

ODE TO ICPA A TALE OF 50 YEARS



The despair of drought hung lowly on the dislocated town
An air of doubt that deepened when the Bourke Hostel closed down
But defeat was not an option on account of cloudless weather
And she knew that they'd be stronger if they all stood up together
So she commandeered a meeting and a rightful thing was done
The mighty Mrs Edgley back in Nineteen Seventy One...
Yes she rose amongst that gathering and made a declaration
"The one thing that we must protect... our children's education"
And a seed of hope was watered by a tear of joy that day
As the birth was crowned and christened in the name 'ICPA'

Four letters proud and worthy in a hard but honest nation
Children at the forefront, namely those in isolation
The parents of these children unashamedly invited
To be vigilant in vision, strong of voice and co-united
Mothers who were weighted down with far too much already
Fathers who were breaking backs to keep the home-front steady
Young Australian families and giving it their best
They descended on that meeting where the challenge was addressed
Then, all across the countryside, they gathered to the fray
And they saddled up that stockhorse with the name 'ICPA'

The message spread like fire and its relevance was burning --
"Equity of access to the tools of greater learning
An isolated child - one who for geographic station
Is compromised unfairly when it comes to education"

The reasoning compelling but the day was far from done
Every inch was fiercely fought and every classroom won
They shouted from the rooftops to personify their fears
Far too often sadly, it would fall on wooden ears
But the blaze was in their heart now and it wouldn't go away
So they shouted even louder did the bold 'ICPA'

Finally, a breakthrough and the true believers roared
For they shouted and they shouted 'til they could not be ignored
The government responded and in Nineteen Seventy Three
Persistence was rewarded with the sacred AIC
Allowances incorporated, supplements secured

The victory was vital and its relevance endured
Because the fight was one of principle and something had to give!
No one should be punished on account of where they live
So the icon was established – it was here and here to stay
And the letters were imprinted – they were I, C, P & A

Branch by branch, they made their stance - a nation joined the ride
And everyone who wore that badge, they wore that badge with pride
Dedicated, passionate and stubbornly tenacious!
It became a family of its own, hospitable and gracious
And family was paramount in everything achieved
From Monaro up to Charleville the signal is received
From Oatlands to the Alice, Port Augusta onto Broome
Broken Hill to Lord Howe Isle, from fax machine to Zoom!
And here we are in Longreach where it honours me to say
Another Federal Conference flies the flag 'ICPA'

You can almost see their faces when the sun is going down
Mitchell, Edgley, Jakins and the VPs - Green & Powne
Pioneers of progress – back when school was in the air!
Now the sky is being mustered – there's a satellite up there!
Ain't no doubt about it friends, we've walked a country mile
But the beauty of ambition fuels the same inspired smile
To be the best that one can be and 'high' is where we aim
The bond of child and parent – it's undoubtedly the same
And the spirit of the people who have gathered here today
Shines a light towards tomorrow... in the name 'ICPA'

There's a moral to this story and it echoes undeterred
Believe in what you stand for and your voice will soon be heard
Success befriends adversity on every worthy track
When all you really ask for is a fair and decent crack!
Despite the many hurdles and no matter what the weather
Strength is better measured by the mob that works together
There is love and there is loyalty incumbent in your tears
That's the sum of every heart... a tale of fifty years!
And beyond this celebration, the horizon's holding sway
As we ride into the future... and we shout 'ICPA'!

To every proud contributor who somehow lit the way
Raise your glass in honour - 50 years – ICPA!

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