

October 2023

President's Report

INTERNATIONAL APPROVAL AND REGISTRATION CENTRE

by **John Mason, President International Approval and Registration Centre (IARC)**, Board Member Australian Garden Council, Principal ACS Distance Education, Publisher and Author.

Introduction

We are another year post pandemic thankfully but global conditions and inflationary trends, climate change and technological change, all continue to affect our industry, and every other industry.

Volatility remains persistent, however, I have received many contradictory messages from people over the past year which emphasise diverse views. To illustrate this, I would like to share one of my experiences. In my capacity as a director of the Australian Garden Council, I headed a major project to survey education and employment attitudes in the garden industry. We received feedback from one state of Australia that horticultural education is doing well, and student numbers are expanding. At the same time from other states information surfaced to suggest severe reduction in funding, course duration and staff morale within mainstream education. We continue to hear of established education providers being under financial stress while new start-ups are growing rapidly.



Changing Challenges

Consider the functions of education as five-sided: Course Development, Marketing, Administration, Course Delivery and Assessment.

When I started out in my career in the 70's, the emphasis in education then was weighted toward course development and delivery. During the early 80's I recall conducting a survey of perhaps 30 private vocational colleges. The way these five functions were balanced has changed a great deal since then, with increasing emphasis upon marketing, administration and even assessment. As a result there has been a decline in attention given to learning. Over the past year though, I have seen an increase in reports that suggest a growing awareness in the decline in learning.

"The challenge for IARC members is to find the balance between attention given to these five functions, while remaining profitable and sustainable".

Sustainability can only be achieved when the product and service retains a quality. There may be a significant sustainability opportunity developing in the fact that some if not many competitors appear to be depreciating quality.

Improving profit margins reduces risk, and that improves sustainability further. Many education businesses make a common mistake of competing on price, but take note that price competition can risk sustainability. It is important to understand that price is only one of several triggers that cause someone to make a decision to buy. Even in a tight economy, buyers will make their buying decisions as much on quality or even convenience as what they do on cost. If you focus on making your service better quality and more convenient, you may sell just as many courses, and at a higher price with a higher profit margin.



IARC’s Activity 2022-2023

Social Media, Marketing, Technology	Member Engagement & Compliance	People & Entities
<p>We continue to strengthen our online presence with increased followers on social media, increased downloads from our websites, and coordinated use of cloud based services to improve efficiency and enable us to operate entirely remotely.</p> <p>Current and prospective members enjoy the ease and convenience of online meeting booking forms, online applications and online evidence submissions. All feedback received was positive, the system is easy to use and customers are satisfied.</p> <p>We are ready to work on the launch campaign of our Course Registration pathway for eligible approved members. The Framework for Professional Learning and Development is in the final stage of product testing, and the administration team has all systems in place to start taking registration applications from beginning of 2024.</p> <p>We need marketing resources designed and approved for</p>	<p>We noticed a shift in the quality of the potential enquiries/applications to the Centre and into the workflow. The standard is high generally. We have discouraged applicants who would not be suitable before they submit an application and pay the non-refundable fee. We believe this is aligned with our core value of ethical business.</p> <p>Coinciding with the above, there have been increased enquiries from quality education providers who don't meet the current standards but may be worthy of recognition in education in their own right if a broader system of recognition was available through changes in categories of membership.</p> <p>We welcomed new members via a meet and greet session (held at the next Committee meeting following commencing membership). The majority of new members took up the opportunity and the Board have been extremely pleased to interact and engage with like-minded</p>	<p>We wish to express our thanks to Amanda White and Ciara Barrett who are no longer serving on the UK Regional Committee.</p> <p>We would also like to acknowledge the time and effort volunteered over many years by Daryl Tempest-Mogg and Tracey Jones. Daryl and Tracy have both stepped down as UK Directors, but will continue to serve on the Regional Committee.</p> <p>We welcome Walid Nosir of Agri Tech College and Jade Sciascia, as incoming Directors in the UK.</p> <p>We have recommenced trading in the UK after 4 years of non-trading. Furthermore, we look forward to encouraging our UK and European membership and gaining some stability and traction in the region.</p> <p>We have introduced an Internal Grievance Procedure which is for all members, staff and associates of the Centre who may have a dispute or grievance to raise.</p>

<p>this major project to be finalised, and we are seeking competent people to work on a marketing subcommittee asap.</p>	<p>professionals on those occasions.</p> <p>We audited our internal compliance activities and introduced a compliance register to improve our compliance monitoring.</p> <p>We also issued all members with an electronic copy of the new Organisational Membership compliance policy.</p>	<p>We are seeking to recruit people to a new marketing subcommittee asap.</p>
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Membership Update

We have a total of **85 members** – this includes all categories of membership. Full fee-paying members, honorary members, subsidiary and affiliate memberships. This is 5% net membership growth on the previous year.

We proudly:

- Approved seven new members.
- Rejected one application.
- Cancelled two applications for failure to supply sufficient evidence
- Received resignation of one member (reason: business closure).
- Terminated two memberships (1 x debtor, 1 x no renewal).

As reported in our annual accounts:

We wrote off a total of \$330 from debtors for the 2022 year.

We saw a minor increase in growth of 1.85%.

Uniquely, all UK members are currently **non-financial** in the current year. This is a result of several unforeseen internal changes relating to the UK business and the Centre’s associated banking facilities. All members were advised there would be a delay in issuing invoices and have had regular contact with our bookkeeper.

There are eight prospective member applications currently at various stages in our workflow.

Finally, IARC stands out from many membership associations because of our affordability and our longevity. As a small non-profit organisation, we are reserved with what we can do, however, please be assured a great deal of work goes on in our offices to revise and evolve the Centre and our core objectives. It is you, the school leaders and education professionals, who have contributed and made IARC what it is today. As we look to 2024, we look forward to celebrating our 25th founding year anniversary. Planning is underway to honour our achievements by hosting a fun and informal evening event - you will be invited!

We anticipate another busy year ahead, that is another year of making quality in education matter.

Warmest wishes,

John Mason

For Further Inquiries

