

ABSA

Annual Report
2020



Chair	Pauline Turner	PLC, Sydney, NSW
Treasurer	Sue Collister	St Catherine's School, VIC
Chief Executive Officer & Company Secretary	Richard Stokes	Associate Member
Other Board Members	Rosie Broderick South Australian Regional Chair	Wilderness, SA
	Jaye Beutel Queensland Regional Chair	Townsville Grammar School, QLD
	Mika Browning Tasmanian Regional Chair	St Michael's Collegiate, TAS
	Liz Langdon Western Australian Regional Chair	Presbyterian Ladies' College, WA
	Kate Kovacs New South Wales, ACT Regional Chair	Loreto Normanhurst, NSW
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	Michael Silcock Past Vic Regional Chair	St Patrick's College, VIC
	Steve Byrne AHISA Representative	Sacred Heart College, SA

CHAIR REPORT

Pauline Turner



As the 2020 school year draws to a close and the southern hemisphere moves into the summer holiday season, I take this opportunity to thank all our member schools for their support of this excellent Association.

This has been a year of firsts, we have all struggled with decisions and uncertainty both in our schools as well as in our Association. For our member schools with long histories that reach back to the first pandemic when our schools and boarding facilities lived through similar times that we never envisioned repeating, many of us have now produced recorded documentation of this second pandemic and the opportunities such a world event produces.

The difference in this historic event is the common link our boarding communities now have through ABSA and the thread that now binds us. 'We are all in this together' has been the year's mantra; we now share one story and one voice. ABSA has been the link boarding schools have turned to for support and information. As a young association ABSA also has a story to tell as this historic year is documented. In reading our CEO's report you will see the changing face of the Association and how the team addressed the virtual world and engaged and supported our sister schools across the globe during trying times. Even though the pandemic is still with us, there is much to be thankful for as we reflect on the year. The relationships that bind us both across Australia and the global community are greatly valued and the common support we all share makes us all stronger.

The Chief Executive Officer's report explains the many achievements throughout the year and the initiatives the Association has engaged in. It is remarkable how much has been achieved, learnt and developed. Opportunities for such profound change come occasionally in a life-time and this year COVID-19 presented this opportunity to the Association, giving rise to new forms of meeting with colleagues through virtual events, webinars from a vast array of accomplished presenters and virtual tours of schools across the world, to speak of just a few new initiatives. We do not know when we will return to face to face gatherings again - this may still be some way off yet.

Uncertainty continues to be ever present and will do so into 2021 as we face the challenges of bringing our international students into the country from their homes, as well as so many aspects of our school experiences that involve international engagement. With boarding numbers still uncertain in many schools, ABSA is committed to ensuring you are supported through the continued engagement in the political sector. The future is still to be written and our hope is that the boarding world will reflect on what it has been capable of achieving within this wonderful community when we work together.

Thank you to our Board Members for the work they are involved in both at State and National levels. The engagement of these individuals throughout this year has been wonderful and I thank them for giving of their time to support and direct the work of the Association.

The development of relationships with outside Associations such as the ICPA and IEBA show that we have been able together to build and promote the Boarding Industry through the work and support we have engaged in this year, thank you. ABSA greatly values the friendship we have with these organisations and we look forward to further developing these relationships in the years ahead.

To our Partner companies, thank you for continuing to support the Association and contributing to the development of the boarding community through webinars and sponsorship. We greatly value your contribution and the support you have given throughout the year.

To the ABSA team Richard, Tom, Jackie and Jared, who have given of themselves daily to ensure the Association runs smoothly and remains financially strong to enable us to provide the best possible training and professional development to our membership. Their ability to be at the cutting edge of new forms of engagement continues to amaze. The initiative that gave rise to the development of term by term professional training for all boarding and school staff related to the boarding community worldwide is exciting. The provision through webinars, accredited courses, training modules, national and international training as well as standards support is growing at a fast rate. Engagement with the media and politically continues to be developed and strengthened. These are exciting times as we stay tuned to the offerings that ABSA has for the coming year.

On behalf of our amazing Association and the National Board I wish you all a safe and restful holiday season as you refresh yourselves for the New Year and the surprises 2021 will produce. We look forward to greater engagement with each of our member schools as we work to build an even stronger boarding community throughout 2021.



NEW SOUTH WALES/ACT Regional Chair

Kate Kovacs - Loreto Normanhurst



ABSA
Annual Report
2020

Our year started well with plans in place for activities and options for the year ahead. March brought a change of direction that no one had anticipated on such a scale.

A number of the boarding schools in Sydney and country NSW felt the first impact with the closure of the border to Chinese students and then full closure of international borders, just as school started for the year.

Some schools in NSW closed before a government directive and some went until the end of Term One. We all were then in the new mode of online learning for the beginning of Term Two, in fact schools were under the impression this would go for the whole of Term Two and preparations were put in place for this event. This was a time of worry for many Heads of Boarding as to what it would mean for boarding and how, when and if we would be able to return to normal operations.

Zoom provided us with excellent means of communication for group gatherings across this period and proved invaluable for being able to gather across the State and not just as a Sydney based boarding experience. Our Zoom meetings provided the opportunity for all Heads of Boarding to attend meetings and we had excellent attendance as the convenience and opportunity to gather and share information as we navigated the pandemic was vital. One of the main goals of the NSW Committee, when we re-established ourselves after a hiatus, was; to create opportunity for collegial gatherings, networking that was supportive for Heads of Boarding to seek knowledge from peers and to work within the NSW/ACT context to support schools with the PD we needed for Heads and staff. As a State we definitely have a lot more understanding of each other's context, have shared our learnings and all have been so generous in sharing when we saw a need.

We met regularly while in online mode and have continued this for Term Three and Four. Along with the regular ABSA Heads of Boarding Virtual Coffee meetings, which provided an insight around the country. Being able to access information from government bodies and politicians, AIS, and Department of Education sources, sponsors and an excellent variety of webinars through ABSA, I believe we had access to excellent resources to assist us in our planning and decision making.

This year hasn't seen NSW/ACT tick all the boxes we thought we would, but as an organisation we have made significant gains in growing as a team.



QUEENSLAND Regional Chair

Jaye Beutel - Townsville Grammar School



Retiring State Chair

At the start of the year, long standing committee member and Chair for the past four years, Marguerite Dunne announced her retirement from the position of Chair. Margie has been a valued member of the ABSA community, and state committee for many years. While she remains on the committee in her capacity as Past-Chair, we give a great deal of thanks to her service and commitment to our professional network over such a long period time.

Queensland State Committee

A reshuffled state committee commenced the year, prior to the COVID-19 challenges. Berian Williams-Jones (Brisbane Grammar) was appointed as Vice-Chair, and Jaye Beutel (Townsville Grammar) as Chair. The Committee comprises of nine representatives from across the state.

Mr Jaye Beutel (Chair), Townsville Grammar School
Mr James Noble (Secretary), Toowoomba Grammar School
Mr Stuart Delaney, St Peters Lutheran College
Ms Lesa Fowler, St Margaret's Anglican Girls' School
Mrs Donna Grant, The Glennie School
Mr Stewart Norford, The Rockhampton Grammar School
Mr Berian Williams-Jones (Vice-Chair), Brisbane Grammar School
Mr Tony Watt, The Southport School
Mrs Margie Dunne, (Past Chair) Fairholme College

I thank the committee for all their support in 2020, not just of the members within the committee itself, but to all their colleagues across the State during such a trying time.

State Conferences and Workshops

This year only saw one face-face event, the Taking the Reins conference on the Gold Coast at Bond University. This is an event which continues to grow, with the 2020 numbers the highest to date, and holds promise to continue on this trend.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all other professional opportunities were held as online platforms. This included a small number of Heads of Boarding meetings on Zoom, however for the most part ABSA Head Office assumed command of and produced many of the online workshops, national conference and virtual coffees, which QLD members took part in.

As we move into planning mode for 2021, our State Committee will return to a focus on providing opportunities for our members to meet throughout the State at network gatherings and professional development workshops.

VICTORIAN Regional Chair

Jane Shone - Methodist Ladies' College



ABSA Annual Report 2020

This has been a year like no other – I intend to avoid the use of the phrase ‘unprecedented’!

A year when we had a range of different events planned, took us to acquiring new skills and becoming adept at operating in an online space. Of course, it was a great shame that we did not have the opportunity to meet up in person and benefit from an exchange of views and experiences, but I think we have managed to use our growing familiarity with technology to huge advantage. Thanks to Richard and Tom at ABSA for setting up a system of Virtual Coffee mornings; they have become a highlight in our calendars, a time to share experiences, ask questions, gain support from each and let off a little bit of steam!

From a time of uncertainty and adversity has come a mechanism to draw us closer together as colleagues and build a community where professionals can share concerns and gain support from each other. It is our plan to continue with this forum into 2021, always hoping that we will not be facing a similar year to the one we have had, but that we have established a structure for regular meetings and exchange of information.

Key areas discussed in our forums:

- Capacity in boarding facilities – 25% ruling – what this means for our boarding houses
- Quarantine restrictions – impact on Interstate and International students
- Sharing of COVID safe plans – supporting each other to make our facilities safe for students and staff
- Mask wearing in boarding houses
- Keeping facilities open during holiday breaks – impact on boarding staff, long term effects on students
- Summer holiday programs and plans for International students.
- Quarantine plans for returning students – Darwin, South Australia, ABSA/LetzLive

As your representatives, Chris and I wrote to Marion Frere at the Department of Education to challenge the recent requirement that, where there are non-resident staff working in the Boarding House, the students will have to wear masks – meaning some children could be wearing a mask from morning to night. Chris was contacted by DET, to seek clarification about some specific aspects of boarding operations, and the department were confident that a favourable outcome would be forthcoming regarding masks. They have also committed to working with us on capacity limitations in the current guidelines, along with the practical implementation of the newly legislated VRQA Boarding Standards for boarding schools.

We will continue to work with Marion Frere and her team next year as we face the new regulatory law for registration as a boarding facility or residence. We will keep you informed as to our progress and will probably be seeking feedback at various stages – again another benefit to come from our new online confidence will be that we can gather remotely and keep everyone updated easily.

ABSA has created a Dropbox file on the ABSA website where we can start to store documents and policies that we are happy to share with our colleagues. This should prove to be a valuable resource centre for comparing policies and procedures used by other schools in Victoria.

I would like to thank all members of the Vic ABSA Board: Chris Van Styn, Mike Silcock, Tim Byrnes, Amanda Haggie, Carolyn Matthews, Sean Cox and Andrew Monk for their huge support and energy this year. Our meetings have been robust and challenging but always conducted with good humour and generosity of spirit with the drive for excellence in boarding at the core of our business.

I am pleased to announce that all current board members have indicated they would be willing to remain on the board for 2021. Election of officers will be conducted at the first meeting in 2021.

We encourage everyone to take advantage of the training opportunities ABSA is offering, the webinars and online training courses. Look out for the opportunities to meet in the virtual space next year for conferences both National and State, and consider applying for Accredited Boarding Practitioner.

As I said at the beginning, this has been a year like no other and while we acknowledge that there have been some incredibly challenging times we also recognise that there has been a coming together and sense of collegiality which has allowed us to draw strength from each other, knowing that we are not alone.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN Regional Chair

Rosie Broderick - Wilderness



2020 has been a challenging year for everyone and has certainly presented its fair share to those of us in boarding.

We were fortunate to have a gathering of the SA Heads of Boarding at Sacred Heart College in Term One, literally on the eve of that school announcing they had a student who had tested positively for COVID-19. Things then changed very quickly as more cases were identified both nationally and within SA. I am sure the response was similar for our interstate counterparts as we grappled with the changes/decisions that we needed to implement in a residential setting, to deal with the evolving situation. Within days, decisions were being made around online learning and school closures. With news of State borders closing and the prospect of extended online learning, many interstate boarders left for home. The school holidays in SA were extended by a week. Some schools encouraged their international students to return home and others made decisions about how they would now accommodate these students.

With face to face gatherings restricted across the State we turned to the virtual space to find the support from our colleagues. I would like to acknowledge the rapid response by the ABSA office to facilitate these virtual meetings and the ongoing support they have offered across a raft of issues as our schools responded to the circumstances of each individual State.

In SA we were fortunate that with the number of cases well under control, that most schools reopened by Week Two of Term Two. This did present ongoing challenges for interstate boarders to get back on campus. Returning boarders found a new set of routines and guidelines had been implemented to be compliant with the Health Advice being provided.

Again SA was lucky and as numbers continued in the 'negative' new cases, restrictions eased which allowed our State committee to meet face to on 24 June. That meeting was mainly to resolve some outstanding vacancies on the committee and positions were filled by interim nominations.



The second meeting was held on 12 August. At these meetings, the efforts of ABSA were recognised for the agility the team had demonstrated in supporting their representative schools and the alternative strategies they have implemented to maintain the Association's income stream and remain viable.

I have a sense many of the initiatives implemented will remain permanent fixtures in the ABSA calendar.

Face to Face PD and conferences were all cancelled so providing alternative delivery modes for PD and the moral support from collaborative on-line discussions was critical throughout this year. These virtual meetings provided invaluable opportunity to share strategies and maintain a level of connection across the leaders of ABSA member schools.

Over the past 14 months the SA Committee has received a number of resignations which were filled on an interim basis until the AGM held on 19 October. Resigning members were Sue Jones-Parry, Andrea Assiotti and Hayley Hall.

As a committee we strive to meet the objective of ABSA that different staff roles have representation and encouraged nominations from staff other than Heads of Boarding. The vacancies have been filled by people representing a number of different staff roles.

Our final gathering of Heads of Boarding in SA will acknowledge the services of Mr Shane Hennessy who will retire his position as Head of Boarding at Sacred Heart College at the end of this year.

Our sincere thanks from the SA member schools to ABSA for their unprecedented support and I am sure many of the initiatives will continue to feature and will be a positive legacy to our industry from the pandemic. Thank you also to everyone who has contributed so generously your ideas and support this year.

Let's hope throughout 2021 we will see some of the old norm return and we will have a chance to meet again in a face to face forum and share each other's company.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN Regional Chair

Liz Langdon - Presbyterian Ladies' College



The WA boarding community has continued to stay closely connected. Even in the absence of face-to-face Professional Development, members of the community have reached out and there have been many discussions and help offered.

WA has been very fortunate that the boarding community has been not been severely impacted by COVID. Although all schools closed at the end of Term One for a period of time, schools and their boarding communities were able to reopen very soon into the start of Term Two and have stayed open. Very strict protocols were put in place in line with the AHPPC guidelines and, although some measures have slightly eased, there are still restrictions and health measures in place.

Discussions at the Heads of Boarding meetings held in both Term Two and Three revolved around how each boarding community was managing with ongoing restrictions due to COVID.

The Annual General Meeting was held face-to-face at St Hilda's on Monday 16 November and also via Zoom. At the conclusion of the meeting, there was networking drinks and an end-of-year celebration.

The ABSA committee met early in November. The discussion revolved around possible Professional Development opportunities for 2021. The committee is hopeful that they can run a Youth Mental Health First Aid course and also hold a half-day symposium. Dates have not been set, but a rough plan has been made. The members of the committee are all cautiously optimistic that there will be increased opportunities to meet in 2021.

All would agree that 2020 has been a difficult and challenging year. I would like to thank all members of the boarding community in WA. We are so fortunate that we have a strong and collegial network. I would also like to thank members of the WA ABSA committee, for their support and hard work. Matt Bradley, Lewis Jones, Kirsty Nugent and I are leaving the committee at the end of this year. I have every confidence that the ABSA WA Committee in 2021 will be brilliant and wish Matt Weston the best of luck as he takes over the reins as Chair.



TASMANIAN Regional Chair

Mika Browning - St Michael's Collegiate



ABSA
Annual Report
2020

Activities

- Fortnightly - zoom HOB meetings
- Monthly - zoom meetings with HOB and Tas Health Department
- July - Boarding House scenario critical management & COVID 19 facilitated by Health Department in conjunction with all relevant state departments on Zoom
- July - Face to Face meeting and training at Collegiate for HOB, School Risk Managers facilitated by Public Health
- Ongoing - much sharing of resources and information in relation to International students, and Covid-19 management
- Holiday Program - all schools with International Students have already combined for some parts of Holiday programing, and have plans in place to work together for the Dec/Jan break.
- Actively participated in ABSA virtual coffees, webinars and training
- Dec - Virtual Duty of Care for new Holiday Program staff facilitated by Richard and Tom
- Dec - Youth Mental Health First Aid for new Holiday Boarding Staff facilitated by Mika.

Plans

- Dec/Jan - Farewell Dinner for departing HOB
- Dec/Jan - Joint Holiday programming

Changes

- 3 of the 6 Independent Boarding Schools Heads of Boarding have resigned this year.
 - Kirstin Divine from Fahan left at the end of Term 2 and was replaced by Fiona Short
 - James Bourne (Hutchins) and Victoria Small (Launceston Church Grammar) will leave at the end of the year.

Challenges

COVID-19 and particularly the impact it has had on the movement of International Boarders has had a significant impact on Tasmanian schools, as under our CAW, the school is the guardian, there are no external guardians, which has necessitated schools staying open all year including Dec/Jan with no end in sight. Given that our boarding houses are small and we run on very tight staffing numbers, this has placed significant pressure on HOB and has contributed to the high turnover this year.

Thank you

The network facilitated by ABSA and the support and training provided by the team at ABSA, has always been fantastic, however, this year it has been indispensable. The challenges raised by COVID-19 can only be faced by support and working with each other and we would like as a State to offer our sincere and heartfelt thanks.

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Impact of COVID on Boarding Schools and ABSA

Wow, what a year... I would say you all deserve a well rested break, however, I know many of our boarding school staff will be working all the way through this holiday supporting their International Boarders.

While this year has certainly thrown many challenges at all of us in so many different ways, and while it eliminated the majority of opportunities for face-to-face networking and learning, it has brought us closer together to become more collegial than ever before. We congratulate all boarding schools for the work they have undertaken which truly showcased their support for the students in our care. There have been vast learnings from lockdowns, cold-like symptom checks, border crossings, learning from home, financial difficulty for families and schools, AHPPC restrictions and many more which I know will now not be lost and embedded into the future of our every-day boarding program.

As an Association (like boarding schools), relationships are our foundation and COVID was well equipped to limit us in this area. However, we are very proud of the work we have been able to achieve for the industry over the past twelve months and thank all schools for being so supportive, responsive and collegial during this steep learning curve. ABSA has had to position itself as a body to liaise with Governments and Media during this time to ensure effective and efficient communication and solutions were provided to ensure issues faced this year were adequately addressed - we could only have achieved this with the strong support and relationship we have with each individual school.

ABSA Training Academy

During Term 4, we were thrilled to launch the ABSA Training Academy which is aligned with the training pathways at the UKBSA. The Training Academy, along with the Accredited Boarding Practitioner, is designed to ensure further opportunities for boarding staff to build upon their skills and professionalise the industry. Following this, we launched the first free online course 'Active Duty' which over 350+ Boarding Staff have completed, one which we hope to see all boarding staff complete. Our quick step to webinar offerings saw over 1500+ people register for the 'Strategies for Learning from Home and Online with A Team Tuition' transforming into a series of over 80+ webinars specifically for boarding staff, an offering we will continue into 2021. In addition, we had the privilege of releasing our first two Certificate Courses; 'Building Chinese Cultural Competence' and 'Cyber Safety and Social Media' aimed at staff working in boarding schools - the certificates provide a deep learning opportunity and the ability to put theory into practice. Our certificate program will be expanded in 2021. Finally, together with the UKBSA, we saw the first three Australians start into the Master's in Residential Education through Buckingham University. This is a fantastic opportunity for anyone looking to complete further study in the area of boarding. With the advent of COVID, our events have truly transformed, allowing us to offer more opportunities like Virtual Boarding House Tours and the Online Boarding Conference which are affordable and convenient for all boarding staff no matter where they are located. A nice side-note is that we have been able to strongly engage with boarding schools outside of Australia including New Zealand, Asia, USA, Europe - a special shout out to UWC Armenia who hosted one of our Virtual Boarding House Tours. We look forward to returning to face-to-face events next year, however this will definitely be alongside our online offering.

Listening and Building closer Connections

We have been in a privileged position this year to hear many individual stories and collect useful data through our survey program on many of the issues we have faced over this period of time. Following the feedback from a Head of Boarding, we launched our Podcast Series 'On Duty' which features industry staff and experts, sharing their insights and interesting stories. ABSA staff also took on the advice to undergo Media training which we did in March - timing could not have been much better! This training really assisted us in the picture we needed to portray as an industry and how to build strong and useful connections. We look forward to continued extensive surveys which will give boarding schools the ability to benchmark important data across Australia and Internationally.



Awards

This year saw an enormous number of high quality boarding nominations for the below industry awards. It is exciting to see the leadership, innovation and commitment that is in our community. We highlight and congratulate the following winners on their hard work and achievement:

- Premier Leaders Award - Lesa Fowler, St Margaret's Anglican Girls' School
- Most Innovative Idea in a Boarding School Award - Mount St Bernard's College (Mountain Bike Park)
- Excellence in Indigenous Boarding Award - Melbourne Indigenous Transition School (MITS) - Temporary Darwin Hub

For further information on their specific work please visit our website.

Partnerships and Organisations

As you all know, this year has not only been difficult for our Boarding Schools and Association, but also for many businesses. We have been extremely lucky to have the ongoing support by many of our Partners during this challenging year. Their commitment and engagement has been second to none, which we are privileged to say. Our Partners continue to grow with the welcoming of Komodo Wellbeing, My Parent Connect, Perception Partners, University Colleges Australia and EPIC. Many of our partners have been able to offer webinars focusing on their area of expertise and what they specifically offer our boarding staff - we thank our schools for your ongoing engagement and interest in this program.



ABSA Staff

This year has truly been transformative which included the development and implementation of many new processes, procedures and systems. We sincerely thank all of our staff for their commitment, engagement and ongoing dedication for what we have been able to achieve this year - thanks to our schools for making our work so meaningful and fulfilling! In addition, we warmly welcomed Jared Daunt to the position of Communications and Events Manager. Jared's ability to build relationships is a real strength of his and we hope many of you experienced this following his call introducing himself, along with his innovations including the launching of our new Podcast Series. We are all looking forward to a rewarding year in 2021 with the welcoming of many more new offerings for our boarding schools.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Richard Stokes



2020 has been a challenging year for ABSA, with so much of what we had traditionally accomplished affected by the shut down and restrictions caused by COVID-19.

Our Duty of Care, A Certificate Course in Student Residential Care workbooks and workshops have continued to be well received, including both the GAP Edition and International Edition. During the last financial year 1,059 books were purchased, a small drop from 2019 which is good news considering the COVID-19 shutdown. 761 people attended one of our workshops to assist them to complete the books - again this is slightly down on previous years due to losing three months of face-to-face opportunities. We have recently transitioned the workshops to a Zoom presentation, which is working well. We have also launched the ABSA Training Academy - a collection of Introductory Courses, Webinars, Certificate Courses and the opportunity to undertake a Masters' in Residential Education.

Other work which has yet again continued to take up much of our time is the review offering for boarding schools and the finalisation of the certification process for the Australian Standard for Boarding Schools and Residences which we will launch early in the New Year.

ABSA's Strategic Plan for 2018/19 to 2020/2021 continues to guide our work and this report is based on the projects detailed to achieve the critical outcomes and objectives of this plan.

Engagement:

Satisfaction survey – the results of the survey conducted early in 2020 are guiding us in the provision of services to our members.

International Membership - one of the positive outcomes of the transitioning of many of our activities to online availability has been the engagement from many of our overseas schools - from Armenia to New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, India and Singapore. The International Version of the Duty of Care books has been really well received, including recently in the United States.

Networking Opportunities - up to March we continued with many of the excellent activities which provided networking, but the COVID-19 shutdown and continuing restrictions have stopped most of these opportunities. However, the regular 'Heads of Boarding Virtual Coffee' catchups have been an excellent activity which has allowed all Heads of Boarding across Australia to come together regularly and discuss the issues they are facing, and many of our States have also had online meetings regularly through this challenging time. We will aim to continue these in the future as they allow the more remote schools to join together and become more actively involved in the Association's work. We are presently working toward ways which allow members to connect - the virtual lunch break at our recent online boarding conference was really successful and enjoyed by those who attended.

Global Conference - this has been put on hold for a future, COVID-safe date.

ABSA
Annual Report
2020



State vs National Differentiation - our focus continues to ensure that all levels of staff receive the professional learning they need - and not to only run national events which involve leaders in boarding communities. The webinar program offered since March has been focussed on providing a wide range of learning for staff.

Engaging New Staff to join the Industry - this is an area we have done little work in during the last 12 months.

Learning:

Accredited training - the ABSA Training Academy has been launched with a wide range of in person, online and webinar training. Through the University of Buckingham we are also offering a Masters in Residential Education for staff to undertake accredited further higher education.

Accredited Boarding Professional - an ever increasing number of people are now proud to announce that they are Accredited Boarding Practitioners, with a more affordable pricing model.

International training - the International Version of the Duty of Care workbooks has been very actively accepted by many of our International member schools.

Indigenous Cultural Awareness - we continue to provide webinars concentrating on topics within this area and are developing key relationships with NT Transition Support Unit, Indigenous Education and Boarding Australia and Boarding Training Australia.

Support for International boarders - our partnership with CLCA has given us the opportunity to provide a range of webinars covering these topics.

Innovative National events - we have undertaken an audit on all of our conferences, which is guiding us on putting together future events. COVID-19, however, has made us offer many more events available to everyone, including webinars, an online boarding conference and the Accidental Counsellors Course.

Online professional learning - the first online short course is available through our website and has already had a really pleasing uptake, and we have many more planned.

Segmentation of professional learning - as part of the ABSA Training Academy there will be a clearly differentiated plan for boarding staff to follow.

Influence:

External marketing - the improved 'Find a School' section of our website had over 38,000 visits in the past year, with an average time spend for each person of around 4 minutes - this shows how important it is for schools to keep this up to date. We have surveyed schools regarding boarding expos for the future. National Boarding Week also plays a key role in our marketing plans and has been incredibly successful.

Government and corporate relationships - our contact with Government has developed greatly over the past twelve months, with strong interest in the adoption of the Australian Standard for Boarding Schools and Residences being a key topic. Further, during COVID-19 we have had constant contact with State Governments and Federal Ministers regarding boarding school issues.

Media relationships - ABSA's relationship with the media continues to strengthen - with many outlets contacting us for statistics, information and contacts during this last twelve months.

Research - a research grant will be available for those who might be interested in undertaking study within our industry. We have teamed up with the UK BSA to utilise their depository for boarding research around the world and this has been published on our website.

Mentoring - we are still working on a plan for a mentoring program for staff moving to more senior boarding positions.

Marketing metrics - this project was completed last year.

Practice:

Accreditation program - The Certification scheme for the Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences will be trialed early in 2021, and will be available to all schools who have undergone both levels of the self-assessment program.

Lobbying - this is a work in progress - the certification scheme, once complete, will hopefully be adopted by our State Governments universally. South Australia and Queensland are particularly interested in this at present. Standard revisited - this project has been postponed until the end of 2021.

Standard Support - ABSA continues to support schools to achieve the best possible practice and as such we provide support and guidance for all member schools. During the past twelve months we had undertaken boarding school reviews for eight schools at the request of their Principal to help them improve their boarding practice.

Survey instrument - we are presently working on survey instruments for schools to use investigating the views of parents and students about their boarding program.

Growth:

New income opportunities - we continue to look for opportunities to expand the income of the Association, allowing better service and programs for schools and keeping membership dues down.

Creative revenue generation - research is being undertaken to look at deficiencies and inefficiencies in boarding operations.

Resourcing anticipated growth - the appointment of a Communication and Events Manager is the second step toward a more balance staffing, allowing us to connect with all staff in the industry and to run more events and better provide the necessary professional learning opportunities for boarding staff at every level.

General:

We have enjoyed working with our Office Manager, Jackie Dench - she has brought a real depth of knowledge and understanding to the critical administrative tasks needed by ABSA, including the updating and development of our database. In recent times we have welcomed another staff member, Jared Daunt, as Communications and Events Manager, to help us with the regular communication to all levels of our membership and to help with the increased professional learning opportunities we are now offering. Our General Manager, Tom Dunsmore, has gone from strength to strength, and now has worked for ABSA for almost nine years. His deep understanding of our profession ensures that everything ABSA does is focussed on excellent service provision for you, our member schools and staff. On behalf of everyone involved in ABSA I thank Tom for his unending energy and focus, and personally I feel privileged to work so closely with him every day. Thanks Tom.

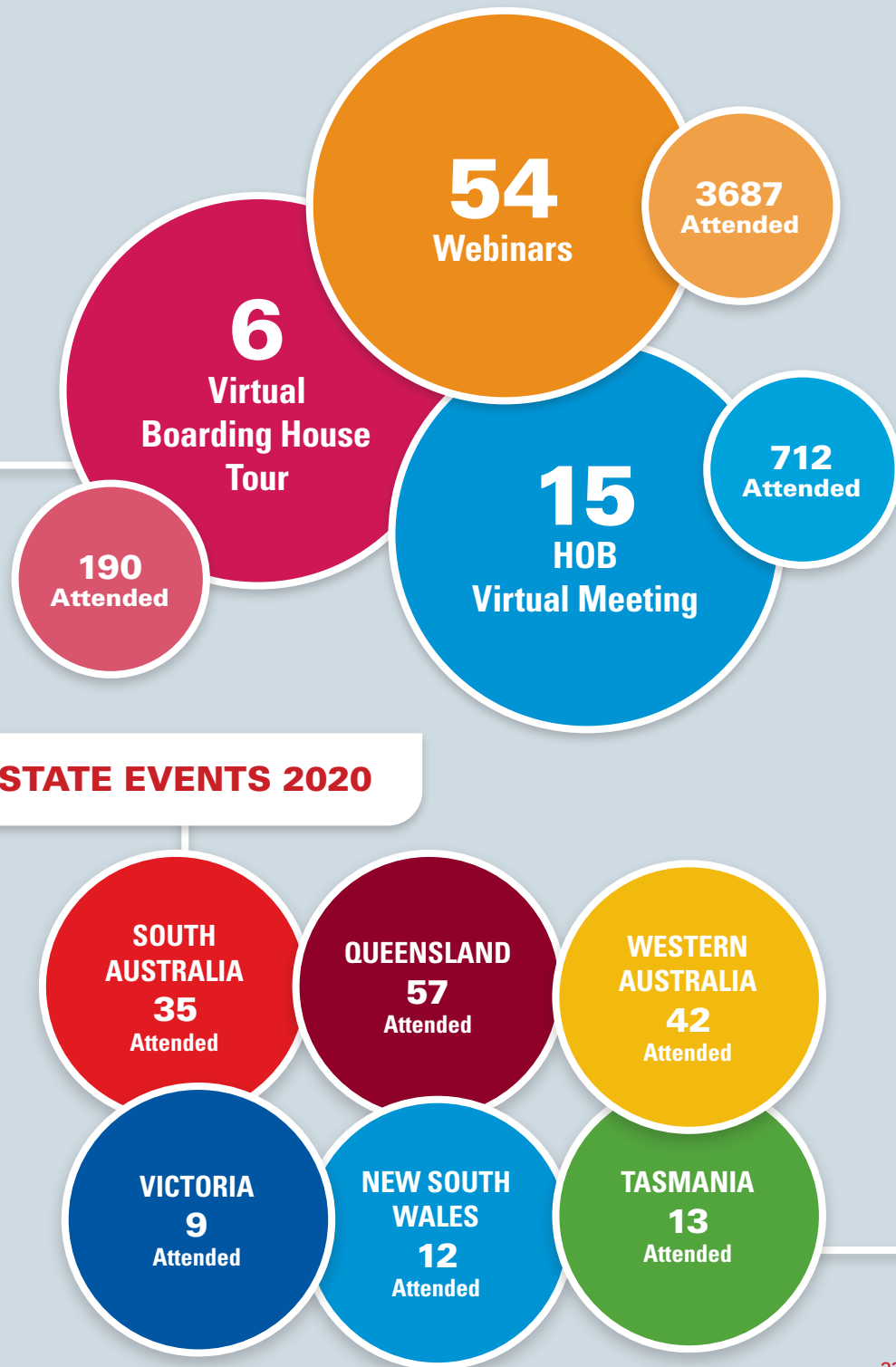
And to all our member schools and the wonderful staff working within them - we thank you for your support and trust that we can continue to provide you all with everything needed to develop boarding even more.



ABSA EVENTS 2020



STATE EVENTS 2020





AUSTRALIAN
BOARDING
SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION

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