

PRESIDENTS REPORT CONFERENCE REPORT – JUNE 2023

Madam Patron, Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM, Federal Vice President Mrs Julia Broad, Branch Life Members, Past Councillors, the Julia Branch convening committee and branch members, Distinguished Guests, fellow ICPA members, ladies & gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to present my 2023 President's Report.

It only seems like yesterday that we were all in Blackall, celebrating the 51st year of ICPA Qld, during what would have to be one of the coldest few days in Blackall ever! The conference was especially notable as we honoured Mrs Jan Gall and Mrs Margie Greenway with well-deserved State Life Memberships. It was also a privilege to have the Minister for Education Grace Grace open the conference. Most notably welcomed Tammy Bailey from Richmond Branch aboard as State Councillor and Christy Bredhauer as Fundraising Officer.

Following Blackall conference, we worked on our motion Action plan for the year, updated our objectives to be endorsed at our first meeting, and set out to make contact with our Federal and State counterparts. We reached out to our branches that each councillor mentors to introduce ourselves and generally prepared ourselves for the year ahead.

July delegations were very successful, and it was the first time a number of our councillors had been to Brisbane for the experience given the COVID world we have been living with. It was exciting to have the full team together other than our Kylie, who does the most amazing job tuning in from home, for our first Face to Face meeting post conference. We set our key issues for the year, which are Distance Education (prioritising GI students), Schools (staffing allocations for rural and remote schools) and Tertiary, Trade and Training (that apprentices receive adequate pastoral care). We have taken on board some advice that we should not change our key issues unless the problem has been solved or a burgeoning new issue has arisen. This will provide a consistent approach and greater impact. This document has virtually covered the state, reaching many inboxes far and wide, including all parliamentarians and key stakeholders and is included in your satchels here.

Delegations entailed a full day of meetings with various sectors of the Education Department. The Education Department has undergone a huge restructure since the commencement of Mr Michael De'Ath taking on the role of Director General. State Council was able to provide feedback on the restructure as there were concerns that the rural and remote sector was no longer a standalone portfolio. We were assured by the DG personally that the new restructure will enhance the outcomes for rural and remote schools, students and families and we look forward to navigating the new system and acronyms! In addition, Kym Turner, Director Rural and Remote gave us a full run down on the new structure which was invaluable to ensure we are directing our lobby to the correct department. Councillors were also kept busy meeting with other key stakeholders including AgForce, Telstra, NBN, ABSA, ISQ, QCAA, P&C Queensland, LGAQ among others.

Our November delegations were again very successful. It was very exciting to know that the accommodation facilities at the Distance Education Schools were being constructed. Most are now completed with the exception of Longreach as there has been challenges with sourcing building so some delays have occurred.

State Councillors travelled to Brisbane again in February for our first face-to-face meeting and delegations for the year. Our week was packed with meetings, and we appreciate the effort from our Department of Education for continuing to be supportive of ICPA and genuinely listening to the issues in rural and remote education. Councillors worked hard at getting all the motion feedback to branches in preparation for motion writing for this year's conference. State Council received positive feedback for the new initiative of compiling all motion feedback into one document for branches to use as a reference when writing motions.

March saw the launch of the ICPA Qld Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS) awareness campaign. Initially the Financial Assistance portfolio made a submission to Treasury seeking a raise in the LAFHAS to further meet the rising cost of accessing education away from home where there is no other choice. In support for the submission

and to garner widespread support and raise awareness of the issues, ICPA Qld commenced an extensive media campaign. Thanks must go to all the councillor, members and stakeholders who galvanised into action by providing milk bottle videos, and sharing their own raw and emotive stories on what it would mean to them for a raise in the LAFHAS. The penultimate moment of the Press Conference was deemed a success with several media outlets in attendance resulting in widespread media coverage.

For a complete recount of proceedings of State Councils meetings throughout the year, read the full portfolio reports provided by Portfolio leaders in the conference documents on the website.

Thanks again to Department of Education, Rural, Remote team for facilitating the meetings with all the relevant departments. Post Conference all the motions are collated and sent to the relevant areas for consideration. This has streamlined our meeting days considerably. We must acknowledge Dr Regan Neumann, Kym Turner, Julissa, and Vas from the team who have been so accommodating over the years as they move on to different areas within the department. We really appreciate that we have Dr Grant Webb and Leanne Wright here with us for conference to update members on the latest developments within the department and to listen to member issues.

ICPA's relationship with the Department of Education continues to reflect the high value they place on our organization. We are proud to be represented on many stakeholder groups including the Rural and Remote Education Reference Group, Early Years Forum, Qld Schools Ethics Committee and Outside School Hours Care Committee. Thanks, must also go to the other parent groups with whom we work closely – P&Cs Qld, Catholic School Parents Queensland, and Queensland Independent Schools Parent Network. In particular I would like to thank Amanda Watt, Executive Officer, Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network for reigniting The Joint Parent Council. This group consists of P&C Qld, Catholic School Parents Queensland, Queensland Independent Schools Parent Network and ICPA Qld. The Council has enjoyed a rich history of joint advocacy for over 40years and had lapsed over the Covid period. The purpose is to advocate on mutual issues, culminating in an Annual joint meeting with the Minister for Education and ICPA Qld looks forward to further participation in this group.

Again, I would like to thank Carmel Nash and the team at the QCEC offices in Brisbane for the use of their boardroom and web conferencing facilities for our Council meetings along with the delicious smokos and lunch provided, it is much appreciated. We recently undertook some training in how to use Office 365 more effectively as we have recently migrated from using Dropbox and Zoom to using the Office suite of products. Our training session took place at Brisbane Grammar School, and we express our sincere thanks to Brisbane Grammar for the use of the facilities and enable us to admire the wonderful campus. The visit to Brisbane Grammar prompted State Council to explore opportunities at other Brisbane boarding schools to host State Council meetings. In February we held our Council meeting at Stuartholme School and thoroughly appreciated the warm welcome and hospitality. Thanks must go to Principal Mr Danny Crump and Dean of Boarding Mrs Jane Morris for making our day so enjoyable.

ICPA Qld is very proud of the great working relationships we have with our Key stakeholders, ABSA, QCAA, AgForce, Telstra, Nbn, QCEC, ISQ, P&C Queensland and others. Knowing that we can communicate with these organisations at any time to assist in our advocacy is invaluable.

October, saw State Council descend upon Texas, for our midyear meeting, hosted by Southern Downs branch. We thoroughly enjoyed the welcome drinks held at the rabbit works which has such a rich history and is well worth a visit. We then knuckled down for 2 solid days of meetings and strategic planning in the inspirational CWA house. Thank you so much for your warm hospitality and looking after us so well.

In February Queensland State Council attended a joint council meeting with Federal Council and all the other state councils in Melbourne. It is such a valuable experience, with each council offering support and the sharing of ideas. Annette Boyle and I were privileged to represent Queensland at the face-to-face meeting.

I must also acknowledge our valued partners ABSA, and Outback Insurance. The financial support as well as the in-kind support of both organisations is second to none and is much appreciated.

On behalf of State Council and all the members of ICPA Qld, I must extend our warmest thanks to our sponsors. Year after year your support allows members to come together and share their highs and lows. It is your support that

ensures ICPA has the resources necessary to lobby effectively at such a high level without needing to source government funding or grants, enabling the organisation to remain truly apolitical in our advocacy.

A massive thank you to our unsung heroes working behind the scenes in off council positions. Christy Bredhauer, Charleville Branch, Fundraising Officer, who has now passed the Baton on to Fiona Murray from Charters Towers Branch. Judy Treloar from Charleville branch, past councillor and state secretary continues in the Hospital Schools position. Lisa Southern, St George Branch and Jacquie Hemming continue to do a cracking job with the News and Views role. We must also thank Natalie Slack from Westmar/Inglestone branch, who sends out our new members packs on behalf of the branch. Louise Winten, Charleville branch has had yet another big year with the Membership role, we have appreciated your commitment throughout the process of transferring from the manual to electronic membership process. Thank you, Lou.

Thank-you to branches and delegates who have put motions on the Conference Agenda. State Council appreciates the efforts you make to ensure that your local issues are addressed here at conference so that State Council can escalate the concerns to the next level.

To our State Council team, yet again we have ridden the highs and lows throughout the year, and we are proud to stand before you here ready to launch into another conference. Many thanks to every single councillor for your contribution and effort over the past year.

To Catherine, and the convening committee, thank you for all your hard work and dedication!! The hall looks magnificent, and we are looking forward to the next couple of days here in Julia Creek.

Finally – thank you to you – the members. It is your passion, your drive and your belief that brings us all here together each year, united in our fight for equity in education for our children. Don't ever forget that you are true educators. It's a constant battle as a parent to try to get the best for your child – after all the best kind of parent is leading by example - and by being here this week, standing together to represent rural and remote education, you are the best kind of role model you can be.

Every day that we, State Councillors, are advocating on behalf of you, our members, we see the lack of understanding of our unique circumstances so we encourage you and other branch members to remain active and involved as this organisation can only thrive with active participation.

This year sees the departure of Louise Winten, Membership Officer and Christy Bredhauer, fundraising officer from the State Council team. We thank you both for your dedication and commitment. As you are aware all positions are declared vacant at the AGM, so, please consider putting your hand up to join State Council, it is such a rewarding experience on many levels.

As you have seen we have been putting the callout for a treasurer. If this role is of an interest, please see me during the breaks for more information.

This is my final presidents report, it has been a privilege and I thank you all for your support over the past three years.

Louise Martin

President

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