



## ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Working together for Equity of Access to Education for all Students who live in Rural and Remote Australia.

### FEDERAL COUNCIL'S BRANCH BULLETIN

Volume 15, Number 3: November 2016

We are on the countdown to the end of 2016 and this month's Branch Bulletin comes to you packed with helpful information to kick-start the new year.

PLEASE remember memberships are now due.

#### Federal Council News

Federal Council has just returned from five days in Canberra which saw 11 Councillors travel from all over Australia to our Nation's capital. Three days of Face to Face meetings with the new council, a day of meetings with Senators and Members of Parliament where 36 delegations were attended then a day of meetings with Departments where another 5 meetings were had. Some of our meetings were with newly elected Members of Parliament where we explained ICPA lobbies while other meetings brought seasoned Parliamentarians up to speed with members' issues brought forward at the Perth Conference in August.

Discussions were also had with the Departments of Education and Training, Communications, Human Services and Social Services. Keep an eye out for an update from these discussions once Federal Council has collated all the information gained.

The logistics of coordinating Councillors from nearly every state and territory of Australia to meet with various members and representatives of Government, is a mammoth task and an essential part of our lobbying. The exposure and outcomes from such a venture is a worthy investment.



ICPA Federal Council is a vibrant and dynamic group that currently has some vacancies. If you want to be a part of a Council that strives to make a real difference to the educational outcomes for our children in rural and remote Australia register your interest by contacting a Federal Councillor. Contact details are available [here](#).

## **Treasurer's Note - MEMBERSHIP**

Did you know membership is open to any person who wishes **to further the interest of the Association** and not just to families who are teaching via distance education or have children attending boarding school? Our portfolio areas cover [early childhood](#), [communications](#), [rural schools and travel](#), [distance education](#), [curriculum](#), [tertiary](#), [training](#), [specific needs](#) and [boarding schools/hostels](#). If you know someone who might like to become a member, please follow this [link](#) or contact the [Federal Membership Officer](#).

- Did you know there is a dedicated Federal Membership officer?
- Jane O'Brien, Federal Membership Officer, is busy sending each Branch Treasurer their 2017 Branch Membership Renewal Spreadsheets.
- If you are no longer the Treasurer of your Branch, Jane is asking for you to let her know as soon as possible please, by return email to [FedMembership@icpa.com.au](mailto:FedMembership@icpa.com.au) so they can be re-sent.
- 2017 Federal affiliation fees remain at \$22 per family and are due January 1, 2017.
- We urge Branches to schedule in their AGM as soon as practical so membership renewal notices can be sent out prior to school holidays.
- Following their AGM, Branches are asked to please email current Branch executive lists to your respective State Webmaster to update the website with current Branch details.
- Members, did you know you are able to keep your membership details current **especially your email address for the Branch Bulletin and important updates (if you haven't supplied your email address you won't receive the Branch Bulletin)**, simply by visiting ICPA [login](#) and logging in with your previous email and password? If you have forgotten your password – just click on “forgotten your password?” and a new one will be sent to you.

Any questions please contact Kate Gray, [FedTreasurer@icpa.com.au](mailto:FedTreasurer@icpa.com.au) or Jane O'Brien [FedMembership@icpa.com.au](mailto:FedMembership@icpa.com.au)

## **Mobile Playgroup Funding Update**

At the recent delegations in Canberra, Federal Councillors sought clarification regarding Mobile Playgroup funding which was brought to our attention by our members. The following update has been provided by the Department of Education and Training.



"Each Budget Based Funded (BBF) mobile service is being individually supported by consultants, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), to support their transition to the Jobs for Families Child Care Package (the Package) or alternative funding arrangements. PwC is visiting each service to develop a detailed understanding of service and community-specific issues and then completing transition plans for individual services. Most BBF mobile services will receive their reports by the end of 2016 with the remainder being provided early 2017. In 2017 BBF mobile services will again be provided with support to implement their transition plans and will continue to be supported up to the introduction of the Package in 2018, and beyond where that is necessary."

## **Members Attention re Interim Satellite Service (ISS)!**

Do you have a satellite dish on your roof that has been there longer than six months? By now you should have been notified by your service provider that the ISS is being switched off in February 2017. You need to transfer your internet plan to SkyMuster. It does not happen automatically.

### **nbn Update and New Help Line**

Further to the **nbn** Australia roundtable forum last month where industry stakeholders met to discuss issues of the Sky Muster satellite service, **nbn** is currently implementing a satellite service improvement program. This is being led by a committed task force to address and resolve the issues identified. Some of the corrective action already undertaken includes software fixes to reduce connection times and configuration updates to improve the stability of the service. This work is ongoing and has seen a substantial improvement in network stability.



**nbn** has implemented changes to their call centre and social media processes which means they are now providing network information directly to end users as it becomes available. **nbn** have also set up a dedicated regional support team in their call centre (**1800 687 626**) to handle regional-specific queries. In addition, **nbn** is working with retail providers and delivery partners, to help improve the installation process and ensure the number of rescheduled and missed appointments are minimised. ICPA will keep you updated as we receive more information.

### **Vocational Educational & Training (VET) Student Loans**

Designed to deliver workplace-specific skills and knowledge, Vocational Education and Training (VET) covers a wide range of careers and industries, including trade and office work, retail, hospitality and technology.

From 1 January 2017 VET FEE-HELP will cease and VET Student Loans will commence. Further information is available at the Minister for Education and Training Media Release on this [link](#).

### **Youth Allowance Update**

During meetings in Canberra with Departments and Ministers, clarification was sought regarding the pre-election commitment by the Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce regarding the qualifying time frame for Independent Youth Allowance changing from 18 months to 14 months.

The following statement has been received by the office of Minister of Education and Training: *"A student cannot apply for independent financial assistance until January 1, 2018, under these new terms (14 months instead of 18 months), school leavers from the 'Year of 2016' will be able use their work months accrued beforehand, so as to be eligible for Youth Allowance from early 2018."*

ICPA welcomes this news and we thank the Government for acting on this decision so quickly.

### **Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Update**

#### **• Avoid Interruptions to your AIC payments**

If you are currently receiving AIC entitlements and will continue to qualify for these boarding allowances in 2017, please be on the lookout for your **AIC Continuation Review Form** which will arrive via post. By returning this questionnaire, within the timeframe specified, your AIC payments will continue without interruption and you will not be required to complete a new claim form.

#### **• New AIC Applications**

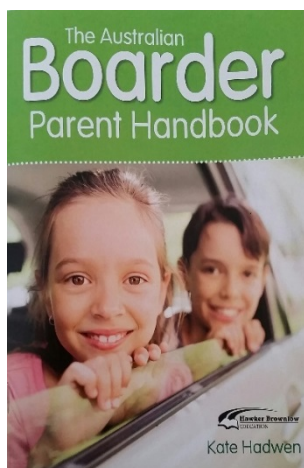
The current AIC claim form (SY040) is available on the Department of Human Services [website](#) and can be used for families claiming for the first time in 2017. Changes for 2017 have been made in this form to allow parents/guardians to reclaim the Additional Boarding

Allowance for 2017. Forms can be posted by calling AIC on **13 23 18** and eligibility criteria is available on the [AIC website](#).

- **Less download for future AIC applications**

The Department of Human Services is working on splitting the AIC form and “Form Notes” into separate PDFs to enable easier download. The updated form and new separate form notes SY040/Ci023 should be available by January 1, 2017.

### **The Boarding Bible**



Do you have a child attending boarding school for the first time? The Australian Boarder Parent Handbook is an innovative resource tool and it is loaded with relevant, common sense information that you cannot do without. A paperback, glovebox sized book, this is an ideal tool for not only those parents who need to make a start on their child's preparation for boarding school but also for those who have come across a hurdle during their children's education when living away from the family home. ICPA endorses this wonderful book and we thank author Dr Kate Hadwen for her generosity of the donation of 100% of the proceeds of this book to our organisation. Follow this [link](#) to order yours now

### **Horizon Scholarship Applications Opening Soon**

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) in partnership with industry sponsors, offer this scholarship to school leavers looking to start an agricultural-related university degree. It provides a \$5,000 bursary per year for the duration of a student's course, professional development workshops and mentoring, industry work placements and the opportunity to network and gain knowledge at industry events. Applications open soon. More information can be found on the [RIRDC website](#).



### **More Tertiary Scholarships**



The Country Education Foundation has a [Scholarship Guide](#) on their website, containing a general list of scholarships available at their partner universities, including specific scholarships for rural and regional students.

## **ICPA benefits from Ridley Promotion (please don't forget)**



ICPA will benefit directly from all Ridley Rumevite and LNT Wet Season blocks with 1% of sales achieved being donated straight back to our organisation. We thank Ridley, Elders and CRT for this initiative and their support of ICPA.

This campaign started on September 1, 2016 & will run until March 31, 2017 so we look forward to a great wet season in the northern part of Australia and we ask that our members and friends consider Ridley when considering the purchase of wet season blocks.

Store locations can be found at:

CRT- <http://www.crt.com.au/store-locations/>

Elders - <https://eldersrural.com.au/locations/>

## **Upcoming State Conferences**

Below are links to each of the State's ICPA Website, Facebook and Twitter pages. ICPA Australia encourages our members to support the vital work that ICPA undertakes at Branch, State and Federal levels. Up-to-date information is constantly being uploaded to each of the below platforms and by following one or all of these links you will be kept abreast of current issues and developments regarding rural and remote education in Australia.

ICPA WA – Perth, March 17, 2017 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#)

ICPA NSW – Bourke, March 29 & 30, 2017 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#)

ICPA SA – Port Augusta, March 31, 2017 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#)

ICPA NT – Webinar, date to be confirmed, April 2017 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

ICPA QLD – St George, June 8 & 9, 2017 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

ICPA TAS – to be confirmed, 2017 - [Website](#)

ICPA FEDERAL – Alice Springs, August 2 & 3, 2017 - [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

