



Partnerships Report

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Partnerships are not about changing ICPA's purpose. They are about protecting our capacity to keep fulfilling it.

For more than a decade, ICPA (Aust) has been considering how to strengthen the organisation, better support members and ensure our advocacy remains relevant and effective. The challenge is that time and financial capacity are both limited. Federal Council members already volunteer extensively, while governance, administration and operational requirements continue to grow. Building stronger organisational support allows our elected representatives to remain focused on what ICPA exists to do: support members and advocate for equitable access to education for rural and remote students.

Federal Conference remains central to this work. It is where members shape our policy direction and where the lived experience of rural and remote families becomes the foundation for our advocacy. We work hard to keep conference attendance affordable, yet, at the same time, conference has traditionally been an important source of income for ICPA (Aust). The annual workload placed on rotating State convening committees is significant and much of this workload is due to sourcing sponsorship.

Our partnership strategy is therefore part of a broader effort to build greater stability, reduce pressure on volunteers and support the long-term strength of the organisation.

We are seeking relationships with organisations that serve the same communities as ICPA, share compatible values and want to contribute to better outcomes for rural and remote families. The emphasis is on meaningful, long-term relationships rather than one-off, transactional sponsorships.

Our independence remains fundamental. Partners do not determine ICPA policy, advocacy priorities or the positions we take. These remain firmly member-led. What partners can do is help provide the capacity, stability and reach needed to pursue those priorities more effectively.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of existing partners, including nbnCo, Telstra, Four Seasons and MDH. In particular, the continued presence of partners at conference gives them the opportunity to hear directly from members and better understand the practical barriers faced by rural and remote families.

Several emerging partnership discussions are also focused on genuine community impact. These include models where part of the support strengthens the national organisation, while another portion may flow directly to branches or projects delivering tangible local benefits.

This is an important distinction. Our members are not being offered up as a market. Rather, carefully selected organisations are being invited to listen, learn and work alongside ICPA where there is a natural alignment.

The need to strengthen our own sustainability is also increasingly clear. Other respected advocacy and support organisations have recently faced serious consequences when government funding was withdrawn. ICPA knows it is not immune to uncertain funding environments or fluctuating conference finances. Building a broader and more reliable funding base is therefore a matter of prudence, independence and long-term responsibility.

As I step off Federal Council, I will continue this work through an off-council partnership management role, helping provide continuity as these relationships develop. I also welcome input from members who may know organisations or individuals aligned with our purpose and interested in supporting ICPA at Federal, State or branch level.



Ultimately, the purpose of this work is simple: to ensure ICPA remains strong enough, stable enough and well supported enough to keep showing up for rural and remote students and families for many years to come.