



“The thing that I realise is, that it’s not what you take, it’s what you leave” – Jennifer Niven, All the Bright Places

As I sit in my schoolroom in 2021, writing this report while my 8 year old daughter works on her English assessment, I wonder if founding members, who established ICPA in 1971, envisaged the legacy they would leave behind? Did they realise that the organisation they founded would be just as relevant and important 50 years later as it was at that very first meeting? So much has changed in 50 years, yet so much has stayed the same and still today educational opportunities for geographically isolated students remain inequitable and the role of ICPA is as necessary as ever. Some of the challenges may be different, but the core business is still the same. And so it is that 50 years later ICPA members remain empowered, motivated and committed to the goal of leaving in our wake more equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for geographically isolated children.

The start of 2021 has continued to provide uncertain and unpredictable times as we grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, although we remain hopeful that the semblance of normality which has returned will continue, especially as we head into State Conferences and in the lead up to our Federal Conference at the end of July. Regardless of what ‘normal’ looks like over the coming months Federal Council will continue our work.

Since my last report, Federal Council has been able to participate in virtual delegation meetings with Hon Andrew Gee MP, Hon Mark Coulton MP and Hon Paul Fletcher MP, where topics for discussion ranged from In Home Care, to communications, school funding, telehealth and everything in between. While the virtual option is not ideal, we have certainly been able to get the best out of it and indeed it has actually been a great opportunity to give a small glimpse into our world’s with Federal Councillors participating from schoolrooms, sitting on the windowsill of their house to get internet connection, rushing into meetings after loading cattle, shearing sheep or harvesting crops and generally dedicating themselves to ICPA in amongst the hustle and bustle of their daily lives.



We have over the past months held 3 full days of hybrid Federal Council meetings, with some councillors travelling to Hobart for meetings in February, while others participated via Zoom. We are also working towards face to face meetings and delegations in Canberra in the coming months. It has been over twelve months since we have been able to attend delegations, so we are cautiously optimistic of being able to pursue this plan.

Over the past months, we have also participated in a number of virtual meetings with the National Farmers Federation (NFF), Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN), the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC), nbn and other organisations and have been especially pleased to have had the opportunity to work closely with supportive staff from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) to continue to build our collaborative relationship with them and ensure we have the contacts available to us when needed. With many changes in staffing occurring recently, to re-establish connections with new staff is vitally important to our cause.

In February branch replies and the motion update from the 2020 Conference were completed and sent out to members. Certainly Federal Council activities have not been limited to motion actions, as was mentioned in our full motion update, however we welcome the opportunity to update members, branches and State Councils on our efforts to address their valid and important concerns and issues. In March, Federal Councillors, where possible, depending upon COVID developments, attended the state Conferences in the Northern Territory, South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia. I will also aim to Zoom into several of the conferences that I am unable to attend and was able to attend the recent NSW AGM virtually. If we have learnt nothing in the past twelve months, we certainly know now that where there is a will there’s a way!

The theme for the 2021 50th Federal Conference is “Stronger Together” and most certainly, over the past 50 years, one of the strengths of ICPA has been the collaboration of members at Branch, State and Federal level and I would be remiss to not express my sheer pleasure at

seeing how all Councils across Australia have come together in many facets over the past twelve months. From building a new website together, to collaborating on a joint submission on a National Framework for Interstate Boarding Students and many other topics in between, it has been so heartening to work with all State Councils to kick collective goals for ICPA as a whole.

We continue to keep our hopes high that our new normal will allow as many of us as possible to come together at Federal Conference in July. By the time you are reading this plans will be well underway. Regardless of what is ahead, be that our world continue virtually or we are able to come together more frequently face-to-face, what I can assure all members is that Federal Council is always here for you and aim to support you in any way we can because being isolated definitely does not mean you are alone.

Alana Moller
Federal President

From Your Editor

Hello and welcome to your April issue of Pedals.

Just when it looked like life might give us a break in regards to Covid we find NSW being overwhelmed by floods.

My thoughts and those of all ICPA members, I'm sure, go out to all those affected. Mother Nature certainly has a cruel bent at times.

However for some the rain will have been a blessing and

it's a difficult road to travel when we want to celebrate what is good for us whilst knowing it means destruction for others.

Thank you to NSW, NT, SA and WA Councils who all, went above and beyond to get some information and photos to me following their conferences in March.

It means I'm a little later finishing this issue than I'd like but I feel it is important to include the most current material possible in each issue.

I look forward to featuring QLD conference in the July issue and I'm sure the October issue will be a cracker with all the highlights of the 50th anniversary of the Federal Conference in Longreach at the end of July.

I'm not a big football follower -should say AFL as I don't even understand the other codes -but there's a West Coast Eagles player who even I can recognise. When I had the chance to have a quick photo with him to send to my two West Coast mad children, I couldn't resist.

I always knew I was short but this photo really does say it all, especially when my daughter pointed out that Nic Nat Naitanui (or Nic Nat as he is often know) wasn't even standing upright!

Who have you had quick snap with just so you can show off to your kids or someone else or because you are a fan?

Raelene Hall
Editor



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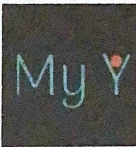
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