

# DOWN THE TRACK

## Magazine



### **CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ICPA NT**

Coverage of the 40th Anniversary ICPA NT Annual State Conference held in Darwin on 8 and 9 March

### **RECOGNISING AND AWARDING OUR OWN**

One State Membership and Seven Awards of Merit given out at Conference

### **BEFORE AND BEYOND**

An incredible speech of reflection, gratitude and revelations given by Peta Stockwell at Conference

## SPECIAL 90th EDITION





# Isolated Children's Parents' Association

## NORTHERN TERRITORY STATE COUNCIL Inc

### 2022 Positions

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# WELCOME TO OUR NEW STATE PRESIDENT

## Dear Members

Welcome to a very special edition of our Down the Track Magazine – very special because in it we get to share stories and pictures from our amazing 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, “Before and Beyond”.

***Very special because it encourages us to reflect and honour the amazing achievements of the past and inspires us to greater heights in our current and future endeavours.***

Also, very special for me, as it is my first, as your ICPA NT State President. This is an honour, a privilege, and a huge responsibility that I do not take lightly. But it is something that does not happen singularly and is very much a team effort in which we all have important roles to play.

The groundwork set by those before us; the support, assistance and hard work by those on Council and Branch Members; but most importantly, the source of our being, our why – YOU, the Bush families – the Mums, Dads, and children across the width and breadth of the Northern Territory working hard every day to educate your children and continue living, working and growing our amazing Territory.

***You and your children is why we do what we do, why ICPA was formed all those years ago and why ICPA is still equally as relevant and important today.***

ICPA has been an ominous and reassuring presence throughout my life.

As a child growing up on the family cattle station in North Queensland and Distance Education and School of the Air, ICPA was always there.

The familiar logo on folders and meeting bags.

Mum (Clair O’Brien) juggling radio time to participate in meetings and her

regularly having to travel for conferences and meetings in her roles at Branch, State and Federal levels.

We knew Mum was off doing really important stuff talking with Government to make things better for ourselves and other bush children’s education and opportunities.

As an adult and a bush parent, becoming a member in my own right in the NT – first as a Lone Member then belonging to the Katherine Branch. Our two sons now are also benefitting from direct and in-direct ICPA activities and influence as small rural school students at Mataranka Primary, Katherine School of the Air and now boarding school in Charters Towers.

ICPA fits around my daily routine of managing the small family stud Brahman cattle operation at Coodardie Station, other volunteer commitments and helping my husband supervise our eldest son’s middle school distance education lessons.

***This year sees a strong and full ICPA NT State Council with 12 members. It is a great balance of continuing and new members and it is a pleasure to work with such a talented and dedicated group.***

Flick through the pages and enjoy getting to know our new members – Treasurer Bec Osmotherly, Melissa Kerr and Mary Bayly.

We are most fortunate to have our immediate past President, Sarah Cook continue on State Council with us. The professional state and high regard of ICPA in the Northern Territory is in no small way thanks to her relentless and targeted effort and commitment.

Thank you to those who were able to be with us at our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference and AGM in Darwin on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of March.

***The beautiful diversity of individuals, backgrounds, locations, needs and***

***experiences all coming together with the common goal of striving to create the best education outcomes for our bush kids and enabling families to stay living and working in the outback.***

Through the motions and workshops, we connected with members and stakeholders, to progress current concerns and shape the pathways forward.

The program was jam packed and the speakers, both prepared and impromptu were amazing, and the networking and connections invigorating.

Read more in the pages ahead. I am sure that you will agree it was a most successful event.

Just how successful, will depend on what each one of us does with the things that we learnt, heard, or were inspired by.

Council has its work set out and are excited about the challenges and possibilities ahead. We look forward to keeping you involved and informed.

Yours most sincerely,

Moira

**Moira Lanzarin**

ICPA NT State President



# A WORD FROM OUR IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

## Dear Members

The lead up to our brilliant 40th Annual State Conference was a blur, and I never gave much thought to what my life might look like after three years as ICPA NT State President.

It has now been more than a month but as I reflect, the magnitude of what was a huge learning curve - and equally huge honour - is still taking shape in my mind.

For now, I have no words and only gratitude towards members, supporters, stakeholder, friends and family who joined me, held me, cheered me, advised me, guided me, chided me and even judged me – for without you, this journey would not have been the wonderful and awesome challenge it was.

**Theodore Roosevelt said "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming."**

There is no doubt I often came up short, I only hope you will equally agree I gave the role as much effort as I could afford.

My biggest regret might always be that I couldn't give as much as I would have liked, but if you ever decide to pay

your state president, don't be surprised if the thought crosses my mind to apply for the job.

Knowing many people deserve to be thanked by me, too many to mention here, may I please take the liberty of thanking Sue Wilson.

Sue took on Vice President of State Council the same year I became President, and I am enormously proud and very privileged that Sue supported me and kept the role of Vice President in her own right, for my entire term as President. Sue, you are a decent, kind, dependable, hard-working, supportive, genuine and beautiful human being, and I am so very, very fortunate we were a team together.

**"What we know matters but who we are matters more." – Brené Brown**

My best to One & All. Besides I truly believe in the cause, fairness and equity are also my defining values as a person, so it goes without saying ICPA will always be very close to my heart.

Sarah

Sarah Cook

ICPA NT

Immediate Past President



## A quick note from the editor...

### 90TH CELEBRATION EDITION

What an edition to put together!  
What an edition to be involved with!  
What an edition to be included in!



Within these pages you will see beautiful photos from our incredible 40th Anniversary ICPA NT State Conference that was held on 8th and 9th of March; the speeches that were presented; long overdue recognition given to some of the many unsung heroes of ICPA NT; tributes to lost family; stories honouring Mums; a fun way to help our children to understand and process stress reactions in their brains; a poem and much, much more.

I would like to draw attention to the speech given by Peta Stockwell—whilst a lengthy article it is well worth the read and an important one, for many reasons, but pointedly

because it tells of the opportunities and wins that come out of the heartbreaking decisions that are made to send children away to boarding school. A sentiment that can also be found in the beautifully written piece by Tanya Heaslip.

Whilst attending the Conference in March and seeing the 89 editions of Down the Track displayed, it turned my mind to the many amazing people who have been sitting in my positing before me - what an incredible and IMPORTANT job you have done in being part of the history of ICPA NT, and I count myself so very lucky to be involved with such a passionate and desperately important organisation.

I would like to take a quick moment to thank our Immediate Past President Sarah Cook for her hours of assistance as my 'second set of eyes' as I've compiled the many articles and pieces for DTT. Well done on a successful, busy, I'm sure challenging at times, but I hope also satisfying time as the ICPA NT State President.

And a big warm welcome to our new State President Moira Lanzarin! I am so looking forward to working with you as you navigate your new role.

Anni

Annika Bell  
DTT Editor

SUBMISSION DUE DATE FOR NEXT EDITION OF DTT: 15 AUGUST 2022





## ICPA NT ALICE SPRINGS BRANCH

Lisa James - President

### ***Hello to all our wonderful members!***

Alice Springs Branch held our Annual General Meeting on December 7th last year, where we had both new and existing members join our committee, whilst our current executive members remained the same for the 2022 year.

In early 2021 for our all-new committee members, it was full steam ahead. Seeing us, as a branch, step straight into the organising and hosting of the 2021 ICPA NT Annual State Conference in March which was held in Alice Springs. Although this was quite daunting to all of us who were learning our new roles, we still managed to pull off a great and successful conference with huge support from members and sponsors.

Throughout the 2021 school year, during our quarterly held in-school weeks that run simultaneously with the running of our face-to-face ICPA Alice Springs branch meetings, a meet and greet was held. This would see members gathering with their children, parents sharing a chat and children playing whilst enjoying pizza or subway. This has proven to be a great opportunity for new members to come and meet other families who may be faced with the same advantages or disadvantages of educating our children remotely; whether it be distance education, boarding life for the child or the parent, university, or early pre-school age years.

These meet-and-greet opportunities are a great way to bring in new members and advocate what the ICPA are all about! We are lucky that our fundraising that we conduct throughout the year allows us to hold such events.

Also throughout 2021, our branch organised and participated in various fundraising activities. For example, the catering for the Undoolya bronco branding, the running of the bar at Tennant Creek rodeo and the creation of our annual fishing shirts. This could not have been possible without our amazing sponsors and members who do the hard groundwork that comes with organising such events.

With these events, I am proud to say that we were fortunate enough to raise over \$25,000 in fundraising for our branch,

which is amazing considering we still had some events cancelled due to COVID.

This year, in 2022, we are looking ahead with some exciting new opportunities and ideas for fundraising events, so please watch this space for news regarding these activities. You can do this by following our face book page, ICPA – Alice Springs Branch.

Fundraising breeds opportunities for our ICPA. This includes but is not limited too; helping members to attend various conferences throughout the year, holding several of our meet and greets, giving us the ability to donate financial amounts to both our State Branch and Alice Springs School of the Air, and awarding successful applicants with our grants. Towards the end of last year, we awarded 4 out of our 5 grants to successful and well-deserving applicants. The process for the applying and being awarded with grants is now much easier as it has been transferred to an all-online system. Hopefully all 5 grants can be awarded this year.

In November last year, 4 members of the Alice Springs Branch, including myself, who were to be attending the ICPA Federal Conference in Longreach, made the hard decision to not attend, as we all felt that the ongoing and unforeseen situation regarding Covid and border closures was all too uncertain. Like many other people in this day and age, we all felt that it was a huge risk for us if such a thing were to happen, as the risk of not being able to return home for more than two weeks would have had a massive negative impact on both our young families and businesses. Fortunately enough we were able to still attend the Conference virtually.

Thank you.

Lisa

Lisa James

ICPA NT Alice Springs Branch President



NOTE: THIS IS AN EXCERPT FROM LISA'S SPEECH AT THE ICPA NT 40TH ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE

# ICPA NT KATHERINE BRANCH

## Kerrie Scott - Branch President

### STATE CONFERENCE 2022 KATHERINE BRANCH REPORT

To begin this report, I would like to express our gratitude on behalf of the Branch for the hard work of our Head Convenor, Julie Richter, who despite her many other commitments, has well and truly pulled together a fabulous State Conference.

Helen Harding has been amazing as usual with registrations and ensuring nothing is overlooked. There are many hours of work for months prior, and it is a credit to both of these ladies and the entire State Council that we are able to celebrate our 40th Anniversary this way. Thank you.

It is an honour in this report to thank our founding members, and members that have played significant roles, many of whom are with us today. Without their initiative and passion, the Katherine Branch and Northern Territory ICPA itself would not be where it is today and our children would not have the access to education they now do. We will be forever grateful.

***Acknowledging and understanding what has gone Before, is what will propel us into the Beyond.***

So much has changed, yet so much has stayed the same. It is an exciting time to be involved with ICPA, and as I carry out 7 years as Branch President, and 5 terms on State Council, I look forward to the year ahead, as it continues to be a most rewarding and enriching experience for me personally. I encourage anyone thinking about being more involved with ICPA to get involved – no one cares about our kids like we do, and we need to be there to drive the change we need for them.

***We don't just want the doors open for our children, but want them to have the confidence and skills, to open their own doors, and I strongly feel that is the essence of everything we do.***

Undeterred by Covid, Katherine Branch hosted its annual Mataranka Sports Camp with over 90 participants and several sports providing professional coaching to our children. This sports camp remains the only access to experience sport for many isolated children in the NT. I cannot be more proud of this camp and the benefits it provides not just our members, but all isolated children across a vast region of the Territory. The branch looks forward to running the event again in October 2022.

The grants and sponsorship Katherine Branch make available to members can only happen because of the generosity of the Katherine community.

***Nutrien Katherine are a driving force behind our fundraising efforts, and understand the importance in supporting our rural families for the future of the Territory and growth of industry.***

The Nutrien Auction, held annually, is an example of incredible community spirit. Many businesses and individuals across the pastoral industry donate items for auction in order to raise funds that go directly to Katherine Branch. The Branch administer these funds through our grants and sponsorship of Youth Camps, Sports Camps, online initiatives, and activities that allow isolated children to learn new skills. The Branch donates \$5000 a year to Katherine Isolated Children's Services (KICS) to assist with the amazing work they do bringing early childhood services to remote cattle stations and outstations. \$5000 to our State Council to support the costs associated with the important advocacy work that drives change at the very top for our children. We cannot operate without the amazing generosity of each of those businesses and in turn, the people that support them. We sincerely thank each and every one of them.

Our biggest initiative this year was the introduction of the Nutrien Boarding Grant. After lengthy discussions during our branch meetings on where exactly our families needed the most assistance, the Nutrien Boarding Grant was formed.

It is time to talk about boarding and what that means to our members.

***Just because we live in the Northern Territory, does not mean that our children shouldn't have access to a full education, and for us, being able to access that often means boarding.***

Distance education is a wonderful thing, but for many families, in fact the majority of our cohort, the entry into Middle Years learning requires a level of instruction that is difficult, often impossible for many to provide in the home school room.



**Adolescents experience rapid physical, cognitive and psychosocial growth, and a need for social and emotional development through contact with peers, which can be difficult to accommodate when completely isolated.**

Accompanied with the need for children to have a fulfilled educational experience, by exposure and involvement in a broader range of sports, music, arts and language, mean boarding away from home is often the only option.

With a distinct lack of financial assistance for our children trying to access a compulsory education through boarding, it wasn't hard to identify where our families are struggling. The elephant in the room is that there are only two schools offering boarding facilities to non-Indigenous children in the Territory.

Interstate Boarding as an option for families is the sensible solution. I am not going to repeat the information we all know or have easy access to by talking about costs of boarding, or interstate family support networks, or individual needs of a student, safety and sense of security for students in boarding. We are all aware of these being part of the decision making process when we talk about boarding, and everyone here would have a fairly decent grasp on that.

***It is time to be frank, and to be honest about what exactly is going on here.***

Whilst the academic quality of NT Schools is not in question, and for many, a boarding school within the NT is the perfect fit, the bottom line is the demand for boarding within the Territory for both Indigenous and non Indigenous students will not diminish any time soon, and there are simply not enough beds in the NT to board all of our remote and isolated children full stop. Interstate Boarding as a Department of Education supported option for Northern Territory secondary students is a necessity, not a luxury, and people need to hear that, and we can't be scared to say there is an inequity here, when we have 8 boarding schools and facilities, and only 2 of those schools and 1 boarding facility are available to all Territorians.

***It should be a no brainer that the State's responsibility of providing education encompass isolated Territory kids trying to gain their compulsory education through boarding, wherever that may be.***

So, what exactly do we need and what are we getting? The Student Assistance Scheme offers an Interstate Boarding

Allowance of \$2000 per year, or just \$600 to families boarding in the Territory. Despite being nowhere near the actual minimum cost of boarding, nowhere near what other states offer their students, and as you'll hear with disbelief through both Alice Springs AND Katherine Branch motions, has criteria which leave the majority of our families ineligible. We need to come up with the solution because its just not working.

**So lets look at this for example:**

- If the Territory government just agreed to match the Commonwealth Assistance for Isolated Students Boarding Allowance (\$8,856 per year) as the Territory's contribution for Geographically Isolated Boarding students, it would equate to roughly \$350,000 per year.
- Lets say it encouraged more families to stay in the Territory and it blew out to \$500,000 per year. The NT Government spent \$1.071 Billion dollars on education in the last financial year. ***How much of that was spent on educating these young Territorians?*** For most, it was \$0.
- The NT Student Assistance Scheme grants, the scheme designed to support isolated students as well as students with disabilities that cannot attend local schools, totaled \$250,000 – that is the entire scheme.

To put it in perspective, the Territory Government are offering \$15,000 incentives under the \$50.4 million dollar Population Growth Strategy, to entice people to live in the Territory which will encourage growth in industry and improve services.

***How about investing some of that money into families to stay in the Territory by supporting them to educate their children?!***

***Have we not already proven ourselves?***

So what have we done so far? I know that the Ministers Office and the Department of Education are well aware of the issues on Boarding for Isolated Children, because I have written and met with them on behalf of ICPA, and as a parent, over the last several years, including issuing a detailed Briefing Paper through State Council in 2021, to which we continue to be ignored.

**Our children's right to an equitable education has been ignored.**

**THE TIME IS NOW TO ACT ON THIS ISSUE.**

We know the statistics on boarding within the NT because we've researched it, consulted the Australian Boarding Schools Association, and gained feedback

from our members, we know our members and we know the problems. We have provided this information repeatedly, we have provided case studies, we've done the hard yards to try and get the attention of the Department on this issue and

***we need our Minister to say enough is enough...***

We deserve to be listened to and acted on, don't forget the Interstate Boarding Allowance itself only came into existence a few years ago because of the work of ICPA NT.

It wasn't that long ago, with the conversion from the Stars Network to Skymuster to access distance education in the NT, Katherine Branch stood up and successfully requested our State Council advocate for an Internet Subsidy for isolated families. That subsidy, which is now administered by Katherine School of the Air, has made a huge improvement on the ability for families to access the data needed for the home school room. That advocacy is ongoing as the Department find long term solutions, but it was at State Conference that the Department of Education listened, agreed that not only was this subsidy vital, it was an important facet in remaining compliant with the Territory's obligations under the Northern Territory Education Act, and together, ICPA and the Department negotiated a subsidy which has enabled isolated families to no longer be disadvantaged trying to access internet for their children's education.

***This proves that there is absolute potential for the Minister and the Department of Education to listen to our needs and act on them – TODAY.***

Thank you.

Kerrie

Kerrie Scott  
ICPA NT Katherine Branch President





## PRE CONFERENCE RECEPTION AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE

On the 8th and 9th of March 2022 like-minded people from all walks of life and locations around the Territory, and indeed across Australia, came together in Darwin NT to celebrate the much anticipated ICPA NT 40th Annual State Conference.

And what an occasion it was.

To quote the words of our new State President Moira Lanzarin:

**"The beautiful diversity of individuals, backgrounds, locations, needs and experiences all came together with the common goal of striving to create the best education outcomes for our bush kids and enabling families to stay living and working in the outback."**

Please take a look through the beautiful photos from the two day event, spectacularly captured by the very talented Nakita Pollock Photography.





# ICPA NT 40TH ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE

## OFFICIAL CONFERENCE OPENING BY ICPA NT PATRON

Mrs Sarah Cook, President of the Isolated Children and Parents Association.

Distinguished guests.

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners, protectors and keepers of the land and waters that surround us here in Darwin, the Larrakia. I pay my respects to Larrakia Elders past, present and emerging.

It is an honour to have been invited here today for the official opening of the Isolated Children and Parents' Association 40th State Conference.

I am very pleased that we are all able to join together once more this year, after the disruption caused by Covid in recent times.

And I think it's quite poignant that because of Covid, many more people now understand what it really means to feel isolated.

Your organisation has been advocating for those who are isolated for decades, but it can be hard for those of us who live in bigger population centres to comprehend what it really means.

Now, of course, in many ways that has changed. Which perhaps makes a few elements of your work a bit more straightforward, but certainly no less important.

As Patron of the Isolated Children and Parents' Association, I have found it striking how constructive, driven, and strategic you are in your mission.

In order to effect positive change, as an organisation you certainly don't dally! Your ability to go forth with workable motions and solutions is to be commended and – I have no doubt – plays a large part in your success.

And your success is important.

You advocate for a highly dispersed group of people, with very unique individual needs. While member families might be united in a way by their distance from urban centres, and shared experiences in terms of undertaking distance learning, each family remains unique in their particular part of the country.

During my last telephone call with Sarah Cook, I took some notes about Station life and later tried to comprehend being on the land, surrounded by more than a million acres, thousands of cattle and hundreds of kilometres from everywhere and everyone.

- 3500 head of cattle;
- 1,008,684 acres;
- 3500 breeders;
- 130 kilometres north of Alice Springs.

And I think these numbers and this reality is simply incomprehensible to many Australians.

Which is what makes your work simultaneously challenging and vital.

There are a few who have written beautifully about this way of life. But a passage in Tanya Heaslip's wonderful book, *An Alice Girl* stands out in particular for it's evocative portrayal of the realities of homeschooling on a busy cattle property.

It reads:

*"Once our governess left, Mum had to step into the teaching role for a short time. [...] But having Mum in the classroom didn't work either. She was our mother, not our teacher, and none of us managed it well. Mum was forever rushing out to pull some meat from the oven or prepare smoko or pack the tuckerbox for the stock camp. And Benny kept clamouring for her at the school room door. It was just confusing[...]."*

*In order to effect positive change, as an organisation you certainly don't dally! Your ability to go forth with workable motions and solutions is to be commended and – I have no doubt – plays a large part in your success.*

*And your success is important.*

Heightening understanding of the realities of family life out in the bush, miles from sources of support that many of us take for granted, is crucial to achieve the necessary support at the highest levels.

The theme of this conference - 'Before and Beyond' - highlights your meaningful history.

It is important to acknowledge the thousands of children and families you have supported since the beginning. The initiatives that have had a positive impact for so many – VISE and the Home Tutor Register, to name just a couple, not to mention the allowances that have been achieved through hard work over these years.

The real difference the ICPA has made to so many lives.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the ICPA NT Flashbacks brochure that was sent through to me. And I think the thing that stands out the most throughout, is the essence of humanity and empathy.

The countless stories of emotional, heartfelt support from friendships forged through this wonderful organisation.

And it is clear that these values are what will underpin the ICPA's continued achievements in the future.

'Before and Beyond' emphasises that the work is never finished.

There is always more advocacy that needs to happen.

More objectives to achieve. The world does not stand still, and with this comes advances in technology, changes to education systems and fundamental changes to the way business is done.

Which all have an impact on the way families live their lives.

And I have no doubt that as an organisation, you have a watchful eye

on the changes that will affect your members.

And that in true ICPA NT fashion, you will deal with these challenges – and opportunities – with tenacity and resilience.

The vast number of volunteer hours that are dedicated to the work of the organisation each and every year, proves that this is heart-centred work for all involved.

So many of you are following very worthily in the footsteps of Jan Heaslip, former President, NT State Life Member and Patron and the other forefathers and mothers of the ICPA NT who have left such a meaningful legacy.

Members and supporters of the Isolated Children and Parents' Association NT, I applaud and thank you all your hard work and dedication to advocating for children not just in your own

backyard, but ultimately for children right across the nation. It is not an easy task,

and you are truly inspirational people and I very much look forward to following your future achievements. I have no doubt there will be many. On that note, it gives me great pleasure to announce the Isolated Children and Parents' Association, 40th State Conference officially open.

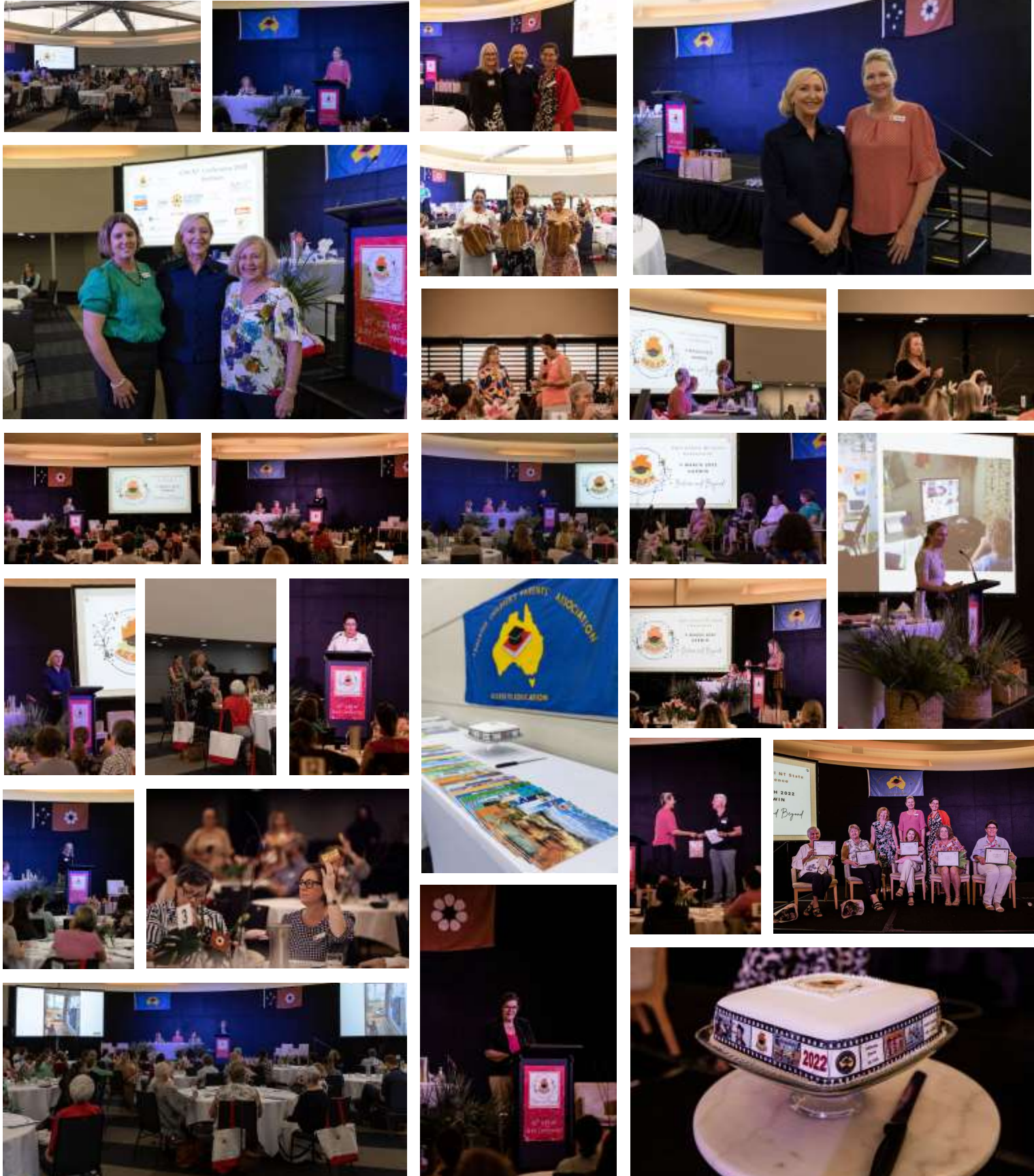
Go well, and thank you.



Her Honour  
The Honourable  
Vicki O'Halloran AO



## CONFERENCE DAY











## CONFERENCE GALA DINNER







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DENNIS KUNOTH OF WAITE RIVER CATTLE HAS SADLY PASSED AWAY FOLLOWING A BATTLE WITH PANCREATIC CANCER

*To Ley & Family,  
We share with you our love  
and support during this  
tremendously difficult time*

♥ Words aren't much,  
but we hope our thoughts & prayers help you  
through your toughest moments.  
ICPA NT Family





## BOOK REVIEW

“

I'm at an age now when in the early mornings I'm often revisited by my own mistakes, stupidities, and unintended cruelties.

They sit around the edge of my bed and look at me and say nothing. But I see them well enough.

### THIS IS HAPPINESS

Release 2019

By Niall Williams

10

★★★★★

### REVIEW BY ROYELENE HILL

Noel the narrator, relives his life while committing his story to characters in a past life in an Irish village. This village was about to be connected to 'the electric' (electricity) and as power poles were hoisted and before the power was switched on, Noel bonded himself to the very core of this community and the people who welcomed 'the electric' and those who did not.

He had a rosy view of life in that rustic village and of the churchgoing culture emerged in hardship and poverty. He felt the sorrows and the happiness that life presented and was happiest when he was besieged by 'the music': pipers, tin whistlers, fiddlers ...and the dancing!

This is the rosy bit, but as an older man Noel reflects on the dishonour within the institutions of Ireland at that time; the failures of compassion, tolerance, and common decency and of himself.

#### OVERVIEW:

"Reminiscing with downhearted regret."



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**One School One Team One Story**





PHOTO CREDITS: Kyra Gill and Brad Murray, Jervois Station NT

## LITTLE OFF THE TOP

Poetry by Brad Murray, Jervois Station NT

Stevie Wonder's in the grader, blowin' cobwebs from the stack,  
 an Lily Latham tags along, clearing carnage from the track  
 The big 140's barkin, the manifolds glowin red  
 There's sand pouring off the mouldboard and the goosenecks starting to bend  
 The oil pressures non existent, and the water temps sky high,  
 turbo boost is through the roof but this ol' machine won't die  
 You can barely see the circle, with the weight she's puttin down,  
 multi pass and final trim, this blokes not muckin' round  
 The cutting edges do their job, As sparks fly off the stone,  
 this demonic machine from the depths of hell, is diggin her way back home  
 A stream of coal flies out the top, as the trans goes back a gear  
 The final drives begin to spin, It must be time for beer.



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# MOTHERS DAY

## Words of reflection from Tanya Heaslip



*Mother's Day! What a precious moment to celebrate.*

*The chance to stop and gaze in awe and gratitude at all our mothers have given us.*

We bush kids (and I still feel like one, all these years on) owe everything to our mothers who helped create ICPA, who fought for the right for us to be educated, who didn't give up against the impenetrable bureaucracy of city indifference, who pushed and strove for better outcomes for us all.

If I think of the greatest gift that Mum has given me, hands down it was the chance for an education. She pushed hard to make sure we had a schoolroom in which to study, governesses to teach us, Correspondence School lessons so that we could learn to read and write and do our sums, and School of the Air to delight in what I always thought was pure theatre – song, dance, reading, poetry.

From a young age, Mum saw the bookish child in me, and when I was ten, gave me the best birthday present I've ever received (now or then). An orange typewriter! With this marvellous device, I was free to tap out stories with one finger, spending hours on end creating stories of children having adventures in the outback. The joy for me was indescribable.

Mum pushed my education further by making sure I went to boarding school and, perhaps more importantly, ensured I stayed there. My homesickness was acute. If I'd been given the chance to come home at any point in those five years, I would have done so in a heartbeat. But Mum knew I needed that education. To have the opportunities that she didn't.

*To have the chance to spread my bookish wings and fly.*

Mum then went one step further, by not only supporting me to get into Law School, but by insisting that I actually went to it! After boarding school, I'd taken a gap year (before there were such things as gap years) and had returned to the station to join the stock camp, ride my horse and regain my soul. Once home, I sobbed at the thought of having to leave again. I begged Mum not to send me to Law School. I couldn't face going away again, back to the city, to another institution. But Mum knew that there was something bigger inside me that needed to come out. *She knew I needed to take those bookish wings to even greater heights.*

So here is a photo of Mum and her mother, the two wonderful elders in my life who supported my love of learning, celebrating my graduation day from Law School. We are all beaming. How lucky was I. To have a mother who encouraged me to develop a profession, which she never had the chance to do, which in turn enabled me to travel all over the world to further my hunger for learning. *I was finally able to develop wings of my own and a life of my own, to become the person I was always meant to be.*

And now I've travelled full circle, back to Central Australia, my beloved outback home, to write my stories – *Alice to Prague*, *And Alice Girl*, and *Beyond Alice* – and Mum has been here, supporting me all the way.

She's been to every launch of every book, (still) beaming, and luckily for me, sharing her selfless acts of love for a bookish bush child who only ever really wanted to read and write.

## Happy Mother's Day, darling Mum, and all the wonderful women of ICPA!

Be sure to visit Tanya's website and get your hands on a copy of her three books for some more exceptional writing and story telling. <https://www.tanyaheaslip.com.au/>





Blackheath & Thornburgh  
College



Charters Towers, North Queensland  
[www.btc.qld.edu.au](http://www.btc.qld.edu.au)

# PP-12 | CO-ED

## NON-DENOMINATIONAL BOARDING FROM YEAR 6

### ENROL NOW FOR 2023



## Let's Connect

Principal, Mr Simon Murphy will be visiting the Katherine and Darwin Shows in 2022. He is looking forward to meeting with prospective and existing families of the BTC community.



## 2023 SCHOLARSHIPS NOW OPEN



Academic



Sport



Boarding Bursary



Community & Cultural



Past Student Bursary

*For more information about our Scholarships and how to register, please visit our website or contact our enrolments team; 07 4787 5100 or [enrolments@btc.qld.edu.au](mailto:enrolments@btc.qld.edu.au).*



[www.btc.qld.edu.au](http://www.btc.qld.edu.au)





# BLACKHEATH & THORNBURGH COLLEGE

Charters Towers, North Queensland

***When choosing a school for your child the options can be overwhelming.***

Add in interstate travel, boarding, children away from home and the many barriers faced by isolated families and this opportunity to explore and evolve in a new and exciting environment can present many questions.

- What are we looking for from a school, environment, curriculum, community?
- Can our child access a diverse learning and co-curricular program?
- How do we cover the costs associated with a boarding education?

Blackheath & Thornburgh College has over 100 years of tradition to draw inspiration from to provide high quality, equitable educational opportunities inspired by our history, moving boldly into the future. Our team of educators and residential staff are dedicated to providing the environment and community to foster outstanding young people from rural and regional areas across Australia.

Blackheath & Thornburgh College offers a diverse curriculum focused on developing a pathway to success for each child in our community. When students are engaging in traditional curriculum areas alongside school developed interest based electives, weekly house based challenges, community events, interschool sports and academic activities they are asked to "Go It Blue!" This motto not only forms the basis for many College traditions, it also encompasses the key values and beliefs that provide the answers to the questions many families consider when looking at schools.

With a growing number of students joining our community from the Northern Territory, our team look forward to visiting families in Katherine and for the first time dropping in to Darwin. Mr Thorne our Director of Boarding will be attending the shows in both locations accompanied by myself at Katherine and Mrs Thorne Boarding House Mother at Darwin. We encourage families to come along, meet some of our key staff members and explore the many opportunities BTC has to offer.

As a small community with many year groups nearing capacity, the College has been able to make some significant improvements to our fee structures to support families making the choice to send their children away. One of the key adjustments has been the introduction of an all inclusive tuition fee that covers expenses such as subject levies (7 -10) and year group biennial camps to ensure all students have full access to the programs on offer at BTC. Our learning environment relies on each and every student having a sense of belonging, connectedness and pride in who they are within our community, something founded in participation in elective courses and camps with their peers.

As we look forward to 2023 the BTC scholarship program is now open for applications. Students wishing to apply for Academic, Boarding, Sporting or Community and Cultural Scholarships are invited to register for one of our scholarship days available both onsite and online. Each year scholarship values vary and will provide assistance toward tuition and/or boarding fees. For further information on the scholarship process please visit our website [www.btc.qld.edu.au](http://www.btc.qld.edu.au).

GO IT BLUE!

Mr Simon Murphy  
College Principal



**Back L-R:** D. Sherratt, (Katherine), A. Saal (Winnellie), S. Craig (Katherine), C. Murphy (Katherine), M. Murphy (Katherine) **Front L-R:** A. Lanzarin (Mataranka), M. Craig (Katherine), M. Vandeleur (Mataranka)





## MARTHA VAN DER VEEN (MARTHA SWART)

**NT State Council:** Founding Councillor and first Publicity Officer 1982

**Founding Member of Katherine Branch**

**Life Member Katherine Branch**

Martha Swart accepted the position of inaugural President of Katherine Branch when we needed leadership and organised direction; she filled these requirements to the core. Intelligent, gracious and with a knowledge of how things worked. Martha was involved in multiple levels of education and advocacy, which included the Education Advisory Council (EAC) and Country Areas Program (CAP) amongst others. Later, serving our branch and state on State Council, she committed time and energy into an already incredibly busy life.

## PAULINE RAYNER

**NT State Council:** Councillor 1984, Vice-President 1985, Treasurer 1986

**Founding Member of Katherine Branch.**

Instrumental in the establishment of KICS (Katherine Isolated Children's Service 1988) travelling playgroup, Katherine Rural College, and Callistemon Boarding House (est. 1997 Katherine). Prior to that Pauline provided private boarding in her home so that isolated children could attend Katherine secondary school. Pauline Rayner is a name that will be known to many in ICPA, and her contribution to our Association is amongst the efforts of so many unsung heroes in the history of Northern Territory ICPA. Pauline, a former remote area student herself, has been involved in "battling" for geographically isolated students for years prior to our inception - a skill she brought to us. She and her husband, Ernie, were instrumental in spearheading boarding facilities in Katherine, firstly opening their home, 40 kilometers from Katherine for to up

13

# RECOGNISING THE UNSUNG HEROES

Also at the 40th ICPA  
NT State Conference  
a special moment  
was taken to  
recognise seven of  
our hard working,  
dedicated,  
committed and  
passionate members  
with ICPA NT Awards  
of Merit.



students to enable them to attend Katherine High School. As the demand grew, she was involved in the establishment of Katherine House - now Callistemon House.

Pauline was primarily involved in the advent of Katherine Isolated Children's Services (KICS) and Volunteers for Isolated Students Education, (VISE) before the input of the ICPA. And no surprise, in the establishment of the NT Rural College outside Katherine now a campus of Charles Darwin University.

Pauline has continued to support, give valuable advice from branch to state levels, positions where she always gave 100%.

## JACKIE HARVEY

**NT State Council:** Councillor 1993-1995, Vice President 1996, Publicity 1997, Vice President 1998-1999, President 2000-2001, Ex Officio 2002, Vice President 2003.

**Life Member of Katherine Branch**

Jackie gave 11 solid consecutive years to NT State Council. From remote classroom teacher to a full classroom, Jackie experienced first hand the reality and challenges of educating remotely and was able to articulate these needs to the powers that be.

## RUTH WOERLE

**NT State Council:** Treasurer 2011 to 2015

**Newsletter "Down The Track"** Editor 2007-2018,

**Archivist** 2007 to present

Ruth has so generously worked behind the scenes, for so long, always been there, always advocating and helping our bush children and families of the NT. Raising and educating her family in a variety of remote locations (National Parks) across the NT. Ruth is our longest standing Editor of the ICPA NT Newsletter "Down The Track". 11 years, approximately 40 editions, 100% voluntary. Moving our newsletter to the modern magazine it is today. If that wasn't amazing in itself, she was also a Council member and Treasurer for 4 years and our Archivist for past ICPA records.

## SALLY SULLIVAN

**NT State Council:** Secretary 2009-2011, President 2012-2014, Ex-Officio 2015, Vice President 2016, Councillor 2019

**Life Member of Katherine Branch 2021**

Sally is affectionately known by many as the "motion Queen". Quick thinking with a good mind for big picture and strategic fit plus an astute and talented wordsmith, Sally has played a pivotal role in all areas of ICPA - Branch, State and Federal. Currently still serving on Federal Council, Sally always makes herself available as mentor to current Councillors, as and when needed.

## HELEN HARDING

**NT State Council:** Vice President 2011, Secretary 2012-2014, Assistant Secretary 2015

**Grants Officer:** 2012 to current

**Life Member of Katherine Branch 2021**

Hardworking, generous, quiet achiever. Helen simply gets things done. No fuss, no fanfare, no problems - 100% reliable. You will find Helen behind the scenes, making sure things are working smoothly, ticking off lists and balancing the books. Helen is the type of person that every organisation wishes to have working with them.

## MARG LAUGHTON

**NT State Council:** Councillor 1988-1989, Treasurer 1991-1995, Councillor 1996, Treasurer 1998-1999

**Three bouts on State Council**, totalling 9 years with 7 of those years as Treasurer.

**Also a founding member of Ashburton Branch** with Del Harlan and Narelle Miller in the early 1990's.

Congratulations to each of our  
Awards of Merit recipients!





“

*It is incredibly empowering for students to learn and truly understand how their brains work.*

*Students quickly learn that the skills it takes to regulate emotions and therefore control their behaviour are actually from within and something they possess and can build upon.*

”

# MAGICAL GLITTER BRAIN JAR

Teaching children how to regulate stress and their emotions

***I am a Social Worker based in Adelaide River and I have been fortunate enough to facilitate the MindUp Program at a few local schools within the area including Adelaide River Primary, Tipperary Station School and Batchelor Area School.***

The MindUp program was developed by the Goldie Hawn Foundation. The program is firmly based in neuroscience and teaches the skills and knowledge children need to regulate their stress and emotions, form positive relationships, and act with kindness and compassion.

One of the engaging activities that students love is creating a magical glitter brain jar. This activity reinforces the key areas children learn about their brain and the power of mindful deep belly breathing.

I use a large plastic jar filled with water and some clear glue as “brain fluid”. As a group we discuss all of the different emotions we feel, observe and demonstrate throughout the day. To represent each emotion students select a different colour of glitter and take it in turns to add it to our magical glitter brain jar.

***Just like the jar, we as humans are also capable of carrying and feeling a range of different emotions.***

We then look at the magical glitter brain. The glitter has settled, the water in the jar is clear with the glitter calmly resting on the water. This reflects a happy calm brain. Students can see clearly through the jar.

When our brains are calm, we too can see clearly, we can think clearly, we can make good choices, we can plan, we can focus and are ready to learn. This is a time we are using our executive functioning. Our “wise Leader” part of the brain is in charge and the children learn that the correct name for our wise leader is the Prefrontal Cortex.

***But what if our brains are NOT calm? What if we are scared, or reactive, or worried, or sad or stressed?***

I rapidly begin to shake the jar. Glitter whirls throughout the entire space, clouding what was once clear. No longer is the magical glitter brain clear and calm. Together as a whole the glitter represents the Amygdala or “Security Guard”. The reactive centre of our brain in charge of our “flight, fight or freeze” response. No longer a brain ruled by reason or mindfulness. When the Amygdala is in charge, one can no longer see clearly, it is harder to make good choices when merely reacting, it is harder to focus and reason, and harder to learn.

I give examples of feeling stressed or scared while the glitter is whirling uncontrollably throughout the jar.

***Then ask the most important question of all; “How do we calm the glitter brain?”***

Hiding the glitter jar behind my back I lead children in a deep belly breathing exercise. It is often very simple and very short. Asking students to put their hands on



their tummy and feel their breath come into their body and then leave their body. I ask students to focus on their breath and allow thoughts to come and go. Some students contain their focus by using their right index finger to trace around each of their five fingers on their left hand. As they go up each finger I ask them to imagine they are smelling their favourite flower. As they trace down the other side I ask them to pretend they are gently blowing out a birthday candle. I produce the magical glitter jar, the water is once again clear, we can all see clearly through it indicating the brain is happy and calm.

### Our wise leader is once again in charge.

I ask the children if it is magic. This creates some fun discussion however the answer is of course, no, it is not magic but simply by taking a few mindful calm deep breaths we can calm our brains, feel focused and are now ready to learn.

Deep belly breathing is one important strategy in assisting children regulate emotions and calm their brains however it is not for everyone. The program allows children to explore the concept of “mindfulness” and brainstorm strategies in regulation that work for the individual student. The program also explores the concepts of focused awareness, optimism, gratitude and taking kindness beyond ourselves and into the world. With the support of incredible and passionate Principals and teachers the students have certainly excelled at taking kindness beyond themselves and truly demonstrated how contagious it can be. An example is the early years class at Adelaide River Primary School organising and preparing a beautiful Morning Tea for all of the Seniors within the community. The word quickly spread and Tipperary Station school also arranged a morning tea for the entire station community.

It is incredibly empowering for students to learn and truly understand how their brains work. Students quickly learn that the skills it takes to regulate emotions and therefore control their behaviour are actually from within and something they possess and can build upon.

The program reinforces to students that each and every single one of them has the ability to choose their mindset and the capacity to grow, develop, improve and thrive.

I hope this gives you a bit of an insight into an incredible program.

Merryn Hughes

For more information about the MindUp program and the Goldie Hawn Foundation visit: <https://mindup.org/>

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A special mention and apology to...



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**MAJOR SPONSOR**

enabling ICPA NT State Council  
to attend 2021 Federal Conference in Longreach

*Dear Adam, please accept my sincere apology for the printed error in Dec 2021 edition of Doves The Truth, for which I shall always feel mortified & deeply embarrassed. I assure you, ICPA NT is eternally grateful for your support and more than anything, I regret this mistake appeared to diminish our collective appreciation and gratitude. Sarah Cook*



# Congratulations



ICPA NT would like to pass on our congratulations to Kylie Jones of RAISEducation who was named the NT AgriFutures Women's Award Winner 2022. In the words of the RAISEducation Board:

"Kylie is the driving force in RAISEducation, with many families across the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia currently benefiting from the individualised support that Kylie provides."

## GIVEAWAY

Enter for a chance to win one of 3 Wooden Animal Shapes Puzzles with Display Stand



Read through all the articles and items in these pages to find the number of times the word Conference appears - then send your answer to Down the Track Editor Annika Bell: [dt@icpa.com.au](mailto:dt@icpa.com.au)

FIRST 3 CORRECT ENTRIES WIN (ONE PUZZLE PER FAMILY) - COMPETITION CLOSSES 30 JUNE 2022



# RURAL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Working with small business owners to reclaim their power

*Susan Guley is an adventurous country girl. She was raised in Bundaberg, Qld and was surrounded by the cattle industry and pioneering businesswomen, as well as seasonal fishing, cane stripping and fruit picking.*

She developed resilience through cyclones, floods, bushfires and drought and was drawn to make a difference by assisting others to do the same, first as a nurse, and then as a financial counsellor supporting victims of domestic violence to build financial security.

Based in Alice Springs, Susan expands Rural Business Support's Northern Territory Financial Counselling team, Susan will work closely with Business Financial Counsellor Kate Green, based in Darwin. Together they provide additional support to small business owners and farming families throughout Northern Territory.

*As a Business Financial Counsellor, Susan walks alongside small business owners as they journey through difficulty, holding space for their unique needs.*

Susan believes that hope is her compass and invites small business owners to work with her to reclaim their power as they develop financial resilience.

The Small Business Financial Counselling (SBFC) program provides **FREE** practical support to eligible small business owners in rural and regional areas who are currently in financial distress due to the ongoing impact of COVID, drought or bushfires.

Our team can support small business owners to find some clarity and a sense of control over where their business is heading by assisting you to:

- Identify impacts to your cash flow and what financial support might be available to alleviate some of your financial distress
- Develop plans to manage your cash flow and creditor payments moving forwards



- Prepare for talks with lenders, major service providers and insurance companies
- Access dispute resolution services
- Connect with broader professional advice and support
- Identify opportunities for you to apply for government and community grants, programs or schemes

If you are a farming family or small business owner in financial distress, or you know someone who could benefit from a chat with one of our Business



Find us on  
**Facebook**

[facebook.com/ICPANT](https://facebook.com/ICPANT)

[www.icpa.com.au/nt/](https://www.icpa.com.au/nt/)

## REBECCA OSMOTHERLY

### ICPA NT TREASURER



Rebecca lives in Katherine with her husband and three children, Ava, Ruby and Ned.

Rebecca joined ICPA NT only recently as a member now that all her children attend boarding school in Queensland.

She feels that she now realises however that she should have been a member even before her children went away to school, as what the ICPA does is relevant to all NT parents as we are all generally remote and lack many resources and services.

Rebecca works part-time as an accountant in Katherine but also helps her husband in his water well drilling business, and this year with all her kids away, she finds herself even more involved due to being able to travel away to help him wherever he is working.



## NEW FACES WHO SHARE

## MARY BAYLY

### ICPA NT STATE COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBER



Mary currently lives at Hamilton Downs Station in Central Australia with her wonderful family. She has two kids, one in year 3 and one in Transition who attend Alice Springs School of the Air.

Mary grew up down in South Australia and never really knew what remote was until she moved up here with her now husband in 2011 (not that the station they are currently on is remote according to many others, says Mary). Mary and her husband have managed a few cattle stations for a couple of people over the years and absolutely love the lifestyle. Her husband grew up in Central Australia so it was nothing new for him, however technology has changed a lot since he went to Alice Springs School of the Air himself.

Along the road Mary has faced the challenges we all face when we have children in the bush and how to get the best education for them. From struggles with internet, to finding govies, to getting financial assistance all for the sake of doing what we can for our kids' education. All of these being reasons as to why she joined ICPA.

There are so many passionate people on ICPA that stand and strive for what is right for our children's education, which Mary found very inspiring.





## MELISSA KERR

### ICPA NT STATE COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBER AND PORTFOLIO LEADER



Melissa lives on a property near Adelaide River with her husband and three children. She is a CPA accountant and has always lived and worked in the bush in Western Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Her two eldest children attended Adelaide River Primary School from preschool to year six and are now both away at boarding school in Queensland in years 8 at The Southport School and year 11 at St Margaret's Anglican Girls School. Her youngest child is in his last year of primary school and will head off to boarding school next year. As a boarding school Mum, she understands the heartache and change in family dynamics with children living away from home.

Melissa has been involved with her local school council board for over twelve years and has been the Chair for most of those years. Equitable access to education for all children in the Northern Territory no matter where they live is Melissa's driving passion and is the reason, she has joined the NT ICPA committee this year.

As the portfolio leader of Rural/Remote Schools Melissa has over a decade of hands-on experience of the difficulties and benefits of educating children in this area. She is determined that the challenges of living in the bush should not impact access to a child's education.

## A PASSION FOR ICPA NT

### WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST ICPA NT STATE COUNCIL MEMBERS



VOLUNTEERING FOR ICPA NT  
CAN BE DONE IN MANY WAYS -  
ALL IMPORTANT AND WILL MAKE  
A TANGIBLE DIFFERENCE

**Please get in touch with your  
local branch to find out how you  
can join in, every effort big or  
small is welcomed.**

**#volunteersmakeadifference**



*Congratulations!*

**LIZ BIRD**

**AWARDED WITH ICPA NT  
STATE LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

- D A R W I N 2 0 2 2 -

*Liz joined the Alice Springs Branch of ICPA in 1997.*

- NT State Certificate of Merit 2013
- NT State Council:
  - Councillor 2000
  - Publicity Officer 2001
  - President 2002-2004
  - Ex Officio 2005
  - Secretary 2007
  - Vice President 2008-2010
  - President 2011
  - Ex Officio 2012
- NT Newsletter Editor 2000
- NT Webmaster 2008-2013
- Alice Springs Branch Life Member
- ICPA NT State Life Member

She has been an active member ever since, including Branch President from 1999 to 2002.

The central Australian pastoral district, Alice Springs broader community and all rural Northern Territory families have benefited from Liz's Bird's long, sincere and note-worthy involvement in advocating for equity in education for children in the bush.

Liz is hard working, reliable, committed, and accessible. She meets her responsibilities with a level-headed, cheerful approach and never fails to respond when help, support or more hands are needed. Everyone in our community knows Liz as a passionate community leader, an excellent role model and mentor and a generous person who shares her time, experience, and guidance freely, including mentoring others in all aspects of community and not-for-profit roles.

ICPA NT is honoured to have Liz on our side and it was with great pride that she was presented with her NT State Life Membership on the 9th of March 2022.

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# COLUMBA CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Charters Towers, North Queensland

***Leading teaching and learning in regional and rural communities comes naturally to Columba Catholic College's new Principal, Mrs Melissa Turner who recently joined the college in 2021 and will be embarking on the school's western tour at the end of this term to meet with new and existing families.***

"I'm so excited to visit all the communities that our student body is made up of. As a born and bred western Queenslander I love any opportunity to get back and this trip will be even more special as I will be able to meet with the families who put their trust in Columba Catholic College to educate their children."

"I have a genuine love of learning, Catholic Education and community. I want to ensure that the students at Columba shine and that their families can be assured that their children are known, cared for and respected."

Moving to Charters Towers from Townsville, Mrs Turner is excited to be back within a school community after having spent the last two years as one of Townsville Catholic Education's Religious Education Advisors assisting schools with enhancing their Catholic Identity.

With a career in Catholic Education spanning over 20 years, Mrs Turner is a highly experienced educator who has had positions of Senior Leadership and Principal in the Townsville and Lismore Dioceses.

"I believe that Columba provides the ideal platform for students to uncover their gifts and to build their skills for life and learning and with the wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities, there is something to meet the needs of a diverse range of students."

The College will host the 2022 Celebrations from Friday 3 to Sunday 5 June 2022. St Mary's College turning 140 years and Mt Carmel College reaching 120 years being the focal point of the celebrations. Tickets are available to purchase through the College website.

Mrs Turner and Deputy Principal Pastoral and Residential, Dan Kyle, will be engaging in a Western Tour from Monday 13 through to Friday 17 June.

For more information on the tour, please contact the College office.

## **Important Upcoming College Dates :**

2022 Celebrations - 3-5 June 2022

Western Tour- Term 2, Week 9 - 13-17 June 2022

Taste of Boarding 11 August 2022 - 4.00pm

Taste of Secondary 12 August 2022 - 8.30am-3.00pm

Visitors Tour- for prospective families Friday 12 August 2022 - 8.30-10.00am

Under 8s Day Friday 19 August 2022 - 9.30-11.00am

To learn more about what Columba has to offer please contact the College for an enrolment package.



**COLUMBA CATHOLIC COLLEGE**  
CHARTERS TOWERS  
*Shine at Columba*

**Family Boarding**  
from Year 5

**Enrolling**  
now for  
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**DAY**  
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# BEFORE NOW AND BEYOND NOW: EDUCATION IN THE BUSH

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BY PETA STOCKWELL

Presented at the 40th ICPA NT  
Annual State Conference

Good morning and welcome everyone to the 40<sup>th</sup> ICPA NT conference. My name is Peta Stockwell, and today I have the pleasure of setting the scene for what I'm sure will be a great day of discussion around education in the bush.

I'll admit that when I was first approached by the ICPA to speak today, an immediate thought was that surely there was someone more impressive to do the job. However, education in the bush is something I have a bit of firsthand experience with, and while I firmly believe you could talk to any of my primary school classmates and they could tell you a great story about their experiences and learnings, it's me standing in front of you today, so I hope you will be able to take something away from my experiences so far.

I was born in the Katherine hospital in 1997, and grew up on Sunday Creek Station, about 300km south of Katherine. The nearest primary school to us was in Mataranka, some 200km away, so School of the Air was always the plan.

**I started in preschool with Katherine School of the Air, and like the majority of geographically isolated students, my mother was my home tutor.**

**This is probably one of the first key moments where I got really lucky in my education.**

Mum had a pretty pioneering upbringing across several NT stations, including Sunday Creek, and had herself completed schooling via distance education; she has been a member of the Katherine branch of the ICPA since the early 2000s, and her mother was a member before her. While Mum will admit that by the time she got to year 9 or 10 schoolwork became less of a priority and helping her parents on the station took up most of her time, there was none of this attitude when she returned to the schoolroom as a home tutor. She was a diligent and passionate tutor, who rather than let us skip the work we didn't want to do, would take it upon herself to supplement our lessons where she thought the curriculum was lacking, or we just hadn't quite mastered a topic.

**Needless to say, at the time there was very little appreciation for how seriously she took our schoolwork; to be honest, a lot of the time I thought she was being totally unreasonable.**

If you'll allow me an example, when I was in lower primary every day we would have to do 'daily writing', where we would write a couple of sentences or a little story about a topic of our choosing. It doesn't sound so bad, but at the time I detested daily writing – it was difficult, and my mother was quite a pedant in making sure my spelling and handwriting





was up to scratch before she would send it off to the teacher – I have vivid memories of having to erase a word multiple times before it was deemed acceptable.

**At one stage, I devised what I thought was a fool proof plan to make daily writing easier – when I had no inspiration, I would write “I love Mum” as my daily writing.**

It was short, I knew how to spell all the words, and what mother could possibly be unhappy with their pupil for writing that? If I was feeling extra dedicated, I would throw in a “I love Mum and Dad”.

Needless to say, eventually my Mum saw through this and said that three words was not good enough for daily writing. Sometime after this ruling from her, I came out with this little gem – for those who can’t see, it says “I hate school, I only like the finish”. I remember thinking Mum would never send that in to my teacher, but obviously the spelling and penmanship was of an acceptable level, so she did!

**In reflecting on this story, what stands out to me now as an adult, is how difficult the emotional juggle must be for all the parents who take on the home tutor role.**

This room is full of people much more equipped to speak on this than me, but I think it is worth highlighting here because it truly is a mammoth role, which sets the foundation for a lifetime of learning. A mammoth role which is, it is worth noting, typically unpaid.

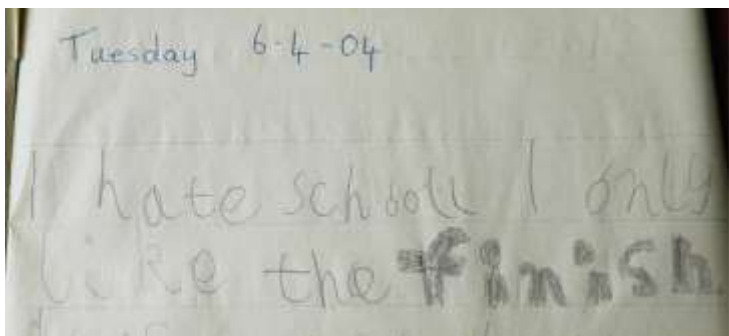
Perhaps the other thing that stands out is that even if you are tutoring a child who says they hate school, do not give up hope too soon – they may go on to pursue further education off their own bat!

When considering our conference theme of Before and Beyond, one of the most tangible examples from my own journey is the transition from lessons via radio to via computer – interactive distance learning, or IDL. I was at KSA when they started trialling IDL lessons in 2003, and was part of one of the first trial lessons where we could see our teachers sitting in Katherine. My memories of radio lessons are pretty hazy, but I do remember the difficulty of trying to listen through the static, and that reasonably often we would miss lessons because the radio wasn’t working, which at the time I was quite happy about!

**Computer lessons were truly transformative: we could see our teacher and any slideshows or videos they displayed, there was a white board function for students to all contribute to, and even a hands up button, so like every other kid in Australia, we heard our teachers say “I can see you have your hand up again Jimmy, but we’re going to let someone else answer the question this time”.**

This was a great leap forward for us academically, but also socially: we could see which of our classmates were in the lesson and hear them talk clearly, we would go around and share news from each student at the start of the lesson. To be able to keep up with your friends that you might only otherwise see three or four times a year at school camps, if you were lucky enough to have parents who would drive you the several hundred kilometres to school camp, made a huge difference.

Despite some evidence to the contrary from my early years, overall primary school was a great experience, thanks in large part to the quality of education provided by KSA and the unwavering dedication of my parents. However, by the time we got to year 7 maths, Mum and I were both a bit out of our depth. Boarding school was always on the cards, and in 2010 I went down to Brisbane to start year 8 at St Peters Lutheran College.





**I have done quite a bit of reflecting on this time, and while I will admit I have lived a pretty charmed life, I think it is fair to say that those first few months of boarding school were the hardest time of my life to date.**

Keeping in mind, my boarding situation was pretty ideal; the girls in my dorm were nice to me, the staff were experienced and supportive, I had a cousin already attending the school and other family living in Brisbane who would take me out most weekends. Let alone considering before and beyond, this was in the age of mobile phones, air travel and emails – I wasn't waiting weeks for a letter from home, and it was before the days of border closures and travel restrictions, which can be nothing short of heartbreaking for remote families. And still, the homesickness was something I had never come close to experiencing before or since. I wasn't sleeping well, I couldn't muster up much enthusiasm for cocurricular or boarding activities, and I was crying on the phone to my parents nearly every night.

**Now, I don't say this to try and describe any special hardship I went through, or to say that going away to school was the wrong choice – in fact the opposite, those years at boarding school were what allowed me to hit the ground running and have four excellent years at university.**



I say this because I think it is so easy to write off these feelings as the childish emotions of a 12-year-old girl, which they were, but regardless, they are the reality for many bush kids whose parents make similar sacrifices for their education. Not to mention the number of 20-year-olds I met at college facing similar teething problems. I can't speak for my parents, but one of the things that stands out to me now is how hard it must have been for them to hear me cry down the phone. I look back and think "couldn't you have put a brave face on for your mother's sake?" but at the time I was just putting one foot in front of the other.

It would be thoughtless of me to tell you how fulfilling I found uni to be and the connections and friendships I enjoy now, without telling you about the sad little girl I was, because without her doing the hard yards I would never have gotten so much out of my late teens and early twenties. And it did, of course, get better. I enjoyed the schoolwork before I enjoyed the rest of it, but eventually I was able to appreciate the things school gave me – friends, sport, shopping centres. I was taught maths, biology and chemistry by first rate teachers, learning things I didn't know would give me a leg up until I got to uni, and potentially equally as important, I lived in a dorm full of girls from all over the world, some of whom are still my best friends.

**It may sound funny, but eventually another thing boarding school gave me was time with my family.**



The beauty of a co-ed school was that we could all go to the same school; my brother arrived while I was still there, and he was still there when our youngest Claire turned up. I graduated with marks good enough to guarantee me entry in Agricultural Science at the University of Queensland, and headed home for a gap year of cows, horses and puppy dogs before returning to Brisbane and college. I chose to do my first year of Ag at the inner-city Brisbane campus, purely for the fact that it was the suburb next door to St Peters, where Claire would be starting year 7 the same year. While Claire took to boarding with a lot more ease than I had, it was a really special year to be able to visit with my siblings weekly, even if it was just to drive them around. It is one of those decisions in life I didn't think too much of at the time, but am truly grateful for now. For anyone who might be finding the importance of this tangent a little hard to grasp, I'll point out that the last time I lived in the same place as my siblings, my sister was 5 years old.

**This is the kind of sacrifice remote families are talking about when they're considering sending kids away, the emotional ones as well as the financial – which are of course, very significant.**

Where, and when, families choose to send their children to boarding school depends on a myriad of factors; academics, the student's cocurricular interests, ease of travel, and family support networks. These days my siblings and I are very close, and I think our time together in Brisbane had a lot to do with that.

After my first year studying mostly basic chemistry, biology and statistics in lecture halls with a thousand other science students, I moved to UQ's Gatton campus where the ag specific courses are based. Here was where I really started to hit my straps – I loved what I was studying and enjoyed the work. From Brisbane I have friends who are now doctors, lawyers, graphic designers – from Gatton I have friends who produce cotton, rice, milk, soybeans, beef, seafood, wool, wheat, or work in an office or lab in industries that support this production, here and overseas. In the lecture theatre and at the pub, my agricultural horizons were broadened. Through various scholarships and courses I went on study tours in three countries and five states. I worked hard, took pride in my work and achieved academically. There was definitely a mindset of 'if I'm going to be down here I'm going to do a good job of it'.

**Importantly, I was able to commit these hours to study, and socialising, thanks to the financial support from various bodies, including the ICPA, which meant I did not have to take on any employment I didn't choose to.**

I did work, but I would not have starved without it. Thanks to ICPA lobbying I was able to access Youth Allowance without asset testing, and generous scholarships and bursaries through UQ contributed a significant amount to my tuition



along the way.

I had some pretty specific goals set for myself at the end of my degree, and while I would be more comfortable saying I was totally shocked when I received the email nominating me as the School of Agriculture valedictorian for 2019, it honestly wasn't really a surprise. I think young Aussies, women in particular, tend to play down achievements and act as if they happened by luck.

*While I do not think it is lucky that I had topped my class for four years of university, or that my lecturers knew me well enough to want to nominate me (it helps if you go to lectures), I was extremely lucky to be born into a family that valued and invested in my education, continuously and tirelessly, funding the roughly 294,000 kilometres I clocked up travelling by road and air to and from school and uni, on top of all the school fees.*



and felt some degree of sadness. It has never been easy, even when it was my own choice. This is not to say I haven't had fun once I was gone – I definitely did – but the leaving was always sad. I did it in the pursuit of personal, academic and professional development, of being able to carve out the life I wanted to lead and equip myself with the skills and knowledge I might need to do that.

**I think the idea of success is unique to every individual, and that the goal posts will change as time goes on.**

If success is being able to board a plane out of Darwin with a one-way ticket without getting teary, I'm not sure I'm there yet, but there are plenty of things that I think the 12 year old me would be pretty impressed by. Things like being able to get off a plane at Brisbane airport, pick up a hire car and drive to St Peters without turning on the GPS, for example, or for that matter, speaking in front of a room full of people! If I hadn't ventured interstate for school and uni, there are plenty of things I would be better at now; my horses would be better trained, I'd be a better mechanic and tractor driver. I think the trade-off is I would have lacked the confidence to value my own ideas and opinions when I ventured outside the boundary gate.

I can tell you that when I got off the phone with the head of school after accepting the role as valedictorian, the thought that came into my head was "Grandma would have been so proud" of the bush kid who became a Valedictorian at the top ranked Ag uni in the country, whether that kid was her granddaughter or not. Before, and beyond.

After graduating, it took me a few months to find a job, which I spent working at home as we waited for the latest start to a wet season in 30 years. I eventually took a job working as a Beef extension officer for the Department of Ag based out of Mackay, where my boss later told me he had no idea I did well at uni, because he never read my resume, preferring to talk on the phone. The job I really wanted straight out of uni, I didn't even interview for, and plenty of other graduates found jobs before me, and better paying jobs than me. Success and achievement look different for everyone. My job involved a lot of driving around northern and central Queensland talking to beef producers. I was pretty intimidated to venture into the blue-ribbon country of CQ to begin with, thinking I would be way out of my league. While I learnt that this was not necessarily the case,

**my experience in Queensland did recontextualise my concept of remoteness. Driving on a dirt road near nowhere in particular, I could see more traffic than driving up the Stuart highway in the wet season. Producers would ring me from the paddock, tractor, while sitting behind a mob of cattle, because they had phone service.**

**And there were school bus signs everywhere, because the rural population was sufficient to support primary schools in tiny towns – in some places the school was all there was.**

This may not be news to many people in the audience, but this adjustment of perspective, agriculturally and socially, around life in remote NT, is one of the most important things I think I brought back with me.

Earlier I introduced you all to the homesick pre-teen I was when I went away to school. In truth, this girl has never really left me. From 2010 until this year, at the start of every year I have left Sunday Creek

When I consider before and beyond now, looking back I can see the challenges overcome and the changes in many things; education in the bush looks a lot different now to how it looked for my grandmother. As an educated young person living in the bush today, I can also see room for improvement.

**I have expressed the wonder of shifting from radio to internet; as wonderful as it was, this was nearly 20 years ago, and in today's modern world our connectivity leaves plenty to be desired.**

Our internet at home will still go out whenever there is rain around, and sometimes when there's not, we have 3 different wifi servers to support a maximum of 15 people on the station, and in the last 12 months our landline phone has been out 173 days – which would be less of a problem if there was mobile coverage. As much fun as I had while away in Queensland, it was always my plan to come back, and my hope was that I could bring some new knowledge and skills with me. The NT is home, and for me it holds the potential to build the life I want to lead; one that contributes to the economy and community of the Territory, and hopefully sees me able to achieve the career I want while raising a family in the bush. This remains no small feat, and I have been asked by some people close to me if I would really want to put myself through all the challenges.

**While the idea of sending a future child away from home at 11 or 12 is not appealing, I believe in the future of the bush, and that more and more we will be able to achieve greater flexibility and productivity.**

**I believe in the importance of having educated voices in the bush to take up the task of advocacy and communication around our industries and communities.**

**I believe in the value that bush families provide to the Australian landscape, and the role they play as stewards of our wide brown land.**

Thank you to the ICPA NT for the invitation to be here today, and all the wonderful work they do to help kids like me gain access to education in the bush. Thank you.

# POST SECONDARY GRANT REPORT

## 2021 Award recipient Sally Shaw

***Since completing secondary school in 2017, I have been studying medicine in a 6 year course at the University of Western Australia.***

Last year was my first year of clinical placement, with the whole year spent learning from doctors in hospitals all around Perth, rather than textbooks and lectures. This year the course has a similar plan with more placements and even an opportunity to undertake a rural placement.

Despite the challenges over the past year of all day mask wearing, PPE gowns, isolation and constant concerns of hygiene I have had an enjoyable time and can safely say I have learnt a lot! I have often reflected on the ways in which my rural upbringing and life as a station kid has prepared me well for life as a medical student. Particularly country peoples' affinity for hard physical work (now converted to hours of studying), observing at times grisly surgeries and working together with a team of doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals.

The constant requirements of new textbooks and learning resources has not been easy to justify financially, however thanks to the grant I was lucky enough to receive from the ICPA this strain has thankfully lessened. Last year I was eager to purchase my very own stethoscope, however I was not so impressed when I realised the cost of these! So, I was very lucky to be able to utilise part of the funding from ICPA.

After witnessing and participating in the health care system over the past few years, I have often been concerned for our rural towns, families, and communities. One day I hope to be able to return to my hometown of Kununurra and work as part

of the health care team there.

*I am very thankful for the ICPA and their grants available for isolated students and families, their support has personally greatly assisted me throughout both my secondary and tertiary education.*

Thank you!

Sally

Incredible work Sally -  
Well done!



We pass on our deepest condolences to the multi-generation ICPA Dyer family at the sad passing of

...  
**JOHN  
DYER**

11 JANUARY 1941 - 1 APRIL 2022

...  
HEYFIELD STATION NT

John was a true Northern Territory pioneer and his love and life's work live on in the legacy he leaves behind.

Our thoughts are with Val, Nick, Justin, Lisa and families in this difficult time.

To our own Julie Richter and family we pass on our sincerest condolences at the passing of

**EDWARD  
O'HEHIR**

15 JULY 1947 - 12 APRIL 2022

Edward was honoured and laid to rest on 19 April 2022 in Katherine, Northern Territory



## Kirra Riggs - Lakefield Station NT

My name is Kirra Riggs, I am a 20-year-old university student living remotely. I grew up on my family's cattle station "Lakefield", located 140 kilometres southwest of the closest large town, Katherine in the Northern Territory. Living in geographical isolation has its disadvantages, particularly due to the distance required to travel for education, health care, food, and rural supplies. Although, living remote also has many qualities which make us fortunate to live in such amazing parts of the country, and experience an extra ordinary lifestyle which is hard to compare to those in towns and cities.

My family has lived remote all of myself and my siblings' lives. My mother, Michelle is still a current member of the "Isolated Children's Parents Association" after 24 years. My whole family has been involved in the ICPA since the beginning of our education, through entering competitions and applying for bursaries and grants. We often travelled with our mother to ICPA conferences and meets, for our main reason to catch-up with fellow isolated classmates.

My first year of schooling began in 2005, via Katherine School of The Air while my family was living quite minimally on our new undeveloped cattle station. Myself and my siblings all were enrolled through KSA at this time. We used a two-way radio system to communicate with our teachers and had hard copy schoolwork sent to us in the mail. I attended KSA through to year eight, then I moved into town and attended St Joseph's Catholic College and boarded at Callistemon House. After being in town for a year, my parents enrolled me in a boarding school a long way from home in Armidale, New South Whales. Now, this took some persuasion, however I soon realised that the New England Girls' School was an equestrian school, and the sudden motivation to travel 3,137 kilometres away to attend was self-

explanatory. I graduated in October 2018, and returned to the NT. After working at home on the station for five months, I was offered a position as a Veterinary Nurse in Katherine where I was employed for two and a half years.

In 2021, I enrolled in a Bachelor of Animal Science through the University of New England in Armidale. I moved home and commenced my full-time online studies in the second semester. I chose to study through UNE particularly because of its superb reputation of having a well-supported online environment for students studying from abroad. The University also has extensive links to the full range of farming sectors in Australia as well as being a leader in international agricultural research and development. After doing a bit more research into the agricultural degrees which the University offered, I stumbled across The Bachelor of Animal Science, which I had never heard of before. The outcomes of studying Animal Science were all along the lines of careers which I had an interest in and were also careers that would enable me to contribute to the NT Pastoral Industry in the future.

If I were to be the recipient of the ICPA NT Post-Secondary Grant, the funds would be used to assist in the cost of travelling to Armidale once a semester to attend the compulsory intensive schools. Any remaining funds would go towards a laptop upgrade further into my studies, or if my laptop holds throughout my degree, the funds will be put aside as assistance in paying off my tuition fees at the completion of the course.

## Congratulations Kirra!







Northern Territory Boarding

# More than classrooms and computers.

Outside the box thinking comes from being, quite literally, outside the box. In addition to the invaluable lessons they learn in class, our boarding students are given all kinds of opportunities to explore – both the world around them and who they are as young people. Time spent both learning and living here means time to build skills of friendship, teamwork, resilience, leadership and decision-making. From here, they're encouraged to take their path anywhere.

**HAILEYBURY**  
RENDALL SCHOOL





# Do It For Dolly Day



**Friday  
13 May 2022**



## Isolated Children's Parents' Association

### NORTHERN TERRITORY MEMBERSHIP FORM FOR 2022

*DUE - JANUARY 1ST EACH YEAR.*

Please ensure payment is received by March 31<sup>st</sup> to qualify for state and branch bursaries

### MEMBERSHIP TO YOUR LOCAL BRANCH IS ONLY \$50/FAMILY/YEAR

- A voice in your children's education.
- Membership voting rights at Branch, State and Federal level (financial assistance to attend State and Federal conferences available).
- Qualification for ICPA grants.
- Free subscription to - ICPA NT 'Down the Track' and ICPA Australia 'Pedals' magazines.

If you're not receiving these publications regularly, check with your treasurer - you may not be a financial member for 2022.  
If you still want to keep in touch, but not be associated with a particular branch, then **Territory Wide Members** is for you!

Please fill in this form and forward to one of the below treasurers.

If paying by Direct Deposit, please use your first initial and surname with the word 'Membership' as the reference to help the treasurer. (e.g. 'J Bloggs Membership'), and post or email this form using the details below.

These are important to use for grant qualifications and for ICPA advocacy purposes.

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Please advise your Branch Secretary and Treasurer of your change of postal or email address

#### **Your children's details**

*(this information is retained by the Branch and State Council Treasurers and Secretaries and used for Grant qualifications and advocacy purposes )*

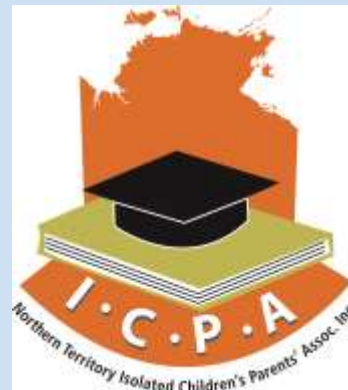
Names (of Children)	Age (turning in 2022)	Year Level (in 2022)	School/University/College Attending

I give ICPA permission to use photographs of my children for use in ICPA Publications and Newsletters, including the ICPA NT Facebook Page and Website ☐ Please ✓



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# DOWN THE TRACK Magazine

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY | EDITION 90 | APRIL/MAY 2022

Outback to Ocean  
Growing Member Connections

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

**2022 FEDERAL CONFERENCE**

**- 3 & 4 August -**

**PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Isolated Children's Parents' Association  
ICPA  
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