

Federal President Conference Report 2025

Louise Martin -QLD

Federal Life members, Mrs Jane Gloster and Mrs Sue Shotten, State and Branch Life Members, Distinguished Guests, fellow ICPA members and friends, it is with great pleasure that I present my Federal Presidents Report. The year has gone shockingly quickly yet again exacerbated by Federal Councils usual routine for delegations and the like being disrupted by the Federal Election taking place. However, we continue to be flexible and adaptive in our endeavours to get the best outcomes for our kids.

A massive shout out to the Federal Council team for the mammoth number of tasks we have completed, and outcomes achieved since conference. With a team of many newcomers and many near newcomers, I have really valued the input of our more experienced team members, Julia, Nikki, Anna and Ali, all of whom have contributed ably to keep us all on track and to find documents in Teams!, Thank you. The enthusiasm of the new team members knows no bounds, so it has been an exciting year with fresh ideas at every turn.

To name a few of the completed tasks post conference, we updated all policies, updated the portfolio briefing documents, wrote all our letters to the Ministers and other stakeholders, and determined the current key issues and in preparation for the October delegations. Whilst we acknowledge there has been a heavy focus on the current key issues, the ongoing AIC campaign, pay parity for early childhood teachers and the removal of Fringe Benefits Tax from essential staff accommodation at boarding schools, federal council continues to work behind the scenes to progress the remaining issues that we are faced with.

October delegations were successful as always. We had many meetings with politicians, and it was a privilege as always to meet with the Minister for Education the Hon Jason Clare MP and the Assistant Minister for Education, Senator Anthony Chisholm. Disappointingly the Shadow Minister for Education at the time, Senator Sarah Henderson failed to keep her appointment with us for the third consecutive visit to Canberra. We thank the Department of Education, Department of Social Services and Services Australia for meeting with Federal Council to discuss ongoing operational issues. We also took the opportunity to meet with the National Farmers Federation seeking their support for ICPA and our current issues.

Federal Council hit the ground running early in 2025 knowing that the Federal Election is looming. We kicked off the year with a trip to Canberra in early February.

Parliament House day was successful with over 35 meetings throughout the day. We spent the meeting reinforcing our request for election commitments, we keep ensuring the wheel

is squeaky. The mood in Parliament House was very election focused and there was much speculation about the potential date at that time.

During that week, we were thrilled with the news that a few of our long-standing advocacy issues have been addressed. It was an amazing feeling for all of us, and the portfolio leaders are excited to share the news in their reports over the coming days.

Whilst the Federal Government was in caretaker mode, the Federal Council team continued working away behind the scenes, sending out 2024 motion feedback to branches and compiling progress reports to send to members. Post election we note that the Hon Jason Clare continues as Minister for Education and the Hon Andrew Giles continues with Skills and Training. Other key portfolios have announced new ministers, Social Services now sits with the Hon Tanya Plibersek and Early Childhood also has a new Minister, Senator the Hon Dr Jess Walsh. Federal Council has taken the initiative to resend the letter requesting that the AIC portfolio is transferred from Social Services back to Education where it belongs at this time when Ministers will be reviewing the portfolios. Key Shadow ministers include Senator the Hon Jonathon Duniam, Shadow Minister for Education and Early learning, Senator Kerryne Liddle, Shadow Minister for Social Services, and Sam Birrell MP, Shadow Minister for Regional Education. Due to changes in sitting dates Federal Council will not be visiting Canberra again until November.

Also in February, Secretary Kelly Ostwald and I travelled to Perth for the Joint Council Meeting. This year the meeting was hosted and facilitated by the Western Australia State Council. Yet again it proved to be such a worthwhile exercise to have all the State and Federal Presidents and Secretaries from across the country come together to discuss all things relevant to ICPA. The knowledge sharing is invaluable especially for those new to their roles. I find it very inspiring.

As stated previously, the number of new and nearly new members of the Federal Council team are many so we committed to undertaking a two-part governance workshop on the roles and responsibilities of a not-for-profit board. ICPA(Aust) Federal Council is a board and as such must meet the ongoing and increasing compliance standards as any other board. The workshop was delivered by Kerry Newton of Directors Australia in person at the Canberra delegations and the second component was undertaken online. It has been a worthwhile undertaking and really sharpened our focus on governance issues.

I would like to acknowledge the ICPA TECH Team. The Tech Team is a subcommittee of Federal Council, which was endorsed at the Post Conference meeting. The team consists of five incredibly passionate and dedicated members of our ICPA family. Since conference there has been a necessary huge upgrade and overhaul of the website and database. The

Tech Team worked tirelessly to ensure that the transition went smoothly. There were a few hiccups along the way, and the stress levels were intense at times. These times have now past and hopefully it will be smoother sailing from here on. On behalf of all members, I extend the greatest of thanks to the Tech Team for the commitment and dedication in seeing these changes through. As we continue to rely on technology more and more the Tech Team has been an invaluable addition to ICPA to ensure the smooth operation of the organisation. Thank you, Judy Newton, Nikki McQueen, Tammie Irons, Kym Ross, and Kate Thompson, you are all super stars.

It is also noteworthy that this year the 175th Edition of Pedals was published, and what an impressive milestone it is! The Pedals Magazine has been such a constant in ICPA members' lives over the years. Many forms of communication have evolved over the last 50 years; however, Pedals continues to remain relevant after all this time as I feel our members still enjoy reading the written word on paper, and to see all the wonderful photos of member activities across the country. My mother, for example, has a complete set of Pedals magazines and considers it to be a wonderful historic documentation of ICPA and it is a reminder of how far we have come, yet there is still so much to achieve. If anyone wants the collection it is in my shed at home!!

Thank you to Hannah and Tracey, current custodians of Pedals, who always put together an amazing magazine. Your endeavours do not go unnoticed, and all members appreciate the time and effort you devote to Pedals.

Federal Council continues to engage C7even, an integrated specialist regional and rural Marketing and Communications Agency based in Tamworth, to support Federal Council in continuing to build the profile of the organisation and assist with strategic planning.

Federal Council worked closely with C7even to build our campaign for the inaugural Rural and Remote Education (RREd) Day. The day was launched on the 9th October to coincide with Federal Council's delegation day at Parliament House. Many thanks must go to our ICPA family, stakeholders, and friends for embracing the day. The exposure the day received in the media was excellent and Federal Council hopes to build on that going forward. The next RREd day will be held on the 15th of October 2025, and with support of you all I am sure it will be bigger and better.

Work continues to implement the operational plan that has evolved from the strategic plan which was developed to support the work of ICPA's processes and procedures to ensure the ongoing longevity of the organisation. As we reflect on the last 12 months we have achieved so much in ticking of the one-year operational plan goals. We have successfully

reintroduced the second VP role, which is already yielding positive results. We have commenced updating councillor role descriptions. We have completed a decision matrix, which is invaluable as it provides clear guidelines for all of council to understand who is responsible for council decision making and in what capacity. The biggest change that we have recently undertaken is moving the Federal Council communication system from Dropbox to Teams. This has increased efficiencies and enabled Federal Council to outsource tech support from an external provider decreasing the necessity to have a councillor responsible for this. It has taken some time to adjust to the new system, however we undertook a couple of training sessions to ensure a smooth transition.

We have now completed our year one objectives and Council will work again with C7even to review the operational plan and set the next objectives following conference. The Federal Council team is very invested in assuring the future of the organisation is robustly structured going forward and will continue to ensure our strategic goals are being met.

In other news, former long term ICPA Qld State Councillor Kylie Camp, from Burketown, has been appointed in an off-council position as a Portfolio Support Officer. The team is looking forward to working with Kylie to write submissions, do research and provide stats for us.

Another massive undertaking for ICPA (Aust) is to ensure our financial viability long-term and as such Federal Council has engaged Julian Moore, Director of Strategic Membership Solutions, to guide and assist us with engaging long term financial partners, which will assist in ensuring our financial security. This process is in its infancy and we will keep you updated with the progress.

The South Australian Federal Conference convening committee have done an epic job in organising conference and we thank them for all their hard work leading up to today. Thank you!! The partner tours look amazing, and I wouldn't mind ducking out myself for the day!

As always for the next council year we will be looking for new councillors. As always, no experience is required, and it is a learn on the job process. Please feel free to reach out to any past or present federal councillor to chat about what it means to be on federal council. A full council ensures the spread of the workload making is easier for all the team.

If we are looking for new councillors, it obviously means we are farewelling valued members of the current team. This year sees the departure of Julia Broad, Ali Allison and Heather Whigham-Reid and we all need to thank them for their valuable contribution. And Julia I need to see real evidence of a house being built to convince me that it was a valid reason to depart Federal Council!!

As always, I encourage all attendees including guests to participate in robust debate at this conference as this always produces the best outcomes so, please don't walk away after coming all the way to Adelaide with any thoughts left unspoken.

Thank you