



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia

Advocating for equitable access to education for students in rural and remote Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

5 August, 2019

48 NOT OUT FOR RURAL & REMOTE EDUCATION AT ADELAIDE OVAL

The 48th Annual Federal Isolated Children's Parents' Association Conference was held at the Adelaide Oval on 31 July and 1 August with over 190 delegates and guests from across Australia attending to discuss ninety-five motions encompassing rural and remote education issues.

A full program starting at 8.30am both days and finishing after dark on day 2, saw many of the same issues be tabled that have been brought forward year after year. With most of Australia in the grips of the worst drought in history, the prospect of educating rural and remote students who have no other choice but to access education via a distance component, has families reeling and seeking urgent assistance. North Queensland Livestock Industry Recovery Agency (NQLIRA) CEO, the Honorable Shane Stone was in attendance to hear firsthand the difficulties facing families from right across Australia who are doing their utmost to give their children the precious gift of a first class education. The Conference was also an opportunity for ICPA (Aust) to update members and reiterate the call for a permanent 'Rural Hardship Education Fund' to be established to assist families to meet education costs in times of difficulty.

Updates from each state were presented by ICPA State Presidents highlighting the inequity that is endured right across Australia. Every ICPA State Council is working hard on their state based issues and the Federal Conference is an ideal opportunity for Councils to collaborate and network to ensure each state is gaining the best possible outcomes.

A number of motions were presented calling for more assistance for families with education costs, especially boarding expenses, during the ongoing drought. The Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance was also a prominent topic, with motions requesting increases to the allowance to assist with rising education costs. Members presented a number of early childhood motions, especially focused on concerns which have arisen with the changes made to the In Home Care program last year and the impact these changes have had and will continue to have on rural and remote families who rely on the scheme for their childcare requirements. The cost of travel for boarding students was raised with members showing appreciation for the current assistance Qantas has provided with its Regional Residents Fare Scheme, but calling for this to be continued and extended to assist with ongoing costs. Once again the longstanding request for the introduction of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role the Home Tutor undertakes when educating students via distance education was raised by a number of Branches, as was the request for the AIC- DE allowance to be extended to pre-compulsory school students enrolled in distance education programs. Communications is always a hot topic and this year many motions were tabled requesting connectivity is ensured during delivery of education regardless of members locations throughout Australia.

As the outgoing Federal President chairing her last Federal Conference, Mrs Wendy Hick was extremely pleased to welcome so many delegates and guests to Adelaide. Incoming Federal President Mrs Alana Moller from Clermont, Qld now has a full Council of fifteen under her guidance and is looking forward to working with Government to continue on the great advocacy that has preceded her.

This was an aptly themed conference of "Sustain Our Future, Invest In Our Children" where we could bring the issues facing rural and remote families and their children to the forefront in the city where the decisions are made.

For further information and comments please contact:

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