

Northern Territory Branch Presidents and Timeline

1965 - 2015

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



CPA Australia - 50 Years in the Northern Territory

CPA Australia is one of the world's largest professional accounting and finance bodies, with over 150,000 members working in more than 120 countries.

In the 50 years since the Northern Territory Branch was established, both the Territory and the profession have changed dramatically but CPA Australia's focus on technical rigour, integrity and innovative thinking endures, and members remain at the heart of what we do.

The Northern Territory Branch founding fathers, David H England (Chairman), RN Collins, DP Lampe, JC McRae and Robert D Oaten were instrumental in the establishment of the accounting profession in the Territory, creating an environment where CPAs could contribute their expertise to the growth and prosperity of the Territory.

Responsibility for the Branch has been willingly taken up by successive Presidents, each leading their council to address the issues of the day.

This timeline records the President's views, taken from the Branch records (including AGM Reports) and their personal reflections on their time as President.

1965

David England

Managing Partner,

Wilson, Bishop & Henderson



“In 1960 the Melbourne firm of Wilson, Bishop & Henderson purchased a small practice from a local accountant in Smith Street. I was asked to manage same and arrived in Darwin with my wife in 1960.

With a staff of three the work was challenging and within twelve months we moved to larger premises in Cavanagh Street with extra staff being transferred from Melbourne. In those days we travelled extensively in the Territory and ‘down the track’. The practice grew rapidly it was an exciting time for Darwin and the Territory which then began to flourish as the capital of the “Top End” and Gateway to the North. Community involvement was essential and I look back with pride on the many organisations I was involved in particularly my appointment to the board of the Darwin Port Authority at a time when the Port of Darwin was being redeveloped the Ord River Scheme and the Bauxite Mine at Gove. I am very proud along with other members of my involvement in the formation of CPA in 1965 in the Northern Territory and their place in the community this year and in the future.”

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



1966-67

Harry Chan OBE

President, Northern Territory
Legislative Council, Mayor of
Darwin



Harry Chan is recognised for his work in the Territory as a businessman, mayor and politician.

What is less well known is that he studied accountancy by correspondence, was the first Territorian to become a Fellow of the Australian Society of Accountants (now CPA Australia) and was also the first elected President of the NT Branch of CPA Australia.

The NT Branch had 32 members.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



1968

Graeme McRae

Managing Partner, Wilson,
Bishop, Bowes & Craig



Mail services from USA to Darwin commenced

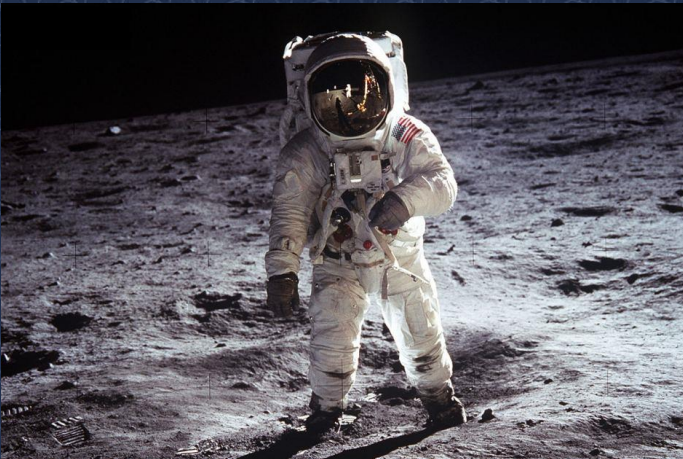
The President's Report reflected the upturn in economic activity and the expectation that CPAs would be in demand providing accounting services and as business advisers - "The expanding business and commercial life in Darwin is going to increase the demands on the profession in the coming years".

- Harry Chan was awarded his Fellowship at a formal dinner
- The NT Branch had 37 members

1969

George Koutsouvelis

Partner, Cooper and Lybrand



Neil Armstrong on the Moon in 1969

- The Branch presented a paper on accountancy training and needs in the Northern Territory to the Planning Committee for the Community College.
- The Centralian Accounting Convention was held in Alice Springs

1970

Bill Hull

Accountant, Commercial
Enterprises, Northern Territory
Administration



Cavenagh Street, Darwin 1970

“I came to Darwin in 1968 after eight years in Nauru to join the then Northern Territory Administration. Most of you present tonight would have had no appreciation of the size on the NT Administration. My role initially was to take charge of the Commercial Accounting Section. I had no qualified accountants.

I became a member of the Branch soon after arrival in 1968 and President in 1970. I saw my role as being to persuade the government of the Territory of the benefits which would come out of offering careers to accountants within the public service. This I did and the government approved an initial ten trainees.

I had now progressed to Director of the Branch frequently being exposed to the Public Accounts Committee of the Australian Parliament and the Senate Estimates Committee. My training as an accountant gave me the confidence and ability to face these terrible persons in their den.

As the Territory approached self government I became a part of a working group developing the first Administration and Audit Act.

Before I retired in 1987 I move through many management roles in the Territory Service because of the expertise and management skills developed as a CPA.”



1971-1972

Bob Oaten

Partner,
Nicholls and Oaten



“I think that we have generated a lot more interest in the Society and it’s affairs during the year and it’s very gratifying to find that the members are giving their support & co-operation.

The Peter Drucker films had excellent attendance and provided stimulating discussion for those who attended.

Our presentation dinner was a wonderful evening with over 100 people there to see three associates receive their membership certificates from the Administrator, His Honour Mt. Chaney. This evening coincided with a visit from the S.A. Divisional President Mr. Faggotter.

A submission on the Darwin Community College was submitted to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works by the Darwin Branch and will eventually result in our Branch having one, possibly two, members appointed to the College Advisory Committee to help with the education program for Accountancy Courses within the College. ...

In conclusion , I would say that it has been a very satisfying year for the Darwin Branch and I have enjoyed serving as your President for the year.” [Extract from The President’s Report]

1973-1975

Stan Haupt

Territory Administration

“This year has been a particularly difficult one due to the disruption of our activities caused by Cyclone Tracey .. for some months there was no suitable venue available for our monthly luncheon meetings and initially at least we had no idea which of our members were still in Darwin.” [Extract from the President’s Report]

- Twenty five percent of Darwin members relocated after the cyclone, reducing the number of CPAs in the Territory to just sixty eight.
- Darwin Community College, the Territory’s first tertiary institution opened. The Business Accounting degree was accredited, enabling Northern Territory residents to study and gain entry into the Association without leaving home.



1976 -1978

Reg Lowry AO

Principal, RV Lowry &
Associates



- The Council arranged a presentation entitled “In the Reconstruction of Darwin after cyclone Tracey, what contributions have been made by unions and the business community?” Members also prepared a Study Paper on Accounting for Disasters, drawing on, and sharing, their experience.
- Members actively promote the profession, with the Branch President invited to address school leavers at Darwin High School and the new recruits in the Auditor General’s office.
- In 1978, the Northern Territory was granted self-government, a significant driver for the Branch to advocate to separate from the S.A. Divisional structure and to become a Division in its own right.
- Also in 1978, the Society held the National Accounting Convention [now known as CPA Congress] in Alice Springs, attracting over 150 delegates from across Australia. It was called ‘Accounting at the Crossroads’.
- The NT Branch had 81 members

1979 - 1980

Robin Flannery

Business Manager, Darwin
Community College; Senior
Ministerial Adviser, Office of
the Treasurer & Attorney
General



“The Northern Territory Branch of CPA was established in 1965 as an outpost of CPA’s South Australian Division.

When self-government was conferred on the Northern Territory on 1 July 1978 by the Commonwealth, the Northern Territory Parliament became responsible for most state-type functions,

At that time, Northern Territory CPA members considered it appropriate for the branch to upgrade to divisional status, but the only concession granted saw it report directly to the head office in Melbourne, still as a branch.

As 2015 marks 50 years in the Northern Territory for CPA, the Branch is still known as a branch.

Today however, the Branch has a lot more autonomy and, with other branches in New Zealand and Europe, at least now has a voice on the CPA Representative Council.”

1981 - 1982

Robin Barnes

Internal Auditor, Darwin
Community College



- Responsibility for the Northern Territory Branch was transferred from the South Australian Divisional Council to the National Council. Members celebrated at a formal dinner during which The Hon. R.M. Steele MLA said “the Northern Territory is a forerunner within Australia of new and controversial ideas and I am convinced that the members of the Branch will follow this trend in their actions, aims and ideas”.
- The Northern Territory Government appointed the first resident Auditor-General, Mr Graham Carpenter.
- The NT Branch had 180 members

“Robin was the founding member of public sector group, internal auditor and also the past President of the Branch. He was one of the most dedicated contributors to the development of the accounting profession in the NT.”

[President’s Reflection, Amin Islam, 2015]

1983 -1984, 1995

Bill Ross

Senior Audit Inspector,
Auditor General's Office



Amyas W. K. Ross, A.A.S.A., is Senior Audit Inspector, Auditor-General's Office, Darwin. He has worked in departments throughout Australia and Papua New Guinea and is Secretary of the Northern Territory branch of the Society. This article was first published in the International Journal of Government Auditing, April 1976.

- The Accounting Standards Review Board was established to review the standards produced by the profession and to give them the force of company law.
- The CPA Program and CPA status were introduced to ensure members were equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet their professional obligations and to provide certified members with a designation that confirmed their competency.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



1985

Kevin Hickmott

Manager, then Partner, Peat
Marwick Mitchell



“As President I worked as a team with the likes of Mr AWK Ross, Mr J McLaren, Mrs R Harvey, Mr RV Lowry, Mr R Barnes, Mr E Isaacson, Mr R Warner, Mr R F Flannery & Mr R Clifton it was a power house of individuals, working honorary for our Territory members. *“May the Force be With You.”*”

I had the opportunity to attend a National Council meeting as an observer for the Territory, opening up opportunities for the future.

In July 1984 we put a submission for Darwin to host the 1988 National Congress. Also in December 1984 as a Council we put a submission that a South-East Asian Division of the Society be established with Head Quarters based in Darwin to National President Mr JE Tomlinson. Unfortunately unsuccessful due to what was considered the diversity of needs of members in Singapore, Malaysia & Hong Kong.

The Council continued to participate as a member of the Batchelor of Business (Acc) Degree Advisory committee and was engaged in general ongoing work in the interest of members, such as Professional Development, luncheon speakers etc.”

1986

John McLaren

Director of Administration for
the Department of Community
Development.



“The year 1985 saw the Northern Territory Government take yet another significant step on the way to Statehood, with the creation of a separate portfolio to oversight that development. The Society, like the Territory, likewise looked to the future and the special situation of accountants in the North of Australia.”
[President’s Report]

1987 - 1988

Rita Harvey

Deputy Commissioner
(Investigations), Corporate
Affairs Office



- The members of the Northern Territory Branch elected their first female President.
- The Northern Territory Branch opened its first office, in Stuart Park. The office provided the members with a higher level of service and a focus point for activity.
- The Northern Territory Government Public Sector Accounting Group (PSAG) was established, stepping up the Society's input into building financial management and reporting capacity in the public sector.

1989

Reg Lowry OA

Principal, RV Lowry &
Associates



- The inaugural Northern Territory Public Sector Annual Report Awards were held. “The Award process saw a major improvement on Annual Reports from a meaningful and accountability perspective.” [President’s Reflection Michael Martin 2015]
- The Northern Territory University (NTU) was founded in response to Commonwealth reforms that aimed to improve the efficiency and international competitiveness of Australian universities.

1990 - 1991

John Godfrey

Accountant, Hendry Walker
Group Ltd

- The Australia Society of Accountants (ASA) became the Australian Society of CPAs (ASCPA)

“Remember, this is your Society, designed to provide you with professional support and training, social and business contacts” [Extract from the President’s Report]



John Godfrey (centre) and members of 1990 Council, including Robin Barnes (second left) and Dallas Jones (far right).

1992

Brian McLaughlin

Business Manager, Menzies
School of Health Research



The Accounting at the Top green gecko

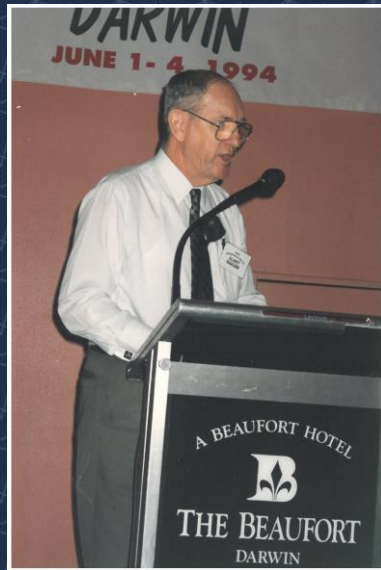
“It is the first task of the Branch Council to safeguard the interests of members, to seek to upgrade their status in the community and in seeking to achieve this objective, to use every avenue available to give them the opportunity to keep abreast of modern methods, techniques and knowledge”
[Extract from President’s Report]

With these sentiments in mind, the Branch organised its first local “*Accounting at The Top*” conference. Speakers included the Honourable James Muirhead, Administrator of the Northern Territory.

1993

Elliott Isaacson

Northern Territory Auditor
General



- The NT Branch delivered the first Accountancy Week, a series of training and networking events.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.

1994, 1996

Mike Vallentine

Associate Professor of
Accounting, Northern Territory
University

“During my Presidency of the Northern Territory Branch I was particularly pleased to further the continuing co-operation between the Northern Territory branches of the Society and the Institute of Chartered Accountants, bearing in mind the competition and antagonism between the two bodies in other places at that time. This co-operation included a number of joint Professional Development activities and the joint presentation of the 1996 “Accounting at the Top” conference, attended by the National Presidents of both bodies.

I was also pleased to participate in the recognition of the sixty years of membership of Darwin resident, Ted Milliken, who had joined one of CPA Australia’s antecedent bodies in 1936, making him one of the organisation’s longest serving members.

I thoroughly enjoyed my involvement with the Branch Council and am pleased to have been a part of the continuing development of the accounting profession and, particularly, CPA Australia, in the Northern Territory.”



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1994, 1996

- “The NT Branch office relocated to larger facilities in the city centre, providing members with a more convenient location and enabling the delivery of over 70 events during the year. [Extract from the President’s Report]
- The CPA Passport Work experience program was launched and NTU student, Julienne McNaught was selected for a placement in the USA, with Nike, in Portland, Oregon. The reference letter from her supervisor said “If an opportunity presented itself, I believe we would seriously consider having her here as a Nike employee”. An experience, and result accounting graduates would generally envy!

1997, 2000 -2001

Kate Laurence

Principal, RC Laurence & Co

- The first Northern Territory University Prize, named for the NT Administrator, The Honourable Eric Johnston, was awarded to the best performing accounting student. This is one of a number of ongoing initiatives that strengthen the partnership between CPA Australia and the university.
- In 2000, The Australian Society of CPAs became CPA Australia and Australia introduced the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- In 2001, Ted Milliken, the Northern Territory's longest serving member, was honoured on the anniversary of 65 years of continuous membership.

“Ours is a large and growing organisation which is gaining a large number of young new members. When asked for a reason it is usually given as our ethical status in the business.” [Extract from the President's Report]



1998

Amin Islam

Principal, Ernest & Young



“The year 1998/99 was a year mainly occupied with the proposed merger talk between the CPA and ICA. The merger resulted in negative. Perhaps the positives out of this event was the determination of the CPA to grow more effective and stronger.

For the first time monthly Professional Development (PD) Calendar was developed and implemented jointly with the CPA and the ICA.

One of the highlight of the year was a highly successful "Accounting at the Top" conference held at the MGM Casino (now Skycity). Both The quality of speakers and the venue set a high benchmark in the NT accounting professional calendar.

At the outset of that year ,the KPI's set by the Councillors to the take the NT Branch at a higher level was very sincerely strived and achieved.

Passing of Robin Barnes in that year, one of the true blue supporter of the development of the profession, was deeply felt.

My earnest wish to lay the seed to grow the NT branch of CPA as an eminent body was truly embedded in the year 1998/99.

On the CPA Australia's 50th Anniversary Celebrations I wish them ever more successful future.”

1999

Adrian Ralston

Practice Manager, Drs Perrett,
Harrison & Partners



“The NT Branch Council has been at the apex of the ASCPA in implementing an electronic newsletter and communicating with its members through email. The NT is the first Branch / Division of ASCPA to achieve this milestone. It is envisaged that in the near future all written communications with members will be done this way.

One of the highlights of the period was the highly successful “Accounting At The Top conference” that brought to Darwin quality speakers such as Dr Hewson.

In 1999, Branch Council commenced preparation of its business plan and 3 year strategic plan with the objectives of increasing the ASCPA’s brand presence in the NT, seeking to commentate through the media on the many business issues of the day, increasing the communities awareness of the CPA designation as the professional of choice, actively participating in and being seen by National Council as a serious participant in the business of the profession, moving the bi-annual AATT conference to an annual event and significantly increasing the number of PD events to members.” [Extract from the President’s Report]

2002 - 2004

Michael Martin

OAM

Deputy Secretary, Department
of Corporate Information
Services



“During this period the NT Government drafted a new Associations Act Following our representations the Act now allows a person holding a public practice certificate issued by an accountant’s body to perform Tier 3 audits.

Key note speakers at the Biennial Conference during my Presidency included former Queensland Premier Wayne Goss and former NT Chief Minister Shane Stone.

A visit to the Territory of the National Board of CPA Australia to attend out Biennial Conference and an opportunity to present to the Board in the opportunities for CPA in Australia. This presentation and the quality of the Biennial Conference reinforced the utility of a NT Branch office staffed by professionals.

The recruitment of a Professor of Accounting at CDU which addressed a major deficiency highlighted by the national accreditation process. This was also a period where much was done to improve the critical relationship between the Territory’s only University and CPA with both parties together working productively.

The development of a strong Council structure with an effective Executive Committee that met in between Council meetings. The PD Sub Committee attracted members outside of Council which worked effectively and the first non Council member later became the President of the Branch.”

BE HEARD.
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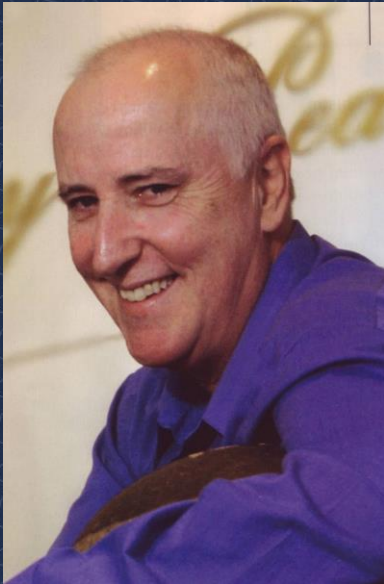


2005

Roger Paul

Accounting Systems Manager

Paspaley Pearling Trust



- There were 358 members attached to the NT Branch, 37% at Associate status and 12% Fellows.

2006 - 2007

Mike Lane

Manager, Aboriginal Benefits
Trust



“I received a phone call from our President of NT Branch Council, Roger Paul, in May 2006. Roger had stood down from the office of President of Branch Council unexpectedly, as *Accounting At The Top 2006* loomed in June. I was Deputy President, and most content to beaver away in the engine room, rather than be on the bridge, and now I was being measured for the mantle of President.

With members of the Darwin Office and Branch Council, we had been working on the program for our flagship biennial conference for several months, considering topics, finding speakers, and tackling the logistical challenges set by interstate speakers and attendees, not to mention our focus on the NT membership.

Now, instead of sharing the chairing of each of the presentations with Branch Council colleagues at the conference, drafting questions and thanking speakers ahead coffee breaks and lunch, of I would have to preside over the full breadth of the conference – and membership, meaning our National President and members of National Council. This meant speeches, welcomes, acknowledgments, other protocols, and fear of failure or, at least, a memorable stuff-up.

What to do? Should I ask the GP to set my legs in dual splints, write me a scrip for strong sedatives, deem me fit for light duties only in June? No. I ‘phoned Rita, my beloved wife then pursuing her Masters of Anthropology at ANU in Canberra. She encouraged me wholly to consider this a blessing, always looking through the spiritual prism.

Thus it came to pass, a Branch Council meeting shortly thereafter, and the presidential void filled with my name. Our *2006 Accounting At The Top* was so memorable to me, opened by the then Administrator of the NT, His Honour Ted Egan, singing “Old Darwin Town”, and filled with colleagues I treasure to this day.

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



2008 - 2009

Steve Balch

Lecturer, School of Law and
Business. Charles Darwin
University



“During my term as CPA NT President I saw and experienced a period of significant change, both in terms of CPA and for myself personally.

On being elected President I had not long before moved to a new position as a lecturer and course co-ordinator for the Bachelor of Accounting program at Charles Darwin University. In addition CPA Australia had embarked on it’s “modernisation” process which saw the then, CPA Board Deputy President, Alex Malley, travel to the NT for a significant vote and which resulted in constitutional changes which, among other things, resulted in the formation of the Representative Council.

Both Michael Martin (himself a former NT President) and myself went on to serve two terms each on that council during which time we had first hand input into the makeup of the CPA Board. I also had the opportunity to lobby for, and see, the change from geographical to merit based appoints to the Board thus clearing the way for members outside the main “State” Divisions to nominate for the Board.”

2010

David Gomez

Principal, Merit Partners



“One activity that stands out during my tenure as NT CPA branch President was the project to assist with developing an accounting body in Timor-Leste. My experience in Timor-Leste made it clear there was serious need for developing accounting skills in the country and that such a project would be worthwhile.

The late Frank McGuiness, former NT Auditor General, took a particular interest in the project and accompanied me on one of my visits to Timor-Leste. We took the opportunity to discuss the importance of an accounting profession with senior members of the Government, including with the then Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, the Finance Minister, University officials, Asian Development bank officers and local accountants.

CPA Australia’s NT Branch facilitating the selection of a Timorese accountant for CPA project in Melbourne and assisted Charles Darwin University with developing the accounting program with the Dili University. The Branch also donated accounting resources to be sent to the Timorese accounting association.

These were initial “small steps” that led to some positive outcomes. These included the establishment of a local accounting association that received a small grant from USAID. There is a program now whereby Timorese accountants are offered a training that includes study in CDU and placements in the Treasury.

During my tenure I also had the opportunity to visit other CPA offices while working interstate and overseas, bringing back ideas for the NT Branch Council.”

2011 - 2012

Shane Smith

Financial Controller, Menzies
School of Health Research



“My two years as president during 2011 & 2012 had many highlights including CPA Australia celebrating 125 years. There were many events and activities, however upon reflection the most memorable moment was Alex talking to Neil Armstrong, with Neil talking though landing the lunar module on the moon. Alex then asking Neil about decision making and leadership during one of man’s greatest achievements.

A local highlight was CPA Congress and the activities held over the course of the 2 days, with 4 keynotes, 1 business lunch, 4 master classes and 15 concurrent sessions with big name presenters including Kevin Sheedy and Paul Citherow.

The Department of Education and Family Services became the NT’s first Recognised Employer Partner.

NT Branch membership continued to grow and in 2012 NT member numbers exceed 450. Yet for all the work done more than 40% of NT members (at that time) had opted out of receiving information about networking and CPD activity via email.”

2013

Nathan Morsillo

Finance Manager,
Central Land Council



“It is hard to believe that 2013 was only a few years ago!

There was a new Country Liberal government in town, and - at least at the time - some initial optimism about change that may be able to be made. Over the year, CPA Australia published and pushed a major report on Australia's Competitiveness, which led to one major lunch event in Darwin with Alex Malley and a panel of speakers. In the midst of government, NFP (ACNC reforms) and a flattening economy, CPA Australia played an important leadership role in meetings with various levels of government. The intent was to encourage continued innovation and investment in aid of productivity.

Alongside this sort of policy leadership, the ongoing day to day core business of the branch keeps the focus on member engagement. Meeting, greeting and attempting to encourage engagement with and between members is sometimes easier said than done, but small steps in the right direction continued to be taken.”

BE HEARD.
BE RECOGNISED.



2014 - 2015

Jocelyn Nathanael-Walters

Manager Sustainability,
Department of Local
Government



“ ... for the Branch to celebrate that CPA Australia has been active in the Territory for 50 Years. This special anniversary has provided a focus for activity this year, starting with a Territory Library exhibition and a parliamentary reception in May, and continued through the year with a project that has created an archive that documents the creation and development of the Branch, and the collation of stories from members that reflects the diversity of the membership, both in their demographics and their experience.

... in the two years as President she has chaired about 35 hours of meetings, headed up the CPA Congress 2014 team and was the front-person for that important event, and has also represented the Branch and the profession at events ranging from the Budget Lockup to meetings with VIPs visiting the Territory. “ *Extract , '15 End of Year report*