

SOUTH AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Belinda Hatcher

Another year, another no show! Once again the timing of our shearing means I cannot be with you in person in Sydney but you do get the pleasure of hearing my voice and enjoying some pictures of SA ICPA families and the special places they live in. So with that said, Madame President, Federal councillors, ICPA members and guests it is with great pleasure that I present my third SA ICPA President's report.

Our delegations for 2023 were held a little later than normal and occurred from the 11th to the 13th of September. We had a very warm and successful first meeting with Minister Geoff Brock, who has always been willing to do what he can to support SA ICPA. We also met with Julie Taylor from the Open Access College, Cara Savarton - State Government & International Relations, Ashley Smith, Christian Barnes and Constance Christou, Transport Services Unit from the Department for Education and Annie Lawless and Tarnya Eggleton from the Child and Family Health Service.

There can sometimes be a struggle for continuity when it comes to staffing within the South Australian Education Department and it is often hard to keep those connections strong. In the future the idea of more than one delegation and or periodical catch ups is one state council will be undertaking and something we hope will help deepen those connections and continue to build the understanding and reputation of ICPA.

When we met with the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, Mr Blair Boyer we were pleased when he announced that there would be a small but welcome increase to the Remote Travel Allowance component of the State Education Allowance from \$250 to \$500 per year. We are always grateful for the Minister's time during our delegations, but I still believe we have a long way to go to see our organisation and its advocacy more strongly understood and valued by Minister Boyer (and the SA Government in general) and his office. State Council will keep continue fighting for this to happen.

As well as delegation meetings, SA ICPA State Council have been busy building connections with some new stakeholders throughout the year. We had a meeting the Statewide Inclusive Education Services (SIES), which was an introduction to each other of both our organisations and with the plan to inform members of the services that SIES can offer families with children who have specific learning needs. I was also invited by the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) to convey any communication needs that our members may have. Even though there is not any specific issues at the current time, ACCAN are keen to have regular catch ups in the future. State Secretary Hollie Williams has also been busy growing our relationship with secondary schools who have an interest educating in rural and remote ICPA students and it was exciting to have several of those school attend this year's conference as a result of her communications.

We were pleased to be invited in March by the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, Mr Blair Boyer, to nominate a candidate from State Council to fill a vacant position on the Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Board. Edwina Bowie who is our Early Childhood Portfolio leader, was a perfect fit for this roll and was successful in her application. She has attended a couple of meetings so far and has gained valuable information for ICPA as well as having the chance to advocate for rural and remote children and their needs.

In February of last year SA ICPA applied for a Thriving Communities grant with the application outlining the plan to engage the services of 'Bank of Ideas' and its founder Peter Kenyon to come up with a key document that would not only enable SA ICPA State Councillors better understand and implement the objectives of ICPA, but to help further develop the passion and commitment of members and volunteers towards ICPA. With the grant application being successful we got the ball rolling by having Peter Kenyon speak at last year's conference as the first step of the process. Once conference was over we set about organising the second and third stages – a set of one-on-one interviews with past and present members and stakeholders of ICPA and then planning and facilitating a two-day workshop for participants to work with Peter to build the story around ICPA, its members and the volunteers who become involved.

The workshop was a great success and produced some innovative and practical solutions and suggestions for propelling SA ICPA safely into the future. At this year's conference we got to hear from Peter, who gave us a final wrap up of the last 12 months and helped launch the new volunteer engagement and support manual that has been created

as a result of this process. The booklet has been printed thanks to the support of Rural Aid and is ready to be distributed to members over the coming weeks.

Unfortunately, due to station commitments I was unable to attend the 52nd Federal Conference in Darwin and I know I missed an excellent few days. Thanks to everyone who went from SA, especially to Hollie and Kirsty for representing our state council. Congratulations to Alana, Federal Council, and the NT State Council for putting on such a successful conference and a big congrats to Louise Martin on her election as the new Federal President. I am sure that along with this year's councillors she will capably lead Federal Council for the future years.

SA ICPA would like to thank Federal Council for all their hard work throughout the year in advocating for our members. Thank you for always being willing to offer support and advice to myself and the whole SA ICPA State Council. The ease at which we can communicate between councils make the organisation even stronger and the outcomes for members that much better for it. I would also like to thank Judy Newton, Federal Membership Officer and the new Federal ICPA Tech Team for all their hard work in working through the challenges that have come from implementing the new rolling membership format. I am confident that this time next year all the troubles will be a distant memory and there will be smooth sailing ahead!

In February Kirsty and I attended the joint councils meeting in Darwin. It was a busy couple of days but as always it was wonderful to be in the company of other state councils as well as Kim and Louise from Federal Council. We are all so vastly different and yet we can come together to share our knowledge and skills for the great good of the organisation and our members. Thank you to Moira and Catherine for organising a wonderful catch up and ensuring that our short but sweet time was enjoyable.

We continue to deliver the Pipeline publication, in full colour now, to members bi-annually and it is always wonderful to read about all the comings and goings of members. Thank you to Mija our Pipeline Editor, who works very hard to get hold of articles, photos, and news so that we have something to look forward to and read twice a year. That along with our social media channels and the website gives members several ways to access what they need to in regard to all things ICPA. While we are on the website, a very big pat on the back to Lisa Slade for stepping into the role of State Webmaster and keeping the ever-changing landscape of news and information up to date. It has been a big year of transition and she has done a stellar job.

The 2024 SA ICPA State Conference was held on the 23rd of March at Quorn and was hosted by the Marla Oodnadatta Branch and was a great success. Anne Scammell and Sophie Matterson were wonderful and very fitting guest speakers, all our panellists and speakers throughout the day were interesting and informative and the motions were presented and debated in a passionate and respectful manner. There was a family friendly and relaxed atmosphere at the evening events and the cricket match at the conclusion of the conference was a fitting way to end the proceedings and a good way to remind us of the core reason for ICPA – the families and the kids of rural and remote South Australia. A big thank you to convenor Dani Chapman and all of the helpers from the Marla Oodnadatta branch for organising what was an excellent State Conference. An almost full State Council was elected at the conclusion of conference proceedings and they hit the ground running the next morning for the first State Council meeting of the year (minus the president who was required to ferry her 16-year-old across Adelaide for her formal and all the appointments that are needed before hand!).

We farewelled outgoing State Councillors Steph Roeske, Jessica Bell and Helen Williams. We were especially sad to farewell Helen. She has been on State Council in some way, shape or form almost 20 years. She has been State Secretary, State Treasurer and State Publicity Officer as well as a branch rep for the Marla Oodnadatta branch. Nothing is ever too hard for Helen and her willingness to just put her hand up to be in a role or get a job done is admirable to say the least. We will miss her a lot but I have a feeling that she will be keeping an eye on us in the back ground for years to come. And a big thank you to this year's State Council executives Hollie, Kirsty, Jodie, and Ellen and all the other councillors for all their hard work over the last 12 months. We are all busy and their commitment to supporting ICPA is always exemplary.

After 12 months of waiting and some covert plans, SA ICPA were very happy to present Jill Greenfield with South Australian State Life Membership at this year's conference. Jill joined ICPA in 1998 and over the past twenty-six years, she has held many positions as an ICPA member, including branch president, secretary and delegate and was co-convenor of two state conferences. She has also held the roles of SA State President, Immediate Past President and

State Treasurer and has been instrumental in helping to shape our association to where it is today. A very deserved new State Life member.

The past couple of months since conference State Councillors have worked very hard on drafting motion letters and gathering case studies over the past couple of months and they have now been sent to the appropriate parties. We are still waiting to get any feedback from these letters but hope it will be any time soon. We have however had some great responses from boarding schools in regard to the motions and discussions that were had around enrolments, scholarships and the ever-increasing fees. A special thanks to SA ICPA State Secretary Hollie Williams, who has been the driving force behind the push to build greater communication channels between SA ICPA and boarding schools and facilities across the state. We were very excited to receive news that one of the above-mentioned boarding schools has created a scholarship off the back of the motion letters and discussion from conference.

Through the support of two grants – one from the Foundation for Regional and Remote Renewal and one from Beech Energy, State Council had the chance to facilitate a face-to-face meeting and incorporate some professional development workshops as well. At the end of May, we met in Clare for 2 days and got the chance to run a state council meeting face to face, which I am sure we can all agree is so much more productive than one on zoom. We then did a 4-hour intensive public speaking session with Annabelle Homer from Voice It, which was confronting but also a great opportunity for us to develop and sharpen not only our public speaking skills, but to work on better ways to write speeches and documents that need publication. There were lots of laughs and a few tears and it was such a great way to bond as a council. On the second day, after lunch we were joined by Isaac Camilleri, who supported us through a strategic planning session. For the session, we picked one of our main advocacy focuses for this year and worked on how best to get the outcomes we needed for our members. We learnt how to look at things differently and now have the ability to apply what we learnt for other areas of advocacy going forward. A value cannot be put on the opportunities to be in a face-to-face setting and it is something we hope to do far more often in the coming years.

As of the end of June, SA ICPA has 122 members, which might not seem many for some states, but for us it is the largest number we have had in almost 10 years. We also have seen two branches double their numbers in 12 months, which is an amazing effort considering those branches are from the biggest land mass area but have the sparsest population base.

Having a larger and more diverse pool of members will be so important for SA ICPA and its future. We will be able to support ICPA better at both branch and state levels as well as having a wider audience exposed to ICPA, its families and their needs. Onwards and upwards for SA ICPA!

Many congratulations to Louise Martin, Federal Council, Laura Stalley and the NSW State Council for putting on what I can only imagine will be an excellent couple of days for the 53rd Federal Conference in Sydney and for dedicating countless hours of your time to ensure that everyone has an amazing time. I will definitely be seeing you in Adelaide next year – even if it is just for a flying visit between mobs of sheep!