

SOUTH AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Adeladie - July 2025

Belinda Hatcher

Federal President Louise Martin, Federal Life Members, State Life Members, Branch Life Members, ICPA members and guests it is with great pleasure (and quite a few nerves) that I present my fourth and final SA ICPA President's report and even in person this time! It is exciting to welcome everyone here to Adelaide and to showcase our wonderful state and its members.

As usual a large part of state council's focus in the first half of the year is always State Conference planning and then following through with the process of actioning motions with letters, delegations and advocacy. The 2025 State Conference was held in Port Augusta on the 21st of March and was hosted by the Flinders Ranges branch. We were very fortunate to hear from Dr Isabella Slade and Jessica Stenson as our inspiring guest speakers and were witness to 29 motions being presented - the most we have had for more than 15 years, which were debated in a passionate and respectful manner. It was also very exciting to have the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, Blair Boyer attend for a portion of the day and for him to get the opportunity to see the way ICPA supports and advocates for its member's needs. We haven't had an education minister attend and participate in a State Conference in over 10 years and we were so grateful that he was able to make the time to attend. A big thank you to convenors Michelle Hilder and Lisa Slade and all of the helpers from the Flinders Ranges branch for organising what was an excellent State Conference.

At this year's AGM we said thank you and farewell to our outgoing state councillor Candice Brown who has been a North West representative for several years now. We also farewelled Jodie Keogh, State Treasurer who after many years on State Council decided to step down from her role and off State Council. We will miss her input and wish her all the best as she spends her time with both feet in one state and supporting her young family's educational path. We also acknowledged Hollie Williams, who didn't leave state council but finished up her tenure as State Secretary and who we are glad to have sticking around for a bit longer. We also welcomed Dani Chapman into the role of Secretary, who with the support of the executive, has found her feet and is settling in well. Finally a big thank you to all of this year's State Council for all their hard work. Like a lot of us, they not only volunteer their time for SA ICPA, but are also juggling family life, work and commitments to other organisations in their community.

The 2025/26 SA ICPA State Council is:

President Belinda Hatcher

Vice President Hollie Williams

Secretary Dani Chapman

Treasurer Kirsty Williams

Publicity Officer Ellen Litchfield

Councillors Di Thomas, Mija Reynolds, Michelle Hilder, Jo Williams, Kristina Crawford, Petie Rankin
Edwina Bowie, Louise Kohler, Pamela Cuffe and Katrina Morris

Since conference state councillors have been working on drafting motion letters and gathering case studies ready to send to the appropriate parties. The process of sending letters was completed in May and we are already started to see some responses to those letters trickle in, which contain positive indications that SA ICPA and its members tireless advocacy is paying off.

The key areas of focus for 2024/25 have been:

- Increasing the State Education Allowance.
- Supporting preschool age students and families access financial support for setting up kindy classrooms.
- Advocating for better access to child and family health services for members.
- Creating and deepening relationships with boarding schools from across the state.
- Supporting Federal Council with their advocacy campaigns throughout the year.

- Continuing to advocate for financial support for distance education supervisors at both a state and federal level.
- Creating access to affordable air travel for students across the state.
- Updating the constitution as well as all policy documents.

We have had the opportunity to head to Adelaide twice in the last 12 month for delegation meetings with Minister's, departmental personnel and other interested organisations. Back in December 2024 a small group of SA ICPA members met with Blair Boyer, Minister for Education, Training and Skills, Claire Scriven, Minister for Primary Industries and Luke Fraser, External Relations Director from the Department for Education. Along with some attending face to face, we were able to zoom in other members from state council who could not make the trip to Adelaide. All our meetings we well received and productive, but the meeting with Minister Boyer was particularly successful due to the casual nature of where it took place. We met at a cafe in Port Adelaide and it was the perfect opportunity for us to have a more open and frank conversation with him and for us both to be able to be more candid. I am certain that this was the turning point that has seen us foster a supportive relationship with the Minister and his office.

Our most recent delegation to Adelaide was held at the end of June. The timing coincided with the end of term for boarding school kids as well as the SOTA school camp being a few days later. This allowed for several members to attend which not only meant that we had a great range of portfolio knowledge, but also that more meetings could be arranged and attended. Councillors met with Member for Stuart Geoff Brock, Education Minister Blair Boyer, the Child and Family Health Service, RFDS, Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise, Uni Hub SA, ABSA (via Zoom) and several Department for Education executives in education, early childhood and allied health. From all reports, the meetings were successful and we are excited about the positive outcomes that are developing from our persistent advocacy, motion's and members supporting case studies. We look forward to being able to update our members and the ICPA community of these developments very soon.

Unfortunately, due to station commitments I was unable to attend the 53rd Federal Conference in Sydney and I know I missed an excellent few days. Thanks to everyone who went from SA, especially to Hollie and Jodie for representing our state council. Congratulations to Louise, Federal Council, and the NSW State Council for putting on such a successful conference and a big congrats to all the councillors elected at the AGM. We are excited to have SA representation back on Federal Council again and are proud of Jill Greenfield on her election. There is no doubt her dedication and wealth of knowledge, especially with Distance Education has been a valuable tool for Federal Council.

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 not only myself but the whole SA ICPA State Council. The ease at which we can communicate makes the organisation even stronger and the outcomes for members that much better for it. I would also like to thank the ICPA Tech Team for all their hard work in continuing to navigate their way through the challenges they have faced as they supported branches and councils with membership and website queries. It has also been exciting to witness the role out of Brevo, a platform which will most certainly strengthen the communication between ICPA and its members.

Our membership numbers continue to remain static and with the gentle reminder's over the last couple of months, we have seen them almost return to the high they were this time last year. Many thank to Louise and the Tech Team who have continued to iron out any kinks in the membership process and who are behind the drive to 'remind' those who haven't quite gotten around to renewing on time.

In February Dani and I attended the joint councils meeting in Perth. 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 Louise and Kelly 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 Jane and Kym 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 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 Edwina Bowie for stepping into the role of State Webmaster and keeping the ever-changing landscape of news and information up to date.

SA ICPA were pleased to present Lisa Slade with South Australian State Life Membership at this year's pre conference function. Lisa has been an active member of SA ICPA at all levels since the early 2000's and has served on the executive for the Flinders Ranges Branch as well as on state and federal councils. She has been the State President, Vice President, Immediate Past President and State Webmaster. She started her journey as State President in 2015 and has been involved in the SA ICPA State Council ever since. Lisa was also Federal Treasurer for a four-year term starting in 2017 and then went on to be Federal Vice President immediately after this for 12 months. A very deserving new SA State Life member.

Over the past 12 years that I have been involved with SA ICPA, I have witnessed the ebb and flow of membership numbers, the evolution of branches, and the growth of children and families within our community. Despite these changes, the core mission of helping members access the most equitable educational opportunities has remained steadfast. Branches that were once full of SOTA kids are now supporting kids away at boarding school or just starting out at kindy and others who only had boarding school kids are now full of kids at uni or starting SOTA. This diversity and range within ICPA's membership is a testament to the ever-changing landscape of rural and remote education, and it's one that we need to navigate together. Local branches, as well as state and federal council, are always available to assist with anything—whether it's a small question or a larger issue. Being here at the Federal Conference is such an informative and empowering experience and one that often ends up being the reason for someone jumping in the 'deep' end and becoming more involved in their branch or even at a state or federal level.

For our family, this is our very last year of dropping children off at boarding school as our youngest Lily nears the end of her final year of secondary school. It marks the end of 10 years of boarding and 18 years as a rural and remote education family. It has been the most amazing community to be a part of and the experiences, opportunities and friends that our family has made along the way are irreplaceable and something we will cherish forever. There has been lots of highs, a few lows and many fun times in between and I will always be grateful for the ICPA family for the support, knowledge and skills they provided us as we guided our kids through all of it. There is no question that I have gained far more from being part of ICPA than I have given.

Many congratulations to Louise Martin, Federal Council, Edwina, Mija and the SA State Council for putting on what I can cheekily say is going to be a pretty amazing couple of days.

Cheers and thank you.