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## Memberships Report

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**Madam President, distinguished guests, fellow members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure that I present the Membership report.**

There is no doubt that 2023 will be known as the year of change in the memberships space. ICPA (Aust), under the steady guidance of Federal Memberships Officer Judy Newton, has created a more secure online system for both the payment of memberships and storage of personal information. This new platform has protections in place to ensure that members' information is safely stored separate to the main ICPA website and only trained and authorised ICPA officers can access this information for the purposes of membership business.

Each membership now runs for a 12-month term from the date of payment, to enable members a full twelve months membership regardless of what time of year they join or renew. The new database sends auto reminders to members when their renewal date comes around. There is also a rolling memberships option being built into the platform for members who simply want to set and forget their annual membership by authorising an auto payment.

Membership fees are made up of a portion for the branch, a portion for the State and a portion for Federal ICPA. Branch, State and Federal ICPA decide their fee portion at their individual AGMs. ICPA (Aust) has increased the 2024 Federal component from \$22 to \$25. The NSW state fee remains at \$18, whilst branches set their own portion at their AGMs each year. We therefore have a legacy issue whereby members pay different fees depending on which branch they belong to. We need to think about how we navigate through our branch fee structures to bring consistency. I recommend branches think about how we can move forward with a consistent branch fee to reduce confusion and harmonise the fee structure. This will take some consideration from individual branches because some may need to reduce their fee and others may need to raise it to get that consistency, State Council is very open to ideas or ways that we can help. I urge all of you to consider the benefits of having the same fee across all branches.

Historically, the membership fee was received at branch level and the branch kept their component and forwarded the State and Federal components on to ICPA-NSW and ICPA (Aust) respectively. With the new online payment system, it is now the reverse. Federal receives the fee and then distributes to the State and Branch their portions. Whilst this process has significantly increased workload on the Federal Memberships Officer, it has reduced the workload on branches. An unintended consequence is that branches have to adjust to new ways of connecting with their members - whilst joining online is now quick and easy, we need to find ways where we can still connect on a personal level with our members and that is a focus, we can prioritise for 2024. I look forward to working with all branches to ensure we are still connecting on a personal level with our members because without personal connection, we don't get the important face to face and social interactions that are the fabric of our organisation.

Membership renewals have really started to roll in since the new platform was set up in January and we have not removed anyone from the database to give members time to adjust to the new

system. With this in mind, there are currently 711 NSW members. I would ask that members refrain from posting me cheques in the mail and instead join online. We all live remotely, so to get to a bank is difficult and impacts your membership because it is just not an efficient process.

Change in any organisation involves consistent team effort to get things done, it requires flexibility to adapt to unforeseen issues and a vision that the desired outcomes will make all our roles easier and more efficient. It also requires a momentum that can sometimes be hard to keep when we consider all the things we have to do in our days and this momentum is certainly something I have struggled with. I would like to acknowledge the supportive networks within ICPA who have helped work through unintended consequences of our changes and maintained the momentum required to 'get there'. The intent has always been to reduce workload on our branches, to make it easier to join ICPA and easier to keep members and I would like to personally thank all branch executives for putting up with my random text messages or phone calls during this time. I will say, it has been nice to speak to so many of you though.

On behalf of ICPA-NSW I would especially like to thank Judy Newton, Federal Memberships Officer for the absolute power of work that has been undertaken in this space and we look forward to enjoying this streamlined system – a bit like when you leave the corrugated gravel road and hit the bitumen, the journey is a lot smoother and I think we have finally hit the bitumen!

I would also like to thank Top Wire Editor Kerrie Johnston for her patience and understanding – you might wonder what the Top Wire Editor has to do with memberships, but we have labels to print and other things that happen in the background like the schools advertising and Kerrie is always so understanding every quarter when it is time for me to download our membership list and print the labels! Kerrie then rallies the troops at Rankins Springs, and then they package up the Top Wire, it all comes together nicely but I am always in awe of the work that goes on in the background.

To Tanya and the team on State Council, you all do a remarkable job for our member families, often at the sacrifice of your own family time. To Nathan, thank you for your trusted stewardship as treasurer and Georgina for bouncing ideas and pragmatic solutions – you make the memberships role much easier at the expense of your own roles growing larger. I cannot thank you enough. I am sorry that I cannot attend conference in person, however I look forward to continuing to work with you from afar as we think of unique ways to encourage memberships of ICPA!

**Remember – to improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often!**

**Claire Butler**  
**Memberships Officer**