



## COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILE

# JOAN McDEROTT

**Committees:** ACADA Executive Committee

**Role:** ACADA Immediate Past President & ACTING ICSA CEO

**Q. How long have you been working in the cake decorating industry?**

In my earlier years I took a break from my career as an organisational psychologist to follow my passion. I started up a cooking school. It was meant to be a hobby while I was still studying, but somehow got out of control. We ended up with 600 mobile cooking schools that operated Australia wide, in NZ and California. It was just a case of being in the right place at the right time. We ended up writing six cookbooks, and I had my own weekly radio and TV segments and wrote columns for Family Circle, New Idea and Women's Weekly. I say "we", as I learnt a long time ago, no one really achieves anything significant alone, it takes a team! When my family arrived, I decided to get off the roundabout! I went back to my previous career. It wasn't until I retired, I reconnected with my passion for baking and decorating. I created Daisy Maisie Designer Cakes, taught cake decorating classes, became the President of Queensland Cake Decorators Association, left and became the Foundation President of ACADA. The rest is history.

**Q. What have you achieved in our industry that makes you feel super proud?**

Playing a leadership role within a team of the most incredible people, that created the Australian Cake Artists & Decorators Association Inc. (ACADA), International Cake Show Australia and the ACADA Australasian Cake Oscar Awards from the ground up. This has been the most humbling, challenging and gratifying eight years of my life. Being part of a team of dedicated volunteers who works tirelessly behind the scenes with the sole aim of helping others, growing our industry and showcasing Australia's incredibly talented cake and sugar artists on the world stage, is incredibly good for one's soul. This is undoubtedly the thing I'm super proud of.

**Q. What do you love about our industry?**

Everything! The willingness of our whole industry to work together to help everyone grow. The recognition that if our industry grows, every individual working within it benefits. To achieve great things, we just all need to work together, to encourage each other and to support each other. We

have a vibrant industry that is destined for a brilliant future. We just need to believe, dream big and be prepared to get involved.

**Q. What did you do before joining this industry?**

This will make you laugh. I started my career as one of the first women in the Australian Commandos. I was the first female sergeant and first female to work my way through the ranks to become an officer. They were the days before the “Me Too” movement. In a male dominated environment (in much tougher times), you had to work twice as hard to earn respect and to prove yourself. What you achieved or experienced along the way made you stronger. Discipline and structure were, and still are important. I really believe this period of my life gave me the training, discipline and confidence to believe you can achieve anything if you believe, work hard and try.

I moved on to be appointed as the senior human resource management consultant for a national company called Intek Group, I started their Queensland Operations. I then started my own Human Resource, Executive Search & Management Consultancy, where I worked for more than 20 years. During that time, I received a ministerial appointment as a director of TAFE QLD, was appointed to oversee its restructure and served on many boards and committees, including Griffith University’s Vice Chancellor’s Advisory Committee for 15 years.

**Q. Why did you join ACADA?**

After a brief stint as the President of Queensland Cake Decorators Association (QCDA) I recognised there was an enormous need for a progressive association that inspires and encourages everyone, including the younger generation. One with a culture that was inclusive, prepared to willingly embrace new techniques and be prepared to change as times change. ACADA evolved out of a dream to create a not-for-profit association with a structure that couldn’t be dominated by egos or power play or benefit the interests of only a few. The dream was to create an organisation that was owned by its members, one that was truly representative. One committed to seeing our whole industry and everyone working within it grow. It’s been a wonderful experience seeing that dream and vision become reality.

**Q. What do you hope to achieve in your new role?**

I’ve been very blessed to have had the privilege of playing a leadership role in ACADA, International Cake Show Australia and the ACADA Australasian Cake Oscar Awards for almost 8 years. I hope now to provide the support, advice and encouragement (from behind the scenes) to ACADA’s new National President and Executive Committee, so they can take ACADA to even greater heights. The newly elected Executive Committee have the skills, experience and dedication to do that. National President Zoe Byers and her entire team have my unwavering support. Please give them yours. Join them in the exciting journey ahead, I know from the bottom of my heart it will be amazing! In the future I look forward to looking back and being able to say to myself “wow look what this organization has achieved” and being able to smile knowing that I played a very small part in this incredible not-for-profit association.