distance Education, Department of Education. I'd agree. I think that the work ICPA-NSW and ourselves have done here in collaboration through Caroline but also that has been supported by the executive of ICPA-NSW and you people generally so that has been fantastic. The other comment that I would make is the really big benefit that you have is that you are a common voice for rural education and our focus is absolutely on geographic isolation because there is not only the fact that we are talking about the lack of services around technology which I agree with you that is where it is at the moment, but also about transport. It's also about health services. You literally are quite dispirited in terms of those particular services. You have been removed from those services. Now I can actually point to the most socially economically disadvantaged community in Sydney and I quite often say to my colleagues to pick the most disadvantaged community in the Sydney basin for me, and they can come up with a range of them that are absolutely dreadful in terms of all sorts of things. I tell them that all of that still exists in rural locations but the difference is that they don't have the transport where they can jump on a train and move to another suburb to get medical. They don't have the issue where they can't communicate. In other words that there are at least mobile services. All of those other complexities that are layered on the sort of things that we see in rural locations and that is one of the things that ICPA does very well in terms of actually bringing out and articulating very clearly to the people who are providing those particular resources and we are one of those people. I think it is a great thing.

Kate Treweeke, ICPA-NSW Immediate Past President. Shennah did touch on what I wanted to say and on behalf of State Council, we do want to say thank you to Caroline McDonald. She couldn't be here and I think this is her first State Conference that she has missed for I don't know how many years and we actually do have her daughter here, Jesse Donoghue who has been the lovely lady taking all these great photos and who is, and I understand Caroline did all her three kids through Queanbeyan and Jesse is a product of one of these and Jesse has been attending these conferences and, I would say, stepping into the shoes of Caroline attending. So, Caroline will be very upset, I think to miss this especially the personal message from Daniel. So, thank you Mike, your team, totally understand where Broken Hill was coming from but this is what it is a part of and this is what it is. Caroline had that there and was like a dog with a bone. She would not let it go. Don't let it go. You work with the departments; you go and meet with your State Governments. It's a matter of being a team and you might disagree and what not but don't let it go. Thank you, Caroline via Jesse, and thank you Mike.

Neridah Healey, State Council. Many years ago, I remember reading in my home town local paper and on the back page was an article written about junior football. The article mentioned that if the boys showed any of the skills, determination, effort and sportsmanship of the girls then the team would win every week. Unfortunately, the girls reached the age when they were no longer allowed to play football and one of those two girls now plays for the Richmond Football Club and has appeared on AFL TV shows. Here to share her journey is Courtney Wakefield. Please make her welcome.

Courtney Wakefield, Richmond AFL W Thank you. I'm a little bit nervous but I have got notes on my phone – hope you don't mind. I'm from Top Hut Station, Pooncarie, 130 kms north of Mildura.

I have a husband and two children, Tilly four years and Syd, is 18 months. I'll now just go through the stages of our journey and where we are at. So, I grew up at Mt. Inspersions Station which is not far from here, 70 kms on the Murray River between Gol Gol and Euston, and I went to St Mary's Primary School across the river to a Victorian school. I caught the school bus to school every day. My dad had two brothers on the property and they had seven children and six children each so our bus trips were full as were our afternoons at home. I played a lot of sport. My parents were actively involved in the local sporting community. My dad played football and mum played netball so we were naturally born into sport which I am extremely grateful for. We travelled six of the seven days of the week to play sport which included basketball, netball, tennis and on the weekends, we would do tennis coaching and rep. duties across the state. Through those opportunities we forged many great friendships with other kids through sport and school which I'm extremely grateful to my parents for that. I'll do the same for my children in years to come. There was nothing more that I enjoyed than running onto a football field on a cold Sunday morning with my team mates, mostly all boys as there were only two girls. I even got the opportunity to play on the MCG for Richmond which was fantastic. I am a lifelong Richmond supporter and it is still a little bit surreal that I'm now playing football for the Richmond Football Club. I played Under 11's back in 1996 and then when we got to a certain age, no longer under 13, we could no longer play because of the rough tackling and so on but I had older brothers and older cousins who, when we played football at home, were pretty rough so we didn't mind really. Anyway, I didn't think much of it at the time. I had two sisters, one older and one younger, who played netball so I happily joined them on the netball court. Any team sport back then would have made me happy. Recently, I had a chat with Ernie Dingo and he asked me again how I felt about it and I was envious of my brother that he got to continue playing football and I couldn't. But growing up all I wanted to do is play sport at an elite level. To represent Australia. Back then there wasn't AFL W so I couldn't do that and we didn't have the role models like we had in netball and basketball. We didn't have Daisy Pierce, Erin Phillips and Lucy Hicky. They are AFL W stars. So, for me it seemed pointless to play a sport then where I couldn't play at the elite level. I am a self-proclaimed dreamer and I thought dreams were easy and my husband now tells me that dreams are cheap, except for this one as we do a lot of travelling. With netball then I could be like Liz Alice or Michelle McMahon, so that is what I did. I focused on netball but I didn't, for a second back then, even five years ago, think that I would play football at the elite level. I am playing now at the semi-elite level with the VFL W and in 2020 we will take an AFL W, a Richmond team into the AFL W competition which is very exciting. But I'll touch on that later. I'll go back to my two kids and Tom. Like I said, we are on Top Hut Station, 130 kms north of here so at some stage, in the next 18 months or so, Tilly will be enrolled into School of the Air Broken Hill, which is daunting and probably more so daunting for me than it is for Tilly as I think kids are pretty resilient at the young age. So, I don't doubt that she will take to the experience like riding a bike or kicking a football. For now I have her enrolled at the preschool which is 120 kms from home, also in NSW. That is a three day per week programme so we travel for that but not every day because I have parents and family who live close by so we

usually pick two days and we go in and we stay the night at mum and dad's which is fantastic. I have no hesitation in doing that or regretted that decision for a second. It's busy and it's hectic, it's time and money but I know Tilly loves it and she gets that socialisation skills and she gets to knock around with her cousins and she has always got a smile on her face and that is the main reason I know she loves it and why we don't regret doing it. So as long as we can afford it and it works, we will do it. But at some stage going back three days a week in preschool school is easier than five days a week in primary school in town in years to come. We will do school of the air which is daunting because I didn't grow up in that environment as I went to a mainstream school but I think it is overwhelming for me because I'm worried that it is overwhelming for Tilly but I don't think it is. It is just my thought process. Setting up is my biggest worry though as we don't have accommodation for a governess, we don't have a school room and I'm not a teacher. The way I see it is that I'm Tilly's life teacher not her education leader. There are professionals to do that so we will have to find a governess at some stage. We are looking forward to the challenges and I have no doubt that Tilly will love it and there will be some extremely rewarding experiences down the track. So that's school and kids. Now I'll talk a little bit about football. I had Tilly in 2014 and in 2014/15 the AFL W season was brought to life. I did think I was probably too old. Probably five or ten years too old. The two kids were only young so the timing wasn't right and we wanted more children. So in 2017 I fell pregnant with our little boy, Syd and also in 2017 Richmond Football club announced that they were entering a team in the BFA W and we were also granted an AFL W licence in 2020. It was a little bit crazy to think that seven weeks later I had Syd, eight weeks later we went to Bendigo for the try-outs and up until we went to the try-outs, I was looking for an excuse not to go. What if Syd didn't travel well or wasn't good enough, but we got there. People probably looked at me carrying a seven-week-old baby on my hip and wondered what that old girl was doing here? Little did they know! Once the try-outs started, I knew I was meant to be there and after 28 years I knew it was right for me. This was my opportunity. It was hard but, in the end of 2017, I got a coach and he offered me a spot on the pre-season squad and that was a big commitment. I was committed though and one thing I pride myself on is my commitment and from then we haven't really looked back. The season started training on Punt Road 110 kms from home so last year I did that once a week and did nearly 40,000 kms travelled for football last year and mostly with the kids in tow. Syd wasn't sleeping and the night before my first game Syd woke every two hours which wasn't ideal and so I didn't kick a goal. In my first year I committed nearly 200 days to football at Punt Road and at home with lots of blood, sweat and tears. I only managed seven games, I dislocated my elbow, broke two fingers and I broke my collar bone which is now held together by plate and screws, but that didn't deter me. Like I said – that day at Bendigo at my trials, I fell in love with playing football again and I wanted to play at the elite level and to think that, in less than twelve months, we run out onto a football field in a Richmond AFL W jersey is something I am really proud of. I say "we" because there is a whole support network of family and friends behind me and around me. All this wouldn't be possible if I didn't have that support from family and friends who are all sitting in this room today. So we are extremely grateful and thankful for that and the opportunities. I undertook this journey with two kids and I think I am much better off because of it and I think I am making the most of the opportunities more and, even if no one else is paying attention, I know that there are always two sets of eyes watching me, their mum, so it pushes me to be the best that I can be and do things to the best of my ability. I know the kids aren't old enough to understand

the enormity of what is going on but maybe in five years down the track I want them to know how important they were to this journey as they really pushed me to be the best that I could be and I'm really thankful and grateful for that opportunity not only to play football but also to be a mum as well. Not just my kids but also my nieces and nephews and any other little kids. I want them to know that anything is possible and by me creating this pathway from the bush to the city, I want them to know that those opportunities are there for them as well. I want them to know that anything is possible and I want to show them the way and by doing this, hopefully, they get that. The AFL W is only going to grow more so the opportunities are endless. So that is a little bit about my journey and are there any questions?

Sarnia Walker, Moree Branch. I just wanted to say how inspired I am by you. You are absolutely phenomenal. Well done. Incredible person.

Courtney Wakefield, Richmond AFL W I didn't talk too much about my family because I would probably cry but another thing was to be the best footballer in the country, without the support of my family, my mum and dad in the beginning, my sister and two sisters-in-law are here and I wouldn't be here today so, like I said, it's been a team effort and I am really proud of what we have achieved and what we can achieve.

Sally Sullivan, ICPA Federal Council. I didn't really have a question either but I came from a generation where I used to get sent to the office for playing football at school but the flip side of that attitude was that they didn't give girls the cane so it didn't stop me. But I just wanted to say how lucky you are and my daughters as well have played AFL and been involved in it at various levels and good on you!

Fleur Cullenwood, Hay Branch. I would like to thank you. My daughter and her very good friend are trialling with the Ballarat Rebels at the moment, they are in the futures squad, so I find you very inspirational and I would like to thank you for showing the way.

Courtney Wakefield, Richmond AFL W Like I said I was a little bit nervous and I didn't cover everything but the AFL W is only going to grow especially for Channel 7 and the AFL to have invested so money and time and effort in the programme now is a sign that they are confident the it is only going to grow. At the moment we have a lot of older and mature players in the competition and they have only been playing for five years and from now you have under 18 female competitions and programmes then in five or ten years' time the standard is going to be unbelievable. Although the standard is not great at the moment and the girls get criticised a lot but what people have got to understand is that we don't get paid a lot to play football at the moment like the blokes do as it is their job, but the girls are still out teaching their children or flipping burgers or running sheep stations, so we don't get that time and effort at clubs to hone our skills so people have to be patient. Thank you.

Libby McFee, State Council. I have great pleasure this afternoon, of introducing our next speaker from NBN. Amber Dornbusch is head of NBN Local NSW/ACT. Born and bred in regional Australia, Amber is absolutely passionate about improving access services for rural communities. Amber joined NBN seven years ago and is thoroughly enjoying engaging with

these communities about what access to broadband will mean for their livelihoods and communities. Please make Amber welcome.

Amber Dornbusch, Head of NBN, Local NSW/ACT

Thank you so much for having me today. It is a pleasure and a real privilege and I really wish I hadn't had to speak after an AFLW player but I'll do my best. As with last year I've prepared a few slides and it wasn't until I spoke to so many of you that, last year I really spoke on my feet and answered as many questions as I could from what I had already been hearing from people in the room, so I really hope to do that again and I am here for the rest of the day. I also hope to get questions at dinner tonight and I really encourage you to ask as many questions as you can or come to me with any queries that I can help with. What I thought I'd do is just give a quick recap of what NBN is offering in regional and remote Australia with a focus on regional and remote and also for education. There is a lot of misinformation out there. There is a lot of myths. There is a lot of confusion and I know that can be really difficult when you are trying to make a decision about what's available to you and what you need or can sign up to and that connectivity is often even more important for people that are physically isolated than those who are in the big cities. So quickly, the NBN is about fixed connections so, you would have heard from Ann earlier about mobile connectivity but NBN is about fixed to your premises, any premises whether it be at home, business, school etc., that's what we have been tasked with rolling out to all premises across the country and what we generally do in regional and remote areas is offer a mixture of two technologies being fixed wireless and our SkyMuster satellite products. We are a wholesaler so you have a choice of a number of different providers which is often a new experience for some people in the more regional and remote areas where a choice of options hasn't always been available. So, we encourage you to find out as much as you can about the different providers that are out there and you can head to nbn.com.au/check to punch in your address and find out the details specific to your location. Around the timeline to date, of most interest to this group here is that we launched two satellites, the first in 2015 and the second in 2016, to offer services to what we plan to be around 400,000 premises across the country, nationally. Last year we launched a trial around what is called a multitask product, which is most important and critical as to

how we work with the NSW Department of Education, to offer distance education services. As it stands currently, we have prioritised the rollout in regional and remote Australia acknowledging that these parts of the country have been historically underserved when it comes to services so, from a commercial perspective the majority of services have been in those built up or metropolitan areas where there are the numbers there to stack up the business case. So, we have been working in regional and remote areas to prioritise those and in NSW we are working towards having all of regional Australia having access to the NBN from about July to the end of this year. As it stands currently there is about 100,000 premises in NSW that are connected to our fixed wireless and our SkyMuster products which are the two areas that I'll focus on today. I already feel myself rushing because I acknowledge that I have got the ten minutes in the agenda and if there are things that you would like more clarity on please do come and see me later on today. This next slide is just about what we have been focusing on and how we have gotten to this point today here in 2019. As I said, we launched in 2015 and 2016. The first services that we launched were about connecting residential grade services to homes essentially as the first port of call. The focus from our engineers and our products team

was about making sure that the scale up of connections, the tens of thousands of premises to connect initially, and the focus was on making sure that we could offer a reliable and stable service even though it was new technology, new connections and we brought on a thousand odd technicians that have covered thousand kilometres to get to training once a week and so that was really the core focus initially in those first few years. Then, of course, we had last year when we launched the multi-cast product which is essentially how we group our communication or data transmission so that the likes of the Department of Education can broadcast or offer distance education over the SkyMuster satellite service. We're really thrilled to be working with the Department of Education on how that will work. We trialled in NT last year and we are excited to do a similar trial specific to NSW and the systems and processes here aiming for Term III and Mike Tom will be able to talk more to that, so that we can work to offer distance education services over the SkyMuster service should that trial be successful in procurement etc. It's part of a broader public interest premises scheme or programme that we are running so it looks at not just for schooling but also for aboriginal and indigenous communities to make sure that we have a fit for product service that meets the needs of those communities. Similar to making sure we meet the needs of the Department of Education for example, for distance education, it's about working with our more remote and indigenous communities to make sure that our product and our offering is fit for purpose there as well. Today I'm really excited to talk about SkyMuster Plus and it has been mentioned a couple of times, but if there was ever a time that I would encourage you, if you haven't already, to connect to the NBN's SkyMuster service, now is a really opportune time. Part of the NBN rollout and out project budget is to make sure that we offer the infrastructure to connect every single home and premises across the country so, the connection to the SkyMuster network, the infrastructure itself, the box that is provided in your home and the satellite dish installed on your roof, is part of our project budget and then each month the cost to you as a consumer is based on what you sign up to in your plan. There are month to month plans available out there from a number, about ten different providers, so you don't need to feel locked in to a long term plan by any means but it is an opportunity for you to have the infrastructure installed to your business, sign up to a month to month plan to trial it, test it out for yourself and see if it suits your needs and whether the plan that you signed up to is adequate for your needs and coming down the pipeline we have SkyMuster Plus which we are looking to launch in late May this year. SkyMuster Plus has really come about from input from the likes of ICPA and we are really thrilled to work with the ICPA both at a State level and at the Federal level and it genuinely is from feedback from forums such as this that we are able to consider and add to our product suite to suit the needs of your students and children. So, what SkyMuster Plus will mean is that those monthly data packages that you sign up to and that can range from say, \$40 a month to \$200 a month depending on how much data you sign up to. Those packages are the data limits and will not include the basic essentials that people use the internet for. For example, web browsing; emailing; online banking; the software updates that happen, often without your knowledge and happen in the background of your computers and devices that can chew up a lot of your monthly data without you even realising. All of those types of activities will no longer count to the monthly data limits for your plans. So, if you were to sign up to a \$50 plan and you had 40 gigabits of data during peak time these types of activities would be able to continue even after you have reached your data limit as standard. This is something that we are hoping will really go a long way to meeting the needs of homes and businesses in regional and remote areas and

we are open to testing more applications on top of that once we have tested this. Today we have discussed Skype for example. So, for children that might be having Skype video calls for speech pathology or mental health support or whatever it might be, by no means are we dismissive of that at all, it's about that we wanted to make sure that we considered and how we opened the pipes, so to speak, and to make sure that it is in a way that we won't ever get to a point like we have been in the past where services are oversubscribed and we are not able to offer a quality service. Initially we are starting with a web browsing, email, software updates, online banking activities to begin with from late May when you'll start to see the launch of that particular product and I would really encourage you to keep an eye out for that and to shop around for different plan and providers as they offer this kind of product and service. Similarly, from about June, we are offering business grade satellite services so these would be for stations and properties where you are needing a business grade solution for your needs. This is something that will enable internet for things like monitoring and the kinds of activities that aren't relevant for residential type service that we have been offering to date and we have been working really closely on this product in particular to make sure that it meets the need of more remote large-scale businesses. Other than SkyMuster, we also have our fixed wireless network in more regional areas. We have announced that another \$800,000 of our project budget is being invested into the fixed wireless network to make sure that we keep up with demand over time and offer a minimum, busy hour experience of at least six megabits per second download across our network. We are also tweaking the products that we offer over the fixed wireless network so that it is not about certain download and upload speeds as a benchmark but more about as much as we can possible offer will be offered on each tower. We know that there is more we need to do here, particularly when it comes to communications around the upgrades that we are doing to these towers, so that you know when those upgrades are happening and I think that is something I can work with Libbie more closely to arrange to get that information out to ICPA members. I feel like I have rushed that a little bit but if there are any questions, I'm happy to take them but I guess the message from us and NBN at a conference like this is that we are really grateful to be invites to attend and to participate in the conversation. We genuinely welcome and appreciate your feedback and it has been taken into how we develop our products, not just at a state level but at a federal level as well and we would love to keep that communication flowing. We have information on our website. nbn.com.au/regional but if you would like to talk to my team at any time, which is the NBN local team, we travel around the state making sure that we are an available face for people to talk to about the NBN and building relationships with groups such as yourselves to make sure that this information is feeding back into NBN and being factored into how we are delivering and operating into the future. Please don't hesitate to get in touch. localnsw@nbnc.com.au particularly if there are events that you would like us to be a part of or to provide information for. We are really keen to hear from your different branches and their executives and how we can assist with that. So, if there are any questions?

Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President, ICPA-NSW. Thank you for coming. Regarding your travelling roadshow with your lovely van out there that is packed to the gills with lovely things, do you feel that you are seeing enough people? That they are coming to you? Are you getting enough feedback? Do you think there are some areas that, and I'm not just talking about ICPA members, but wherever you go, do you think you are getting asked the right

questions or are there gaps? Like here is a good opportunity but do feel like travelling around is actually working?

Amber Dornbusch, NBN. I think it is an invaluable exercise to give people an opportunity to talk to NBN directly. We recognise that not everybody absorbs information from reading. We have a plethora of information online but that is not how everybody absorbs information. You can talk to different providers but we understand that a lot of the time you want the basic facts about the NBN wholesale network so that you can make informed choices about which retailer you choose. It is a really complex and challenging exercise to essentially replace the entire telecommunications network and really shake up the industry across the country so, I think it is important that we give people the opportunity to talk to us directly in their home towns and communities. But I do think there is possible more that we can do. For example, with your communication channels, we can get information out through the magazine that goes out quarterly so if there are gaps that your branches see and would like more information on, we are more than happy to help supply that information so that you are making as many informed choices as you can. An example, I was talking to Bernadette about WiFi calling and how you can use a SkyMuster connection and make calls through enabling WiFi calling on your mobile phone and how that can be helpful if the mobile network is down or whatever it might be. There're so many different applications out there that are facilitating connectivity for remote areas that NBN as a network provider can enable but it is about making sure that you know not just about NBN but also those different applications that are out there that you use over the NBN to get the best out of the experience. So, that magazine, perhaps if there's other social channels where we can share that information, we can work with each of the branches as little or as much as you'd like.

Claire Butler, Balranald Branch. Most of us are predominately Telstra customers and I speak to a lot of people in rural areas who might say things to me such as, "I can't get the NBN. I contacted Telstra." That's not a negative to Telstra but Telstra will say to them that they don't provide an NBN service. So, I still hear from people now who say that they can't get NBN and I say that yes you can, you can get NBN satellite and it is really good. When my kids come home, they can run three laptops watching Netflix, we can do the WiFi calling. I have three kids away at boarding school. One of them can ring my mobile while one of them can ring the landline and we can talk to them. It's great. How can we get that message, that communication between Telstra and NBN? I know Telstra might not want to share different services that aren't theirs but I think it is really important for us because we ring through Telstra which is predominately our main provider but I think it is important to get that message out.

Amber Dornbusch, NBN. It is a learned behaviour that it is Telstra that you go to. It has been in regional and remote Australia for such a long time so I can understand that. It comes back to that change that has been created through this new network so I think the basics are challenging to get out there and it is a challenge to even come out and see us at the events we hold because people might think that it's not for me because I've been told that I won't get the NBN. If there is one thing I would encourage people to share the message is to say, if you go to our website which, ironically if they don't have a good connection they probably can't, but it does help. There is that "Check your address" function there which shows that you can get a SkyMuster connection, these are the providers to go through, but I do think that, this year,

with the launch of SkyMuster Plus in particular, and the fact that we have worked through the stability issues that we had initially, it is so fantastic to hear that feedback that you are satisfied with the service and that it is meeting your needs. I'm hopeful that the message will spread more but I think through Top Wire and other channels like that, if we can put a more concerted effort into the basics of, "You can get the NBN and this is how", hopefully more people will take it up. That will then, in turn, help with the Department of Education in migrating services over to the NBN should that happen as well for distance education. There are lots of win, win, win opportunities so we would love to work closely with the branches to get the message out particularly if there are social media options for example, we can provide content for that so that it is shared out.

Sally Sullivan, Federal Council, ICPA(Aust). I'm not sure if this is a question for you or the Education Department in NSW, but the REACT Programme for delivering distance education has been trialled on a small number of families in the Northern Territory and shown to work and the whole pretext of multi-casting is that it doesn't matter how many people it is going to its delivery is not effected. Now the Territory is doing trials with more families and I heard earlier that NSW is testing it also, I just wonder why everyone had to test it and why it just can't be used particularly in those places flagged earlier with connectivity issues?

Amber Dornbusch, NBN. I will Mike Tom go into that in more detail but we are really pleased to start the trial process. We are aiming for Term III at this stage and then, should that be successful, the services are offered in the Northern Territory are different to the services that are offered here and it is a different sub-set of end users, so to speak, or students on that service. So, it is important that it is trialled and tested in a fairly robust way when it is delivered across for all distance education students. It's stable and reliable and it works. For us and what the Department of Education needs to be clear on is that sure, we can demonstrate that the network works, but it is also important that it is really clear that all the applications that they put over the network work as well so that they can be confident that their service will be offered and there won't be any issues in stability or reliability of that service once they switch over. Even today this comes back to the fact that every time I come to this conference I come away with conversations and insights that enable us to look at how we can fill any potential gaps, whether it be interim or long term and it's something that we will take away from discussions today about how we can possibly support distance education here in NSW through our SkyMuster Plus product in an interim way until all of those services have been migrated over because I understand that you are really keen for that to happen as soon as possible but we do need to do those trials and we do need to make sure that the applications work over the network. I hope to be able to come back to you with more information on some possibilities there following discussions we have had today thanks to your feedback.

Britt Anderson, Broken Hill Branch. I was wondering if there is any technology being investigated or available, we have NBN for personal use not in our school room, of getting that NBN further because, unless you are in the house or have a hundred boosters in the governess's cottage or in the workshop, or the woolshed, you are not going to get anything and sometimes it is really important to get that out of the classroom to deliver education. For example, I might do a spelling test down the creek and if they're not listening to me say the words and write it on their sheet, we'll go and write it in the sand and it just changes the focus and things like that.

We use Google Drive a lot for School of the Air, which is amazing, but if I'm not near the house we can't do that.

Amber Dornbusch, NBN. This is where it becomes a little bit challenging for NBN because we don't offer any of these products but there definitely are WiFi extenders all of that kind of thing as well. Information I can provide to the executive and to the branches is that there is a firm called Aginet in Wagga Wagga. Also, there is a Northern Territory ex-government employee who did a trial where they were able to SkyMuster connection. He couldn't be more remote and is hundreds of kilometres from the next remote station so they have used a SkyMuster connection and used repeater stations to be able to use his mobile phone over SkyMuster across his entire property and that is hundreds of kilometres. Not just from the home itself which is standard WiFi but even further so, perhaps this is something or an action to take away for NBN to work with Libbie as the Communications lead, about providing some examples. We are working with the National Farmers Federation on those kinds of technologies that are available but it is just as similar for governesses on those properties as well so I am more than happy to collate some information to share.

Lisa O'Keefe, Koolaman Designs

Thank you so much for inviting me today and I did print off some notes so apologies if I bore you to death but I'll try and do my best to make sure that I keep you engaged for ten minutes or so. After Sarah Storer last night I'm not sure if I am up to that league but anyway, I'll do my best. I'll put me timer on so I don't keep you hear too long otherwise I could chat forever. When Neridah caught me back at netball last year and mentioned the conference and did I want to have a chat I thought whatever could I talk about? I thought I'll see if I can find something interesting enough and I thought I'll start with Tuesday. On Tuesday I got stuck in the car wash so if you have every been stuck in a car wash before you will empathise with me. Halfway through a car wash and then it all stopped. I did the automatic one because I was being a bit lazy and dressed up for town and so I started the horn. Beep beep! Beep beep! Eventually the guy came and let me through and I had to rewash the car so that was thirty-five minutes of my Tuesday gone – washing the car. Anyway, I've been a member of Balranald Branch for a few years and I've always admired the ICPA and what you do as a group and how you get together and your comradery and thank you again for having me here today. So just a little bit about myself – and I've caught up with a couple of you – I've got three kids and just to give you me ICPA background, Gus started boarding school this year. He is in Year Nine and he is in Melbourne. Like many of you and probably you have twice as much distance, he is 1,000 kms from home. It is a round trip of 1,000 kms and then I always thought that my kids would all go in the same direction, do the same thing and have the same opportunities but we soon worked out that little Lisa, who is in Year Seven, is on the autism spectrum and she also has some other learning disabilities which make life a bit tough for her. So, we have opted for her to come up to Mildura which is 130 kms away for us and, in what my cousin described as a really innovative arrangement and I'm sure there are lots of you who do this as well, but rather than move out of home and leave another daughter at home with Christian, what we've done is share a house with another mum looking after two girls and being house mothers two nights a week. Innovation is something that, I think, all of us as parents and especially where we live, are

doing all the time. Bella is at home and she still has 150 kms round trip on the bus every day. It's not that far to town but the bus meanders. About me? I grew up in north east Victoria where it rains and I remember, as a kid, my dad saying, "Can you just pray for the rain to stop?" Anyway, that seems to be a long, long time ago and hard to believe now. I then spent a couple of years studying accounting and much to mum and dad's disappointment I swapped and went into Ag Science and got a degree in Ag Science. Then after graduating and looking for a job in agronomy I worked as a cook once and made 860 rounds of sandwiches in a couple of weeks. There are a lot of skills that I have and brought to where I am now. I ended up in Forbes in Central West NSW, eventually finding a GPS. I was working as an agronomist on GPS ag specialist programmes and was actually one of the first female agronomists that this company had ever employed and I do know that they have employed women since. So, I didn't ruin it for everyone else. I then met my husband and a few years later we moved to just out of Euston, Balranald towards Mungo there on a sheep and wheat station and there were a few teething issues when I moved in and I'm sure lots of you who are in family business and moved in next door to mum and dad, mother-in-law and father-in-law, moving into Nana's house with everything of Nana's except for Nana. So, we have made it our own after 16 years. Then I changed careers and got a job as manager of the TAFE campus in Robinvale and, thanks to Neridah's mum actually because I flunked the interview so badly, and several months later I caught up with her and said that I didn't deserve that. I was terrible and I can't believe that you gave me the job. She said, "Lisa, I've got girls and if you were one of my girls and you went to that interview, I would know that you could do it." Well, it was a bit poor but anyway I got the job. Then I had Gus and in 2007 a cousin of ours came home from overseas and she was wearing this necklace and my sister and I saw this necklace and we just loved that necklace. I was working three jobs as part of the drought and I saw this necklace and I thought, goodness it has all her kid's names on it and I loved it. So, I was looking around trying to find one in Australia but couldn't find it. Then I was having a conversation with my sister and from there we grew this idea that why don't we try to do it ourselves. We had nothing to lose. So back then John Howard he gave us a baby bonus as a \$7,000 lump sum. It doesn't happen like that now and while we didn't get the flat screen TV or the leather lounge, we got a capital investment into our business. That was what started in 2007. While we weren't the first personalised jewellery company in Australia in 2007, we were the first to hand stamp. That was one letter at a time. Those engineering stamps that you use that was one letter a time, stamping all our jewellery which we still do now. It was great timing because it was the start of online shopping in a big way. A lot of our customers said that they had never shopped online before but we told them not to worry and that we would show them. We'll talk you through it. So, it wasn't just me, it was my sister, Stacy who is my best friend and to be able to work together was great. We did have a few rough moments. One of the rough moments was that later on she revealed that she was pregnant with her third child and was feeling pretty ordinary so I kind of discounted that, but other than that we really compliment each other. She is great at working out fine details and, as you can tell today when I was late and sitting out the front chatting and then at the last minute checked to see if this worked and it didn't...and anyway we got it sorted. I'm more of a "last minute, great idea, let's work out the details later" person. But together we make a good team. So, we started Koolaman and we wondered what we would name all our jewellery pieces so we started off naming them – Koolaman is the name of our farm and then let's name all the products after the neighbouring properties. Well,

Bennington, Brahma, Ackungle, Athol and people couldn't even say Koolaman how are they going to be able to say these names? So, we quit that and what we really wanted to do was pay for our groceries. So, we thought if we could just pay for our groceries it would be enough to keep us going and we can look after these young kids that we both had, three children each, and be able to work from home. Our husbands were probably our biggest doubters at the start. Christian asked me what do we do when we go to the shows? Do you have like a big jacket and you hold it open? Well we were not quite like that. Not quite the shyster. So, we had eight pieces and one type of necklace and one of those was a silver dog tag for a dog, it was the shape of a bone, and that lasted for a couple of years, but of those eight pieces we still have five which are part of our core range. We design all the pieces here in Australia. Our silver gets made overseas purely because it is cheaper. All our gold gets made here in Australia. The first shipment we ever got back in 2008, we were emailing this guy and telling him what we needed and showing some samples and we need to order this, this, this and this. He sent us a US\$5,000 package without payment. I said to him later that we wondered what he was thinking because he didn't even know us or dealt with us before. He said that we were good country girls and he knew we were good for it. Little did he know that we didn't even have US\$5,000. Up and up we are still dealing with this guy now so it was good. One of the unique differences with Koolaman is that we have never retailed in the conventional sense so Stacy and I, back in 2010, we spent 42 weekends away for the year between us travelling to different markets, fairs, boutique expos, things like that, trying to expand our data base and now we have over 40,000 people email addresses on our data base. We have established a store front in a more unique sense and back then we used to stamp on site because we have eight pieces you could choose a piece of jewellery and have "Isabelle" on it and we would take it out of the stand and stamp it and hand it over. Obviously, that changed when we got more pieces but it certainly meant that people who weren't sure about our product could buy it quickly on impulse and we capitalised on that. This slide here shows a little bit of what is going on at Koolaman. The spear grass and the blue bush and that sort of thing you see on the landscape isn't quite there right now but I'm a positive thinker so we are going to think about what's going to be there in a few year's time. We learned some valuable lessons. I was at the Mildura airport one day and it was the first time I hadn't travelled with a baby so I had always travelled with a toddler. I'd taken a friend or a cousin or met someone along the way who would look after the baby while I was working. So, this one time. No babies. You can put a lot of silver into hand luggage so I would take my little bag and that had all the samples, all the stock and I would carry it on the plane and we used to have this saying that, "Fluffy walk on, it's not very heavy." But these bags would weight about 15 kilos by the time we put all the stock in them. Got on the plane. Got down to Melbourne and back in those days you had to walk through the Xray when you got off the plane and into the main airport. Got there and I said, "Oh no where is the bag?" I'd left it in Mildura! I rang home and yes, Christian had the bag and he is driving back to Robinvale. We had a show starting next morning at 9.00 am. I rang my sister and she said, "Lisa, it will be right. We'll sort it out." Well, you really can't turn up a show selling silver jewellery when you don't have any silver jewellery. Would you believe – I rang a girlfriend in Robinvale and she told me that there was someone in the office working on superannuation and she was on her way down to Melbourne in half an hour. The next morning that bag had been couriered to us in Melbourne. How's that for a good story? We have had wonderful opportunities. We have created wonderful opportunities. We have had up to eleven staff

working for us back over 2012/2015. That has slowed down I think because Stacy and I are probably working a little bit smarter these days and also the call from the kids has changed a little bit so we have got even more time to spend on the business. But we often had a lot of parents who had children at home and who worked from home so we provided a lot of different opportunities for them and we have had lots of opportunities as well. We have had Country Style come and do a photo shoot and we have had Outback Magazine. Nathan Dyer, he came and stayed with us two nights and there was no disguising what our life was like. It was OK. If it was for 12 hours or something, we could pretend but not with Outback Magazine – he knew us warts and all. We have had a few celebrities wearing our products. Dannii Minogue, Kathy Freeman, Johanna Griegs was a great ambassador for us and she always claimed that her husband bought the necklace but we know and she told us, that the year before he bought her a box of cold power and she said that she didn't want to be caught out again. She purchased the pendant herself. So, Koolaman is something that is inspired by the people we meet and we have been really lucky because Stacy and I have travelled every capital city except for Darwin, plus lots of rural places as well and we have also travelled to New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, all for work and things that, if you had have said to me 12 years ago that you would be doing this, I just wouldn't have believed it. We have had an amazing ride. One of the things that really attract people to jewellery like Koolaman is that emotional attachment and we have met people who have had horrific things happen to them or their family members and we have also met people who have had really wonderful things happen to them and these pieces of jewellery mark those times and help them remember those people or that time in their life where things were good or bad and I think that's why Koolaman has been such a success. What I will say, and we all know this, that running your own business is really a tough job so I can tell you all the fun things but there are sleepless nights and sometimes it would be so good to just walk out at 5.00 o'clock and not think about it until tomorrow morning but we are so lucky and it doesn't matter whether you are on a farm or a small business or a big business or a service business owner, they all have challenges and that pay cheque at the end of the week would be great but I don't think I could go back now and the flexibility and the benefits that the business provides has been fantastic. I've got the photo of the bogged car there. The main thing is that anyone can do it and that's what Neridah alluded to at the start and that is that anyone can do this. When I was talking to Sarah this morning, she has an Instagram page and channelling her way with collaboration. It doesn't matter where you are if you have an idea that is unique or different to what is currently in the market and you can make it different, surround yourself with people who are a supportive network, shake off any of the doubters, think positive, take small steps and you use those contra deals, for instance swap your jewellery for something else and then have a great product because the great marketing story will compliment it. It could be where you live, how you came up with the idea, your background but everyone has a story so make sure you use that to your advantage. To sum it all up I hope I haven't bored you to tears or said too many "ums" because that's what my husband says I say too often. Anyway, finally, Koolaman is nothing out of the ordinary and what we did with our start-up capital of \$7,000 is totally obtainable for anyone. Looking back, Koolaman is the story of diversifying and getting an off-farm income and now we are a company employing staff with a presence in different magazines through editorial and worn by women and celebrities all over Australia and the world. Thank you

Agenda Motions

Allowances

A1. Nyngan

“That ICPA-NSW supports ICPA (Aust.) in the lobbying of an increase to the AIC Boarding Allowance to more closely reflect the real costs of educating isolated students.”

Moved by Davis Butler, State Council on behalf of Nyngan Branch. Seconded by Michelle Butler, Nyngan Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Boarding school fees continue to rise at a greater rate than the CPI. A Nyngan Branch member at the end of 12 years of secondary education for four daughters has watched her tuition and boarding fees increase from \$28,000 to \$58,000 per annum per child. The AIC Boarding Allowance, a so-called equity allowance, needs to be updated and increased constantly by the government to reflect the increasing financial burden being placed on isolated families to educate their children.

Comment.

Sally Sullivan, ICPA Federal Council. I just want to say this is a great motion to put in and we would be able to take that lobby forward. It is just a commonality across all Australia in the boarding schools that differential between the cost of boarding and AIC.

A2. Walgett

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Department of Education to consider that residents living within the allocated 56km range required to receive the AIC and who are battling the ongoing drought in our area be considered for the bypass.”

Moved by Liz Powell, Walgett Branch. Seconded by Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President of NSW on behalf of Walgett Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

The Walgett district has only experienced a decent fall of rain for six months of the last seven years, which was in 2016. The businesses and district have battled the drought and as we desperately need business owners, employees, farming families and their employees to remain in the area we ask that they be considered for the bypass until rainfall returns and the district begins to recover. This issue is causing a great deal of segregation in our community as the government divides us further by the haves and have nots. Those who receive the AIC Allowance and those who are busting their butts in our township and within the 56 km circumference are getting frustrated and continuously disappointed. These people should have the option of sending their kids

away if required for an all-round higher level of education. In our community the division is exploding as aboriginal students receive total assistance when going away to boarding school and people outside the 56 kms receive some help and a few struggling families are being excluded and have had enough. This is causing a greater divide by race as well as tension amongst the local residents and farming families. This is roughly around six to eight families which would be a total of between \$48-84,000. They have formed a group due to their frustration and are holding meetings outside of the ICPA and it has become a social media racial battling field as they are set upon for wanting a better education than the Walgett Community College by some local residents. Please ask the NSW government to stop causing a greater divide in our community where it is already causing animosity over water, dust and other major drought related concerns and give these families the same opportunity.

Comment.

Sandra Hewitt, Central West Plains Branch. I support this motion. I can empathise with the situation of the community division described by the Walgett Branch. Several communities within the Central West Plains Branch are also split between the have and have-nots of AIC eligibility and the effects of the drought don't discriminate according to how far from a local small school a family lives, or how far their house is from the bus stop. I have personally seen many families with no chance of accessing AIC leave the town so that they can access suitable education and they never return.

Kate Thompson, ICPA (Aust) Federal Council. There are obviously two issues. AIC is a Federal issue and By-pass is more a State issue but I think that this is a motion that could be brought to Federal Conference and we can help in working around the two issues.

A3. Walgett

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Department of Education to allow the residents of Walgett to bypass the Walgett Community College due to its level of academic achievement, sporting opportunities and safe social interaction.”

Moved by Liz Powell, Walgett Branch. Seconded by Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President of NSW on behalf of Walgett Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

The Walgett Community College has had a “makeover” but let's face it, the results remain low and academic achievement on the decline. People should have the option of going away. They should be able to receive the AIC Allowance to attend a school with a higher level of academic achievement and a greater subject choice. It's getting past the point where our members are too disheartened after years of putting this motion forward. Our member numbers rapidly drop as they feel they are fighting a losing battle. I was Secretary for the Walgett Branch in 2001 and 2002 and was writing these same motions. In 2019 people are demanding a better, safer and higher level of education than the Walgett Community College is offering.

Comment.

Tanya Mitchell, State Council. I just want to add that we are having very similar issues in Bourke and that, on a daily basis, the police are being called and that staff are walling themselves up in offices for their protection. So, I fully support these motions.

Further comment regarding AIC and LAFA by Mike Tom, Department of Education and others.

Mike Tom, Department of Education. A couple of things that come to mind. The first one is that AIC is always a contentious issue and Walgett has been for a number of years so Kate, I acknowledge that that is the case. A lot of the last motion is something that we can't comment here. It's not within our domain to be able to comment on that. We'll take that forward, obviously, for a discussion and notification at a higher level. The second thing is that within the by-pass process we have before said to Guy Mathews, who looks after the programme for Australia, what happens if we say a blanket by-pass in this particular area for whatever reason? And they said, "Well we probably wouldn't accept it." So, they control the programme in terms of the process, they give us the rules and regulations around what we can and can't indicate for what you guys call a by-pass. So, my suggestion here is that I'm happy to have a conversation with Guy about drought restrictions in terms of issues but it doesn't just apply to Walgett. It applies to multiple communities right across NSW and a conversation will need to be had about the consistency of their particular process there. So, I would agree with your Federal Council that that probably needs to be taken forward at a higher level to see whether or not circumstances can be made in terms of that. The last one I'd like to comment on is the Living Away From Home Allowance. Living Away From Home Allowance is controlled by NSW State and that is actually through our unit and one of the things that I am probably a little bit concerned about is that I would have expected the number of people for the LAFA to have increased dramatically this year and it hasn't. There is a slight bump in it but really it hasn't gone up so what that's saying to me is that our way of communicating is just not working. It's just not getting out there and we have tried as much as possible to get this out right across NSW. We've used social media. We did a massive social media through Facebook. We did some very big ads with the Land newspaper and traditional media. We've done interviews. ICPA worked very closely with us in terms of ensuring that it is going out in Top Wire and a whole range of other things but I urge you to make conversation with people about the Living Away From Home Allowance and if people are unsure as to whether they are eligible or not, for goodness sake, give our office a call. Let the ladies talk them through the process and let us decide whether or not you are actually eligible or not for it. For goodness sake don't allow people to self-assess because there is money literally going begging there for people who are eligible for it.

Neridah Healey, State Council. Mike the Living Away From Home means tested so people living on drought affected properties in the last financial year had extremely high incomes because they had to get rid of all their stock so it is now going forward that no one has got anything to sell anymore or no one is having lambs or anything like that, so, that is part of the problem. The money has run out now but our financials from a year ago show these huge inflated numbers because everything went.

Mike Tom, Department of Education. That is a good point and that is correct. So, traditionally what we do is to actually look at the tax issues that are in the previous financial year but we also can assess on this current year on your current circumstances and that's available specifically for you guys and exactly for these circumstances as we find ourselves in now. So, again, I suggest that you give our office a call, let us work you through that particular process and support you with that process. The phone number is 02 6334 8070. Certainly, you can look it up in your Top Wire. All the information is there. The ICPA web site has the information. We are happy to help out.

Sandra Hewitt, Central West Plains Branch. Just a comment to Mike regarding the "small bump and not the expected big rise". At the moment I know I have to do a LAFA reapplication for my son because he has gone into Year 11 and I'll make this point because I'm sure I'm not the only one who actually hasn't got their tax completed yet for the last financial year and I would assume a lot of people are the same. You might expect a much larger bump between April and June once everybody gets their income tax assessments returned But I am probably in the same boat. We have offloaded a lot of stock and it would be appreciated if that could be taken into account.

Kate Treweeke, ICPA-NSW Immediate Past President. Just further to Sandra's comments and what is going on is that you are correct. You don't self-assess and that is with anything involving money and filling out forms. Don't self-assess. But it is also be honest. When you are talking to the Department of Education or boarding schools about your circumstances don't hold back. Really do tell them. Really give them the whole story and tell them really what's going on because there might be just something in that story that they might grab onto and that might be how you will get over that line. So, don't hold back. Be honest in what's happening. What has happened in the past and what may happen in the future depending on the season.

Mike Tom, Department of Education. One last comment and that is that the two ladies who deal with this all the time are very knowledgeable in their area so they are the only ones to deal with and they're the ones that answer the phone on a regular basis. They know most of you by name. They know most of the children who are in it so I would absolutely agree with Kate and for goodness sake, give us the full story, and they are good listeners, and we can phone you back at a time that suits. There has been a couple of times when phone calls have come through and we have had to look at other suitable times to call back. The other thing is that we are always open for a process of appeal. Like any government department there is a process of appeal so there is a means test in there but in terms of timelines and things like that we will do our best to make things as flexible as possible given the current circumstances.

Rachel Brindley, State Council. I just want to jump back to the by-pass issue and I know that it has come up a few times and when you look at the guidelines and how they are outlined, it is more than a by-pass has to be applied to a school rather than to say where the motion mentioned the community. Are we better off asking for members for case studies saying, "Here's the school and the issue in that school," and presenting something a bit more formally in terms of specific issues rather than asking for a blanket Walgett community by-pass?

Mike Tom, Department of Education. I guess the comment is that if you are looking for something around the reasons like drought that the school is actually by-passed then it is not just one school, we are looking at but it is multiple communities and it has an effect. In the last motion that was put forward you were actually indicating that there was a standard issue that you were referring to. What I'm saying in that particular circumstance is that we can't make that decision from here. It needs to be, in my view, to be taking the motion and the explanation forward then the more detail in the explanation to a certain extent the better informed the people who need to make that decision will be. What happens traditionally with ICPA is that the State Executive meet with the Department and that is usually around about May I think from memory. With them to be able to put forward that case at a high level with the Department is exceptionally useful.

Liz Powell, Walgett Branch. I've actually approached the school. I've tried to get suspension rates; I've tried to get violence results. Teacher violence. NAPLAN results. Results of their HSC. Their ATAR results. No one would actually give me any information. Not even staff that I am close to where game to give me any results of violence, of anything. I was asking for figures not names but no one will give me any results.

Mathew Brown, Relieving Executive Director for Rural South and West Operating Directorate. I have the longest title in New South Wales, I think. I'm sorry that you are feeling that degree of anxiety and frustration with the process. There are a few steps here that you need to be alerted to I suppose. First of all, no school will provide that information to any parent or any member of the community under any circumstances for a range of reasons but most importantly connected to the Department and the Government's expectation around privacy. If there was anything that could identify a child and that becomes even more likely in a small school, then it's just not able to be released to anybody for use or dissemination. When it comes to things like NAPLAN results and HSC results, those sorts of pieces of data are certainly be trusted to parents in general terms and certainly with a specific parent about their child's success or challenge but the point remains that, in terms of violence within a school, I mean I don't have any particular details about Walgett itself simply because it is not part of my operational directorate, however, I can relay that to Frank Potter who is the Executive Director for that space and I certainly will alert him to the fact that there are some motions here specifically relevant to Walgett so that he is aware of that and that he might act on it. If the parents who are here, ICPA members who are here, and would like some specific information about Walgett I think it would be most appropriate for those people to perhaps approach Frank Potter and the Director for that space for more discussion and to look at concerns that you have particularly around that school and what you would like to move forward with in terms with the suggestions that you have had and have but ultimately I think they are questions that genuinely cannot be answered for a range of very good reasons but most of it had to do with privacy.

Communication

A4. Monaro

"That ICPA-NSW assists ICPA (Aust.) to continue lobbying all telecommunication companies and governments for mobile service coverage in rural and remote blackspot areas."

Moved by Tim Fletcher, State Council on behalf of Monaro Branch. Seconded by Shannah Joiner, Monaro Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

While it is appreciated that the government's mobile black spot program is rolling out to provide better mobile coverage for rural families it is primarily going to benefit the more regionally placed families rather than the remote families. Remote families often do not have the choice of landline and they rely solely on mobile phone and internet for communication and many do not have the access.

A5. Balranald

"That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to give a timeframe for when satellite schools will be transferred onto the NBN SkyMuster satellite."

Moved by Kathleen Harris, Balranald Branch. Seconded by Claire Butler, Balranald Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Currently Clare public school is experiencing very slow internet on the satellite provided by the department. Some days download speeds are only 1mb/sec which makes any form of online learning useless. For example, to download educational programs on the smart board such as Behind the News, the program needs to be played first to stop buffering and then it can be replayed fully. This is very time consuming in a learning environment with children waiting for the lesson to begin and impacts on learning. To connect to another classroom or to a live music lesson is very "hit and miss". The new LMBR financial system is cloud based and requires reliable and fast internet. The internet often drops out and data that has been inputted is lost. Therefore, productivity in the administration office is also negatively impacted. Balranald Branch would like the Department of Education to give a date as to when remote schools like Clare will be transferring to better satellite internet such as the NBN where many families in the area have become connected and noticed significantly improved internet speeds and improved reliability.

Comment.

Mike Tom, Department of Education. Just giving you a bit of an update and I will do a small presentation after lunch which will look at this. I know that Amber is also

speaking around the distance education process and the relationship we have with NBN at the moment. From a perspective of the wide area network that actually connects all the schools across the state together, we have been working solidly to try and reduce the issues that we have had and that have been mentioned in this particular case. We are very aware that schools need to be able to operate not only in terms of curriculum needs, but also in terms of administrative needs. There are a range of things that the department is doing to try and alleviate those and I'll address some of those in my presentation after lunch. Also, we are working with Infrastructure NSW. That is using some of the money that has come out of Snowy Hydro and we will look at how some of the major highways of traffic that is used by the department, but also by other departments, can be upgraded to try and reduce some of these bottlenecks. So not only is this about the department's own network, it comes down to some of the major pathways that Telstra and other carriers are using as well. We have certainly arranged things that we are trying to put in play to reduce the issues that are addressed in this motion.

A6. Rankins Springs

“That ICPA-NSW strongly urges the Minister for Education to ensure that all remaining TP1 and TP2 schools with satellite internet have a secure and consistent connection.”

Moved by Debra Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Sally Argent-Smith, Rankins Springs Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

At our local TP1 Primary School, Naradhan Public School, the satellite internet connection at the school is unsatisfactory. The internet connection is slow and at times unstable, which inhibits the students and staff accessing essential resources and data. In the classroom, a number of programs requiring an internet connection are unable to be accessed due to slow internet speeds. The Connected Classroom equipment is vital technology for a small, isolated school and requires an efficient internet connection. Students and staff regularly participate in video conferences to access a variety of learning experiences, competitions, professional development and meetings. There is a significant delay from the school's end, making it difficult to converse with other participants. A warning symbol is often displayed on the screen indicating a poor connection and quite often drops out, requiring the school to attempt to dial back in. The school has also been unable to participate in the NAPLAN Online trials. The principal was informed that a satellite option would be made available, however has now been told that Naradhan Public School is on the list of schools that require an upgrade to access NAPLAN Online. The school is currently getting an upgrade through the Connecting Country Schools project which will improve wireless connectivity at the school, but has been informed that it will not improve internet speeds. The school has recently rolled over to LMBR, the Department's new finance system. Staff have

found it difficult to access EBS: Central, the Student Administration tool used to manage Student Attendance, Student Behaviour, Curriculum, Student Finance and Student Health Records. It often takes many attempts to login placing added pressure on the Teaching Principal who already has a challenging workload and on the School Administration Manager. The school has installed a WAN optimisation appliance as a trial to attempt to enhance the satellite internet connection. After a number of trials of this appliance had taken place, it was deemed a failure. There are now other satellite options available in the area, as accessed by local residents, with much better connection speeds. However, no specific information can be given to determine when the situation will improve.

Comment.

Mike Tom, Department of Education. The Connecting Country Schools simply addresses the robustness of the network internally to the school rather than externally to the school. Again, the department is working towards trying to fix it. We know that that is a particular problem for that school. I would like to acknowledge the support of ICPA in helping us to actually move these particular problems forward.

A7. Balranald

"That ICPA-NSW supports ICPA (Aust.) to continue lobbying the relevant Federal Ministers to ensure that rural and remote schools are prioritised for any expansion of the mobile coverage footprint into regional Australia."

Moved by Kathleen Harris, Balranald Branch. Seconded by Claire Butler, Balranald Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Balranald Branch is of the view that the selection of priority regions for the implementation of mobile phone coverage should include a priority for rural and remote schools that are currently without reliable mobile phone service. Most rural and remote schools are evacuation points in the event of emergencies occurring within the area and surrounding communities. Clare Public School is 155km from Balranald and consists of a school only. It is not part of a town. In the event of bushfires and other natural disasters, Clare Public School is the emergency evacuation point and, as the centre of the community, holds the Royal Flying Doctor medical chest and a defibrillator in case of a medical emergency. Unfortunately, Clare Public School sits within a 15,000sq km mobile blackspot that is bigger than Sydney and the Blue Mountains combined. Clare Public School has limited unreliable mobile phone coverage by using an external Yagi aerial situated on the teacher's house pointing to the tower at Mossgiel on the Hay/Ivanhoe Road (50km away), with the next mobile coverage approximately 120kms away from the school if travelling by road from Balranald. Balranald Branch seeks the support of ICPA (Aust.) to ensure that the Commonwealth Government prioritises rural and remote schools for future expansions of the mobile footprint under the mobile blackspot programme. Time and time again under the programme we are seeing fringe areas being successful. We are yet to see a remote area in NSW that has a huge impact,

such as a remote school being successful. The time for Telcos applying for areas that deliver the most profits must stop.

Distance Education

A8. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to support incentives, such as recognition of work experience, for graduate teachers who accept work as governesses tutoring distance education students in remote areas.”

Moved by Claire Samford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch. Carried.

Explanation:

Many families who have more than one student in the home school room may employ a governess. Usually this is an untrained person or backpacker. In supporting graduate teachers to be employed as a home tutor in a distance education school room there are a number of benefits. For the students, they are being supervised by someone who is a graduate teacher. The advantages for the graduate teacher is that they have a full-time job, including full board and keep, they are working in the industry they have trained for, they are working under the guidance of an experienced teacher, they are gaining experience working in a multistage classroom and would be gaining recognised work experience. For the family, they are able to afford to employ a qualified supervisor to help educate their children. This has the potential to encourage qualified teachers to move to the bush. The government is saying that the amount of funding for education is continually rising with the standard of education getting further and further behind. Could this be a way of helping close the gap in education between the rural, remote and metropolitan schools?

Comment.

Mike Tom, Department of Education. I'd like to thank the Louth Branch for actually thinking outside the square and I like the way you actually finish that with a question mark and I think that is a question that we need to ask so we are spending quite a bit of time and effort to try and encourage teachers to come out and be in rural schools and to live in rural communities. I think the concept of someone who is actually spending time on a property supporting families probably makes them open to working in a rural community. So, while it's not in my area – it sits in HR – I am happy to take that forward with the help of State Council at the next visit.

A9. Tibooburra- Milparinka

“Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch would like to thank the ICPA-NSW executive and portfolio holders for all the negotiations they were engaged in at the start of 2018 around the implementation of the Federal In-Home Care Guidelines in July 2018.”

Moved by Bernadette Maxwell, Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch. Seconded by Laura Finch on behalf of Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

The small amount of time provided for feedback to stakeholders in the In-Home Care system regarding changes to the guidelines was a great stress to six of seven families with school aged children in 2018 in our branch. It came on top of what was already a very stressful time of severe drought. It was very much appreciated that the NSW State Council helped with the negotiations that provided a much better outcome than was anticipated.

Comment.

Laura Finch, Broken Hill Branch. The Broken Hill Branch would also like to thank ICPA-NSW. We were given a short notice regarding the implementation of the Federal In-Home Care guidelines commencing in July 2018. In December 2017 we were thrown a curved ball with changes that were going to affect many families in home-care. On the 18th December, 2017, we received the new guidelines for In-Home Care and the time frame of 8th January to file for upcoming changes. As you can all appreciate the short timeframe included the Christmas and New Year holiday period. Our in-home provider was away from work for some of this time because of the holiday period which proved very difficult to converse and resulted in many of us feeling that we were flying blind. When we approached ICPA-NSW they couldn't help us enough. We all felt very supported. When we stamped on our local member's door, he actually openly said that he couldn't believe how many branches and members were in his electorate. So, to conclude, I sincerely thank ICPA-NSW executives and portfolio holders. We are all time poor and needing to spend time with our families at Christmas but you jumped in without hesitation to assist and for this we are very appreciative of your help and dedication towards positive change.

A10. Collarenebri/ Mungindi

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Minister for Education to start the Limited Program or ‘bypass’ schools when students start boarding school in Year 7.”

Moved by Libby McPhee, State Council on behalf of Collarenebri/Mungindi Branch. Seconded by Bronwyn Smith, Moree Branch on behalf of Collarenebri/Mungindi Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Currently the program is only available from Year 9 onwards. If a student is behind in any subjects Years 7 and 8 are good years to catch them up. Generally, most mathematics is done on a calculator from Year 9 onwards. The Collarenebri and Mungindi Central Schools are already accepted schools for this program. The concept of by-passing is to allow access to education and for children who would otherwise have to find other alternatives to education which can include families relocating from a small rural community and this has huge impact on these rural communities.

Comment.

Mike Tom, Department of Education. In terms of this particular motion I think what I need is probably some more information on that and I would like to, if it is possible, meet with the Moree Branch perhaps after this break to discuss this further.

Early Childhood

A11. Louth

“Louth Branch thanks Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Early Childhood for her work in implementing preschools in the areas where there had been no practical access for pre-schoolers, if they were without a committed volunteer to deliver Distance Preschool.”

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch. Carried by acclamation.

A12. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests that the Minister for Early Childhood establish preschools in small isolated schools where there is no other access to preschool for four-year olds.”

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch. Carried.

Explanation:

Several remote schools have been identified as servicing areas without access to pre-schooling. This is despite a three-year effort to collaboratively find a system with sustainably which could facilitate pre-schooling in remote villages for three and four year olds who are without a committed home tutor to deliver distance education to them.

A13. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW continues to request the Minister for Early Childhood for all non-equity three-year olds in rural and remote locations to be funded for access to preschool education.”

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch.
Carried

Explanation:

This would allow all children time to have any early intervention strategies implemented and also enable them to achieve their 600 hours of pre-schooling.

A14. Monaro

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Department of Education to review the funding for preschools so that children can attend preschool from an early age to benefit from early intervention should they require it.”

Moved by Shennah Joiner, Monaro Branch. Seconded by Tim Fletcher, State Council.
Carried

Explanation:

Under the new funding arrangements children with disabilities are not part of the equity group but they are funded under the Pre-school Disability Support Program which is applied for by the pre-school after the child is enrolled as a four year old. However, this does not apply to three-year olds who are not part of a socio economic or indigenous equity group, or four-year olds who have never been identified as having developmental delays. This means there are many children who reach kindergarten without having had any vital early intervention.

Comment.

Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Early Childhood Education. I would just like to add one thing for the Monaro Branch. Last year we did add children with additional needs to the equity group for funding now so they are receiving funding. That wasn't the case previously but we did make the change so now equity children at preschool from three, the low socioeconomic, aboriginal children and children with disability as well are funded. So, that has changed in recent times just so that you are aware.

A15. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Minister for Early Childhood Education to investigate the impact that the migration to the new Childcare Package and the ceasing of Budget Based Funding (BBF) services has had on mobile services and communities in NSW.”

Moved by Amy Pollard, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Gus White, Wentworth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

For many rural services the migration to new funding models in July 2018 has not occurred smoothly. ICPA Wentworth Branch is aware that some services are starting to feel the financial impacts of these changes to funding. Also, mobile services who have changed to the Department of Social Services are still unsure as to how long they will be funded for. ICPA Wentworth Branch believes that the true impact of the changes has not been investigated at any level of government and believe that the impact on NSW services should be properly understood by the NSW Government and made available for the public.

Comment.

Vickie Olds, Tibooburra/Milparinka Branch. I would like to speak for the motion. As many in this room know I work for the Outback Mobile Resource Unit. Budget Based Services are generally the only early childhood service in the area for children under four and five before preschool. The kids you saw in the clip earlier, I've known since birth and we would have been the only early childhood that they had access to. We provide socialisation for parents and children, educational activities and resources. We provide early detection for developmental issues in younger children. Qualified experienced educators through the Department of Social Services, as I still regard myself as an early educator. The fact that we don't know what's happening in two years to our mobile service is very concerning. We have a different way of reporting to the Department now and, while nobody likes reporting to the Department about numbers, ours seem to go into a data exchange base and there is no way that we can personalise our experience. So, last year, we travelled somewhere for three days. We got caught at one place because the roads were closed. There was no electricity and there was no way of reporting on that data base as to why we didn't work for those three days. So, I am nervous that, in two years, eighteen months' time, the Department is going to look at our numbers and not see huge numbers and shut us down. Those non-huge numbers still deserve the best education that we can provide, that mobile services can provide.

Ann Jakel, Telstra. I just want to mention that Telstra wants to offer any support to this that we can if it is relevant.

Sally Sullivan, ICPA (Aust) Federal Council. My comment is that this is certainly not a problem unique to NSW and I would encourage ICPA-NSW to take this to Federal Conference as well.

A16. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Minister for Early Childhood Education and the Early Childhood Education Directorate to engage in community consultation into the viability of a preschool in Pooncarie and provide an explanation of their findings.”

Moved by Gus White, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Amy Pollard, Wentworth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Exploring the option of preschool in Pooncarie has had the support of the Education Department locally, and other like-minded organisations. To date all that has been verbally communicated to the community is that a community preschool in Pooncarie is not an option. The community would like a proper explanation as to why they are not eligible for a community preschool or what steps would be required to obtain a community preschool.

Comments:

Clancy Griffiths, Wentworth Branch. I just wanted to say that because the Pooncarie School is now open and there are children in the town attending the school. They have younger siblings who can attend the preschool and also, on the surrounding stations, if their parents bring in those children from the stations to have a day at the Pooncarie School then they also have younger siblings so they are coming along to and they could be attending a preschool as well. There is a population boom in the area, I’m evidence of that, and also, there is a building there at the school grounds that the school does not use, so that is there ready to be used for the preschool.

Rural Schools

A17. NSW State Council

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Department of Education to explore the possibility of TPI Schools adopting a standard distance education program, where a suitable program or teacher is not in place.”

Annabel Strachan, State Council requested permission for a word change. Granted.

The motion now reads: -

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Department of Education to explore the possibility of TPI Schools adopting a standard distance education programme where a suitable programme is not in place.”

Moved by Annabel Strachan, State Council. Seconded by David Butler, State Council.
Carried.

Explanation:

Over many years, members of ICPA-NSW have continually presented concerns about the programming and interruptions to programming in TP1 schools. There have been numerous examples in TP1 schools where principals have taken extended leave and children are without a program for up to a term or longer. There have also been cases where the relieving teacher has been in place up to a year without having any program in place. This is completely unacceptable for remote students who do not have the benefit of access to peers and other services. If schools had access to, and the ability to adopt the core subjects from an existing approved distance education program, then parents could be assured that their children were being provided with a consistent acceptable program.

Comment.

Mike Tom, Department of Education. I think the conversation needs to be further fleshed out so what I would ask is for ourselves and State Council to meet and to, perhaps, look at what that might look like in terms of from your perspective and what sort of resources would need to be put in place. So, distance education does provide a safety net, usually in terms of single subjects but not necessarily in terms of a whole programme and we haven't had to look at that from a primary perspective so it would require, I think, a bigger and deeper discussion and I am happy to do that.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. I may just add to what Mike said. Obviously, that is not a situation that the Department would ever accept as reasonable or acceptable. I have spoken with both Dean White, the incoming Executive Director and Frank Potter, the Executive Director of Rural North, indicating that this is a motion and I have asked them to consider the discussion that will obviously take place and also to work with their Directors to ensure that such a situation doesn't arise if and wherever possible. Obviously, there are some instances where it may not have been planned organised but, in general terms, we can't imagine why that would ever should occur or be allowed to occur.

A18. Rankins Springs

"That ICPA-NSW urges the Department of Education to ensure that the Rural Area Relief (RAR) position is retained for TP1 and TP2 schools so that relief teaching staff can be accessed when needed."

Moved by Debra Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Sally Argent-Smith, Rankins Springs Branch.
Carried.

Explanation:

Our local schools currently have access to a Rural Area Relief teacher when covering teaching staff on leave or who are attending professional development. These positions are filled on a temporary basis and at the end of each contract the position is reviewed. School principals are continually fighting for the positions to continue as casual teacher availability is extremely low in rural areas. These positions are vital in ensuring schools remain operational in the event of an unexpected illness and/or leave. TP1 and TP2 schools have a low number of staff and do not have the ability to split classes in the event of an unexpected absence.

Comment.

Mike Tom, Department of Education. Two things to state here. The first one is that I have passed both A18 and A19 which are both concerning the RAR, over to HR, Human Resources that looks after this area and they have copies of this, and I suspect that they will respond. They are aware that this is an issue. The second thing is that there is a staffing methodology review in place at the moment and they are really looking at the whole staffing methodology for education and we would acknowledge quite openly that staffing is one of those really complex areas right across NSW and when we make a change it is basically been almost like a bolt-on over a number of years and it is now time to look at all of those elements. As a result of that at the end of last year a range of stakeholders were brought together for discussion internally in the Department to kick off that particular process and I suspect that people like yourselves will be engaged in the near future. I know that a number of rural principals absolutely brought up the idea of the RAR and how it was used.

A19. Balranald

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to give rural and remotely isolated schools more consideration for replacement teacher options when deciding to make the Rural Area Relief (RAR) position obsolete.”

Moved by Claire Butler, Balranald Branch. Seconded by Kathleen Harris, Balranald Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

A Rural Area Relief Teacher (RAR) has been provided to Clare Public School for one or two days per week to relieve the teaching principal and facilitate the continued classroom teaching of students. The RAR teacher was a valuable part of the school community as the principal would quite often require their placement at Clare due to the principal's necessary commitment to the department and the many aspects of their position i.e. training days away and administration obligations. The RAR position was based at Balranald Central School and the RAR was shared between Clare, Tooleybuc, Balranald and Euston for the past 20 years. The RAR teacher was compensated for travel in their private vehicle between these schools as part of their employment contract. Upon the resignation of the RAR teacher half way through 2018, the Department of Education - without community consultation - made a decision under the

“Local Schools Local Decisions” (LSLD) policy, that RAR positions would gradually become obsolete across NSW and these schools would then have to seek replacement casual teachers through casual teaching. It is very hard to find a casual teacher at Clare, mainly due to the lack of financial compensation for travel due to the long distances required to travel to the school. Clare does not have a large pool of casual teachers available to the school due to not being located within a town and it is the belief of the Balranald Branch that if more RAR positions become obsolete then casual teachers will be extremely difficult to acquire at remote schools due to travel and accommodation options. For example, without a travel incentive, a teacher living in Balranald will choose to relieve Tooleybuc or Euston over and above travelling a 310 km round trip to Clare. If a casual teacher can't be acquired for the days that are needed by the principal then the school is not able to be opened therefore school children would be missing out on much needed and valuable education. Balranald Branch would like the NSW Department of Education to consult with rural schools to find a better solution to the replacement of RAR positions/casual teachers to ensure that teachers are always available to these schools and are given prioritisation with the incentives of travel and accommodation due to isolation and travel distances.

A20. Moree

“That ICPA-NSW lobbies the relevant ministers to implement the following recommendation made by Professor Dr John Halsey in the ‘Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRRE) – Final Report’ to “reduce the impact of administration on workloads to create more time for teaching and leading learning” (Halsey, 2018, p.37) with urgency.”

Moved by Sarnia Walker, Moree Branch. Seconded by Libby McPhee, State Council on behalf of Moree Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

In our small schools we have witnessed our teaching principals being bombarded with training and administration duties, taking them away from the classroom and the important task of teaching our students. Professor Doctor John Halsey noted that “in a small school in particular where principals have a large teaching load, there is little time left for focussing on leading learning. Scaling back of the administration workload needs to happen to create more time for leading learning to be done and done well.” (Halsey, 2018, p.35). Small school students require stability and continuity of learning just like their larger school counterparts and though we do not doubt our small school teaching principals are doing their utmost to ensure this occurs the amount of time out of the classroom is noticeable and disruptive. Time out of the classroom includes but is not limited to professional development, training and also the challenges that only a small school principal experiences such as co-ordinating trades people conducting maintenance, technical difficulties with ICTs, break downs in equipment such as water pumps and important phone calls that require immediate attention. All of these responsibilities that are usually shared by many in a large school are only shared by two in a one teacher school. Planning, teaching and assessing students is a full-time job. How does one person realistically do all of that as well as the added workload of a

teaching principal? Teaching should be the main focus and administration tasks should be minimal and easy to achieve.

References: Halsey, Prof. Dr. J, Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education – Final Report, Commonwealth of Australia, 2018.

Comment.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. I just want to let you now that the Department is actively working on trying to reduce the amount of administration that the principal is required to do. For example, there are about four or five significant reports that have been taken off the table in 2019 and there are additional reports and time saving activities we are trying to look at. We recognise the importance of principals, teaching principals and teachers to work in class rooms and not complete administration tasks particularly ones that are just duplicated and/or can be done in another way. We certainly agree with sympathy and sympathise with the spirit of this particular motion and I believe it is really important that it goes forward in its present form for us to discuss in more detail.

Gus White, Wentworth Branch. I just want to make sure, as a parent, we want to see our teachers and our principals keeping up to date with training, education and up-skilling themselves so just to balance it off I just want to make sure we are sending the right signal. Yes, there is some administration issues but also, they need to up-skill and go and get some training because we want them teaching our kids as well as they possibly can.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. You are 100% correct. Stephen Covey noted, for example, that, when asked about the danger in training people is that they become so good that they leave. Stephen Covey's concern was that, if we didn't train them, they might stay. We agree with Stephen Covey.

A21. Moree

“That ICPA-NSW lobbies the relevant ministers to place urgency on streamlining the overcrowded national curriculum, particularly in the primary school years, restructuring it so there is a stronger emphasis on deeper understanding of core subjects such as Mathematics and English.”

Moved by Sarnia Walker, Moree Branch. Seconded by Libby McPhee, State Council on behalf of Moree Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Since the national curriculum was introduced to our school teachers and students have been overwhelmed and stressed with the enormity of what is needed to be taught and learnt. The foundation years should have a stronger emphasis on literacy and numeracy, our Kindergarten students should not be struggling before they've even begun. The enormity of what they are required to learn in a short period of time is unrealistic. In a review of the national curriculum in 2014 the authors stated that experts in early years learning recommended that Foundation to Year 2 should focus on literacy and numeracy

alone (*Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014*). They also wrote that it was pointed out by several different entities that the content expected to be taught by primary school teachers was too large. Considering this review was undertaken in 2014 the Australian Government response included an admission that “we already knew that many stakeholders had been critical of the overcrowding of the Australian Curriculum and the content being excessive” (*Australian Government, 2014*) and then went on to include a recommendation for Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to “revise the structure of the Australian Curriculum to reduce the amount of content to a narrow core required to be taught, especially in the primary years. Foundation to Year 2 should focus on literacy and numeracy” (*Australian Government, 2014*) we strongly believe that urgency in getting this process started is required.

References: Donnelly & Wiltshire, Review of the Australian Curriculum: Final Report, 2014. Australian Government, Review of the Australian Curriculum: Initial Australian Government Response, 2014.

Comment.

Bruce Paynter, State Council. I would just like to make a comment here on the last few motions. Your State Council has been working very, very closely with NESAs during the last twelve months on the curriculum review. These things that we have been raised this afternoon have certainly been put front and forward and in quite a forceful manner. Your concerns have been heard, especially by Helen and myself who have attended many meetings this year, and we have been reassured, and when you do actually read my report, you’ll see in there a NESAs section that we have been one of the few groups that have made continuous points like this and that they have been certainly very much heard and are in the review process. Just to let you know that this isn’t something washed over but we have been working very hard behind the scenes.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. The Minister, Rob Stokes, has asked Dr. Jenny Donavon, who is part of the Department of Education team to undertake a review and Professor Jeff Masters has been asked to do that for the Department or with the Department and I would suggest that this motion also go to the Department and Jenny Donavon as well as to NESAs itself.

A22. Boomi,

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Department of Education that P5 schools be allowed two calendar years with numbers below 26, and then put on review for a following year before being reclassified as a P6 school.”

Moved by Libby McPhee, State Council on behalf of Boomi Branch. Seconded by Kate Treweeke, ICPA-NSW Immediate Past President on behalf of Boomi Branch.
Carried.

Explanation:

In isolated, rural areas droughts and the effects of droughts rarely last for a single year. After workers have been dismissed due to drought, it typically requires 2-3 years for these workers to be replaced (if the drought has broken). When attempting to source new employees, the size of the local primary school can have an enormous effect on the

ability to attract new families/employees to an isolated, rural district. With the current limited time provided for schools with enrolments falling below a certain number an isolated school is likely to be reclassified (and consequently lose teachers) which has dual effects. First, it usually means that a teacher and their family leave the district and secondly, a school with less staff can be a large deterrent for potential families looking for employment in isolated, rural areas. The negative cycle then continues that there are less people in the district, fewer services and then this becomes less appealing to potential employees.

Comment.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. An excellent point. I'm not sure in this particular instance that the school has actually applied for drought staffing supplementation. The Department through the Government has allowed that to take place this year and many schools have applied for that which could mean if their staffing was held that would mean that their funding was held which would mean that would keep the school as a TP2, allowing it to have that additional year buffer that has been requested. The request needs to go through but I don't actually know whether that school was regarded as being able to apply for that funding. However, I thought I should make that point.

A23. Louth

"That an ICPA-NSW representative meets annually with each regional director overseeing Rural and Remote Schools and that these meetings become embedded into the directors' calendar."

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch.
Carried

Explanation:

When we have education issues in the bush, we are always aware of how fortunate we are to have ICPA as a voice through which we are able to lobby. It has come to our attention however that new directors responsible for "ICPA areas" are sometimes aware of ICPA existence only after a conference when a motion that concerns their office has been carried. This motion was carried last year following several comments for the motion. We feel it would be beneficial to both the community and directors, newly appointed or not if they'd had the opportunity to meet with State Council and or members from their area and at least, hear some of the issues ICPA is working towards.

Comment.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. What an excellent motion. I spoke to some of the directors when I saw this as a motion and they would be delighted to meet with you. They meet as a group once a term and I would suggest probably organising for the ICPA to have a representative to meet with the two hubs in rural south and west and once the motion has gone through, we can make sure that happens. What I'll do is to

make sure that Dean White is aware of this motion and ask him to enact that with those hubs.

A24. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Executive Director of Public Schools NSW to ensure that the regional directors actually physically attend the rural, remote and very remote TPI schools in their area, at least twice a year.”

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch.
Carried

Explanation:

There are many reasons for which the Louth and Wanaaring school communities feel that the Directors should be on site at least twice a year. Most importantly they need to review the teaching principal's program to be delivered and register of work which has been delivered to the students. The Director then also (and perhaps this is the most integral part of the overseeing role of a principal) needs to inspect and enjoy the students' completed work, whether it be a work in progress or published and ready for sharing. How else can the tax paying public be assured that the above is happening in a positive manner? We believe that the Director's physical presence will engender friendships and networking which will allow them to understand issues between teaching principals and their communities before problems arise. This level of support is necessary for the teaching principal who is working in professional peer isolation (even though they have access to on line mentoring) and the communities they are serving who deserve the best education possible for their children.

Comment.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. Just reading an email from Charles Dwyer, the Director in that space, and he fully supports this idea and has no issue at all with it. I personally visited Louth three times and Wanaaring once in 2018, Terms Two and Four. It is an expectation that those Directors actually visit the schools at least once a term and have a formal conversation or meeting with each principal in each of the schools in their patch. Support was also provided on site through Terms Two to Four on a regular basis with peer principal visits from Jonathan Harvey, the Cobar Public School Principal, and the types of support were negotiated between the Director and Jonathon Harvey based on the feedback from the Principals and what is called the PDP, which is a regular review and discussions, and feedback from Jonathon Harvey and the Principals occurred after the visits. One visit has occurred at Louth Public School this year and one was scheduled at Wanaaring but the class was actually doing a swimming carnival at that time so the Director attended that. However, obviously there are still issues and I will raise this with the Director and ask him to, again, speak with the people who have those concerns.

Annabel Strachan, State Council. In 2018 the three terms in Louth School had no programme so even though he may have been visiting, he wasn't actually checking programmes or making sure work was done.

A25. Louth

"That ICPA-NSW requests that the NSW Department of Education directors responsible for isolated schools monitor their principals to ensure that the communities are being thoroughly included in any school decision process."

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch.
Carried

Explanation:

While policies such as Local Schools Local Decisions (LSLD) has been appreciated in our area for its pragmatism in enabling principals to have the authority to make the most appropriate decisions for the needs of their students without constant real consultation with the community, these policies can result in discord within isolated communities. The principal is able to access a series of training opportunities for themselves even though they are intending to transfer from their current school. Louth Branch certainly does not wish to hinder any in-servicing of staff. However, we feel that Directors should be aware that in some circumstances training needs to be moderated. While Louth presented a motion, which was carried last year, we feel that safe guards still need to be put in place.

A26. Louth

"That ICPA-NSW urges the Executive Director of NSW Public Schools to ensure an interview process is undertaken when a TPI school's relieving principal's position is to be filled for longer than two terms."

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch.
Carried

Explanation:

When a principal is away from their permanent position, for whatever reason, it can stretch to years in time. Obviously, the relieving principal is then a significant person in the school life of a child. Louth ICPA Branch feels that when the relieving principal is in the situation of 'filling in' for longer than two terms, for their sake and the school families involved, the position of relieving principal should be opened for applications of expressions of interest and the formal interview process should be conducted. Anything less is creating an environment for confusion and awkwardness.

Comment.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. I think that we would agree that that would be ideal. Unfortunately, when the expression of interest was actually published there were no applicants and so the person who was placed in that position was a tap on the

shoulder on this occasion and that sometimes happens, unfortunately, more and more often these days in isolated schools. It is a pity and it is unfortunate and certainly not desired but in the ideal world, if there were many or several applications that were submitted, then that would also include a parent or the parent body in the decision which is ultimately made. So, I'm sorry.

A27. Louth

"That ICPA-NSW urges the Director Western Plains to ensure that there is always a 'hand over' between principals in TP1 schools particularly in the program."

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch. Carried.

Explanation:

It has been the practice in small western schools, for the succeeding principals not to have 'crossed over'. The common arrangement is for the leaving principal to tidy and pack up the school, collect their own resources, hand back the keys and drive away just before Christmas.

In our experience of assisting new teaching principals as they begin their appointment, the major 'shock' is the huge workload required to program appropriately for a multistage classroom, let alone rigorously implementing same and following up with constant assessing. While obviously this is the most important task, often times it is the one which the teacher is not able to do expediently as they are having to mentally grapple with and make decisions about other issues which also require immediate attention. This has resulted in poor coordination of programs, resources and staff rosters; generally a longer period of time for the community and principal to feel comfortable as co-workers in an isolated setting, which has led to any dispute/misunderstanding/ being presented as a complaint; a 'program vacuum' being created (as in no set outcomes' adjusted program being followed daily); awkward staffing arrangements; new resources being unnecessarily purchased and a myriad of other negatives most of which could be prevented by the outgoing principal inducting the incoming principal.

Comment.

Kathleen Harris, Balranald Branch. We would like to wholeheartedly support this motion because we have found the same case at Clare Public School and we find it as a frustrating concern in TP1 Schools because it is disruptive not only to staffing but also to the children already at the school. We feel that there needs to be more communication between the leaving principal and the new principal.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. In the ideal world I 100% agree. All of those things are perfectly stated and I accept them. I think we all would. Unfortunately, sometimes people leave and other people come and there isn't a moment between. I do know that Charles Dwyer, Director of that space did meet with the principal and the new principal during the school holidays however, obviously, there were still issues.

A28. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Department of Education (DoE) to provide single person accommodation at Louth Public School, as they have done in other small remote schools.”

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch.
Carried

Explanation:

There is no affordable accommodation in Louth. So, when a casual teacher or visiting consultant needs to stay overnight it is not feasible for them to do so. There is no additional funding which allows for this extra expense. This is yet another disincentive for principals as they cannot leave their position for any amount of time, as the school would not be attended by a teacher.

Comment.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. I just ask that the motion might be redirected to Teacher Housing Authority rather than the Department of Education because the Department of Education doesn't actually manage any accommodation any longer and Teacher Housing Authority has been separated from the Department so we agree with you 100% but we have no capacity to make any changed and the same applies to the next motion as well.

A29. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to ensure that teacher housing is maintained to a high standard in very remote schools such as Louth”.

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch.
Carried

Explanation:

Because of isolation and distances from amenities and trades persons it is imperative that teacher housing be maintained at such a level that it is comfortable and safe so as the Principal and their family can make it a home throughout their time at the school. For example, the Louth School house has been there 30 years without any real upgrades to essential amenities such as kitchen and bathroom. As an incentive for Principals to want to come out to these very remote schools the house needs to be of high standard as they will be making it their home for the next two years or so.

Comment.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. My previous comment also addresses this.

A30. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to include an appropriate vehicle in the incentive package for the Louth and Wanaaring Principals.”

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch.
Carried

Explanation:

An assistant principal in TP4 schools are on a similar remuneration package to the TP1 principals at Louth and Wanaaring schools. With vast distances, unsealed roads and the costs involved in running a vehicle in these conditions it can be very expensive for an incoming principal to be able to meet these costs without having the knowledge or experience of these conditions prior to their appointment. With prior knowledge of the added vehicle expense it would be a deterrent for some applicants, once again leaving these very remote schools at a disadvantage. In these small isolated communities, there are no essential services such as doctors, dentists, supermarkets and day to day needs. Once again, more expenses will be incurred.

Comment.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. What a wonderful idea. Can I suggest that this motion goes to HR, the Human Resources Directorate, because they are looking at reviewing options and ways to incentivise the staffing of these challenging schools.

A31. Louth

“That ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education to ensure that procedures are followed before sending a complaint to Employee Performance and Conduct Directorate (EPAC)”.

Moved by Claire Sanford, Louth Branch. Seconded by Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch.
Carried

Explanation:

We understand that once a complaint has gone to EPAC the Department are unable to do anything about it. We believe before a complaint goes to EPAC that the person in which the complaint has been made against has the opportunity to defend their actions and any other persons who can give information are asked before the person responsible sends it to EPAC. This would alleviate the stress that occurs when waiting for very long periods until the complaint process is dealt with by EPAC. Only when all the information has been gathered and the person responsible is not satisfied should it then be sent to EPAC.

Comment.

Mathew Brown, Department of Education. Can I just let you know, in terms of the explanation, EPAC is actually part of the Department of Education. It is one of the

Directorates. It is not separate. However, what happens when somebody makes a complaint about an issue, generally about a person. Say, for example, about a teacher. If the issue is one which EPAC determines that they need to investigate then that is the end of the matter. There can be no further discussion and no department officer is able to intervene in that process. So, you couldn't have that conversation with that person beforehand or to try and resolve it some other way. EPAC makes a determination in the first instance whether or not it reaches the threshold for investigation and if it does then, basically, it ends as far as any local type of response can be made. I don't know the circumstances of this one, obviously, however, if this is going on for some time all I can suggest is that it is obviously, clearly a complex matter and, unfortunately the process follows. It wouldn't matter whether it was, sadly, Louth, or a school in the leafy northern suburbs of Sydney. It is the same process and people are still unhappy.

A32. Tibooburra - Milparinka

"Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch would like to thank the Department of Education for the opportunity for Tibooburra Outback Public School to participate in the Rural Experience Teacher Program in 2018 and 2019. We hope this program continues for many years to come."

Moved by Bernadette Maxwell, Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch. Seconded by Brit Anderson, Broken Hill Branch on behalf of Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch.
Carried.

Explanation:

The Rural Experience Teacher Program has had a beneficial effect for the Tibooburra Outback Public School. Being in such a remote location and small number of student enrolments, this program has meant the students have attended school with better student teacher ratios providing a greater opportunity for learning for each student. The teachers who apply are experienced and bring with them knowledge in different teaching and learning programs they have been exposed too, helping local teachers with new knowledge to better student outcomes. The other major benefit of this program, especially for our small remote school at Tibooburra is that this extra teacher is in addition to the normal school budget. The Tibooburra Outback Public School is looking forward to its four-term placement of a teacher from the Rural Experience Program for 2019. We hope to have more positive feedback and that this program continues well into the future.

A33. Rankins Springs

"That ICPA-NSW urges the Minister for Education to ensure that rural and remote schools have access to face to face counselling sessions for students."

Moved by Debra Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Sally Argent-Smith, Rankins Springs Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Our local TP1 schools, Naradhan, Rankins Springs and Weethalle Public Schools have not had access to a regular school counselling service for over 12 months. All three schools recently participated in a trial with Royal Far West (RFW), where they had access to a psychologist who provided a mix of tele-psychology and a fly-in, fly-out service. At the end of the trial, the principals saw the model as a viable last resort, however many students missed out on the one-on-one support due to limitations of the tele-psychology program. Additionally, during the fly-in service, Naradhan students had to be transported to the nearest school, Rankins Springs, at the school's cost for cognitive assessments due to insufficient internet connection at Naradhan Public School. Teaching staff are also feeling the absence of a regular school counsellor who had previously provided support with classroom management strategies and learning adjustments to ensure every student was supported. Our students are being disadvantaged without real access to face-to-face counselling sessions to support their academic, social and emotional welfare and it is especially vital given the long-term effects of the current drought on their mental health.

Comment.

Gus White, Wentworth Branch. I really support this motion. I just find it extremely important because there is a fair overflow of the tension in households running farms through a really tough drought period and it is overflowing onto the students. We are witnessing a number of that at Yanco and most schools I'm talking to are saying that they are seeing an increase in issues of kids presenting with mental health issues. So certainly, that support I reckon, is really, really important.

A34. NSW State Council

"ICPA-NSW would like to thank Minister Stokes and the Department of Education for ensuring that teacher numbers have been maintained in drought affected areas regardless of enrolments."

Moved by Annabel Strachan, State Council. Seconded by David Butler, State Council.
Carried by acclamation.

Tertiary

A35. Moree

"That ICPA-NSW lobbies the relevant ministers to ensure that universities providing teacher training include a standalone mandatory unit on Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in their curriculum."

Moved by Bronwyn Smith, Moree Branch. Seconded by Sarnia Walker, Moree Branch.
Carried.

Explanation:

Just for those people who are unaware. The Autistic Spectrum Disorders is an umbrella covering all conditions from opposition defiance disorder, ADHD, ASD, Asperger's. All of those so when we say Autistic Spectrum Disorders that's the umbrella we are talking about.

With the alarming rate of increase in the diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder's (ASD) the chance of a newly graduated teacher having a student with ASD in their class is significant, therefore knowing how to manage this condition with an appropriate level of skills and knowledge in behaviour management strategies for ASD would provide beneficial outcomes for all students in the class. This early training could also lead to a reduction in the high level of early 'burnout' with between 40% - 50% of teachers leaving in their first five years of teaching, because they feel that they don't have the skills to deal with the challenges of having children on the Autism Spectrum in their class. Educating teachers at the undergraduate level would be more cost effective than having to provide post graduate training during the first few years of teaching. This could also reduce the amount of time teachers need to take out of the classroom for Professional Development (PD). In some rural areas, teachers are simply unable to take time out for such training because there is a lack of relief teachers available to allow for this, or they are required to travel considerable distance to attend training workshops which is often not an option for them. Very little learning happens when children are not engaged. Teachers need the training to recognise when a student's coping skills are not working. They need to recognise the signs and be able to avoid the melt-down before it happens. They need to be proactive so that they won't have to be reactive. Dealing in a reactive way when a student has lost the ability to cope creates a stressful situation for everyone. But with adequate training a teacher learns to create the environment that will reduce the likelihood of a melt-down. A teacher can learn these things the hard way over many years, but by then, coupled with the complex curriculum and extra curricula activities expected of them, they're looking for the door. The cost of the four-year degree is wasted, not to mention the toll on the teacher's health. But the biggest cost is in the damage that is done to the students, not only those with an ASD, but also to every child whose education was impeded by a teacher, through no fault of their own, didn't have the necessary skills and support to teach the wide variety of students who are now in every classroom.

Comment.

Ellie Laird, Hillston Branch. I fully support this motion and well done to Moree for bringing it forward today for us. I am a mother of a child on the Spectrum and also a teacher so I am seeing the effects on the children and on the teachers and I know the universities are doing it and NESAs are doing it but I think there should be more done.

Kate Thompson, Federal Council. Just a bit of an update. This motion came to Federal Conference in 2016. Federal Council went to the Federal Department of Education and Training Minister and also the Australian College Deans of Education and, while we haven't had specific comment that they are going to take it, the Australian College Deans of Education did say they will take it to their meeting and, hopefully, down the track it will be instigated into the courses. This motion could also come to Federal Conference just as another backup.

A36. Monaro

“That ICPA-NSW requests a progress report from the relevant ministers and agencies on the implementation of each of the government supported recommendations of the 2013 NSW Review into Agricultural Education and Training.

Moved by Shennah Joiner, Monaro Branch. Seconded by Tim Fletcher, State Council on behalf of Monaro Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

In December 2013, Professor Jim Pratley of Charles Sturt University provided a report on a review he had conducted into agricultural education and training in NSW, jointly commissioned by the NSW Minister for Education and the NSW Minister for Primary Industries. ICPA-NSW played a significant role in the review, preparing a submission and attending several roundtable discussions with Professor Pratley with the aim of increasing access to agricultural education and training for our children. The final report contained 27 recommendations to the government. The government responded to the review by supporting 26 of those 27 recommendations. The Monaro Branch suggests that at this time, ICPA-NSW should seek a progress report by the NSW Government on work conducted towards each of the supported recommendations. Inquiries and reports such as this one cost considerable money to the taxpayer, and it is legitimate that interested bodies such as ICPA-NSW hold governments to account for implementation of responses to such reports. One recommendation of the report supported in principle by the government was that the NSW Department of Primary Industries re-establishes the Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture. As far as Monaro Branch is aware, and despite the passing of five years since the report, Murrumbidgee College has neither been re-established, nor has agricultural training been revitalised at that facility. Another government supported recommendation was for the NSW Department of Education to explore options for the designation of an agricultural high school near Dubbo, but Monaro Branch is unaware as to whether the Department has explored such options and if so, the results of that exploration. A further government supported recommendation was where opportunities exist, schools move over time to offer Certificate III in Primary Industries for students seeking employment in agriculture. Such school movement towards offering Certificate III's in Primary Industries does not seem to be occurring within the Monaro Branch footprint, and we wonder if it is happening elsewhere. A progress report from the government on its work towards achieving the supported recommendations will provide knowledge to assist ICPA-NSW to focus its work with the state government to maximise agricultural education and training opportunities for our children.

A37. Monaro

“That ICPA-NSW thanks the NSW Minister for Skills and Minister for Regional NSW for the provision of funding to expand the Country Universities Centre (CUC) to new regional locations in NSW, and requests the Minister supports the establishment of further new Country Universities Centres (CUC).”

Moved by Shennah Joiner, Monaro Branch. Seconded by Tim Fletcher, State Council on behalf of Monaro Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

The NSW Government has provided \$8 million to the CUC to establish centres in locations including Cooma, Broken Hill, Narrabri, Moree, Griffith and Leeton, to support university students who wish to have opportunities for university study while remaining in their local communities. The Australian Government has co-contributed to this NSW Government investment to the CUC with a further \$5.1 million to enhance this expansion. Monaro Branch wishes to thank Deputy Premier The Hon. John Barilaro, the Minister for Regional NSW and Minister for Skills, for supporting the CUC model for regional students. Numbers studying through the model are well beyond targets, and the model has been shown to be generating academic successes beyond even campus face to face study. The CUC model is not in any way intended to replace financial supports for students to relocate to a university campus. Rather, it is complementary to these opportunities, and some students of the CUC relocate to university campuses after a year or two of gaining confidence or financial ability while studying in their local community. Alternatively, other students have changed from campus study to the CUC model once they have experienced campus university life, but wish to return to their own communities. While thanking the Minister for his support to date, we encourage the Minister to further support the CUC to expand to further regional communities so that our students can have the option of accessing higher education while remaining in their community and having the benefits of the academic and administrative support, technology, connectivity, and community of learning that a CUC provides.

A38. Moree

“That ICPA-NSW supports ICPA-QLD in their efforts to attempt to stop the impending closure of Queensland Agricultural Training College (QATC) campuses in Longreach and Emerald.”

Moved by Bronwyn Smith, Moree Branch. Seconded by Sarnia Walker, Moree Branch. Carried.

Explanation:

Ensuring ready access to quality education and skills development provides important career paths for young people at a time when efforts are being made to encourage them to remain in regional areas, decreasing population drift and ensuring sustainability”

(Media release, ICPA QLD.) “Farmers’ Feed the World,” and with the ever-increasing population and ever shrinking viable farming land area it is vital that young farmers are trained with the right skills to manage the land and sustain the environment at a time when land and water management are crucial to our future food security. Many young people who are passionate about agriculture struggle to focus and learn in a conventional school environment and schools often don’t have the facilities or the opportunities to offer these students the ability to follow their passion, learn and become productive, contributing members of society which makes Agricultural Colleges in regional areas a vital part of these students’ educational opportunities.

Once these colleges are closed the valuable land associated with them will be sold and the ability to purchase the same area of land in a populated area, close to facilities, required for afford to lose this valuable land and training facilities because they cannot be replaced.

Comment.

Gaby LeLievre, Louth Branch. We support this motion. If these agricultural colleges are not supported the options to the practical bush child will further be restricted. Not all children are university bound. We fully support the ones who do however we recognise that we equally have to fight for the options for the ones who don’t wish to go to university.

Richard Stokes, Australian Boarding Schools Association. These two colleges are members of ours and we have done quite a bit of work to help them with their opportunities. They were as shocked as everyone else and we actually met with the State Council of ICPA Qld last week and they are really working on the same concept that Western Australia did when they were trying to close one of their colleges as well and I can’t, more strongly, encourage you to help Queensland because the more voices we get the more chance we have got.

Travel

A39. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister for Transport to provide the School Drive Subsidy (SDS) for remote pre-schoolers.”

Moved by Amy Pollard, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Gus White, Wentworth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Face to face preschool in remote areas has always been a challenge to achieve. It comes at a great cost and requires a significant time investment from parents. With the worsening drought, many families are finding themselves time and money poor and preschool is presenting a particular challenge to these families when no travel assistance is provided. One of our families will travel over 20,000 km just to attend preschool this year. Other families are choosing not to attend face to face sessions as the cost is too

great to attend. Early childhood education is vital for the development of our children prior to commencing schooling. Travel assistance is a small investment in starting children out on the best pathway for learning.

A40. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request Transport for NSW (TfNSW) to provide statements when payments are made for the School Drive Subsidy (SDS).”

Moved by Gus White, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Amy Pollard, Wentworth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

It is extremely difficult for non-regular school travellers to ascertain what a payment consists of when it is made. A simple statement issued to the family with the number of journeys, the date of the journeys and the location would allow families to work out if payments have been processed correctly. Currently families receive a bulk payment in their account with absolutely no notification of when it has occurred and what it is for.

Comment.

Loris Ally, Hillston Branch. We support this motion from Wentworth Branch. We have seen inconsistencies with payments so having a travel statement would ensure we are receiving the correct payment.

A41. Rankins Springs

“That ICPA-NSW requests the Minister for Transport and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) as a matter of urgency to lower the number of students required to start a non-commercial bus run.”

Moved by Debra Castle, Rankins Springs Branch. Seconded by Sally Argent-Smith, Rankins Springs Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

Although a bus run may be maintained with eight students, 15 students are required to start a new bus run. This requirement means that an operator needs to purchase a Category 2, which is a 14 - 24 Authorised Adult Seating Capacity (AASC – excluding the driver), bus to service the run. This would mean, for example, a Toyota Coaster or similar bus. If the required number to commence the run was brought back to eight then a Category 1, which is an 8 - 13AASC bus, is all that would be required - a Toyota commuter bus or similar. We understand that the larger bus allows for a significant growth of student numbers but would argue that the lower number of eight is hard

enough to attain in most rural and remote communities so that much room for growth is not necessary. Consideration of applications for commencement numbers lower than the requisite 15 on a case by case basis would be welcome and appreciated. All communities are different, and consideration of this should be taken into account. Perhaps it is time that TfNSW again looked at community owned bus runs where feasible, which would be less expensive to support.

Comment.

Helen Ponder, State Council. Just to reiterate to Transport NSW, this motion has been coming to Conference and coming to your desk time and time again, year after year, and we really strongly urge you to relook at this and consider what the numbers are out in the rural and remote areas and try and work a way to make this happen.

A42. Nyngan

“That ICPA-NSW lobbies the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight to supply adequate funding and strongly encourage all local councils to prioritise and maintain unsealed roads that are required by families for travel to access school bus routes as a priority.”

Moved by Davis Butler, State Council on behalf of Nyngan Branch. Seconded by Michelle Butler, Nyngan Branch.
Carried.

Explanation:

We thank Councils in Western NSW for maintaining unsealed roads required for bus runs. However, without giving priority to roads that families travel on to access the school bus run, accessing education becomes difficult, expensive and inequitable.

Supplementary Motion

S1. Walgett

“ICPA-NSW requests the NSW Department of Education implement a program to specifically address learning difficulties within NSW Government Boarding Schools, similar to or the same as the Arrowsmith Program which has been successfully implemented by the Blackheath and Thornburgh College in Charters Towers.”

Liz Powell, Walgett Branch. I would like Conference’s permission to withdraw this motion.

Permission granted. Motion withdrawn.

Carried.

Miscellaneous

A43. Wentworth

“That ICPA-NSW request the Minister to look at alternate ways that the Active Kids and Creative Kids Vouchers may be provided and administered to remote children and children located close to state borders.”

Moved by Clancy Griffiths, Wentworth Branch. Seconded by Stacy Burnes, Wentworth Branch.

Carried.

Explanation:

The Wentworth Branch would like to thank the Minister for this initiative and the ease of the application process. Families from the Wentworth Branch have however found the vouchers difficult to use, with the majority of sport conducted across the border in Mildura. For those sporting clubs based on the NSW side of the border, the registration process also posed difficulties with Victorian insurance required to participate in the relevant league. Some of our more remote families also find it impossible to attend weekly sport sessions. It is essential that these activities are available to our remote children who do not have access to standard sport through school. Whilst we appreciate the additional work involved, a reimbursement of costs or travel would be appreciated in these limited circumstances.

Comment.

Bernadette Maxwell, Tibooburra-Milparinka Branch. I fully support this motion. The nine children who are enrolled at Tibooburra Outback Public School this year will have a total of \$1,800 sitting there that they can't use because they don't have access to any weekly sporting or creative kid's sessions so we completely support this motion.

A44. Moree

“That the Moree Branch host the 2020 State Conference in Moree on the 18th and 19th March.”

Moved by Bronwyn Smith, Moree Branch. Seconded by Sarnia Walker, Moree Branch. Carried by acclamation.

Explanation:

ICPA-NSW Moree Branch would like to host the 2020 State Conference to welcome members to our region and show all that it has to offer. We have a little slide show presentation shortly. We are also working with Mungindi and Boomi Branches as they are small Branches and we will be doing it together.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of the
ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF
NEW SOUTH WALES INCORPORATED
8.15am on Thursday 7th March 2019
Buronga

Bruce Paynter, ICPA-NSW President.

Before we start, I would like to draw your attention to a mistake in the typing of the agenda and do apologise for that. You will all remember from last year that Jim Swales stepped down as a trustee and that Lindy Kitto stepped up into that role last year and has been doing so this year. So that is a typo mistake there and you will see that on page two under "Trustees". If you would like to make note that Lindy has been doing that job for the last twelve months and wishes to continue. I'll now hand over to Helen and thank you very much for your attendance.

Helen Ponder, Secretary.

Good morning everyone and welcome to the AGM of the Isolated Children's and Parents' Association, March 2019.

Motion 00.03.19 *"That the Apologies as received and as posted on the noticeboard be accepted."*

Moved by Helen Ponder, Secretary. Seconded by Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President, NSW.

Adoption of the Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting:

Motion 01.03.19 "That the minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting as circulated electronically be accepted as a true and accurate record."

Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President, NSW. I would like to make an amendment to that motion. The amendment is to change 2019 to 2018.

Motion 01.03.19 *"That the minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting as circulated electronically be accepted as a true and accurate record."*

Moved by Helen Ponder, Secretary. Seconded by Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President, NSW.

Business arising from the Minutes: Nil

Correspondence: Nil

General Business

Revised Constitution.

Helen Ponder, Secretary. The revised constitution including the original Constitution, the one with the proposed edit and then the revised Constitution including edits has been circulated more than once throughout our branches and members and I'd like now to move the following motion.

Motion 06.03.17 *“That the Constitution for the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of New South Wales, Incorporated be adopted, as circulated to members in the required time frame.”*

Racheal Brindley, Treasurer. I would like to make an amendment and the amendment is that Motion 06.03.17 be changed to Motion 06.03.19.

The motion now reads:

Motion 06.03.19 *“That the Constitution for the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of New South Wales, Incorporated be adopted, as circulated to members in the required time frame.”*

Moved by Helen Ponder, Secretary. Seconded: Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President.

Helen Ponder, Secretary. I would like to recall Racheal Brindley, our Treasurer, as it was brought to the meeting’s attention that the withdrawn motion needs to stand until the next State Council comes in.

Motion 04.03.19 *“That Kellie Nulty (CA, RCA) be retained as auditor for ICPA-NSW Inc. for the 2019 financial year.”*

Moved by Rachel Brindley, Treasurer. Seconded by Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President.

Secretary’s Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, fellow members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen it is with great pleasure and apprehension that I present my Secretary’s Report.

It is with some sadness that I present my last secretary report to Conference. I have been a member of ICPA-NSW State Council for four years and have thoroughly enjoyed the journey. What a tremendous amount I have learnt. I was told many years ago that it is important to learn something new every day and I can attest to doing this during my time on State Council.

State Council have had another busy year advocating for equity of access to education on behalf of rural, remote and very remote families. The State Council executive attended mini deputation to Sydney in July. Meetings were held with Telstra, Transport for NSW, The Early Childhood Directorate and the NSW Standards Education Authority (NESA). It is appreciated that these organisations make the time to meet with ICPA to listen to concerns and State Council look forward to further associations with them in the future.

Main deputation was held in October with a busy schedule planned over the five days. State Councillors split into groups and attended to 32 meetings taking several relevant discussion

points to each meeting. This is a very useful way of getting issues most affecting our members heard at both a parliamentary level and to key educational stakeholders.

Some of the main issues ICPA-NSW took to Sydney were focused around Early Childhood, Tertiary Education, Travel, Communications, poor internet coverage and educational standards. State Council had the opportunity to enforce the effects of the drought and the impact it is having on families and mental health. Many issues raised in Sydney were brought to the ICPA State Conference held in Mudgee by delegates and members. It is important that issues be brought to State Council so that they can then be researched and followed up on. In saying that, issues do not have to be carried at a Conference to be raised at State Council. ICPA-NSW Councillors are available all year round to listen and advocate on behalf of its members.

Congratulations to the Wentworth team who have organised and presented a very professional conference this year. The convening committee have worked tirelessly to make this conference available to members at minimum costs due to the hardships being suffered because of the ongoing drought. We are all working overtime due to this and I would like to extend a warm welcome to those who have made the time to join us here this week and hope we all get some beneficial rain very soon.

A valuable lesson learnt during my time is to step outside the comfort zone and have a go – someone always has your back on ICPA-NSW State Council and what a fantastic group of new friends I have made. Thank you all very much for your support and I wish you all the best for the future.

Helen Ponder
ICPA-NSW Secretary

Motion 02.03.19 *“That the Secretary’s Report be accepted.”*

Moved by Helen Ponder, Secretary. Seconded: Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President, NSW.

Treasurer’s Report

Mr. President, distinguished guests, and fellow members of ICPA – it is with pleasure that I present the treasurer’s report for the 2018 financial year. These audited financial statements, with accompanying auditor’s report, have been prepared by Kellie Nulty, Accountant in Mildura.

Statement of Income and Expenditure:

There are a few points of interest in this years’ figures compared to last years’;

- **Memberships:** The amount of \$17,108 is the total of all 2018 memberships, whether they were collected in the 2017 financial year or in the 2018 financial year.
- **Donations:** Included in this amount are part of a post conference amount from Louth Branch, partnership agreement from Telstra which increased in 2017 and the Boarding Schools Expo donation.

- **Government Grants:** The Educational Support Grant for the 2018/19 financial year was received in the final week of 2018 which is perfect timing for our financial reporting. I am really pleased to be able to tell members this morning that ICPA-NSW received a letter last week from the Minister for Education, Rob Stokes, indicating that after a review of our Educational Support Grant we have been given a 7.5% increase for the 2019/2020 financial year. The Minister has written that “this increase is made in recognition of the valued service your organization provides in support of education in NSW.” ICPA-NSW would like to thank the Minister for this unexpected and welcome increase.
- **Funds Held in Trust:** There are branch funds being held in trust by ICPA-NSW at the moment, they are for Cobar \$2908.39 and Warrumbungle \$4,985.04.
Expenditure: Overall expenses for the 2018 year were \$87,985 similar to the previous year. Within that spending were increases in Top Wire Costs, both for the printing and postage. State Councils meeting costs were also higher, due in part to having a full council for the year, as well as Deputation falling during the Invictus Games which pushed the cost for accommodation that week higher. These increases were offset by the reduced cost for Mudgee State Conference and lower travel costs to Federal Conference in Canberra.

The final result for the 2018 financial year is a loss of \$3,931. I would like to say here that as I mentioned at the Mudgee Conference, we had one invoice that didn't come through from 2017 until January 2018 for the cost of accommodation for 2017 Deputation. The cost was for \$5,203.50, and once adjusted, it sees us make a small profit in 2017 and a small profit in 2018.

Assets and Liabilities Statement:

The overall equity position of ICPA-NSW for 2018 is as follows;

- **Assets:** The Unexpended Donation Account has not been utilised this year so the balance remains the same.
- **Plant & Equipment:** Louth Branch used some of their 2017 State Conference proceeds to purchase laptops, laptop cases and hard drives for seven ICPA-NSW State Council positions, this was a very generous donation and has been gratefully received.

Merchandise:

ICPA-NSW merchandise has made a profit of \$2,004 for the 2018 year, thanks to the efforts of Merchandise Convener, David Shrimpton. I would like to thank David very much for travelling to both State and Federal Conferences last year, and for his management of the merchandise stand. Merchandise is intended as a promotional tool for ICPA-NSW and is not therefore expected to make substantial profits.

Lone Members:

I would like to thank Irene Lund for the enormous amount of work she does in this role. Lone Members ended the 2018 year with 130 members.

Sponsorship:

ICPA-NSW is very appreciative of the continued support of Telstra, and would like to acknowledge Tricia Wilson, General Manager Central Region – Sydney/Hunter Central Coast for providing funding assistance for ICPA-NSW State Council through a community

partnership agreement. Unfortunately, Tricia is no longer in the role and we instead look forward to working with the new team headed by Chris Taylor and represented here by Ann Jakel. ICPA-NSW would also like to thank Meg Bennett from the Boarding Schools Expo for the generous donation towards the 2018 Conference, their support is gratefully received and very much appreciated. As mentioned earlier DestinationNSW generously sponsored State Conference 2018 to the amount of \$20,000, they have followed up by supporting this years' fantastic conference, sponsorship helps make our conferences affordable for all members.

Aussie Helper's Volunteers for Isolated Students' Education (AHVISE):

Each year until 2017, part of the Educational Support Grant was donated to AHVISE to help cover their insurance costs. This amount was \$1080 and was paid after the grant is paid to ICPA-NSW, due to the upheavals within the original VISE, this sponsorship has fallen by the wayside so ICPA-NSW will follow up and talk to Lyn French to find out what they now need and how we can help.

Membership:

At the end of the 2018 membership year, ICPA-NSW had 25 financial branches (not including Lone Members), and seven branches in recess.

Membership numbers for 2018 are slightly lower than 2017 at 862. The online membership platform has been successful in allowing members to join quickly and easily online but has had some teething problems from the Branch Treasurers point of view. Most of these problems have been resolved and the process is becoming easier.

Finally, I would like to thank all Branch Treasurers for their efforts over the past twelve months you keep it all ticking along. I would particularly like to thank everyone who helped me, I had absolutely no idea what I was doing when I took the role on, I had never been in an executive role on a committee before, but I thought it would be a great learning opportunity and the only way I was going to be able to justify getting out of my house without my children. It was a steep learning curve but I had the absolute support of Ellen Walker the previous treasurer, as well as State Council, so help was always there when I needed it, thank you Ellen and all of State Council.

I feel that I have really made this role my own and have loved the experience, the friendships and most of all, the feeling of achievement when sitting face to face with someone who can affect the change you want to happen and as you talk, understanding dawns on their face and you see a glimmer of hope.

Finally, I would like to thank Shennah Joiner, Monaro Branch for agreeing, to take over from me in this role, I will support you in every way I can and feel confident you will make the role your own.

I hereby request that this report and the audited financial statements be accepted. I also recommend that the state component of a Branch Family membership remain at \$18.00 for the 2020 membership year.

Rachel Brindley.

Honorary Treasurer.

Motion 03.03.19 *"That the 2018 audited financial statement of ICPA-NSW Inc. and the accompanying Treasurer's Report be accepted."*

Moved by Rachel Brindley, Treasurer. Seconded by Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President.

Motion 04.03.19 *“That Kellie Nulty (CA, RCA) be retained as auditor for ICPA-NSW Inc. for the 2019 financial year.”*

Rachel Brindley, Treasurer. I request that Motion 04.03.19 be removed.

Motion 05.03.19 *“That family membership of ICPA-NSW remain at \$18.00 for the 2020 membership year.”*

Moved by Rachel Brindley, Treasurer. Seconded by Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President.

General Business

Revised Constitution.

Helen Ponder, Secretary. The revised constitution including the original Constitution, the one with the proposed edit and then the revised Constitution including edits has been circulated more than once throughout our branches and members and I'd like now to move the following motion.

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Motion 04.03.19 *“That Kellie Nulty (CA, RCA) be retained as auditor for ICPA-NSW Inc. for the 2019 financial year.”*

Moved by Rachel Brindley, Treasurer. Seconded by Kate Treweeke, Immediate Past President.

Lone Members Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Lone Members Report.

NSW/Vic Lone Members is the one of the biggest group of members within ICPA-NSW. Lone Members are usually members who live too far from a branch to attend meetings and may be involved in educating isolated children or interested in supporting those who do. A number of Boarding Schools in NSW and Victoria also hold membership as many of their boarders come from regional and remote areas and the schools wish to support the aims of ICPA.

Highlights for 2018 for NSW/Vic Lone Members include:

- hosting the ICPA-NSW State Conference in Mudgee
- a total of 76 family members and 54 school/organisation members by the end of 2018
- regular newsletters to members keeping them informed and involved.

One of the best things about being the Lone Members Officer is to be able to get to know so many people across NSW and Victoria through emails, phone calls and face to face interaction at conferences or Boarding School Expos and anywhere elsewhere in between. It is always a pleasure to meet or receive an email or phone call from a Lone Member. It is also a great privilege to be on State Council and count everyone as special friends. Thank you to all the Council members who have given me so much advice, help and encouragement during the year. I look forward to another productive year.

Irene Lund
Lone Members Officer

Merchandise Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Merchandise Report.

As always, the Merchandise stand attended the ICPA-NSW State Conference in Mudgee and the ICPA (Aust.) Federal Conference in Canberra during 2018. Both conferences saw a steady trade of merchandise as I hope we see here in Buronga. As well as attending conferences, sales were also made by mail after customers had either seen the merchandise at conferences or checked out the stock on the ICPA webpage.

I plan to attend the Federal Conference in Adelaide with the merchandise, but in the mean-time items can be purchased at any time as they make great birthday and Christmas gifts. My details are on the website.

Prices for merchandise have not increased for some time, and presently there is no plan to do so. Current prices reflect excellent value, and we endeavour to keep merchandise as fashionable as possible.

MERCHANDISE STOCK AUDIT

Description	In Stock
Rugby Tops	17
Polo Shirts - Men	4
Polo Shirts – Women	5
Beanies	4
Stubbie Holders	38
Pens	58
Keyrings	51
Men’s Ties	15
Peak Caps	76
Scarves	29
RB Sellars Shirts - Men	10
RB Sellars Shirts - Women	38

Many thanks for the opportunity of serving ICPA-NSW as Merchandise Manager.

David Shrimpton
Merchandise Manager

Publicity Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Publicity Report.

Conference

Never aLONE – Accessing Education Together was the theme for this years Isolated Children’s Parents Association of NSW (ICPA-NSW) 46th Annual State Conference held at the Parklands Resort in Mudgee on the 14 and 15 March 2018.

The conference was convened by the Lone Members Conference Committee. Huge congratulations to the ICPA-NSW State Conference Convenors, Lindy Kitto and Caroline McDonald together with the amazing team of, Vanessa Reschke, Sue and Richard Gordon, Myfi and Jason Kellahan, Lindy Whale, Jesse Donoghoe, Bruce and Marianne Paynter, Dennis Kitto, Andrew and Irene Lund behind them for organising such a wonderful conference. Living in areas all over the state meant face to face meetings were impossible. All the planning was done via teleconference meetings thanks to Telstra. Well done Lindy and Caroline and your fantastic team!!! You honestly did an amazing job!

Leading up to the 2018 ICPA-NSW State Conference, all relevant media were contacted and as a result the conference was well publicised. WIN News interviewed ICPA delegates about the many issues they are confronted with in accessing education in rural areas. The conference was officially opened by His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret’d), Governor of New South Wales and Mrs Linda Hurley. This was a huge honour for everyone attending. Their presence created a lot of outside media interest.

ABC Western Plains Rural reporter, Sally Bryant, attended the two-day conference broadcasting on live radio interviews which gave listeners a great insight into the concerns

associated with rural education. The conference gave rural and isolated parents a platform to discuss motions affecting equity of access to their children's education. All motions were posted on our ICPA-NSW Facebook page as they were presented. Following the conference, a media report was sent out to all media contacts. NSW Country Hour later aired Sally Bryant's interview with new ICPA-NSW President Bruce Paynter.

Facebook

Facebook continues to be one of the main avenues State Council and Branches use to keep their members informed of issues as they arise, sharing posts from both like-minded groups including ICPA (Aust.) and other State pages. All motions from both the State and Federal conferences were posted on the ICPA-NSW Facebook page as they were presented. This enabled members who did not attend either conference the opportunity to be kept updated as motions were carried or lost.

Top Wire

Top Wire keeps all NSW members in the loop. Editor, Kerrie Johnston, brings everything together into a fantastic publication where relevant issues, personal stories, reports, photos and current information is shared with members. Pedals, ICPA (Aust.) magazine provides information accumulated from each state. Thankyou Raelene Hall, Editor, for a great insight into what is happening on a federal level.

With the very generous donation from the Louth ICPA Branch, a new Canon SLR camera was purchased for the publicity role. This will be a huge asset moving forward and will assist greatly in capturing events for many years ahead.

With the new camera in tow, I attended the ICPA Federal Conference in Canberra in August. It was great to work with Jesse Donoghoe and some great photos were taken over the two-day conference.

ICPA-NSW held a very successful annual deputation in Sydney advocating on behalf of its members from Monday 22 to Friday 26 October. Many photos were posted during deputation.

On a personal level, I would like to thank my fellow State Councillors for their support over the past twelve months. Being part of this great team is such a rewarding experience. Despite the drought, ICPA-NSW State Council continues to be a voice on behalf of its members and every effort is made to ensure the very best possible outcomes happen for our bush kids. Hopefully 2019 will be a wet one!

Skye Bragg

ICPA-NSW Publicity Officer

Top Wire Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, fellow members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Top Wire Report.

Congratulations once again to the ICPA-NSW State Councillors for their commitment and dedication as they advocate for issues around education of rural and remote families in NSW.

A tremendous effort indeed and you can read all about their efforts in each edition of the Top Wire as they helpfully contribute their reports and other interesting articles of information.

Thank you to the branches who have contributed Waratah News articles and again I strongly encourage **every** branch to contribute at least once a year. The size of the article is irrelevant as our readers are keen to learn about the lives of rural and remote families.

Thank you, Irene Lund, our ICPA-NSW Lone Members Officer for posting me the address labels for mailing each edition and for keeping the address database of members up to date.

Many thanks once again to the Rankins Springs Branch who unreservedly come together to package and post each edition of Top Wire for your reading pleasure.

After a review by State Council, Top Wire now has a new printing company and a revamped format. I look forward to your feedback on the “new look” Top Wire.

Kerrie Johnston
Top Wire Editor

Webmaster Report

Mr President, distinguished guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Webmaster Report.

The Webmaster’s role is principally one of support to and of ICPA-NSW State Council, and endeavours to continually add value to ICPA-NSW’s online presence. The Webmaster’s aim is to create a consistent digital footprint which upholds ICPA’s main message of ‘Working together for Equity of Access to Education for all Students who live in Rural and Remote Australia’. ICPA-NSW continues to work towards effective communication with its members and as such the Webmaster is responsible for supporting State Council and communicating to members, primarily through the ICPA-NSW website.

After a security scam last year, it was suggested to Federal Council that only relevant contacts be maintained in the public view, and as such ICPA-NSW was the guinea pig to test this out. As seen on the screen, the NSW contact page was updated and only shows the President, Secretary, Publicity Officer, Top Wire Editor, Webmaster, Lone Members Officer and Merchandise Officer. The other positions are still on the website, but are “not live”. You will notice there is an information box inserted underneath the contacts to direct you to all the contacts for ICPA-NSW. This link is a locked down document for members only and members need to be logged in to download it. This has all worked well and this year we have not had any similar security scams.

I would like to thank my fellow State Councillors for their support and encouragement.

Finally, I would particularly like to thank ICPA (Aust.) Web Manager, Sue Shotton, for her training and support throughout the past year as NSW Webmaster.

Annabel Strachan
Webmaster

Election of Office Bearers

All positions were declared vacant and Susan Kingwill took the Chair for the elections, appointment of Scrutineers and Returning Officer.

Susan Kingwill, CEO Contact Inc.

Well another year has passed and here we are again together. In opening I want to acknowledge the enormous pleasure and privilege of being the Returning Officer at your AGM each year and before I declare all the positions vacant for ICPA-NSW, State Council, I truly want to acknowledge and attest to the diligence and professionalism of the State Council and all your efforts throughout the year.

I've experienced that first-hand at delegations but also in interactions throughout the year and I think that that is an enormous contribution on improving access to education for rural and remote children and we have certainly heard throughout the conference how those efforts are not only continuing but also growing where the new partnerships have formed new pathways to advance your cause. So, congratulations to you Bruce in the leadership role and Kate as Immediate Past President and all the Councillors for your efforts. I'd like to invite you to acknowledge by acclamation all of those efforts.

As your returning officer, as you would appreciate, it is a great relief to know that there are nominations for all positions and I can also verify that they are all duly moved and seconded appropriately as you would expect.

In starting I wanted to talk about the Trustees. In your processes and constitution, you have the role of three Trustees and last year Jim Swales retired as being a Trustee and Lindy Kitto took on that role. So, you have Lindy Kitto, Barbara Leulf and Ann Milliken as being your Trustees. As the process at each AGM, one of the Trustees stands officially before the membership in terms of a paper nomination, to be re-elected into that role. This year it is Ann Milliken from Hay who is renominating as a Trustee. Ann has been nominated by Kate Treweeke and seconded by Helen Ponder to continue in that role. I am sure that we all welcome Ann continuing in that role as a Trustee.

President

Claire Butler nominated by Kate Treweeke. Seconded by Helen Ponder. Accepted

Vice Presidents (two)

David Butler nominated by Helen Ponder. Seconded by Tim Fletcher. Accepted

Libby McPhee nominated by David Butler. Seconded by Sandra Hewitt. Accepted

Treasurer

Shannah Joiner nominated by Helen Ponder. Seconded by David Butler. Accepted

Secretary

Deb Castle nominated by Helen Ponder. Seconded by David Butler. Accepted

Assistant Secretary

Ally Briggs nominated by Elizabeth McPhee. Seconded by Helen Ponder. Accepted

NSW/Vic Lone Member Officer

Irene Lund nominated by Michelle Butler. Seconded by David Butler. Accepted

Publicity Officer

Gabie LeLievre nominated by Clare Sandford. Seconded by Helen ponder. Accepted

Committee

Skye Bragg nominated by David Butler. Seconded by Helen Ponder. Accepted

Tim Fletcher nominated by David Butler. Seconded by Libby McPhee. Accepted

Tanya Mitchell nominated by Annabel Strachan. Seconded by Helen Ponder. Accepted

Annabel Strachan nominated by Tanya Mitchell. Seconded by David Butler. Accepted

I would like to congratulate each and every one of you in your roles and could I ask that the ones who are present, we haven't got Claire Butler, Ally Briggs or Skye Bragg with us today, but could those people who have been presented as your new councillors simply stand up so that we can congratulate you and move you as the new council? I think that you are in very safe hands and, given that Claire cannot be with us today and is your new President, I'm handing back to Bruce to continue and reconvene the AGM and to carry on with the business of ICPA. Thank you.

Bruce Paynter, Immediate Past President. On behalf of Claire I would like to thank you very much Sue, for once again being our Returning Officer and carrying out the duties. Thank you very much. David Shrimpton will continue as Merchandise Manager and Kerrie Johnston will continue as the Top Wire Editor. I'll now hand back to Helen.

Helen Ponder. That concludes the business of the AGM and I now declare the 47th Annual General Meeting of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of NSW Inc. officially closed.

Helen Ponder**Honorary Secretary, ICPA-NSW**

All business of conference was concluded and there being no further agenda items the ICPA-NSW 2019 Annual Conference was closed at 11.45 am

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