

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As we embark on our 50 year celebrations this year I dedicate this President's Report to all of those who have come before me as Federal Presidents and I express my absolute gratitude and admiration to them all for the legacy they have built.

Year's end is neither an end or a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instil in us – Hal Borland

My happiest wishes to you all for the new year, I trust it has started positively and joyfully with great optimism and hope for you all.

The year that was, 2020, certainly did give us some experience, instilled some extra wisdom but, most of all, it showed us just how important it is for us all to support each other and continue to work together. It was certainly a tumultuous year marked by extraordinary and difficult events, particularly around educating our children, challenging for many of our members at the best of times.

While we should not dwell upon these past challenges and instead focus on what lies ahead, it is this year where our ICPA past is so important, as we mark 50 years of this great organisation. What an incredible milestone from the humble beginnings of our predecessors in the NSW outback town of Bourke, in April 1971 when the late Mrs. Pat Edgley, MBE, called a meeting to save the Bourke Hostel, which serviced families in the outlying district, from closure. I pay homage to all that have come before us and their achievements and determination which led to the formation of the great organisation we are a part of today, 50 years on.

And to each and every one of our members current and past, this would not have been possible without all of you; members, branches, State Councils and Federal Council all working alongside each other to advocate for our children. They say "from little things big things grow" and ICPA is the epitome of this adage.

There is much to look forward to this year and Federal Council are eagerly awaiting the opportunity of sharing these events with many of you.



Of course though, celebrations aside, there is still plenty else happening in ICPA business. Since our Conference in August Federal Council, though still unable to meet in person, nor attend delegations, have been focused on addressing the motions carried at Conference, along with ongoing policy. We have been in contact with a number of MPs and Senators to put forth numerous topics and recommendations and, at the time of writing this report, are awaiting responses to requests for virtual meetings with key Ministers before the Christmas break.

Predictably several topics have been taking precedence for us. Most notably, our collaborative efforts with all State Councils in bringing to fruition a national approach to the situation of interstate borders affected by COVID-19 restrictions, has been ongoing. Together we all contributed to a submission to Hon Andrew Gee MP, Federal Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education. It was heartening to have the opportunity to contribute to this framework and a pleasure to work with all state councils to produce a thorough and valuable document on behalf of our members.

We have also been actively working on the new School Resourcing Standard Direct Measure of Income Funding model, the Distance Education Teaching Allowance advocacy, providing feedback for new initiatives for school leavers, working on the development of the new look website, being actively involved in communication activities and discussing provision of additional financial support for apprentices, amongst other valuable topics and undertakings.

Federal Council is pleased to be representing our members as a key stakeholder in consultations on the development of the new regional tech hub and look forward to continuing to be a part of this to ensure support for those educating their children in regional, rural and remote areas is at the forefront. Perhaps one of the biggest topics on the agenda though has been the establishment of the Tertiary Access Payment. While, at this stage, some of the finer details of how the Payment will be accessed are being finalised, it is a tremendously positive outcome for our families that

this long-sought assistance has come to fruition. Also in the area of tertiary education, Federal Council was especially pleased to note that, as a direct result of our discussion with the Federal Government on the concerns around gap year students' eligibility for Youth Allowance as an independent due to the COVID-19 lockdown, that in the Federal Budget positive measures were announced to alleviate this fear and these measures have been implemented.

All of these topics, and others, will be discussed in upcoming virtual delegation meetings and have also been addressed in a range of forums, from webinar meetings, letters, discussion with advisers to other advisory and consultation groups. Though we have not been able to undertake any advocacy in person, we have been busy with opportunities to participate in a range of virtual events from all over Australia, some of which we may otherwise not

have been able to attend in a 'normal' year.

And what then is 'normal'? It is hard to know in these uncertain and unprecedented times! While Federal Council recognises this we continue to forge ahead with plans to hopefully come together as soon as possible this year in as many face to face capacities as possible. At this stage we aim to attend state conferences where possible in order to support our State Councils and meet with members, however knowing this may not be possible. Regardless of the format, or any other challenges the future throws our way, you can all be certain that one thing will never change; we will always be here to support you in educating your children because isolated does not mean alone.

Alana Moller
Federal President

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For more information please contact Kim Hughes, Training Portfolio Leader, ICPA Federal Council at kim@icpafc.org.au