




2019 / 2020

ACA Qld
ANNUAL REPORT



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MAJELLA FITZSIMMONS

ACA Qld

2020 – a year we will never forget for many reasons. The majority of us will remember the rollercoaster ride of emotions, anxiety and significant business decisions made in record time to ensure continuity of learning for the children in our care and education, a safe haven for our families, our early childhood educators/teachers mental wellbeing and continuation of their workforce participation, all while ensuring our services remained open and sustainable during COVID-19. We all reflected on everything we do, including our “WHY” and learnt a whole range of new skills, including enhanced technology capabilities.

ACA both in Queensland and through our ACA National association stood out as leaders in the ECEC sector, consulting with all sides and levels of Government to deliver the \$1.6 billion ECEC Relief Package. This package was not perfect; however, it did save 99% of early learning services from potential collapse.

This year was the first that we were unable to conduct our annual conference, and it was sorely missed, as it is an excellent opportunity to learn, network and grow. The renewed energy and passion that comes from the conference is immeasurable. As restrictions continue to ease, the 2021 conference is positioned to be a huge success and expected to sell out. As always, our conference committee has continued to work hard behind the scenes despite COVID-19 to ensure the conference will proceed better than ever.

Your College for Australian Early Childhood Educators (CAECE) (that is 100% operated by ACA Qld and therefore owned by our members), continues to grow and improve its service offering for student early childhood educators, holistic early learning service support, and support of our sector. It was humbling observing the team not only survive but thrive through COVID-19 while improving the service delivery through technology. The entire team worked extremely hard, maintaining and in some instances increasing their connection, ensuring students remained active and engaged in their learning. The inclusion of a more thorough Learning Management System via an online portal, and introduction of First Aid has been a welcomed addition for team CAECE. Mandy and her team should be congratulated for the professionalism and standard that has been maintained, including the high number of compliant unit completions each month.


ACA Qld and CAECE team continued on our growth trajectory. 2020 saw the purchase of new building premises, located in Underwood. This is only a short drive from our existing offices and will provide great flexibility, efficiencies, and improved facilities to expand our service offerings. With an extended boardroom and multipurpose space, ACA Qld envisages member meetings, committee meetings and some potential training and face to face learning and development will be run from this space.

In preparation for the Queensland State election in October, we managed to engage with nearly 40 Ministers and candidates through our election manifesto – **What Queensland families want. What our children need.**

Before we saw the pause on all face to face workshops, ACA Qld/CAECE were able to offer Understanding and preparing for Assessment and Rating workshops around the state. ParentTV also conducted a couple of workshops for ACA Qld in Brisbane and the Gold Coast in mid-March. Member meetings transitioned from face to face to webcast effortlessly, and we trust members benefited from these and all of our other unprecedented levels of communication.

Early Childhood Educators Day again broke records, celebrating the largest and we trust the best celebrations across Australia. It was rewarding to recognise and thank our outstanding early childhood educators who we believe are starting to be appropriately respected for the essential workforce they are.

Brent, Jae and I have remained active contributing to ACA National. After our face to face Melbourne meeting in March, we set in place a course of action to work with Government and Departments to tackle the ECEC response to COVID-19. Weekly teleconferences continue to occur as we move from health to economic recovery.



MAJELLA FITZSIMMONS
PRESIDENT



CEO REPORT

BRENT STOKES
ACA Qld

Unprecedented is one of the more commonly used words to describe 2020. The unpredictable nature of this year including one of Australia's worst droughts, bushfire seasons, and coronavirus resulted in communities working alongside health authorities and Governments like never before to respond accordingly. This year has undoubtedly drawn the curtain back on the pivotal role that the early learning sector plays in supporting Australia's workforce participation. At the same time, never has it been more important to celebrate the evidence-based positive and important long-term outcomes for those children attending high-quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and our essential workforce.

Australian Childcare Alliance should be extremely proud of the trust shown by our members when advocating and collaborating with Government and departments to deliver the \$1.6b ECEC Relief Package in response to the COVID-19 health pandemic. This package successfully secured the sector from imminent collapse on 6 April. As it turned out, the swift response taken in Australia resulted in significantly reduced health impacts that many of us feared, expected, and experienced in many other countries around the world. As such the demand for early learning exceeded the relief subsidy model for funding that was designed to hibernate and protect the ECEC sector for families, early childhood educators/teachers, and providers. Our subsequent submission to the four-week review was influential to the Transition back to CCS from 13 July until 27 September. Criticism about the exclusive removal of JobKeeper from the ECEC sector was understandably high and while we appreciate this, the miscommunication led to misunderstanding (40% of the workforce ineligible) and political point scoring. In our belief it was the correct move, allowing services to welcome back more families and our workforce in full. As we continue to experience recovery our focus will remain on our more vulnerable families and women in the workforce. Vulnerable families with difficulties including socio-economic, disadvantaged, geographic location, cultural backgrounds, and more are often the most negatively affected by situations like this. Women have once again suffered disproportionately to men as a result of COVID-19 due to the types of industries that are gender dominated, and we will continue to advocate for equal opportunity to access high quality early learning for **ALL** children.

Like many of our valued members, ACA Qld implemented risk mitigation strategies while delivering unprecedented levels of communication. Understanding complex new subsidy systems in record time resulted in our new landscape where we operate, resulting in us taking swift action to understand and then react prudently and pragmatically to achieve the most sustainable outcomes for our members and your association. We are very proud of the work we did to remain financially independent throughout this period.

The Federal Budget announcement on 6 October did not reveal any surprises for our sector, however, we are heartened that the Australian Government has budgeted for further Transition Payments for Victorian service providers recovering from an extended lockdown period this year.



This commitment to consider further targeted support mechanisms in other geographic areas, should we experience a second wave and return to restrictions provides confidence. We welcomed the Australian Labor Party's budget response including the proposal to increase investment in Australian families by increasing the subsidy rate to 90%, and we called on all parties to fully embrace the evidence-based recommendations of the recent KPMG report. ([You can read the media release here.](#)) We continue to urge both major parties to commit to waiving the CCS annual cap and relaxations of the Activity Test to provide all families with a minimum of two days a week of early learning.

The Queensland election has dominated much of our advocacy over the past couple of months. We undertook nearly forty political engagements with our election manifesto - [What Queensland parents want. What our children need.](#) This was well received by all sides and levels of Government in the pursuit of four key policy recommendations being; KindyLinQ – the extension of this program to include all of the ECEC sector, QKFS / PLUS – long term (5 year block) funding extension, Supply – ensuring demonstratable needs analysis be conducted before new services are approved and funded, and Payroll tax – to be redistributed to employing more Queenslanders and improving pay and conditions for our existing workforce. We congratulate Labor for retaining government for the next four years; regardless of the election outcome, ACA will continue our bi partisan approach to work with all sides of government in the best interests of the sector.

Industrial Relations activity has returned to a more manageable level with a high court decision fixing the paid personal leave issue and the substantiative claims varying our awards.

Early Childhood Educators Day was yet another success! This day was all about the recognition of our amazing professional workforce. We hope all early childhood educators across Australia had a wonderful day with their team and families. We cannot thank early childhood educators enough for the difference made every day to the children in care. It was lovely to read all the stories and see the amazing photographs of how you celebrated Early Childhood Educators' Day 2020.



The immediate issue facing our sector is the difficulties many services are experiencing when recruiting new staff. We highly value our professional workforce, and this is potentially a good news story that when unemployment is at record highs, the early learning sector is currently looking to recruit over 1,000 people in Queensland alone.

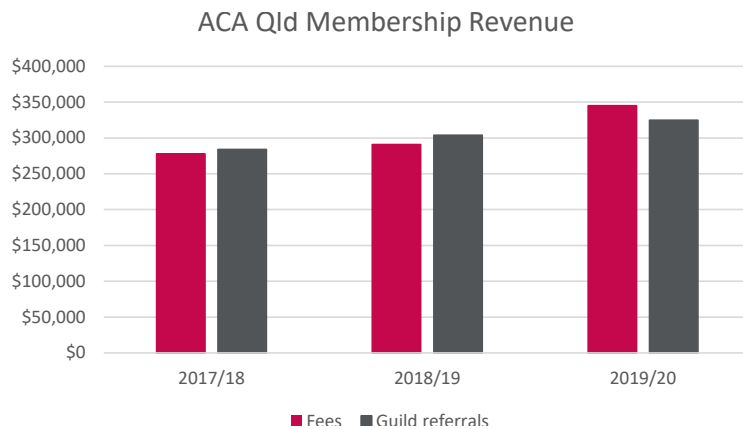
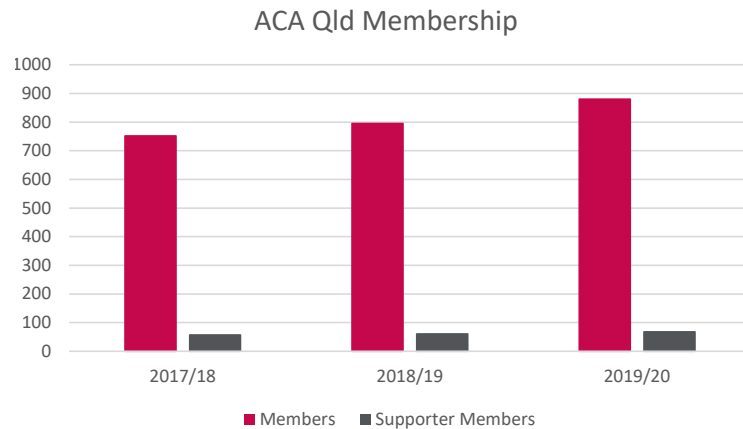
As I reflect over the four years that I was fortunate enough to be the ACA Qld CEO, I feel very proud of what we as an association have achieved. ACA Qld is a team, and we could not achieve what we do without all of our valuable members, supporter members, sector partners, including all sides and levels of Government and Departments, ACA Qld office/ CAECE teams, ACA National and ACA Qld Management Committee.

In addition to advocacy, one of the performance measures is the ability to financially contribute to the association. Over the past four years, we have achieved some significant accomplishments.

Membership - When I joined the ACA Qld office at the start of 2017 our membership was at record levels with 705 members and 57 supporter members. Our membership numbers have fortunately increased year on year:

2017/18: 752 members & 57 supporter members
 2018/19: 795 members & 61 supporter members
 2019/20: 880 members & 68 supporter members

Over the past four years, this amounts to an increase in membership numbers of 175 or 25% resulting in increased annual revenue and Guild referrals.



CAECE – In 2017 our loans to ACA Qld were significant and net assets were negative, we had four trainers in our team and 243 students, that year we incurred a loss. The following year our loans increased and our debt ceiling raised. Our income resulted in another loss resulting in a decrease net asset position. We had grown to five trainers and 300 students.

In 2018/19, I was fortunate enough to be provided with greater involvement and oversight of CAECE. That year we grew our students by 50, reduced our loans slightly and net assets improved. It was the first year that CAECE produced a profit. Last year we grew by an additional trainer to 6, our loans reduced further however most impressive was our profit resulting in an improved asset position.

Over my time we have increased by 2 trainers, 125 (50%) students, we have reduced the loans to ACA Qld and have an improved net position of 32%. Most importantly, we went from making a loss to a profit.

ACA QLD SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

2017

- ACA Qld's largest ever conference (LDCPDP),
- Child Care Subsidy (CCS) advocacy primarily softening of the activity test to include voluntary work and travel time, delaying mandatory attendance reporting, reducing the withholding rate, Kindergarten exemption, absences for continuing families, back payments to families and ACCS (child wellbeing) to name a few, and
- Extension of workforce transitional regulations, repealing Regulation 310, rest period condition allowing for the removal of the expiry date for existing services and for other services, the ability to apply for an addendum to service approval. This resulted in considerable cost savings to Queensland families of approximately \$5 per day or over \$100,000 per 75 place service.

2018

- Implementation of CCS including financial modelling (FAMT),
- Policies procedures and forms,
- Find Childcare Now advertising campaign with over 5000 television commercials (backed by a digital campaign), promoting the accessibility and affordability of quality ACA Qld member ECEC services (\$250k), and
- Industrial Relations advocacy (\$150k).

2019

- Federal election advocacy **#BestStartInLife**,
- Industrial Relations advocacy (\$130k),
- Workforce transitional regulations extension, allowing early childhood teachers an additional two years to achieve their qualifications, and
- Ongoing improvements to CCS including extension of 8 week rule, ACCS (child wellbeing), cessation of care, back payments and third party fees.

2020

- COVID-19 advocacy with the Federal Government to deliver the \$1.6b Relief Package that successfully rescued the ECEC sector before transitioning back to CCS where attendance data supports the sector,
- Queensland State election advocacy through our election manifesto - **What Queensland parents want. What our children need** engaging with 35 Ministers and candidates to ensure accessibility to affordable quality early learning through our four policy recommendations, and
- ACA Qld Elston investment that is expected will future protect the association's financial security.

BRENT STOKES
CEO

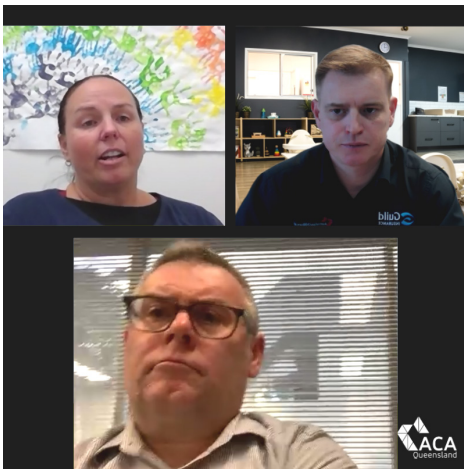
2020 POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS



Honourable Grace Grace MP - ALP Minister for Education and Industrial Relations Qld and **Deputy Director - General Sharon Schimming** from Queensland Department of Education.



Meaghan Scanlon MP - ALP State Member for Gaven, Assistant Minister for Tourism Industry Development



Senator Murray Watt - ALP Senator for Queensland, Shadow Minister for Northern Australia and Shadow Minister for Natural Disaster and Emergency Management.



Senator Susan McDonald - The Nationals Senator for Queensland, **Andrew Powell MP** - LNP Member for Glass House and **John Hathaway** - LNP Candidate for Townsville.



Jarrid Bleijie MP - LNP Shadow Minister for Education, Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations and State Member for Kawana.



Natalie Marr - LNP Candidate for Thuringowa and **Philip Thompson OAM MP** - LNP Federal Member for Herbert



Trevor Watts MP - LNP Member for Toowoomba North



Tom Smith - ALP Candidate for Bundaberg



CAECE RTO MANAGER'S REPORT

AMANDA WALKER
CAECE

The College for Australian Early Childhood Educators (CAECE) was developed to deliver high quality and practical training for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector in Queensland. CAECE is a for-profit college; however, as it is 100% owned and operated by Australian Childcare Alliance Queensland that is not for profit, the college is therefore owned by our valued members. We strive to deliver premium training at heavily subsidised pricing.

CAECE continues to grow and develop into a progressive and adaptive college delivering Early Childhood qualifications, striving to exceed the needs and expectations of our student learners, services and the sector.

We wished our Training Operations Manager, Vicki Shearer well as she moved on to explore alternative arrangements for her family in NSW and welcomed Amanda (Mandy) Walker who has joined our team with shared passion and enthusiasm. Mandy has our respect and confidence to continue our improvement journey.



In the time that Vicki was with us, she guided and supported the team through a PQS (Queensland Government State funding) audit. This audit brought about a number of opportunities in the administration and compliance departments from a process perspective. The team has been provided with professional development and training on their practices and procedures to ensure strict compliance. There was a review of the policies, procedures and forms resulting in CAECE remaining compliant.

2020 was an unpredictable year of change in so many aspects. CAECE grew, contracted and then grew again. We were very fortunate to welcome a new administration and compliance Manager in Islay Macmichael, who is revolutionising the way our processes are driven to the benefit of our student learners and services.

When COVID-19 hit, we pivoted and adapted to working remotely in a short amount of time. The entire team banded together and supported each other through this transition. Some of the team were apprehensive to the changes, including new technology and understandably nervous as to how this would impact CAECE, our students and our ability to visit services to conduct assessments. The team embraced this challenge. The team adapted well to supporting students online and most reported an increase in interactions with students and services during this time.

CAECE upgraded its technology by introducing Microsoft 365, with a focus on SharePoint, News post and Teams to stay connected and changed to an online learning platform called Cloud Assess. This technology has made it easier for students and all CAECE team members to stay connected and exceed expectations of their study (students) and work requirements (team).

The team is more robust; we communicate more on a more meaningful level because of COVID-19. We not only look after the academic wellbeing of our students; we now ensure we focus on their emotional and social wellbeing; we connect more with service supervisors and Approved Providers.

- Student numbers - 2019/2020 financial year 364
- Units of completion - 2409
- Graduations - 104

CAECE is financially independent and sustainable; I hope our members are as proud of our college as I am.

AMANDA WALKER

CAECE RTO TRAINING OPERATIONS MANAGER



TREASURER'S REPORT

DOUG BURNS
ACA Qld

The audited Financial Statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2020 for both ACA Qld and CAECE are now available for your consideration and are tabled with the secretary.

The financial year of 2019/2020 provided unique challenges for ACA Qld. Apart from the need to increase support to our members across Queensland as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted every centre, it became necessary to cancel our premier fund-raising and promotional professional development event – the annual ACA Qld National conference. In previous years, this event has represented our single largest source of revenue. In 2019, 44%. Without the conference, our finances could have been severely compromised. However, the situation was mitigated by JobKeeper, the federal Government Cash Boost and numerous efficiencies in the operation of the association.

Previous years of financial prudence allowed the association to continue our full operations despite a decline in revenue. A modest before tax profit was achieved and is testament to the capacity and agility of the current ACA Qld team.

Support to the early learning sector this year has resulted in historically high membership. We currently have a membership of 884 members and 69 supporter members, an increase of 9% over the previous year. Never before have we spoken so comprehensively on behalf of the sector.

During the 2020 Financial Year, the Guild Group provided \$368,343.40 of referral fees. In a year without the annual conference, Guild's support to our association has been vital.

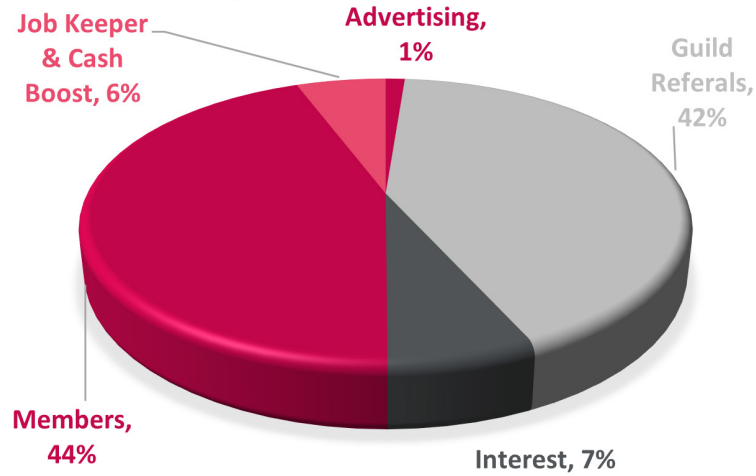
The college (CAECE) enjoyed a successful year, providing training services to record numbers of students and delivering a profit continuing its financial independence for a second year. The ability of the college to pursue its goals amidst difficult circumstances is a testament to our RTO Manager, Mandy Walker, and her team of trainers.

ACA Qld remains the peak body for the early learning industry. We look forward to an easier trading environment as COVID-19 is brought under control within Queensland and Australia and encourage our members to take full advantage of our advocacy and services.

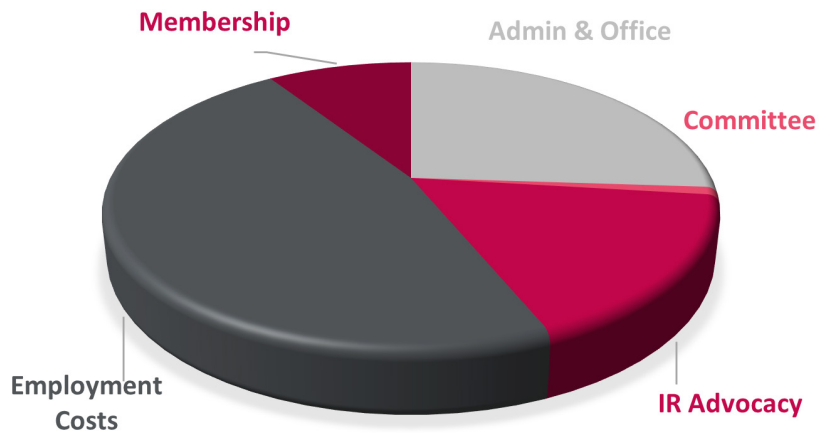
DOUG BURNS FCPA
TREASURER

ACA QLD AND CAECE FINANCIAL REPORT 2020

ACA Qld INCOME 2020 FY

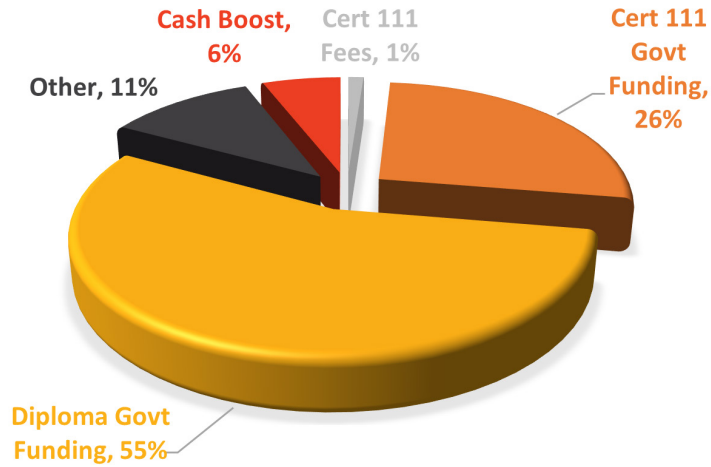


ACA Qld EXPENSES 2020 FY

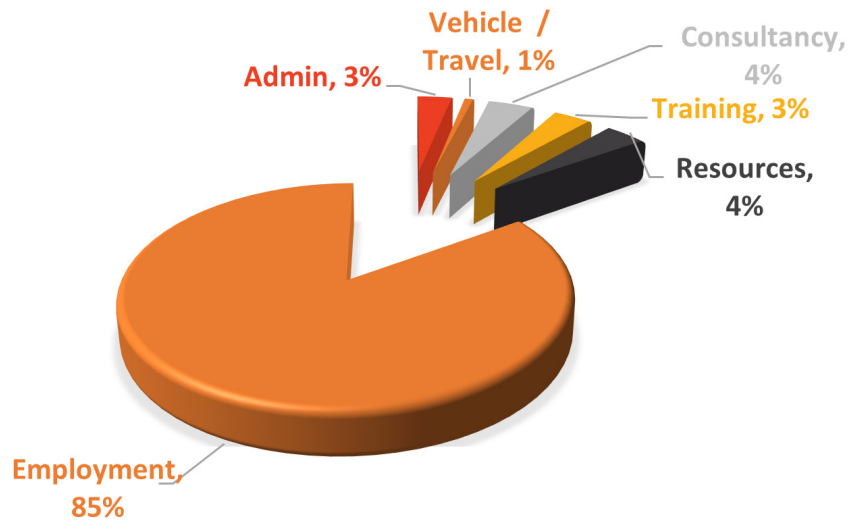




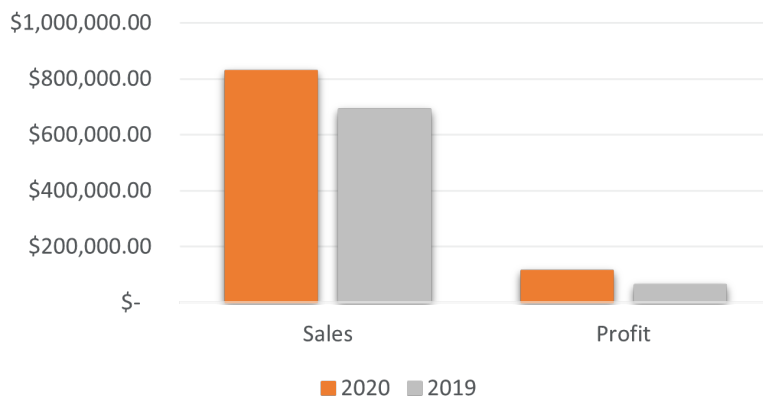
CAECE INCOME 2020 FY



CAECE EXPENSES 2020 FY



CAECE 2019 / 2020 COMPARISON



ACA Qld

2019 - 2020 COMMITTEE MEMBERS



MAJELLA FITZSIMMONS
PRESIDENT



JAE FRASER
VICE-PRESIDENT



DEBRA NORTH
SECRETARY



DOUG BURNS
TREASURER



KERRIE LADA
COMMITTEE MEMBER



ROSA MCDONALD
COMMITTEE MEMBER



LINDA DAVIES
COMMITTEE MEMBER



LOUISE THOMAS
COMMITTEE MEMBER



NICOLE FOWLER
COMMITTEE MEMBER



KATY MASON
COMMITTEE MEMBER



PAM MACLEAN
COMMITTEE MEMBER



BRENT STOKES
COMMITTEE MEMBER

2019 - 2020 OFFICE TEAM MEMBERS



BRENT STOKES
CEO



JEN SMYTH
OFFICE MANAGER AND
CONFERENCE COORDINATOR



LETITIA BERNDT
RECEPTIONIST/
ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT



BRIANNA SALMOND
MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



AMANDA WALKER
CAECE TRAINING AND
OPERATIONS MANAGER



ISLAY MACMICHAEL
ADMINISTRATION AND
COMPLIANCE



KARLA MOONEY
TRAINER AND ASSESSOR



KELLIE SAVILLE
TRAINER AND ASSESSOR



LAUREN TURRELL
TRAINER AND ASSESSOR



MEAGHAN WESTWOOD
TRAINER AND ASSESSOR



SONJA HARTLEY
TRAINER AND ASSESSOR



LAINIE RANDELL
TRAINER AND ASSESSOR

