



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia

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

FEDERAL COUNCIL'S BRANCH BULLETIN **Volume 17, Number 4: March 2019**

Welcome to the first Federal Branch Bulletin for 2019. It is hard to put into words the devastation that we feel for our friends suffering across Australia at the moment whether they are too wet or too dry. We pray for a break in the weather and better times ahead. It is encouraging that our Government is consulting with organisations in the hope of bringing some sort of relief to families in these disaster zones.

Please note that this edition of the Federal Branch Bulletin has a link to the 2018 Motion Update following the Federal Conference held in Canberra on 1/2 August, 2108.

Federal News



ICPA Federal President Wendy Hick along with Secretary Suzanne Wilson travelled to Melbourne on 20 February to attend Face to Face meetings with representatives from ICPA State Councils. Topics during the meetings included updates from each state on current lobbies, state conferences progress, collaboration between states, submissions completed and upcoming, as well as membership numbers and how to increase them.

These valuable women all stepped away from their families and homes to come together for the good of our organisation and on behalf of our members we thank them.

2018 Federal Conference Motion Update

After each Federal Conference, Federal Council action every motion that is passed by writing letters to the relevant Members of Parliament, following up discussions during delegations and then speaking with Departments while in Canberra.

To view all 2018 motions and outcomes in one document follow this [link](#) and the Motion Update with current results of letters received is here.

Membership News



- Wishing all our valued members a happy, safe and productive 2019.
- Thank you to all who have renewed their memberships for 2019.
- A reminder that memberships were due and payable on January 1.
- Members who have yet to renew for 2019 can either take advantage of the online option or renew through their Branch as in the past.
- Many state conferences will be held over the next few months and to be eligible to attend your state conference as a voting delegate, you must be a paid up member of ICPA at all three levels (branch, state and federal).
- Your membership is important to our organisation and when lobbying government for change, numbers count.
- Why not tag a friend, family, neighbour, work colleague to become a member?

Members, if you have not heard from your Branch Treasurer, or are unsure about your membership status please get in touch with Jane O'Brien [here](#)

2018 members who have not renewed by end of March 2019 will not be current members and therefore will not receive any further State and Federal publications.

A timely reminder to members to renew as soon as they can to continue receiving up to date Bulletins and publications.

Jane O'Brien
Federal Membership Officer

Federal Conference 2019



Plans are well underway for the 2019 ICPA Australia Federal Conference, to be held on 31 July and 1 August at the Adelaide Oval. Hosted by the ICPA South Australia State Council, the convening committee are currently working hard to deliver two wonderful days in the City of Churches. All enquiries regarding the conference can be directed to Conference Convenor [Katrina Morris](#). Keep an eye on our [website](#) for further details as they come to hand.

We are excited to announce that the key note speaker on Wednesday 31 July is world champion cyclist Anna Meares OAM.

Pedals



The 150th edition of [Pedals](#) has now been delivered to all ICPA members. What a showcase this was, highlighting such a special occasion and editor Raelene Hall is to be congratulated on a job well done.

Thank you to those Branches across Australia who wrote wonderful tales from their small towns highlighting our diverse nation including Moonie, Charleville, Ellangowan, Hyden and Winton.

For advertising opportunities in Pedals please contact Raelene [here](#).

ICPA State Conferences

The month of March will see [New South Wales \(Buronga\)](#), [South Australia](#) (online) and [Western Australia \(Scarborough\)](#) all hold their ICPA State Conferences. The [Northern Territory](#) State Conference will be held in [Katherine](#) on 2 April. ICPA Federal Councillors will be at each of these Conferences, so please say hello and ask the questions pertaining to Federal issues that you are wanting to ask.

We wish each of these Councils all the very best at their Conferences and thank all delegates for taking the time to attend along with congratulations to the new State Councils. We look forward to giving further updates in the next Federal Branch Bulletin.

Tertiary Update

Youth Allowance Update

As of January 1, 2019, the parental income threshold for regional, rural and remote students applying for Youth Allowance under the *Independent through work: Part-time work or earnings for rural and remote students*' criteria is \$160 000, plus \$10 000 for each eligible additional child in the family. Information on *Youth Allowance* - can be found [here](#).

Youth Allowance Overview 2019

The Youth Allowance Overview 2019 aims to summarise the lengthy Youth Allowance website. This information relates to rural and remote students planning to study full time and who intend to apply for Youth Allowance. The Youth Allowance Overview 2019 can be found on the ICPA (Aust) website [here](#). It is a guide only. For more information, advice, clarification and assistance please phone **132490** (dedicated Youth Allowance phone number)

ICPA (Aust) would like to thank the Department of Human Services and the Department of Social Services for their invaluable assistance with clarification of information for this document.

Facebook Student Update Page



The [Student Update](#) Facebook page and Twitter, operated by Centrelink, Medicare and Department of Human Services, has up-to-date, student specific information, advice, news, support and tips for Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY. 'Like' this page and you will receive information, updates and reminders about student payments. General questions can be posted and the relevant service will respond with advice, further action or comment, Monday to Friday during business hours. Recent topics have included: Documentation or Information required for Student payment claim, Fares Allowance, When will you get your first payment? How is your student payment claim progressing? Student Start-up Loan

and Rent Assistance.

National Tertiary Course Website: www.courseseekeer.edu.au

Course Seeker is a new national Higher Education information website launched late 2018. This website is a one stop shop for giving current and prospective students the ability to easily research and compare higher education courses by course, study area, institution, admission criteria, state and application pathways for higher education courses. It has information about courses, both online and on-campus across Australia. The information enables direct comparison of admission criteria and application processes across different courses and providers.

Tertiary and Training Website Document

The "*Useful Tertiary and Training Websites*" document collated by the Tertiary and Training portfolio provides useful websites and resources for students to assist in planning their future whether that be at university, VET course, apprenticeship or heading straight into the workforce. It is available on the ICPA website [here](#).

Email correspondence

Students can get monthly emails with updates, important information and changes to student payments by subscribing to our eNewsletters. Students can subscribe to:

- [News for students and trainees](#)
- [News for rural and remote Australians](#)
- [News for Indigenous Australians](#)

The DHS Communications team have also published a [webpage](#) that summarises the information and provides additional information about payments and services DHS offer.

Submissions

Two submissions within the Tertiary and Training Portfolio were submitted in the New Year.

- The [National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy](#) submission highlighted key issues and challenges raised by ICPA members concerning access to tertiary and training education for rural and remote students.
- The [Vocational Education and Training Review](#) submission highlighted issues relevant to rural and remote students and recommendations for consideration to ensure equity of access to the Vocational Education and Training system for rural and remote students.

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Preschool Funding

- More than \$440 million has been provided 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. See the Ministers media release [here](#)
- A reminder that 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](#). Further information can also be found on the [FAQ page](#).

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. Follow this [link](#) for the latest version of the IHC National Guidelines

Families are encouraged to review their incomes to make sure they are receiving the correct percentage of CCS.

- 200 more IHC places have also 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. By clicking on the link - [CCCF Special Circumstances Funding](#) further information about the program including Guidelines, a Fact Sheet and Application form are available.
- 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. Follow this [link](#) for further submission details.

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](#).

AHWISE Update

In 2018 the Aussie Helpers team successfully replaced the former VISE program with Aussie Helpers VISE (AHWISE), helping over 100 remote students with their educational needs. The AHWISE team is now offering additional support services, including a virtual classroom where volunteers who cannot travel have the ability to tutor bush kids online. In 2019 the \$500 families have been required to pay to help with cost of funding tutors and insurance will be waived, many thanks to the enormous fundraising efforts with Aussie Helpers.

Want to know more about AHWISE and the wonderful work they do supporting students and families in rural and remote locations?

Have a listen to this [podcast](#) where AHWISE Team Manager Lyn French discusses the process and benefits of volunteer tutor roles in distance education classrooms.

With the flooding crisis in NW Queensland, AHVISE are ready to help and will do their best to put a tutor in place ASAP. Please don't hesitate to contact them on 0731032070 or email info@ahvise.org.au

UNICEF Australia Drought Report



ICPA (Aust) welcomes the UNICEF Australia Drought Report released 18 February, 2019.

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 that they face.

To view the report follow this [link](#).

There has been a lot of media following this release and we think that this [interview](#) is one not to be missed.

Central Station Blog Contributions

Central Station has once again offered ICPA members an opportunity to participate in a week of posts on their website this year. Our goal is to present at least five positive stories from DE/SOTA - fun schoolroom anecdotes, success stories of DE/SOTA kids, interesting outreach/minischool/inreach experiences, anything that can show how much we value our DE/SOTA experiences. If you are interested in participating or would like further information, contact DE Portfolio Leader, [Alana Moller](#)

Submissions

Four submissions have been lodged by ICPA (Aust) during January 2019. They are:

- [2019-2020 Pre-Budget Submission](#)
- [National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy](#)
- [Vocational Education and Training Review](#)
- [Consumer Safeguards Review Consultation – Part B Reliability of Services](#)

2019 Conferences

ICPA NSW – Wentworth, 6 & 7 March 2019 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#)

ICPA WA – Scarborough, 22 March 2019 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#)

ICPA SA – Online Conference, 22 March 2019 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

ICPA NT – Katherine, 2 April 2019 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

ICPA QLD – Charters Towers, 5 & 6 June 2019 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

ICPA FEDERAL – Adelaide, July 31 & 1 August 2019 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#)

ICPA TAS – [Facebook](#), [Website](#)

