



PRESIDENTS REPORT QLD ICPA

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It has been another significant and productive twelve months for ICPA Qld since Federal Conference in 2025. As we begin a new council year, all councillor positions have been filled, with only the Publicity Officer role remaining vacant. Rather than seeing this as simply a gap to fill, Queensland State Council is using the opportunity to reflect on how we communicate, strengthen our public presence, and ensure our message continues to reach members, stakeholders and decision-makers with clarity and purpose. We have also farewelled valued members of State Council and welcomed new voices to the table, bringing renewed energy, fresh perspective and a strong sense of momentum for the year ahead.

Over recent years, State Council has concentrated on ensuring our relationships and efficiency with stakeholders are well-established and finely tuned. Over the past twelve months, this has coincided with refreshing our constitution and preparing to apply for DGR status. As part of that process, we also examined our partnerships and revisited ICPA Qld's core values and what we stand for — ensuring everything is equitable and apolitical in all respects. As a result, State Council made the decision to pause partnerships until we have clearly defined our priorities and identified organisations whose values are truly aligned with ours.

Conference was held in Atherton at the beginning of June. There were equal representatives of stakeholders and members from across the state, the conference captured the voices, concerns and needs of all members across the two days.

State Council have been working through the motions that were carried to identify - The Key Advocacy Areas for the Year Ahead -

The first key area is Living Away from Home Allowances (LAFHAs), with families increasingly affected by the cost-of-living crisis and changes to funding for independent schools. A central part of our advocacy is ensuring decision-makers across Queensland understand why rural and remote families choose independent boarding schools: for many, there is no local state schooling option that provides face-to-face secondary education for their children. Access to boarding schools is therefore not simply a matter of choice; it is a practical necessity. It is the shared responsibility of all education sectors to ensure children across Queensland can access appropriate schooling without placing an additional financial burden on families—one that urban families are rarely required to consider.

The second area is early childhood — specifically, access to childcare whether you're in a large or small centre, and access to kindergarten for Queensland families who require school bus travel or significant travel by distance. We are seeking recognition of, and compensation for, the burden this places on families.



The third area is distance education, and ensuring access to sufficient and appropriate support materials in the home classroom to complement learning delivered through Schools of Distance Education. Queensland's seven Schools of Distance Education, like all schools across the state, operate individually, and the way they communicate and work with families varies. State Council is currently exploring ideas and solutions to support both the Department and the schools in working with their families — and most critically, ensuring that Version 9 curriculum is supported by adequate materials in the home classroom.

The fourth key area, again carried at conference, is the need for a state-delivered secondary school with an agricultural curriculum, in line with what interstate counterparts already have. We have worked extensively with the Queensland Government and the Department of Education, and over the past eighteen months our advocacy has also extended to the Minister for Primary Industries and the Department of Primary Industries, in alignment with the Queensland Government's *Prosper 2050* policy, which identifies education and access for agriculture as a priority for the state's future. We have been fortunate to work with a minister who understands both education and agriculture, and the importance of rural and remote communities across all industries.

State Council has also been working extensively with Independent Schools Queensland and Catholic Education Queensland, ensuring that students — who so often access these sectors for secondary schooling, and increasingly for primary schooling in larger regional centres — are receiving the best possible education for their families. Queensland has also been working toward a State Boarding School Standard, with all sectors collaborating to ensure it does not become a burdensome standard that increases costs for families.

Looking Ahead for the year - Following Federal Conference, Qld State Council will meet for our first delegations in Brisbane next week. We will also undertake training while there, continuing our priority of upskilling the dedicated volunteers who serve on State Council. This will include advocacy training with Alan Parker, followed by governance training with Directors Australia, as we do each year. In recognition of the commitment of State Council, we have formalised going forward that two training courses will be provided annually to all State Council members, including off-council positions.

Our advocacy continues to grow, and so too does our commitment to staying connected with our members and supporting our branches. We recognise that some branches are facing challenges, including constitutional requirements and the ongoing task of maintaining active membership. At the same time, we have been greatly encouraged by branches in different parts of the state that have been reinvigorated and are once again active, engaged and contributing strongly to their communities.

State Council will continue to work alongside branches that need support, while also having honest conversations about what structure will best serve members in each area. For some, that may mean rebuilding in their current form; for others, it may mean considering amalgamation with nearby



branches or, where necessary, dissolution. Whatever the outcome, our focus remains the same: ensuring ICPA membership is meaningful, purposeful and effective for the families we represent.

In a time when families are surrounded by organisations, support groups, advocacy voices, social media and constant communication, we know that connection cannot be taken for granted. We must continue to listen, communicate clearly and remain visible and relevant to our members. The continued need for ICPA is reaffirmed every day by families educating children in rural and remote Queensland. Our responsibility is to keep that connection alive and strong, so every member knows they are heard, supported and represented.

It has been my pleasure to deliver my final report as Qld President and hosting the 2026 Federal Conference in Queensland here on the sunny Gold Coast. I wish you all a wonderful year of advocacy for equitable access to education.