

2024 State Conference Secretary's Report

Patron Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM, State President Wendy Henning, State and Branch Life Members, Fellow State Councillors, Federal President and Councillors, Past Councillors, Branch Members and Belyando-Mt Coolon Conference Committee members, it gives me pleasure to present my Secretary's Report for the 2023/2024 year.

ICPA 'ing is busy and demanding; it can occur at any time and in any place! With emails, Messenger, Facebook and phone keeping us connected, I have to say that life in ICPA and on State Council is almost a full-time job and is certainly a way of life!

It is a privilege to be part of ICPA – a well-respected and recognised parent advocacy group, with children and education at its heart. Current times are challenging with costs of living soaring, uncertain economic elements, uncertain global political times, destabilising social change and perspectives, and more immediately for us, a looming State election. I am grateful to be able to continue contributing to the world of education in my role in ICPA, for education truly is the key to intelligent and informed decision making, to richness of community and relationships and to personal well-being. Believe me, there is true passion, there is hard work, and there is fearless, yet reasoned advocacy based on evidence, on behalf of members, on the part of State Council.

I thank Wendy, Kate, Kasie, Louise and Amanda on Executive for your continued support - your understanding, graciousness and advice have been truly appreciated, along with the humour and the good fun, the camaraderie, the bountiful texts and messages, and the need for more regular visits to the hairdresser to cover the greys! On a personal note, my thanks go to Executive and State Councillors for covering my leave earlier this year when my Dear Dad's health became very poor, very quickly, and he passed away after a short time. I appreciated the time as an only child, to process this and certainly appreciated Amanda taking my place at Joint Councils meeting in Darwin at only a couple of days' notice.

I also want to thank Assistant Secretary, Sonia Spurdle, for her unbeatable work ethic – always willing to extend a helping hand, Sonia works so meticulously to keep the ICPA wheels turning and deserves our recognition. Sonia has become the "Queen of Gifs" – I am sure her phone is attached to her hip – she is so quick to respond to messages.

Thank you to Melissa Iland for her support in all things technological, social media and publicity. I want to say how much I admire Melissa on her achievement as a Mum of boarders – a tough gig, yet managed with such personal strength. To State Councillors and those in Off-Council positions, thank you for continuing to accept me in your team, and for your friendship. What a great bunch of people you are, and how much I admire the obvious juggling you all do in your other lives in order to commit to ICPA, and how much I have enjoyed your enthusiasm and company and your work. I am going to miss those we farewell in this meeting – Anneli, Kylie, Megan and Melissa – it has been so special to get to know you all.

Life post pandemic is certainly different to life before, even though we now go about our daily tasks with little interruption. However, the impacts of isolation periods and intense online learning, and its continuation will, I believe, be profound. We see a generation of children impacted socially and I fear with so much of our lives now online, we are losing ever so important social and community connections. But this is how life has always been for you. You have always sought opportunities for your children, be they educational or social or physical. You have so much to offer in this space at this time.

Again, we experienced a significant wet season in the North-West, the Gulf and other areas of our state. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with our members affected, and their communities. Whilst we can pass this off as “life in the bush”, there is a human, physical and emotional toll, not to mention the economic toll, and this includes the impacts on the learning of our children.

2023 State Conference in Julia Creek saw our changeover of President and some changes to roles within Council. Tammy Bailey also resigned a few weeks later. We were delighted to welcome Sancia Fegan, Sonya Shelley and Robyn O’Brien to State Council for 2023-24. All Councillors have most certainly embraced their roles with enthusiasm, having been thrown into the action at Post-Conference meeting!

Fiona Murray took on the important role of Fundraising Officer for the year. We thank Fiona for her huge effort during the year and her tireless pursuit of donors for the annual Art Union. This is becoming an increasingly difficult job, exacerbated, no doubt, by the current economic climate.

Lisa Southern has been kept busy producing fabulous *News and Views* editions for us all to read. This too, is hard work, sourcing interesting articles and graphics. We all look forward to receiving our copies in the mailbox! Tina Barrett became our Membership Officer, working closely with Amanda to overcome challenges which come up with this role, especially with the change to rolling Membership payments.

Judy Treloar flew the ICPA Flag with Hospital Schools for another year and always provides us with detailed, meticulous reports. Judy also keeps us up to date with other Rural Community Advocacy groups and is an enormous help with Bush Christmas.

Tammie Irons maintained her interest in ICPA as our Web Tech Officer – Tam works “behind the scenes” for us and we appreciate her work – yet mostly, she can only work with what we provide to her. Please ensure you help Tam by updating your Branch pages and providing her with information.

Following Julia Creek State Conference, Delegations were held in early August 2023 in Brisbane. We were fortunate to be hosted by Brisbane Boys College and thank Headmaster, Mr Andre Casson and his wonderful staff for supporting ICPA in this way. Our every need was met.

Being the first Delegations post conference, there was much to be done and we met with the Department of Education, BSDE, DESBT, the Minister’s Advisor, Dr Christian Rowan and other relevant organisations including QCT, QCAA, SPELD. Councillors were kept very busy representing the motions from Conference which became ICPA policies.

State Council Mid-Year Meeting was held in Theodore – what wonderful hospitality was extended to us by Sarah Cox and Nikki Mahoney who made us feel very much at home. We appreciated attending a Dawson Valley Branch meeting and having dinner with Branch members on the Friday evening, prior to settling into full-day meetings on the Saturday and Sunday, as bushfires closed in on the routes some of us travelled home.

Mid-Year Meeting led to Delegations in November in Brisbane as Councillors further represented the issues members had debated at State Conference. We also undertook valuable administrative work whilst we were hosted by ISQ in their beautiful new administration offices at Southbank. Thank you to Chris Mountford and Amanda Watt for supporting us in this way.

Again, numerous meetings were attended across Brisbane, including with Ningana Trust, Digital Child, Bush Kids, PandCs Qld, QCEC, TAFE Qld, Telstra and QTU amongst others.

And, of course, we met with the Department. Added to our usual meetings were numerous appointments with Queensland Parliamentarians, who sought to meet with us in response to the distribution of our *Key Issues* Document. We were certainly buoyed by the response and appreciated the opportunity to advocate for the issues which were highly concerning for our members.

February Delegations saw State Council meeting face-to face at St Joseph's Nudgee College and again, we greatly appreciated the hospitality of Principal, Mr Scott Thomson and Dean of Boarding, Mr Casey Brearly and their wonderful staff.

The usual meeting with the Department was very informative and productive and other meetings included: QCAA, Autism Queensland, TAFE, DESBT, AgForce and parliamentarians, to name a few.

This past Council year saw Councillors representing ICPA Qld and its members at various additional meetings, projects, conferences and forums, and responding to various reviews and requests for submissions. This work takes the time of our volunteers and the input of ICPA Qld is respected and indeed, sought. We see this increasing year by year.

Our partnership with Digital Child has continued to thrive, as have others including with Ningana Trust, and ABSA. All our partnerships are greatly valued, and we thank partners for their support of ICPA advocacy. One highlight this year is the ICPA Photo/banner displayed on two Greyhound buses which traverse Queensland.

The Secretary receives and sends numerous emails each and every day! These can relate to the organisation of Delegations, contact with stakeholders, State Conference, members' issues, monthly meetings, mid-year meeting, campaigns, and communication between State Councillors and politicians. For example, post conference, many letters were written, and emails sent to various stakeholders regarding the motions passed at our conference. Our communication is especially important in developing positive relationships with others, so that we are able to have worthy conversations in the interests of our members and their families.

The 2023-24 Council year saw branches recognising Members who have contributed significantly to ICPA Qld over the years. Assistant Secretary, Sonia Spurdle has listed these recipients and I offer my congratulations and thanks to all of them.

Queensland Certificates of Appreciation will be awarded during Day 2 of Conference.

We also saw a name change for the former CAP BOTA Branch to Capricornia, to better reflect the demographics of the Branch area.

Last year Bush Christmas raised nearly \$15,439.00 to support the work of ICPA. ICPA Qld would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Wendy Allen for continuing the tradition of supporting ICPA Qld through the Bush Christmas Raffle and to Judy Treloar who works so hard with this Raffle. Anyone lucky enough to visit Bush Christmas in November-December in Toowoomba, would have been enthralled with the variety of goods available and the fabulous atmosphere. We look forward to continuing this relationship as this is one of our major fundraising events.

Once again, Conference Minutes were most ably compiled by Di Selby. This is a task which takes many hours to ensure accuracy and professionalism. We certainly appreciate your commitment, organisation and hard work, Di. Noela Wilson and Tammie Irons are also to be thanked and recognised for proofreading the minutes and other ICPA material.

Rose Philip continues to be our Archivist. This is such important work for the history of ICPA.

Branches are reminded to send a copy of their AGM minutes and Branch Executives forms to the Assistant Secretary, assistantsecretary@icpaqld.com.au. Audited financials need to be returned to the Treasurer treasurer@icpaqld.com.au after each AGM. A reminder to keep your personal membership details current by logging onto the website and updating details when needed. Any other membership queries please send to the Membership Officer, membership@icpaqld.com.au This is essential to keep the member data base current and ensure those who join are included and receive all information relevant to them.

Belyando – Mt Coolon Branch Conference Committee members have been working extremely hard to organise conference this year. They have left no stone unturned and have done a superb job in delivering this wonderful conference. You will be exhausted tomorrow, if you are not, already! Our thanks must go to Amanda, Goscelyn, Ureisha, Colleen, Zabby, Kate, Natalie K, Tom, Alana and Natalie C. and the numerous other hardworking folk who have created this Conference.

I want to acknowledge the work that our retiring Immediate Past President, Louise Martin has done for ICPA Qld. Louise has given many years to ICPA Qld and her commitment to, and belief in, the provision of equal access to quality education for young people, has been obvious. We will miss Lou's "discombobulation", but know that she is not leaving ICPA behind, as she continues in her role as Federal President.

Finally, thank you to President Wendy Henning for leading us in State Council Year 2023-24. It has been a huge year, especially as awareness of, and support for our organisation increases, and the perspective of rural and remote Australians is increasingly valued. Well done, Wendy on such a busy, successful and "let's do it" year!

In conclusion, I would like to assure members, that State Councillors work extremely hard to represent you and your issues. Please be sure to participate as you can – this can include completing surveys, responding to requests for information, preparing motions, updating information and supporting each other. Thank you for allowing me to present my Secretary's report.

"I, Annette Boyle, Secretary, Queensland State Council, move that the Secretary's Report be adopted."

Annette Boyle

ICPA Qld State Secretary

