

2023 State Conference Secretary's Report

Patron Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM, State President Mrs Louise Martin, State and Branch Life Members, Fellow State Councillors, Federal Councillors, Past Councillors, Branch Members and Julia Creek Conference Committee members, it gives me pleasure to present my Secretary's Report for the 2022/2023 year. My ICPA life continues to be one of learning and affords me the privilege of contributing in a small way to the educational journeys of rural and remote students.

Whilst in my previous life, my career in schools allowed me to work closely with students and families and to share in the joys and challenges that educational experiences, family life, government policy, community perceptions, environmental conditions, the economic climate and trends of thought present, I remain in awe of the commitment of ICPA as an organisation, and its members maintain in pursuing equal access to educational opportunities for their members' families and children. There is a true passion, there is hard work, and there is fearless, yet reasoned advocacy based on evidence.

I thank Louise, Wendy, Kate and Amanda on Executive for your continued unswerving support - your forgiveness, graciousness and advice have been truly appreciated as have the humour and the good fun, along with the camaraderie, the boundless texts and messages, and the pulling out of hair at times! So essential in effective teams. I also want to thank Assistant Secretary, Sonia Spurdle, for her hard work – always willing to extend a helping hand, Sonia works so diligently to keep the ICPA wheels turning and deserves our recognition for her quiet work and “can do” approach. Sonia is also able to help us all keep perspective with regular gifs that sum up a situation most aptly.

My thanks also to Melissa Iland for her support in all things technological, social media and publicity. To State Councillors and those in Off-Council positions, thank you for continuing to accept me in your team, for your support and patience, and for your friendship. What a great bunch of people you are, and how much I admire the obvious juggling you all do in your other lives in order to commit to ICPA and its advocacy, and how much I have enjoyed your enthusiasm and company and your work.

With the changes in approach to Covid, we had a better 12 months than previously, with only the traffic light warning system to utilise, and minimal, if any, disruptions to carrying out our meetings and delegations. We have now progressed to alterations to meeting schedules due to those we are visiting having covid, rather than the wholesale interruptions of the past two to three years!

The latter part of 2022 saw rain events affect much of Queensland, and consequently, many of our members experienced flooding. The culmination was the dreadful flooding in the North-West and Gulf areas and our thoughts and prayers continue to be with our members affected, and their communities. The photos of flooded and destroyed school rooms were especially poignant; yet how quickly families worked to restore their children's access to their education in one way or another.

I have discovered that life in ICPA and on State Council is extremely busy – in fact it is almost a full-time job and is certainly a way of life!

I was privileged to attend Federal Conference in Perth in August – apart from the wind, rain and enormous seas, it was exciting to visit the West for the first time. Motions were presented and debated with feeling and intensity, and we were also treated to the presentation of Guest Speaker, Dr Craig Challen, an Australian vet and one of the team who rescued the young Thai soccer players from the flooded cave in Northern

Thailand in 2018. His story is well worth watching and reading.

2022 State Conference in Blackall saw some changes to Council with Jocelyn Freeman and Rob McArthur stepping down after committed service to ICPA Qld State Council. Dianne Meikle also resigned a few weeks later. We were delighted to welcome Tammy Bailey to State Council for 2022-23. Tammy certainly has embraced her role with enthusiasm.

Christy Bredhauer took on the important role of Fundraising Officer for the year and will hand the reins to Fiona Murray who has agreed to take on this role. We thank Christy for her huge effort during the year and her tireless pursuit of donors for Bush Christmas Raffle and the annual Art Union. Lisa Southern and Jacque Hemming have been kept busy producing fabulous *News and Views* editions for us all to read. Louise Winten has worked as Membership Officer, continuing to overcome challenges with the new database as she and Amanda worked on membership. Sadly, Louise has decided to finish in this role, and we thank her for her dedication and enthusiastic work over the years.

Judy Treloar flew the ICPA Flag with Hospital Schools and has provided us with detailed, meticulous reports throughout the year. I was delighted to receive the nomination of Judy as a Branch Life Member this year and have enjoyed our emails sharing tiny snippets of the joys of life as grandparents!

Following State Conference, Delegations were held in mid-July 2022 in Brisbane. We were fortunate to be hosted by Carmel Nash and her wonderful team at Catholic Schools Parents Queensland for our face-to-face meeting. Being the first Delegations post conference, there was much to be done and we met with the Department of Education, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, visited the Hospital School, and also met with other relevant organisations including, TAFE, Bush Kids, P & Cs, AgForce, nBn, QCT, ISQ, eKindy, and Catholic Schools Commission. Councillors were kept very busy representing the motions from Conference which became ICPA policies.

State Council Mid-Year Meeting was held in Texas – and what an event it was – dodging flooding creeks as we travelled to and from Texas, and just beating the flooding event which arrived after we left! One of my favourite memories is the sound of the Dumaresq River overflowing its banks at dusk – the quiet ebb and flow of water in eerie light – juxtaposed with the knowledge of the possible devastation flooding causes. It was wonderful to meet Southern Downs Branch members, to work with them in organising our meeting, and to hear about their concerns, particularly the issue of the tenure of Acting Principals and the impact of the situation on their schools and communities. It is wonderful to have two Delegates from this branch with us here in Julia Creek. Thank you to Sally and Kim and your team for hosting our visit so kindly.

Mid-Year Meeting led to Delegations in November in Brisbane as Councillors further represented the issues members had debated at State Conference. We also undertook valuable training in TEAMS, our newly adopted platform, before our State Council face-to-face meeting, both of which were held at Brisbane Grammar School. I thank Berian Williams-Jones and Tim Fulton who welcomed and hosted us on behalf of the Headmaster, Mr Anthony Micallef. Again, numerous meetings were attended across Brisbane, including with Ningana Trust (whose generous sponsorship assisted in supporting our LAFHAS increase project), LGAQ, Digital Child and of course, the Department. Staff hosted us for a day of meetings with representatives from Department Branches and we were grateful for robust and informative meetings as well as generous hospitality.

February Delegations saw us meeting face-to face at Stuartholme School and again, we greatly appreciated the hospitality of Principal, Mr Daniel Crump and Head of Boarding, Ms Jane Morris and their wonderful staff. We also became familiar with the structural changes in the Department of Education, and consequential changes in personnel. Indeed, we look forward to continuing our professional and robust relationship with the Department personnel and always appreciate their willingness to listen and to advise. In February, our meetings included Ms Stacie Hansel and Mr Tim Shipstone representing the Minister for Education, DESBT, QCT, ABSA, AgForce and Digital Child, to name a few.

In March, President Louise Martin, Teacher Education and Tertiary, Trade and Training Portfolios Leader, Anneli Day and I, met with Robbie Katter MP, Shane Knuth MP, Brent Mickelberg MP, James Lister MP and Jennifer Howard MP, all of whom had requested meetings following the dissemination of our Key Issues Document in December. This document went to all Queensland politicians amongst many others. We felt we were able to represent the four key issues to these parliamentarians and contribute to their understanding and awareness of the issues facing our members.

This past Council year saw Councillors representing ICPA Qld and its members at various meetings, projects and conferences and through responding to various reviews. This work takes the time of our volunteers and the input of ICPA Qld is respected and indeed, sought.

One of our significant partnerships, that with the Digital Child, continued to develop under the enthusiasm and guidance of Communications Portfolio Leader, Megan Easton. Megan has worked hard with the Digital Child leaders and the work in this project will surely prove immensely interesting and valuable.

The December school holidays saw the hard work of Vice-President Kate Bradshaw and Melissa Iland, supported by Louise Martin and Sonia Spurdle to produce the ICPA Qld "Increase to LAFHAS" campaign. There was a great amount of time and energy put into the campaign, including filming, scripting, editing and securing families who would participate by sharing their stories. The campaign culminated in a launch in Brisbane outside Parliament House in March with a number of Councillors travelling with Amanda Walker to attend. We were appreciative of the response we gained from some media outlets and will continue to lobby the State Government for this increase.

President Louise Martin and I met with Federal President Alana Moller and Federal Secretary, Kim Hughes and other State Presidents and Secretaries at the Joint Council Meeting in Melbourne just prior to February Delegations. These meetings provide the opportunity to share ideas, happenings and updates, as well as to discuss issues which arise from time to time.

The Secretary receives and sends numerous emails each and every day! These can relate to the organisation of Delegations, contact with stakeholders, State Conference, members' issues, monthly meetings, mid-year meeting and campaigns, and communication between State Councillors and politicians. There is no rest for the wicked, but the privilege of communicating with so many people about rural and remote education is immense. For example, post conference, as per usual, many letters were written and emails sent to various stakeholders regarding the motions passed at our conference. Our communication is especially important in developing positive relationships with others, so that we are able to have worthy conversations in the interests of our members and their families.

The 2022-23 Council year saw branches recognising Members who have contributed significantly to ICPA Qld over the years. Assistant Secretary, Sonia Spurdle has listed these recipients and I offer my congratulations and thanks to all of them.

Queensland State Life Membership – I will fill this in later

Queensland Certificates of Appreciation will be awarded during Day 2 of Conference.

Off council positions this year were held by Fundraising Officer, Christy Bredhaur; News and Views Editors, Lisa Southern and Jacque Hemming, Membership Officer, Louise Winten, Web Tech Officer, Tammie Irons

and Hospital Schools, Judy Treloar. Tammie Irons has been our Conference Registrations Officer and she has been kept very busy with all the registrations and questions around conference this year. It is certainly a busy time!

Last year Bush Christmas raised nearly \$12,800.00 to support the work of ICPA. ICPA Qld would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Wendy Allen for continuing the tradition of supporting ICPA Qld through the Bush Christmas Raffle. Anyone lucky enough to visit Bush Christmas in November-December in Toowoomba, would have been enthralled with the variety of goods available and the fabulous atmosphere. We look forward to continuing this relationship Bush Christmas as this is one of our major fundraising events. We also recommend the Landline story about Bush Christmas. Please visit Bush Christmas this coming year. The craft and other merchandise are simply a sight to behold.

Once again, Conference Minutes were most ably compiled by Di Selby. This is a task which takes many hours to ensure accuracy and professionalism. We certainly appreciate your organisation and hard work, Di. Noela Wilson and Tammie Irons are also to be thanked and recognised for proofreading the minutes and other ICPA material. Tammie

Rose Philip continues to be our Archivist. This is such important work for the history of ICPA.

Branches are reminded to send a copy of their AGM minutes and Branch Executives forms to the Assistant Secretary, assistantsecretary@icpaqld.com.au. Audited financials need to be returned to the Treasurer treasurer@icpaqld.com.au after each AGM. A reminder to keep your personal membership details current by logging onto the website and updating details when needed. Any other membership queries please send to the Membership Officer, membership@icpaqld.com.au This is essential to keep the member data base current and ensure those who join are included and receive all information relevant to them.

Julia Creek Branch Conference Committee members have been working extremely hard to organise conference this year. They have done a superb job in delivering this wonderful conference. Our thanks must go to Catherine, Kylie, Sarah, Tracey and Kimberley and the numerous other hardworking members of the committee.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the work that our retiring President, Louise Martin has done for ICPA Qld. I've only known Lou for a couple of years, but her commitment to and belief in the provision of equal access to quality education for young people has been obvious. Lou has given many years to ICPA and I am sure will continue to participate and contribute. Lou, thank you for your guidance of me in my role, and for your honesty and support when you had to "break in" this new Secretary. Thank you for being roomies, for the "discombobulated" times, and personal understanding. All the very best as you change roles in State Council.

In conclusion, I would like to assure members, that State Councillors work extremely hard to represent you and your issues. Please be sure to participate as you can – this can include completing surveys, responding to requests for information, preparing motions, updating information and supporting each other. Thank you for allowing me to present my Secretary's report.

"I, Annette Boyle, Secretary, Queensland State Council, move that the Secretary's Report be adopted."

Annette Boyle

ICPA Qld State Secretary