

ICPA Qld President's Conference Report Sydney – July 2024

Federal President, Mrs Louise Martin, Federal Life Members, State Life Members, Branch Life Members, Distinguished Guests, fellow ICPA members, Ladies and Gentlemen: It gives me great pleasure to present my Queensland President's report for the 2024 Federal Conference.

It is hard to believe (at the time of writing this report) that nearly a month has passed since the 53rd ICPA Queensland conference was held in Townsville, hosted by the Belyando Mt Coolon Branch.

With a fresh start in June to the council year in Queensland timely to reflect on and recognise 12 months of dedication and tireless hardworking commitment from each and every member of the ICPA Qld State Council. As volunteers, the members on council and off council have committed and delivered a truly mammoth year worthy of reflection and as we embark on the new council year to plan and strategise to ensure we utilize everyone's time effectively and continue to ensure all of our rural, remote and geographically isolated students are receiving their best education.

The QLD diaries over the past year has consisted of - Post-Conference Meeting, three Brisbane Delegations (August, November and March) including Face-to-Face Meetings, a Mid-Year Council Meeting, over 77 meetings with Stakeholders whilst on Delegations, three Parliamentary Hearings, more than 13 Council Teams meetings, 86 Meetings with Stakeholders when not officially in Brisbane, Mentor Branch Meetings, telephone calls, emails and messenger conversations. That is more than 184 declared meetings.....it is acknowledged that all of this is in a voluntary capacity, all members of the team having full-time responsibilities away from Council and families too. Dedicated, passionate and all extremely capable, the 23/24 State Council each deserved to be proud of themselves and their contribution to the organisation as the 24/25 State Council team look forward with enthusiasm and energy to continue the work.

With so many meetings, and extensive network and group of supporters, for ICPA Qld to meet and further the lobby or advocacy of the motions and policies, one of our key relationships is with the Department of Education. The Rural and Remote team has been led by Dr Grant Webb, Assistant Director-General, Rural, Remote and Strategic Initiatives. Our working relationship is respectful and understanding with both sides working towards equity in education. ICPA Qld appreciates the time of Grant and his team. We have the opportunity and ability to work with them along with so many sectors of the Department. This network is truly valuable for the organisation and students alike.

My belief is that hearing genuine voices of rural and remote families, through ICPA has value for those in the Department. ICPA Qld continues to take a considered approach in our advocacy ensuring that meetings, correspondence and conversations are based on knowledge and evidence and genuinely portrays the voice of members and their children. Council has been fortunate to have discussions with former Minister for Education, the Honourable Grace Grace, and now we work in collaboration with Minister Farmer; we thank you for listening and valuing our students. Over the past 12 months there has been strong evidence of the department consulting with ICPA Qld to ensure that our members issues, thoughts and suggestions are heard.

Another valuable working relationship is with Independent Schools Queensland and the Catholic Education Commission. With so many of our students receiving their education through either an Independent or a Catholic School, it is vital that we continue to ensure all bodies who deliver education hear and understand our students and the added layers of complexities they experience. QCAA, DESBT, Autism QLD, SPELD, C&K and QLD Teachers Union are to name only a few of our stakeholders who we meet with regularly.

In her President's Report at the 2004 ICPA Qld Conference, Mrs Rose Philp talked about the importance of the Joint Parent Network. Twenty years on, it has given me great pleasure to be a part of this group representing ICPA and working with Queensland Independent Schools Parent Network, P&Cs Qld and Catholic Schools Parents Association.

The group, along with Queensland Curriculum Advisory Authority (QCAA), came together in October last year delivering a webinar on "Artificial Intelligence (AI) in School and at Home", over 600 families tuned in on the night and more accessed after the day. A testament to the strength of the four groups working together.

Brisbane delegations were held in August, November and March. I would like to acknowledge Brisbane Boys College (BBC), Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) and St Joseph's College (Nudgee) for hosting State Council for our face-to-face meetings this year. These meetings are important for the planning and coordination of timetables with stakeholders, and also, the coming together of council. Face to face meetings is where we have the opportunity to ensure our thoughts and plans for the progression of motions is on course, update State Council policies for the year ahead, and strategise for the best outcomes. There is nothing more motivating than all being in the one room.

To start our time in Brisbane in August last year, Council engaged the services of Directors Australia to deliver a training course on Governance. This insightful and useful training has enabled Council to ensure the integrity of the organisation is maintained and governance is followed with diligence. It was also an opportunity for councillors as individuals, to learn and grow, and develop skills. With the overwhelming popularity of this course, we will again utilise Directors Australia when we go to Brisbane in a few weeks' time to upskill and refresh. Council will also receive Media Training through Independent Schools QLD, an investment in our councillors to have a positive flow on to our members.

QLD has a State Government election in October of this year and for the past twelve months and up to October it has been a focus and, at our Mid-Year Meeting we formalised the 2023 Key Issues Document. This document was created with the intention of circulating to all stakeholders, all sitting members of Parliament and to anyone else with whom ICPA Qld meets – our "Key Issues" are determined by the main topics raised at conference through motions. This year these issues came under TTT, DE, Travel and our small schools (in Schools) Portfolios. Our small schools are hurting and need assistance to ensure there is equity as well as equality to cover their needs immediately.

Following the distribution of the Document, we were heartened by the response and met with many stakeholders, both current and new. As a result, we can report that ICPA Qld now has a seat on the Queensland Virtual Academy (QVA) Stakeholder Group. There also has recently been an announcement of a further expansion of the CUCs footprint in Queensland.

In October, State Council had all roads leading to Theodore, where we were hosted by the Dawson Valley Branch for our Mid-Year Meeting. We thoroughly enjoyed our time, not only ICPA'ing but also learning about this community and its surrounds. Visiting branches throughout the state is certainly a highlight on the calendar year and is a wonderful opportunity to be able to speak directly to members and listen to issues and concerns.

Any opportunity to ensure perspective and consideration is given to rural education has been taken throughout the year including attendance as a part of the Early Years Stakeholder Group and the Early Years Forums in March and November. Attending ensures we connect with education staff, parent body groups, and with representatives from organisations pertaining to early year education, engagement and care.

The statewide Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership and their Country Collaborative group broadened our reach, experience and knowledge.

To ensure that any organisation is sustainable and viable we need to foster and maintain relationships with valued partners. We acknowledge our partners ABSA and Outback Insurance who have also now been joined by Telstra. Their financial support as well as in-kind support is valuable and appreciated. Partnerships is an area, in the new council year, we will continue to look at, evaluate, develop and strengthen. We are also extremely grateful to Bush Christmas for their generous support each year, with 2023 being no exception. This is a special relationship supported by past ICPA members who enjoy supporting current members. We are also privileged to have a working relationship with Ningana Trust for whom Gina and Tim Fairfax are Trustees. We must also mention a thanks to Greyhound Australia, we have made it onto the back of two buses, so keep an eye out for them!

Joint Council Meeting brought all ICPA Council's together in Darwin. The knowledge and experience in the room was incredible and the opportunity to discuss all things ICPA, along with the sharing of information, tools and ideas was valuable. Amanda Clark and I were the Queensland representatives. We thank the Northern Territory State Council for hosting and chairing the meeting. February in Darwin was certainly a warmer place to be!

At the beginning of May, Council made the decision to publish another document with the lead up to the election – the ICPA Qld Election Commitment Document was created and has now been circulated to all sitting members of Parliament, along with listed candidates. As an apolitical organisation, ICPA Qld is happy to talk to any interested persons about these requests and encourages those who are seeking to lead the state to give priority to rural and remote students and their families.

Council has been a team of strong knowledgeable 'doers' in On and Off Council positions. I thank Tina Barrett, who has been on a steep learning curve as our Membership Officer, a role that is continuing to evolve, as does the membership process. Lisa Southern, has continued another year of compelling compilations to bring the News & Views editions to you all.

Fiona Murray, is our Fundraising Officer; this task, bigger than it looks, is vital to help ensure the name of ICPA is visible. Tammie Irons, has continued in the role of Web Tech and keeps our website updated and running smoothly. In the Off-Council role of Hospital Schools, we have our State Life Member, Judy Treloar. Judy attends meetings and we look forward to her reports as they are always fascinating. It is important to ensure that there is a rural and remote perspective on the board.

This year State Council saw Tammy Bailey step off Council in October and at conference Kylie Camp, Megan Easton and Anneli Day retired from their roles as Councillors. Melissa Iland stepped down as the Publicity Officer and Louise Martin as Immediate Past President. We thank them all for their commitment, dedication and knowledge. We wish each well, with all of those extra hours that you will acquire back into your day - though I am sure at times you will miss ICPA!

Amanda Clark, Belyando-Mt Coolon Branch, convened with her team of helpers a conference that was not only well attended by 34 branches and over 260 attendees but thoroughly enjoyed by one and all. Conference was not only a fantastic few days of "business" but also a celebration and gathering of so many members, guests, sponsors, stakeholders and members of parliament in attendance including The Education Minister, Assistant Education Minister and Shadow Education Minister. With motions being debated, stakeholders and members

speaking, guest speakers and presentations for retiring councillors and two Certificates of Appreciation presented.

Mrs Wendy Hick, Mt Isa BOTA Branch was recognised with a Certificate of Appreciation for her tireless dedication to not only her branch and state council but also all members. An acknowledgement that came as a surprise to Wendy but not to those who in the room, she has assisted and worked with over many years. The second COA was to the Westmar Inglestone Branch for compiling and sending out New Member Packs to all QLD Members who join. The branch has been doing this at their own expense for over 17 years and are often the point of correspondence from the organisation upon joining. State Council are very appreciative of their work and commitment.

QLD State Council are delighted to have Christy Bredhauer join in the role of Treasurer, Stephanie Cowper as Publicity Officer, Rhiannon Newsham and Sally Campbell as councillors. These ladies joined the experienced councillors and we now also have Amanda Clark, stepping down as Treasurer and joining Kate Bradshaw as Vice Presidents. QLD State Council is certainly in safe hands.

State Council has been committed to raising the organisation's profile, attracting the next generation of members and increasing communication and connection between Council and its branches, members, and potential members. This year we have sponsored episodes of "Married to the Land" podcast, had a presence at Channel Country Ladies Day, Westech Field Days and Beef Australia's Beef Week. As a member-based organisation, we need you and encourage you all to spread the word of ICPA and encourage others to join. There is a continual stream of the next generation entering the rural industry and it is so vital that the ICPA message and ultimately membership finds its way to them and then to us.

Thank you.

Mrs Wendy Henning