

Concrete Institute of Australia President's Report - 2021

Taking the reins as National President in October last year gave me time to reflect on what a turbulent period the Institute had been through over the two years prior. Our now Immediate Past President, Shan Kumar, provided much guidance and leadership over this time, and the work conducted by our Councillors, State Presidents, committee members and staff was tireless and allowed us to maintain stability and clarity, whilst continuing the Institute's objectives throughout the pandemic.

Despite the continued ups and downs of COVID, lockdowns, and restrictions, CIA still had much to be positive about in 2021. Highlights included:

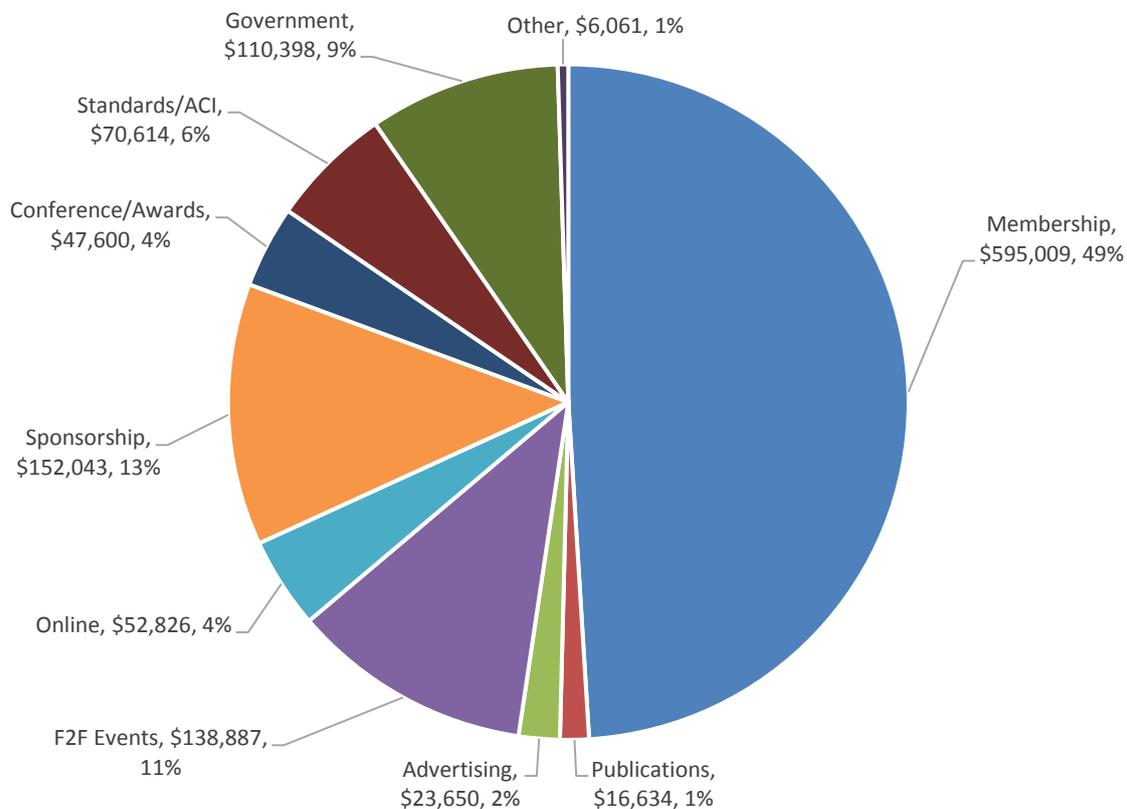
- Concrete 2021, the first fully virtual conference ever run by the CIA. We were able to hold a very successful event in September, hosting 150 presentations, 40 live Q&A forums, 35 technical sessions, and 4 full days of content and professional development.
- Hosting close to 20 face-to-face events, mostly in Queensland and Western Australia, along with nearly 40 webinars, many of which were transitioned from live seminars to online. In total CIA presented technical events to over 3000 delegates in 2021.
- As an election year we welcomed a number of new State Committee and Council members and we have an excellent balance of experience with new contributors. We also acknowledged the changing of the guard at a National level in a 2021 kind of way – online via Zoom and You Tube.
- We continued to strengthen our relationships with our International affiliates, participating in the ACI 24 Hours of Concrete Knowledge Conference in July, hosting RILEM President, Ravindra Gettu from India, at a CIA webinar; CIA members Arnaud Castel and Marie Joshua Tapas taking on leading roles in the Asia Pacific Region for RILEM; Professor Stephen Foster becoming Deputy President at *fib*, and President Akio Kasuga a keynote speaker at Concrete 2021.
- Further development of Young Professional Members and the YPM Group has now resulted in regular monthly meetings of our young professionals around the country.
- The introduction of new working groups related to diversity and engagement, and contractors and certification will enable the Institute to grow and evolve.
- Continuing to attract new members, both individual and company, with steady growth in Professional, Young Professional and Bronze Company membership.
- Introduction of the new CIA website and AMS, providing a better platform for members to access resources and materials, whilst improving efficiencies in membership management.
- Continued regular engagement with industry and members via ecommunications, social media, and Concrete in Australia.

From a financial perspective 2021 continued to provide the Institute with a number of challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The original budgeted surplus of \$92,800 was ambitious and dependant on a return to face-to-face events and a successful biennial conference in Perth. However, following new outbreaks and strict restrictions and lockdowns it was soon evident that budgeted revenue items such as the conference, seminars, sponsorship and membership would change significantly. By the end of the 3rd quarter it was forecast that the Institute would make a loss.

Fortunately, the Institute continued to receive JobKeeper payments in the first quarter of the year and was also eligible for NSW Government subsidies in the last quarter. This allowed for some welcome

cash flow as we continued to be flexible with events, transitioning face-to-face seminars to webinars or cancelling them altogether. Membership renewals remained healthy and Professional Members continued to grow, as did Standards Online & ACI Membership. Several costs related to the office, travel, and seminars remained low. However, the main financial challenge experienced was the transition of the conference from in person to online. This resulted in a difference in budgeted revenue (\$100,000) to actual revenue (\$27,000), a variance of \$73,000. The Institute also determined to continue with the development of a new data base and website. Given the expected financial result it was also determined to reverse a number of items listed in prepayments in the balance sheet including conference seed funding of \$40,000 so that 2022 could begin with a clean sheet. Despite the difficulties encountered, we continued to deliver on our objectives as guided by the Strategic Plan and the Institute was still in a healthy cash position at the end of 2021 with \$639,525, but realised a deficit of \$87,485. The main sources of revenue by activity:

Revenue by Category 2021



Membership

Membership retention remained a vital part of the Institute's strategy in 2021. Before journal adjustments were made subscription revenue for the year was slightly above budget, an excellent result in a difficult year. Throughout the year we saw a steady growth in Professional Membership (6% increase on 2020 numbers and a 90% retention rate) and Young Professional Membership (9% increase) whilst company membership remained stable. In particular, we retained our three Platinum Members. Additional subscriptions for Standards Online and ACI Membership also grew slightly. Our 2022 strategy is to continue working with our current members, focus on new recruitment strategies, and work on greater engagement to attract new members.

Education

After an ambitious start to the year with a heavy emphasis on face-to-face events, this quickly required flexibility and transitioning. By the middle of 2021 all events in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia had reverted to online whilst F2F continued in Queensland WA. This resulted in a drop in revenue from a budget of \$268,800 to actual of \$138,900. Online content continued to do well but in a saturated market realised revenue of \$53,000 (down on the budget of \$79,000). Despite the setback face-to-face seminars will again be a key focus in 2022, however our webinar program will remain a staple education product and eConcrete on demand materials will continue to gain momentum.

Conference and Awards

The Institute originally budgeted for \$100,000 revenue from the conference in Perth, which was reduced from the normal biennial budget of \$200,000. Following the decision in February to transition it online this meant there would be a significant impact on revenue (forecast was adjusted to \$20,000). Realising \$28,000 was an outstanding result. The Awards for Excellence also suffered due to the pandemic. Originally 60 entries were budgeted for but on 34 were received. This created a variance of \$36,000 in revenue.

Results

The Institute had overall a challenging year financially and experienced a deficit of \$87,485. The organisation did finish the year though in a strong cash position with \$639,525 at hand and total assets worth \$1,003,281.

Outlook

2022 will continue to be a challenging year for the Institute, however we approach it with optimism. There will a renewed focus on live events as the market gets used to living with COVID and providing steady revenue and cash flow through events. There will also be a concentration on membership engagement as individuals and organisations continue to come to terms with the market, and the Institute can really implement the new AMS and website. Focus will continue to be placed on the main revenue streams of the Institute such as membership, education (seminars, webinars, workshops), and sponsorship. These platforms, built in recent years, have provided the Institute with financial stability to help weather the storm until we are placed to hold a face-to-face conference again in 2023 and will hold the organisation in good stead for the years to come.

Sherard Northey
President, Concrete Institute of Australia
June 2022