

Federal President Conference Report 2026

Louise Martin -QLD

Federal Life members, Mrs Megan MacNicholl OAM, Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM, Mrs Jane Gloster, Mr Jack Beach, Mrs Judy Newton, State and Branch Life Members, Distinguished Guests, fellow ICPA members and friends, it is with great pleasure that I present my Federal Presidents Report. Yet again, I have no idea where the year went other than rapidly and somehow in a Back to the Future like situation, I am back welcoming you all to another Federal conference which has come around again in a flash!

The Federal Council team have yet again risen to the occasion and put in a huge effort advocating on behalf of you all. This latest twelve months has been a period of consolidation with the current ICPA team confident and assured in their roles and enhanced with a few new team members finding their way. The current government is well established, and the advocacy pathway has resumed normality.

To name a few of the completed tasks post conference, we updated all policy objectives, updated the portfolio briefing documents, wrote all our letters to the Ministers and other stakeholders, and determined the current key issues in preparation delegations in November. Whilst we acknowledge there has been a heavy focus on the current key issues, the ongoing AIC campaign, Early Childhood Issues, Youth Allowance and the Remuneration for the Isolated Classroom Supervisor (RICS), federal council continues to work behind the scenes to progress the remaining issues that we are faced with.

November 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 office of Jess Walsh, Minister for Early Childhood. 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 met with the National Farmers Federation, and Australian Local Government Association, seeking their support for ICPA and our current issues. Meetings were also held with The Commissioner of Jobs and Skills Australia and a visit was made to Finnigan, School of Distance Education.

A follow up delegation was held in May when we spent the meeting reinforcing our request for election commitments, we keep ensuring the wheel is squeaking loudly. This delegation was held in Budget week. Whilst it is potentially an exciting time to be in Parliament House, it is not much fun when we leave empty handed as was the case this year. Federal Council has decided to change our delegation schedule to be more aligned with the budget cycle. Going forward we are experimenting with a September delegation, followed by tabling the

annual budget submission in November and a follow up delegation in February to reinforce the financial asks of the members.

In February 2026, Secretary Kelly Ostwald and I travelled to Launceston, Tasmania for the Joint Council Meeting, which was hosted by Federal 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 continue find it very inspiring. Plus, we had a little bit of fun and did a tour of the James Boag brewery for those who were still around. And it was great to do a bit of a reconnaissance of the area in preparation for Federal conference in 2027!

After a road trip exploring the midlands from Launceston, Kel and I lobbied in Hobart to meet the rest of Federal Council for a two-day face to face meeting. This catch up was planned as a new year reset and to undertake training. We set our priorities for the remainder of the year and spent plenty of time reviewing the constitution. We undertook Media training this year with Saltwater Media. Luke Waters delivered an excellent workshop with easy steps to follow to assist Federal Council in getting cut through with our messaging. We used this new strategy with excellent effect at the May delegations.

Throughout this year it has been a privilege to take part in the National Boarding Standard Review on behalf of members. The review will be out for public consultation mid-August and Federal Council will share the details on how to access the review, and I encourage anyone who is involved in boarding from families and our boarding guests to contribute to the review.

I would like to acknowledge the ICPA TECH Team. The Tech Team is a subcommittee of Federal Council, which is endorsed annually at the Post Conference meeting. The team consists of five incredibly passionate and dedicated members of our ICPA family. On behalf of all members, I again extend the greatest of thanks to the Tech Team for the commitment and dedication to ICPA. The Tech Team has been an invaluable addition to ICPA to ensure the smooth operation of the organisation as we continue to rely on technology more heavily. Thank you, Judy Purvis, Nikki McQueen, Tammie Irons, Kym Ross, and Kate Thompson. The Tech Team farewells Judy in the database role this year and on behalf of all members I extend thanks to you Judy for your efforts ensuring the database is always current. Judy is staying on for 6 months as project manager for the Tech team and will then enjoy a well-earned retirement from ICPA!

This council year has seen the establishment of two further subcommittees to assist with lessening the workload of Federal Council and to assist with securing the future of this organisation and the volunteers who serve on Federal Council.

The Partnership subcommittee was established to seek financial and other support from corporate organisations. Federal Council continues to engage 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. It is increasingly difficult for the conference convening committees to source funding for conference, which has traditionally been the main source of revenue for the operation of ICPA. Federal Conferences now must be held in large cities, which increases the costs of holding conferences significantly.

The Governance subcommittee was also established this year, charged with creating and reviewing policies that are now required to maintain compliance as a not-for-profit charity registered with the ACNC. The governance subcommittee has also been working closely with Governology, a governance advisory law firm dedicated to assisting associations and charities, to rewrite the constitution. We thank Kim Hughes and Kylie Camp for their roles in the sub committee

All members of ICPA are welcome to apply to contribute to the ICPA Australia Subcommittees, the Tech Team, Governance and Partnership. These committees are not limited to Federal Council. If Tech, governance or partnerships is your passion please reach out. This is a wonderful way to contribute to ICPA if you cannot commit the time required as a federal councillor.

The Pedals Magazine continues to be a constant in ICPA members' lives and 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.

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 has also engaged C7 so assist Federal Council and Tasmania Branch in the organisation of the 2027 conference in Launceston.

Federal Council works closely with C7even to grow the Rural and Remote Education (RREd) Day. Many thanks must go to our ICPA family, stakeholders, and friends for continuing to embrace the day. The RREd day for 2026 will be the 16th of September and will continue to be held on the 3rd Wednesday in September to avoid clashing with similar events.

We have an exciting collaboration with Sarah Henney from Outback linen this year. Sarah has developed a red shirt in her signature print at a discount price for ICPA members to purchase for the RREd day. Don't worry the men have not been forgotten and Sarah's manufacturer is able to whip up a few ties as well. You will be able to purchase the shirts individually on the Outback Linen website. There is a discount code for ICPA Members. Please see Kym Ross Publicity officer and she will provide you with the code. There is also a couple of sample shirts here for you to check out.

The strategic plan which was developed to support the work of ICPA's processes and procedures to ensure the ongoing longevity of the organisation continues to be implemented. This year we reviewed the plan and set goals for the next 12 months to 2 years. It genuinely has been really pleasing to be able to tick jobs and goals off as we go along. 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.

Federal Council has now fully embraced Teams as the preferred form of communication and file storage. This has increased efficiencies and enabled Federal Council to outsource tech support from an external provider, Askme Technologys, decreasing the necessity to have a councillor responsible for this. It took time to adjust to the new system, however a couple of training sessions assisted, with the transition and training is ongoing so we can further develop our skills.

The Queensland Federal Conference convening committee have done an epic job in organising conference and we thank you Kate Bradshaw, Melissa Iland Alana Moller, Hannah Calcino, Christy Bredhauer, Lisa Southern and Wendy Henning, for all your hard work leading up to today. Thank you!! Thank you must also go to St Hildas School for providing this wonderful venue for the conference.

As always for the next council year we will be looking for new councillors. 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 it 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 Kelly Ostwald, Nikki Mahony and Jill Greenfield as well as our membership officer Louise Winten and we all need to thank them for their valuable contribution.

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 the Gold Coast with any thoughts left unspoken.

Thank you