

NORTHERN TERRITORY BRANCH

50 Years of Stories

1965 - 2015

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



IAIN SUMMERS, FCPA

Management and Government Consultant

Member since 1999

Despite being streamed at school into science subjects, it was not my natural place. I saw that accounting was undersupplied at the time, and so I obtained chartered accounting qualifications with Coopers & Lybrand in my home town in Brisbane. That led to four years of adventure working with that firm in Mount Isa and Port Moresby, during which I discovered that I belonged in small, and preferably tropical, communities. So I have lived happily in Darwin since 1980.

I spent eleven years as a partner with Pannell Kerr Forster (now Deloitte) in Darwin; followed by two years in a management role with the Northern Territory Tourist Commission; and then a seven year term as Northern Territory Auditor-General.

It was during my time in the Auditor-General role that CPA Australia invited me to join. It was an easy offer to accept – it was apparent that public sector accountants were being well serviced by CPA Australia, including through their annual national Public Sector accounting conference.

For the past thirteen years I have been providing governance and management advice, assistance, and training primarily to government and not for profit organisations, while also involved with coaching and committees for the family's sporting and recreation activities. I label myself as a "community worker".

I married Helen, an optometrist, in 1988 and we raised our three children in Darwin.

I completed a law degree at Charles Darwin University in 2006. So while it took 33 years to earn a double degree in Commerce and Law, it does show that lifelong learning is possible.

I was interested in aviation from my school days, so I obtained a private pilot's license before arriving in Darwin. I was then able to use it during my time in the accounting practice, where I enjoyed a decade or so as the "Flying Auditor of Arnhemland".

My training and experience as an accountant has allowed me to be a useful contributor to my community. I value the opportunities this has given me, and I am grateful for the support provided to me by the Northern Territory Branch of CPA Australia.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



RANDLE WALKER, FCPA

Centrecorp Aboriginal Investment Corporation

Member since 2000

I arrived in Alice Springs in October 1997, following a two year contract in Townsville. I had asked a former school friend, who lives in Darwin, to look for accounting jobs in the NT, and he sent me an ad for Financial Controller of Hertz position with Australia's largest Hertz franchise based in Alice Springs. Like most 'East-Coast' dwellers I had no idea that Alice Springs was 1,500 km from Darwin – maybe my 'friend' didn't want me too close!

Arriving in Alice Springs for the interview I had expected a sleepy country town, but Alice Springs in 1997 was at its peak for tourism and thriving. I was amazed to find 3 x 24 hour supermarkets, pubs, nightclubs, and a never ending list of social and tourism events, balls and many other 'orphans' who had come to Alice like me looking for adventure. I went back to Townsville, quit my job, and as they say, 'the rest is history'.

I worked for 11 years until 2008 for the Hertz franchisee before selling the franchise back to Hertz Australia and I assisted the business relocate to Adelaide. Moving with the business wasn't an option - my time wasn't done in Alice Springs. I was recruited to Centrecorp Aboriginal Investment Corporation as Commercial Manager as a succession plan for the retiring General Manager before being appointed as CEO in 2012.

Over the years I've been active with CPA – initially as a local organiser and point of contact for the Darwin staff, and then being elected onto the Brach Council in 2008, Deputy President in 2009 and 2009, and serving out my term until 2012. After a two years off Council I then was re-elected back onto Council in 2015. My aim has always been to be the voice of Regional and Remote CPA's in the NT and ensure that they have access to similar benefits and levels of service as other CPA's. In November 2013 I was very proud to be awarded the 'NT President's Award for Excellence in Service and Leadership'.

50 Years of CPA's in the NT is a great achievement for the organisation and something all members should be proud of. It makes us all aware that we are part of a very large network of professionals who have a long-standing reputation in the NT, across Australia, and the globe. The highlight for me of the 50 year celebrations was visiting the NT Library '50 Years of CPA' exhibition launch and meeting some of those who were present in those early years – some great inspirational characters who put down the foundations for the professional reputation that we all carry on today.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



KEVIN HICKMOTT, FCPA

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

Member since 1973

Initially I went to Darwin, Northern Territory on 26 December, 1972, and have been in the NT since then.

I believe being a member of CPA Australia has offered me the professional confidence and ability to contribute in a very professional way to our Community. In particular due the high ethics and governance standards, it makes you very much aware of early on, when becoming a member.

I respect and enjoy our Profession. CPA Australia has always been very proactive for the membership from my prospective. 1972 to now 2015 – 43 years and I very pleased to have had the opportunity and to have been involved with CPA Australia NT during the early development phase to the current very professional era.

ALASTAIR SHIELDS, FCPA

Department of Land Resource Management

Member since 1984

I was born in the Northern Territory and have lived here all my life. When I left Darwin High School in 1980, I could have either gone down south to do a degree like many of my friends, or look for what was available in the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory Government was advertising a Finance Officer in training position which involved full-time study at the then Darwin Community College (now Charles Darwin University) towards a Bachelor of Business in Accounting, and part-time work within the Northern Territory Government. I wasn't really ready to leave Darwin, so I applied for the position.

Ten new finance officers in training, including me, started in Northern Territory Treasury in February 1981. Most of us joined the Australian Society of Accountants (now CPA Australia) as student members, and we started going to some of the professional development sessions. These were held mainly over lunch at a venue in town somewhere. Looking back on it now, I realise that there was a very strong culture by the experienced members to provide support, coaching and mentoring for the junior profession. That culture continues today.

After 3 years of study I completed my Bachelor of Business and became an Associate Member of CPA Australia. When the CPA program became available, it seemed to be a natural choice to enrol in and complete the program. I am afraid that I was not always a terribly diligent student – I enjoyed the outdoor life, sailing and fishing, and some of my CPA materials came on sailing and fishing trips so that I could sneak in a bit of study when things were quiet. I did the program with a fellow FCPA, sailor, and amateur fisherman, Rex Schoolmeester. It helped having a like-minded person studying at the same time, and we helped to get each other motivated.

Although I went on to study law, and to pursue a career in the law, my focus has been commercial law, and my CPA designation has been very important in assessing commercial aspects of the transactions I have worked on. It has also been of assistance to me as I have moved into managerial roles within the Northern Territory Government. A number of years ago, I received my 20 year membership badge from CPA Australia, and, most recently, my 30 year badge. I wear these badges with pride at the Annual CPA Australia Christmas Party.

50 years of CPA Australia in the Northern Territory is a significant milestone. It is great to think that there has been a strong network of support for accounting professionals in the Northern Territory dating back to 1965. Darwin was a very small community then, and isolated from the rest of Australia and the world. We didn't have the internet, email, fax machines or mobile telephones then, and so a local form of professional support would have been very important.

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary, I think back to the individuals who were involved in the establishment of CPA Australia in the Northern Territory, and those who have continued to support it through their efforts throughout the time. I think of some of the accounting professionals that I met when I first joined as a student member, people like Reg Lowry, and Graham Backman who represented an earlier time in the Territory, when the Territory was much more of a frontier town. They also tended to wear short sleeved shirts, shorts and long socks – a fashion that I am pleased to say was disappearing when I entered the workforce in 1980.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



REX SCHOOLMEESTER, FCPA

Department of Corporate and Information Services

Member since 1983

I was born in the Northern Territory and have lived here all my life. When I left Darwin High School in 1978, I was planning to go down south and undertake a career in chemistry. My brother Frans who started in the public service in the early sixties, suggested that I look around at some of the opportunities in the NT. The Northern Territory Government had identified that there was a shortfall of qualified accountants in the public sector and was advertising a Finance Officer in training program. I joined the program in 1979 which involved full-time study at the then Darwin Community College (now Charles Darwin University) towards a Bachelor of Business in Accounting, and part-time work within the Northern Territory Government.

Most of us joined the Australian Society of Accountants (now CPA Australia) as student members, and we started going to some of the professional development sessions. The NT Government provided a number of Government related professional development opportunities during this time also. In 1981 a new group of trainees were selected and a strong bond and network began which the NT Government is still benefiting from today. After 3 years of study I completed my Bachelor of Business and became an Associate Member of CPA Australia. When the CPA program became available, it seemed to be a natural choice to enrol in and complete the program.

I spent my first 20 years in government mainly working as the Finance Investment Manager and Manger Member Services for the Northern Territory Superannuation Office. During this time there were some significant changes in the regulation of superannuation and superannuation funds. I had a brain explosion in 1997 and resigned from the NT Government with the intention of starting my own accounting firm. I completed the CPA private practising certificate, however never undertook the residential part of the program. In 1998 I joined the Government again as the Deputy Public Trustee. I then was silly enough to apply for a position with DCIS as the Manager Taxation Services that over saw the introduction of GST and I lodged the first NT Government BAS. I have always been interested in Management Accounting so I joined the Department of the Legislative Assembly as the Chief Financial Officer. I returned to DCIS as the CFO where I am currently.

I am proud of the profession that I belong, and it has given me opportunities to work in exciting and interesting jobs. The people and networks that I have established through being a member of CPA is an integral part of my life. Programs and conferences like "Accounting at the Top" and even opportunities like meeting new accounting graduates and listening to other members and their experiences still motivates and stimulates me.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



THOMAS GANLEY, FCPA

Darwin International Airport

Member since 1998

I became a CPA because it is a recognised professional qualification in commerce, and because I acknowledged the education, networking, and mentoring opportunities it would provide to develop my career.

CPA Australia is the only professional accounting organisation to have the commitment to resource an office in the NT, which provides significant professional development, conference, and support services. It has enabled me to meet other professionals, undertake local professional development, and for my workplace to benefit from graduate placements.

I am proud to be a part of an organisation that had the foresight to establish services last century in a geographically challenging location for the benefit of its members and the population they served and continue to serve.

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STEVEN ROSSINGH, FCPA

North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

Member since 1993

Both my parents were from families of 8. My mother is Indigenous, a Kamilaroi women from the Liverpool Plains area in northern NSW born on Caroonna Mission, and my father is a Dutch immigrant who arrived in Australia in 1953 without a word of English. Across all of those 16 uncles and aunties, their spouses, and then children, and children's children, I was the first to attend university – let alone complete a degree.

I wanted to study accounting when I left school. Through no fault of their own, I was not able to receive any career/study guidance or assistance from my parents; although I did receive strong moral support. My father, who had been made redundant due to technological innovation around the time I finished school, advised me not pursue a career in accounting because "computers will take over the profession". I listened and did not commence studies until I was 25, and completed my degree part time over 6 years.

My career has been extremely varied and has not followed a conventional CPA pathway; and I could not say that I have worked in what could be considered to be conventional accounting roles until the last 4 years. However, the knowledge I gained through undergraduate accounting studies, followed by completing the CPA Australia program and later the co-branded CPA/Deakin University MBA program, opened up doors that would not otherwise have opened for me. Aside from the knowledge I gained in completing these studies, I know that the strength of the CPA brand on my CV was a factor in me securing at least three of the senior roles I held. Even while heading up the sport and recreation portfolio in the NT Government for 6 years from 2007-2012, the knowledge I gained as a CPA gave me a keen edge compared to most other Departmental CEO's when negotiating and dealing with Treasury and Department finance officers, auditors, stakeholders, and clients.

I am currently employed as CFO by the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) and am loving working in this Aboriginal legal aid organisation. I have been on the Board of Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal health service for the last 3 years, and was recently appointed to a casual vacancy on the NT Branch Council of CPA Australia. One of my key agendas on the Branch Council is to help facilitate an increase in the number of Indigenous accountants and to improve the cultural practices of CPA Australia by assisting the development of a Reconciliation Acton Plan for the parent body CPAs Australia.

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BRONWYN ROSSINGH, FCPA

Charles Darwin University

Member since 1998

My first job was with the ANZ Bank in Karratha as a Ledger Examiner and Teller. This gave me a reasonable grasp of debits and credits, journal transfers, financing and ways to invest money. Later on, after working and studying in the area of IT - developing accounting software and managing accounting-based IT systems, I realised that I had a reasonable knowledge of accounting concepts and thought it would be a good career move to have both IT and accounting skills and qualifications.

I am the youngest of four children and was raised predominantly by my mother as a sole parent in the northern suburbs of Perth, Western Australia. My family was what we refer to today as 'low socio economic status'. Although my siblings left school early to find work, I was intent on completing year eleven and twelve so I could go to university. I was fortunate that my mother always supported and encouraged me to achieve my aspirations.

For a number of years I worked with accounting firms in Perth and London undertaking IT and accounting roles. In 1986 I worked with Touche Ross as a Senior Accountant and later as a Senior Consultant for KPMG Peat Marwick which included working in remote Aboriginal communities conducting audits and accounting systems development and training. In 1993 my husband and I relocated to Kununurra so I could take up a position with Kununurra Warringarri Aboriginal Corporation as the Financial Manager. This informed my thinking about the need for more contextual and compatible systems concerning government funding and the associated reporting and acquittal requirements. Since this time I have been pursuing solutions to these and other issues through research in collaboration with a number of remote communities and groups.

I completed a Bachelor of Business through Curtin University and I was awarded first class honours in Management Accounting for which I was awarded the CDU Chancellors medal and the NT Government medal for outstanding academic achievement. I completed a PhD in 2014; my topic was Culture Legitimate Accountability: Finding the Balance for Remote Aboriginal Communities. I have been a CPA since 1996 and awarded FCPA status in 2015 and believe this to be an essential professional credential to have.

I have been working with CDU for around ten years and am currently employed as a Community Engagement Leader working in two remote communities undertaking research and supporting communities to improve education pathways towards higher education.

In the past ten years or so I have chosen the academic research pathway as opposed to a practising accountant but have always maintained a steady flow of board appointments as Director of Finance and also project managed numerous research and other projects.

My accounting and business qualifications and skills have enabled me to have a broad set of skills that I can apply across many disciplines that enable me to focus on the factors that are critical to Indigenous people from remote communities so their voice is heard and legitimately acted on. This I do through an accounting, management and governance lens using an intercultural approach that respects and acknowledges Indigenous culture.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



NATALIE SCOTT, FCPA

Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office

Member since 2002

I am a second generation Darwinite, both my parents having been born here after their parents arrived in Darwin in the late 1930's. I was a little unsure about what career I should choose. Having completed all of my high school work experience doing Nursing, but I really enjoyed science. I was accepted into James Cook University in Townsville to study Environmental Science in 1995. At the time there was a lot of discussion about whether or not you could get a job when you graduated in this field. So, after a lot of deliberating I made the choice to stay in Darwin and started a Bachelor of Business (Accounting) degree at the then Northern Territory University (NTU). The rationale was that a business degree would always be a valuable base.

After my first year of study I wanted to work for a while. Thus began a few years of working and studying, before I put study to the side after my brother was involved in an accident and subsequently passed away. I worked first for architectural firm Woodhead International, and later Nortruss Building Supplies, where my insight into how businesses operate grew. I was very lucky in the latter role to be the person that filled in when others went on leave so I got a lot more exposure to the various aspects of the business – stock control, inventory management, payroll, debt collection, manufacturing, delivery coordination, construction, banking, as well as my core daily duties in timber sales, accounts payable, and reception.

February 2000 saw me return to my studies full time, but this time at Avondale College on the Central Coast, New South Wales, where I graduated with my accounting degree in December 2001. 6 months prior to graduating I was offered a job in Darwin with Deloitte in their Audit and Assurance Division. I started in February 2002 and worked with them for almost 6 years. It was a fantastic opportunity that provided me with a wealth of knowledge and experience working on a vast array of clients, industries, software, and locations. I had the opportunity of a lifetime to participate in a busy season exchange, or secondment, to the Dublin, Ireland Deloitte Office for 3 months in January 2006, that included a round the world plane ticket from my boss, Bob Hudson.

I joined the Northern Territory Government in 2008 as a Finance Manager at the then Department of Planning and Infrastructure, before moving to Northern Territory Treasury as Assistant Director Financial Management where I oversaw amongst other things, the Treasurer's Directions. A secondment to Charles Darwin University to act as their Financial Accountant in 2011 then saw me transfer to the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office where I have been since July 2012 as a Principal Auditor.

I value my CPA membership. As a student at NTU I attended a seminar presented by Gavin Sell, the then NT Branch Manager, who encouraged students to sign up for benefits, including discounted printed volumes of accounting standards – a necessity for any accounting student. As a member of the CPA Passport program, an opportunity presented itself to apply for international work experience placements. I won a position with Air Vanuatu and flew to Vanuatu in January 2001 for the two week placement. It was a truly amazing experience and opportunity to see how an international airline operates, and I rotated through the various operational areas during my time with them.

Most people working in a Chartered Accounting firm undertake the CA Program, but I was able to complete my CPA Program. It wasn't always easy getting through the modules with a demanding job and commitments at home, but I was very proud the day I received my certificate, and subsequently my 10 year membership pin.

I joined the NT Branch Council in 2013 after a call from our local branch General Manager Debbie Hall. I saw it as a way to give something back to the profession and have been Deputy President since 2014. I have enjoyed being involved in the national Public Sector Management Group, the opportunities to be involved in planning the Accounting Congress, as well as Administrator for our local Members of the NT Branch of CPA Australia Facebook page, where we seek more member engagement. Speaking with students at career fairs and welcome to the profession events have also been great opportunities to mentor the next generation of accountants.

50 Years of CPA in the Territory is important to me as it shows that we have strong ties and roots in our local community, and that accountants aren't just about numbers, they are about having connections and networks as well.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



BELINDA HOWIE, FCPA

Northern Sky Accounting & Advisory Pty Ltd

Member since 1998

Becoming a CPA was part of the accounting journey. Uni undergraduate degree -> CPA/CA. I started doing the CA program as this was recommended by my employer, but I swapped over to CPA and haven't looked back.

The CPA reputation is held in high regard by industry. Initially, I remained for my personal career, then I became involved with the NT branch council, and I particularly enjoy the networking and Professional Development opportunities. Having a local branch enables personable contact with the organisation. I quickly learned the difference between non-professional accountants and those who invest in a professional membership of a quality accounting organisation with high standards.

50 years in the Territory means to me that CPA Australia is a sustainable, well managed organisation that invests in its regional areas and members.

BENJAMIN INGLIS, CPA

Lasseters Group

Member since 2001

I was two thirds through my Bachelor of Commerce at the University of South Australia, and was a member of the CPA's Passport program. I was interested in becoming a CPA, mainly due to the fact that one of my uncles was a CPA, and I liked the idea of that. As part of the CPA Passport program, they would organize presentations from different organizations and individuals. One of those presentations was centered on the employment prospects for accounting graduates once they finished their study. I do recall thinking that the employment prospects in Adelaide were quite challenging. The State Bank of South Australia had collapsed in 1991, and the fallout was still being felt in the South Australian economy.

In 1997, my brother and sister-in-law, who lived in Alice Springs rang me advising me that there was an accounts officer job going at a Hertz Licensee office in Alice Springs where my sister-in-law worked. Thinking back to the challenging work prospects in Adelaide at the time, I thought I should go for it and finish my studies while working. I was successful in getting the job, and moved to Alice Springs in October 1997.

After completing the majority of my study in Adelaide, once I started working in the accounting field, I was actually surprised as to how much I still needed to learn. I recall asking how to operate a fax machine on my first day at work. After some time as an Accounts officer, I was promoted to the position of Accountant and finished my Bachelor of Commerce. My boss and Financial Controller of Hertz at the time was Randle Walker, who is a FCPA in Alice Springs.

My prospects for further promotion were limited until such time that the Financial Controllers position became vacant. After around 8 ½ years at Hertz, there was a position advertised for an Accountant at Lasseters Casino in Alice Springs. I applied for that position and was successful. About one year after starting at Lasseters, my Financial Controller left for another position within the Lasseters Group. I applied for the Financial Controllers position and was successful in getting that job. I had a lot to learn in my new role as Financial Controller, and enjoyed the challenges surrounding that. I believe one of the great challenges that accountant face is bridging the gap between the financial side of the business and the operational sides of the business. That is one area that I believe is critical to the success of any business. An accountant being able to explain financial concepts that make sense to front line managers is very important, as it being able to adapt to ensure that the back of house accounting requirements and controls are such that allow and encourage the business to operate to the maximum potential.

I have just been elected to the NT Branch council in 2015. I believe that the accounting profession has been very good to me and I have never regretted the career path that I have gone down. I feel that we all need to, at some time, contribute to the betterment of the profession, and now is my time.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



CARMEL VANDERMOLEN, CPA

Arid Lands Environment Center Inc.

Member since 2011

Just like many people my career path has not been a straight line, neither has life really. I grew up in Ballarat, Victoria and this is where most of my family still lives. Spent most of school enjoying the learning, not necessarily the way we learnt or what we were learning. Bumbled around after completing a Bachelor of Commerce Degree at University, not really knowing what I wanted to do, or where. And then was offered an opportunity to live and work in the Anangy Pitantjara Yankunytatjara (APY) Lands doing all finance, IT, administration, unpacking trucks. For any one who has never worked in a remote location you really do become “Jack of all Trades”. It was this experience that helped me work out what I want to do. I found that I was rather good at making the administration and finance area of a business work. 6.5 years ago I moved to Alice Springs where I continue to work in the admin and finance areas of a number of small local businesses.

I came to work as an accountant as I could see the need of having good quality knowledge in this area. The efficiencies that can be made still amaze me, which in turn effects all aspect of the business from staff to customers, and of course the bottom line and on going sustainability of the business.

I chose to become a CPA for two main reasons. The first reason was to increase my own knowledge. Doing the CPA requirements has done just that and I would not be as successful as I am now without this knowledge. Secondly, with the level that you have to achieve to become a CPA people know they are getting an accountant with good skills and knowledge.

So this is the 50th year that the CPA has been in the territory, and that 50 years would have seen a lot of change. The territory is not one of the easiest places to live and with it brings its own economic challenges. This also means that there are very unique opportunities. The fact that the CPA has managed to continually have a representation here in the NT for 50 years, shows just how dedicate the CPA is to working within all sectors and places, even when the environment can be difficult. We know we can make it better, and the opportunities are always there to do so.

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SERGEI JANSONS, CPA

Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association

Member since 1980

I was working as a cashier for Queensland Institute of Technology, when I visited the guidance councilor on my career objectives. He pointed me in the direction of computing or business, and since I was already working in accounts, I decided to take up an accounting degree. While working as a cashier, the auditor from Qld. Auditor General's Department suggested that I should apply for an audit position. So I called up the Auditor General and made an appointment to see him. Yes, in those days, I was actually interviewed by the Qld. Auditor General. Therefore, I started as an audit clerk in the Qld. Public Service, then moved into Internal Audit, Operational Audit and after about 16 years, I ended up as Financial Controller for the Department of Family Services.

I was frustrated by the Qld. Government at the time which was run by "**Joh Bjelke-Petersen**", so I resigned and went looking for work overseas. I didn't want to spend the rest of my life working as a public servant! In November 1988, I was appointed as "Roving Finance Officer" for the United Nations Development Programme in New York. UNDP had 135 offices around the world and my job was to go to problem country offices and fix their accounts and administrative systems, train staff, and do whatever else was necessary and then get out. I visited 12 countries in the 2 years I was in this position and each trip was approximately 4 weeks. The countries I went to were: Mauritania (twice), Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) - got Malaria on this trip, Mali, Niger, Senegal, The Gambia, Iran, Peru, Mexico, and Cuba.

When my wife got pregnant, we looked for another posting with UNDP, and in late 1990 we ended up in Copenhagen where I worked as Chief Finance and Administration Officer for the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office, which contracted all vehicles, office equipment, and services for the whole UN system. Our two daughters were born in Copenhagen and we spent 4 years there before I was transferred to Bhutan as Deputy Resident Representative (Operations) for UNDP. Bhutan was beautiful but it was hard on the health – diarrhoea was a common ailment.

After 4.5 years in Bhutan, I got a promotion back to New York as Deputy Chief, Technology Services Division and I spent another 2 years in New York before deciding to return to Australia for family and health reasons. I spent a year recuperating, and then found it difficult to get an appropriate job in Brisbane. Finally, I started looking for work outside of Brisbane and ended up as Financial Controller with Ngaanyatjarra Services in Alice Springs in 2003. In 2006, I took up my current role as CFO for CAAMA (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association). Initially the family was not happy moving to the NT. Now, they say that is has been the best move for them because of the opportunities and lifestyle.

I'm a truth seeker and very interested in world politics. I don't read a lot of MSM but read a lot of alternative news sources – that is where the real news is. I am also a classical pianist of reasonably high standard and a bio-dynamic gardener. I dislike dry boring rock gardens! None of that for me. My small property has over 20 fruit trees and vegetable gardens including, plum, nectarine, mandarins, peach, mulberry, grapes, olives, orange, lemon, lime, and pomegranate. These are an investment that returns real food each year!

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



JO CARLESSO, CPA

Charles Darwin University

Member since 2009

If in my teens, a little birdie had sat on my shoulder and whispered that I would one day become a CPA, I would have raised my eyebrow completely perplexed by the foretelling. This time of my life was dominated by pursuits in fashion, fitness, and friendships. So, without too much encouragement, I embarked on an extensive stint in the fashion industry, followed by a spell in the fitness and recreation industry, interspersed with multiple social occasions. It was during this time that I developed a deep appreciation for the conscientious hard work of small business owners. This was because - at the time - news stories and conversations were dominated by high unemployment, high interest rates, and the loss of many manufacturing jobs. As a consequence, I was stirred to better understand the economic and business world we lived in.

It is 1996, I'm married and living in the US; my husband a lecturer in Aerospace Studies at the University of St Thomas and I've got a lot of time on my hands and an insatiable curiosity about the economic world. Without too much delay, I enrol and am accepted into the University of Minnesota into a business degree program.

Returning to Australia in 1998 and settling into Alice Springs, I discover there is a university in town. What luck! I enthusiastically march into the University office, proudly prepared with my transcript in hand; I begin the process of transferring credits and enrolling in a business degree program. Accounting is still not on the radar.

During my first year, I noticed I was topping my accounting and economics classes. Mmmmm ... with the encouragement of my accounting lecturer, I selected classes that would qualify me for membership as a CPA. While still completing my degree, I obtain work in the Accounting profession; tax returns, audit work, and generating financial statements. A few years after graduating, I am offered a finance position at Charles Darwin University and am encouraged to become a CPA.

The University continues to encourage me, not as a student anymore, but as an employee. Today, I'm the Finance Business Manager at the Alice Springs Campus of Charles Darwin University. I provide critical advice and support to our work units and stakeholders. Furthermore, I see firsthand, the meaningful role education brings to enhance the quality of life of our students and the positive results that roll onto the local economy and beyond. Remarkably, my interest in fashion, fitness and friendships has not diminished in the slightest. I have just added another energising interest - I'm a CPA.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



LINDA MURPHY, CPA

Zone Management (NT) Pty Ltd

Member since 2001

To be honest, I chose Accounting as a career to “spite” my former husband! We had moved to Tasmania for a 2 year posting with my then husband’s job, at the end of 1989. Up until that time I had been a stay at home Mum, and that was the expectation for the next umpteen years while the children grew up. Having had to leave my close friends behind in Darwin, I decided that I was no longer willing to sit at home and not put my brain to use. As we were only to be living in Tasmania for a 2 year period I went to the local TAFE and found a course that I would be able to complete within the 2 years that we were there. The course was an Associate Diploma in Business (Accounting). I had not studied since I left high school in 1972 so I was quite nervous about commencing it but my hard work paid off and I was awarded The Dux of the College for the time that I was there.

I initially joined the CPA Passport Programme whilst studying for my Degree in Accountancy at Uni. I was interested in the networking opportunities presented and wanted to be part of an organisation of like minded people.

I remain a CPA as I take pride in being part of an elite organisation of Accountants, who wish to maintain standing within the community. CPA Australia continues to support its Members, and its stringent Professional Code of Conduct ensures that Members of the profession are revered and respected by those from the general public who have dealings with them. I have never had to actively seek employment since commencing my Accounting studies; rather, employers have come knocking on my door to offer me a position. I am certain that the reason for this is the CPA designation and the high standards that we strive to maintain.

Since completing my first qualification as an Accountant, I have worked in both the Private and Public Sector. My first job putting my qualifications to the test, was as Assistant Accountant with Paspaley Pearling Company. Whilst working there I commenced my Bachelor of Business, with an Accounting Major and a Double Minor in Law and Management. After leaving Paspaley Pearling Company, I worked for Bill Passmore & Associates in the Financial Planning and Insurance Industry for 7 years 8 months. I then worked for Feros Wee, a CPA Public Accounting firm for over 4 years. After my stint there, I moved back into the Financial Planning sector again, working for a firm called RetireInvest. After 12 months, I was asked to work in a Public Accounting practice, specialising in the Taxation side of the business. I am now the Registered Tax Agent for that group of companies.

CPA Australia – 50 years in the Territory means 50 years of promoting the role of women in the business community. CPA Australia actively supports and encourages the advancement of women in their chosen profession, and for this they should be applauded. Women are the backbone of society and with strong women in Accounting, Management and Leadership roles, the Territory will go from strength to strength.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



JANET JONES, CPA

APA Group

Member since 2001

I started and completed my accounting degree as a mature age student and was fortunate to have employment with a company that both valued and encouraged further education. My leader and mentor, as a CPA, was an excellent role model and provided insight into the benefits of becoming a CPA, both for career advancement and to broaden my skills and expertise. As a late starter in the accounting profession, I was keen to make up for lost time and gaining my CPA qualification, investing in myself, was a significant step in this process.

I am proud to be a CPA. My CPA has significantly impacted my career, I would not have my current role without this qualification. It has provided rewarding opportunities and work variety that would otherwise not be achievable, and this in turn has greatly increased my personal satisfaction and enjoyment throughout my career. Thank you CPA!

I enjoyed working with numbers and had strong analytical skills. Accounting seemed a natural choice, reflecting my preferences. I considered a start in accounting as an excellent basis, transferrable to a multitude of careers paths. Now, I have a job I greatly enjoy. I work for a company that I am proud of. I am pleased with what I have achieved.

I value my CPA and encourage others to consider the potential rewards for the hard work in gaining the qualification. 50 years in the Territory is a terrific achievement and one that I am proud to celebrate with others.

HITESH KHANNA, CPA

Department of Treasury and Finance, NT

Member since 2009

I reached Darwin via Melbourne, USA, and India. Through the course of the journey here, I've studied Engineering and Mathematics in India, studied and worked at graduate school at the Ohio State University in USA, researching the behavioural ecology of avian vocalisation, and been a teacher of Maths & Science at a secondary school in Melbourne.

As another way to skin a cat – to engage my interest in sustainable development and earn a good living - I work in policy (accounting, financial and economic) at the Northern Territory Department of Treasury and Finance, which gives me a financial perspective on development in the Northern Territory and affords me the opportunity to engage in projects such the development of the next demographic projection model.

Becoming a CPA was a natural next step to developing my accounting skills following study at University, and keeping abreast of the latest developments in accounting, and more generally, in Darwin and the Northern Territory through CPA's outreach events and conferences.

50 years in the Territory means to me that I know that I know that I've made a good investment.