

IARC President's Report

October 2019



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

Industry Update

IARC is this year celebrating 20 years since forming in November 1999.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Peter Derrig and Katie Freeth in particular, who volunteered a great deal of their time in those early years to get the organisation established and operational. Katie, as our first Secretary and Executive Officer of the Board, operated from her home in Europe (living between Scotland and Cyprus) and throughout November and December 1999, spent six weeks in Australia working hard on establishing the formal Constitution, recruiting initial members and giving strong support to Peter Derrig and myself as the original Directors.

Times have changed greatly since 1999, both in the climate and nature of the education industry and of IARC itself. We know change has been the theme of the education industry for several years, both within national systems, but also internationally.

I have increasingly become aware of research as well as anecdotal evidence of changing attitudes and trends, including:

- Formal qualifications and accreditation of courses is less important to employers. Employers now rank “passion” as being the first thing they look for in a job applicant.
- Enrolments in mainstream education such as Universities and Vocational Colleges, are broadly suffering; though there are signs of some institutions making dramatic changes to the way they operate. Some institutions are seeing growth in enrolments, but others (generally more conventional) are seeing decline.
- Micro credentials are booming
- Tech giants including Google, Amazon and Microsoft are moving increasingly into the education industry (directly delivering and indirectly buying shares investing in education institutions)
- Some Governments are reviewing and significantly changing their approach to education (e.g. The Singaporean government is de-emphasising the role of assessments

and international rankings in their education system; the Australian Prime Minister has called for the time taken to develop new courses to be reduced from years to months.

- Blended learning is an increasingly favoured concept.
- Tech applications (video, AI, IT driven assessments) are all increasing
- Marketing dynamics are rapidly evolving. Websites alone do not give results they once gave; business-to-business partnering, networking, lead prospecting etc are all becoming increasingly important for successful marketing.
- “The international education marketplace is overcrowded” was commented to me personally by the marketing manager of a large public university
- Printed textbooks are flagged to decline. In a statement from Pearson who published 25% of the world’s text books – they are moving to ebooks. It is likely other education publishers will follow.
- Political instability and change is affecting education. Factors such as Brexit, Trade wars and GDPR have all taken tolls on smooth operation of education providers – both small and large; at local as well as international levels.
- The rapidly changing environment is providing short term opportunities for exploitation by providers who take a short term view. Less ethical and short term management strategies are increasingly unsustainable and risky. Public suspicion of education has risen with increasing media reports on scandals and financial collapses in high profile education institutions – not only private institutions either.

The one thing that has not changed is the value of networking between institutions and industry professionals.

We have always been better informed and more aware of our industry when we’ve connected with colleagues, than when we’ve been when standing alone.

These are just some of the changes I have been observing over the last year.

It is becoming clearer every year that while education and learning is as important as ever, the ability to change and adapt to every aspect of operations is becoming an increasingly important factor.

Education providers need to be able to change faster than ever in order to be sustainable.

Membership Update

This year has been a slower year in some respects for IARC. Partially, if not predominately due to members' need to adapt to change. Nevertheless, members have been interacting more with each other and our Secretariat, which has at the very least helped members elevate awareness and achieve a sense of connection, on many occasions.

We have a total of 72 members – this includes all categories of membership. Full fee paying members, honorary members and subsidiary memberships. This is a decrease of 4%, from 75 in October 2018.

- There is one prospective member application being worked on at present.
- There have been **three new members**.
- IARC **rejected zero** applications.
- IARC processed one new membership who withdrew membership 1 month after joining.
- IARC **lost five members** in total for the following 2 reasons: the school ceased to operate, or there were staff changes at the school and new management decided not to renew, or the business model changed and online education was no longer the primary objective.
- We terminated the **zero** memberships in the last year.
- We wrote off a total of \$990 from debtors.
- There are **four** members who are currently considered non-financial with invoices unpaid for the 2019-2020 member's fees.

Although we see a small drop in the total membership this year, we do continue to have excitement and positivity going forward, with an increase in enquiries through 2019 (comparative to the total enquiries received in 2018).

General Updates and Notes for Members

We have increased social media activity with many announcements posted online. We request members to join us, connect with us, follow us online if you haven't yet already. Find us on facebook @[iarcedu](#) and linkedin: [International Approval and Registration Centre](#).

Quarterly newsletters are issued from our *no-reply* email news@iarcedu.com . Please ensure you have added this email address to your trusted contacts to ensure you receive these.

'Declarations' were requested from all members at the time of renewal this year. This is an important requirement which is necessary as it is taken as your formal agreement to adhere to IARC's revised and newly introduced policies following a governance update. If you have not yet returned those to our Business Manager, please return your declaration as soon as you can to jade@iarcedu.com.

Development projects, including website programming, commenced during 2017-2018 have slowed due to budget constraints. We will continue to work on the introduction of significant products and services but work pace is reduced due to resources.

Behind the scenes our dedicated team continue to handle a high number of enquiries from students and prospective students of the members. We are proud of this service we offer. If you need any information to present on our website or to your students, please contact us and we will happily provide a short statement for you to use.

We worked hard on the development and launch of the new Organisational Membership Quality Framework and accompanying application. After many months of consultation and research, the Quality Framework, consisting of 6 elements, ensures members are operating at a standard we feel is very competitive in today's education marketplace. If you would like to know more about the Quality Framework, you can view more online at iarcedu.com or contact admin@iarcedu.com.



In closing, we look forward to resolutely reinventing ourselves, and continuing to benefit from networking with each other throughout the year. I would like to thank you for ongoing commitment to quality in education and to the ethical standards on which we base our core business.

With warmest wishes,

Mr John Mason



Quality for Excellence in Education