



Sean Dillon MP

Member for Gregory

ICPA Queensland State Conference

Mr DILLON (Gregory—LNP) (2.40 pm): I rise today following my recent attendance between sitting weeks at the ICPA Queensland State Conference held at St George. I was joined—the parliament was very well represented—by the member for Toowoomba North, and the local member and minister, Ann Leahy. Shortly I will touch on the quality of that advocacy group.

Ms Farmer: And me.

Mr DILLON: I also acknowledge the member for Bulimba, for those who are nervous that I might have forgotten her. We had a good chat on the sideline.

In particular, I want to talk today about the work of the ICPA as a group, which may slide under the radar quite often in Queensland's advocacy, and the work they do for our children in regional areas. I acknowledge the work of the patron of the ICPA, Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM, who not only is the patron now but also when the conference was previously held at St George she served as the chairwoman. I also want to thank the current president, Wendy Henning; the federal president, Louise Martin from Blackall; and my own local Alpha-Jericho branch delegate, Loretta Goodwin, along with hundreds of other delegates.

The ICPA is made of up of 1,200 member families, with 45 branches across Queensland. It came from humble beginnings in 1971, when the first branch was formed in Cunnamulla, quickly followed by Kindon, Dirranbandi and Bollon. The ICPA has a long and rich history of working to deliver outcomes for bush and remote children and their families. I myself am a product of both the correspondence and boarding schools that they fought to make a better place.

True advocacy and polite, genuine and targeted conversations from people who represent the ICPA are truly something to be seen and believed. Around that conference was excellent conversation, not necessarily aimed at changing the government's approach but, more importantly, guiding departmental officers around such things as the new curriculum that is being rolled out for correspondence students and the ongoing access to integrated learning materials or their eventual replacements.

Emerald Electorate Office

Shop 1, 93 Clermont Street, Emerald QLD 4720
(07) 4913 1000
Gregory@parliament.qld.gov.au

Longreach Electorate Office

Shop 2, Studio Exclusive Arcade, 120A Eagle street, Longreach QLD 4730
(07) 4521 5700
Gregory@parliament.qld.gov.au



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The ICPA has morphed from representing pre-HF radio correspondence papers to a new digital age. They have advocated strongly right throughout the history of correspondence, not for higher standards of education than our urban cousins, not for better than what anyone else gets, but simply to achieve the same level of education.

The work that was done when this side of the House was last in government with the living away from home allowance, to ensure that it was more reflective of what was required for people who live in remote areas to attend boarding school, is, once again, reflective of the strong work that we will do alongside the ICPA moving forward.

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