

# DOWN THE TRACK

N E W S L E T T E R

#84  
MAY  
2020



### ICPA NT PATRON

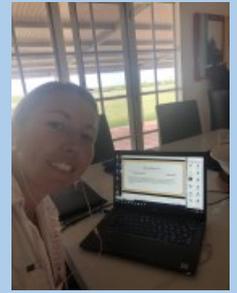
We pay tribute to our previous patron Mrs Jan Heaslip and welcome our new patron The Honourable Vicki O'Halloran

### COVID-19

A time of reflection, change, and highlighting the challenges of isolation

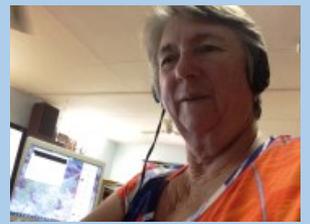
### SKYMUSTER

Increases to data allowances and some helpful hints on how to manage your data usage



## 38TH ICPA NT STATE CONFERENCE 2020

WHAT A YEAR TO HAVE A WEBINAR



MANY THANKS TO THE CONNELLAN TRUST AND SIBA SHIPS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE NT ICPA VENTURES IN 2020



# A WORD FROM THE ICPA NT PRESIDENT...

**Recently a lobby group, representing agriculture, contacted ICPA NT to ask what we thought about the idea of a financial subsidy towards the cost of home schooling in term 2, whilst schools are closed due to the Corona Virus Pandemic.**

Members will know this is not a new idea. For many years ICPA Australia has been representing branches throughout the NT and indeed Australia, for a DETA - Distance Education Teaching Allowance.

So of course our response was positive, that yes we do support the idea, and agree families should be compensated for costs related to the necessary supervision of students in the home school room, receiving an education. Despite strong support for the idea, the above-mentioned group realised the task was too big to take on for just Term 2. But we learnt something – **people are beginning to realise that teaching your kids from home is a huge job – and it is a job.**

Yesterday (as I write this) I received no less than ten emails from my son's boarding school. He is in year 11 and the emails were full of instruction, process and procedure on how he will proceed for the next five weeks, while his school remains closed. Thank goodness he is my only student, because I can see this is going to be one hell of a job. (I'd probably rather be bull catching on my own - I know he certainly would).

The average salary for a Teaching Assistant in Australia is \$39.26 per hour. Late last year the Federal Government pushed back to ICPA Australia and advised education is a state based responsibility, so state councils should ask their respective governments for a DETA.



At our state conference (March 2020), the following motion was carried: **That ICPA NT lobbies the NT Government to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role the home tutor plays in educating geographically isolated students via distance education.**

Whether the payment for such a role is made by the family (to a governess), or one of the parents forgoes a wage to do this role, supervising your children in the home school room is a direct cost to geographically isolated families. The cost of food, board and other sundry expenses (such as rent, travel, telephone & internet) is on top of wages, as in most every case, the governess lives with the family.

**In Home Care** does not cover supervision of children at school. **Assistance for Isolated Children** scheme, according to the guidelines, is not intended to meet the ongoing cost of provision of education (e.g. costs associated with teaching, tuition and supervision).

Government schools (public schools) are free to attend for Australian citizens and permanent residents, but if you are providing a supervisor, as required by the government, for the compulsory supervision of students on School of The Air (Distance Education), public education for geographically isolated families is not free. It is, at present, a direct cost covered by our families.

ICPA NT advocates for equity in education. And our wins, our work, benefits ALL geographically isolated families. Support us to support you.

#IamICPA

Keep in touch, regards Sarah Cook.

# A word from the Editor...

## Wowzers! What a year 2020 is shaping up to be!!

But in true Territory / Australian style, ICPA NT members have stepped up, rolled up their sleeves and carried on! Despite so many events being cancelled, plans being postponed, massive changes to life for many, and uncertainty around the world, you have provided enough content for yet another full newsletter!

On a personal note, my family and I made the decision to put the rest of our travelling on hold and come on back to the Territory to ride things out. It was a wild bit of time packing up a house worth of

'settling' back in to our van and then driving back in time to cross the NT boarder before the closures back in March. But we made it and are so thankful to be home, and in my opinion, in the best place in the world!

Thank you again to everyone for all your input, contributions, photos, articles and general support.

It's another great edition!



## Volunteers for Isolated Students Education Aussie Helpers



AHVISE (Aussie Helpers Volunteers for Isolated Students Education) is a voluntary organisation that assists rural and remote children with their educational needs. Retired tutors/teachers volunteer their time to go bush and help our rural and remote kids in the school room. Many of these kids have their own schoolroom on cattle stations, communities, national parks, properties, farms, fishing villages or even the odd remote island.

Where there's help needed AHVISE will be sure to assist if there is a volunteer available.

If you feel you can help our kids by volunteering, or if you are a parent requiring help please get more information and register by going to:

[www.ahvise.org.au](http://www.ahvise.org.au)

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**Printer:** Hollands Print Solutions - McCourt Rd, Yarrowonga. NT.

*Our Newsletter is now proudly printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.*



**NOTE:** In order to reduce our carbon footprint we are trialling a reduced plastic mail out for this edition. If you have had any troubles with this new process please email Annika with your concerns on the address above.

## NT WEBSITE – <http://nt.icpa.com.au>

Keep an eye on our website as news items, media releases and events will be posted regularly.

If your branch has something important to share with other NT members please email it to the [ntwebmaster@icpa.com.au](mailto:ntwebmaster@icpa.com.au)

The NT webpage homepage has a Facebook feed which allows you to view the NT Facebook page without the added burden of increased data due to the ads.



Twitter -- @NTICPA

'Northern Territory Isolated Children's Parent Association'



FRONT COVER– Some of the wonderful ICPA members who dialed in for the 38th ICPA NT State Conference Webinar on the 25th of March. BACK COVER: One of our avid readers (and contributor for this edition), Oliver Seamer enjoying some down time whilst flicking through the pages of Down the Track.



# Isolated Children's Parents' Association NORTHERN TERRITORY STATE COUNCIL Inc 2020 - 2021 Positions

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## PORTFOLIO POSITIONS

**Allowances** - Sarah Cook Assistant: Kerrie Scott  
**Boarding** - Amber Driver  
**Communications & Technology** - Sarah Cook  
 Assistant: Kerrie Scott  
**Curriculum** - Bec Cadzow  
**Distance Ed** - Amanda Murphy  
 Assistant: Heidi Millership

**Early Childhood** - Bianca Brown  
**Rural/Remote Schools** - Sarah Measey  
**Special Needs** - Suzanne Wilson  
**Tertiary** - Suzanne Wilson  
**Training** - Katie Payne  
**Miscellaneous & Across the Border** - Sarah Measey

# Passing of the ICPA



*Mrs Sarah Cook  
President  
NT Isolated Children's Parents'  
Association*

*Dear Sarah*

*Over the past few years, it has been my great pleasure to be the NT Patron of my very favourite organisation, ICPA.*

*Without a doubt ICPA is one of the most valued organisations in outback Australia, working to ensure Children who live in the outback receive a valued and strong education.*

*We began ICPA in the NT in the late 1970s. I have always loved every minute of my involvement and thoroughly enjoyed the time, especially in 1982 when we began a united Northern Territory Association. It has been an amazing and fulfilling part of my life. We also held a Federal conference in Alice Springs the same year, which I convened. A very busy year 1982 !!!'*

*I think the time has well come for me to stand down as Patron, it has been such a special time in my life. Time now for someone to bring their own gifts and skills to this amazing organisation.*

*I wish you all great happiness and great success as you move on in the world of education for our beautiful bush Children.*

*My very best wishes to all NT ICPA members*

*Sincerely Jan Heaslip*

## Mrs Janice (Jan) Heaslip OAM

Jan arrived in Alice Springs on the 20th August 1957 and shortly afterwards travelled to Hamilton Downs Station to be a governess, teaching School of the Air to the Prior children. While in Central Australia, Jan met her husband Grant and moved to Bond Springs Station, where they raised their family and still live today.

Jan has four children, all taught on School of the Air over a span of 14 consecutive years. For most of those years, Jan was President of the School of the Air Parent's Association, where she became acutely aware that families already living in the bush or coming to live in the bush were deeply concerned with two issues; health and help in the times of sickness or accidents and education for their children.

During this time, some very wonderful people from Meekatharra in WA through to Bourke in NSW had the same concerns, and ICPA was formed in Burke in the 1970s. Soon families from all over the Australian outback were becoming interested in and joined the organisation of ICPA. In the Territory, families from the Katherine and Alice Springs School of the Air both formed ICPA branches.

Members of these branches were talking to the Education Department in Darwin. The Secretary of Education at that time, Mr Geoff Spring, was amazingly supportive of education in the bush and Mr Spring asked the two newly formed branches to amalgamate, to form one united voice. The two ICPA branches did just that, and in 1983, Jan became the Inaugural President of the ICPA NT State Council.

Jan has been involved in education in the bush for her entire life, notably through the School of the Air Parent's

Association, the forming of the Alice Springs ICPA Branch followed by the forming of the NT State Council and the ongoing strength of ICPA, as well as her very significant role with St Philips College. It is no coincidence that all of these organisations have prospered with the benefit of Jan's commitment, leadership and endearing work to improve education for remote children.

In 2011, Jan accepted an invitation from the Northern Territory State Council to take on our highest honorary role, of Patron. A Patron must promote the goals, values, aims and objectives of the ICPA NT at every opportunity, and there was no question Jan was a natural albeit impressive choice for this very special role.

During her nine years, Jan has remained connected and deeply committed to ICPA, from attending branch meetings and providing guidance, to attending the very highest levels in her role as Patron. At the 2019 State Conference, Jan shared her deep love for ICPA, but due to personal reasons, she was preparing to step down. Jan made a personal request to Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AO, Administrator of the Northern Territory to succeed her, and Her Honour accepted.

This is by no means the full story. These are a few short words, written to thank one of our very own. Jan Heaslip OAM has given her very, very best - for many, many years - to ICPA. Under Jan's stewardship ICPA in the Territory has grown to become a highly regarded organisation, both at state and on a national level, realised by wonderful achievements for education in the outback. NT State Council wish Jan the very best, and we look forward to calling on Jan for guidance, wisdom and knowledge from time to time.

# NT Patronage Baton

## Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AO

*At our 38<sup>th</sup> State Conference, our Patron Mrs Jan Heaslip OAM stepped down, and a new Patron accepted the role.*

***The new Patron of the Northern Territory Isolated Children's Parent's Association is Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AO.***

*We are so very grateful to Mrs Jan Heaslip who personally asked Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AO, Administrator of the Northern Territory to be our Patron; and for this, Jan is leaving us in very best hands.*

### ADMINISTRATOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AO was sworn in as the 22nd Administrator of the Northern Territory on 31 October 2017.

As Administrator, Her Honour represents the Crown in right of the Northern Territory. Her Honour performs a similar constitutional role to that of a State Governor and does not participate in the political process.

Her Honour was born in Tasmania and moved to Darwin in 1989, where she has resided for the past 30 years.

As Administrator of the Northern Territory, Her Honour values the importance of supporting and promoting the Territory and Territorians. She is Patron to more than 55 organisations, and actively supports the development of emerging Territory leaders. Her Honour is passionate about sharing Government House Northern Territory with the wider community, and pursues innovative opportunities to enable access to thousands of Territorians and visitors each year.

Prior to her appointment as Administrator of the Northern Territory, Her Honour was Chief Executive Officer of Somerville Community Services. She has been a member of a range of boards and committees locally and nationally. Her Honour was Chair of National Disability Services Northern Territory, serving as National President of National Disability Services from 2012-2015, and Chair of the Northern Territory Government Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability Reform.

Her Honour was a Committee Member of the Northern Territory Government Community Benefit Fund, National Disability Insurance Scheme Pricing Committee, National Disability Insurance Scheme Operations Committee, National Disability Insurance

Agency, Independent Advisory Council's Housing Innovations Working Group and the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Northern Territory. She was also a member of the AICD Not for Profit Chairs Forum and the Territory Economic Summit External Reference Group.

Her Honour was also the Chair of the Northern Territory Housing Appeals Board for eight years and a member of the Children Australia Journal's Editorial Board. She has been a juror on numerous Award panels, most recently the Australian Institute of Architects Northern Territory Architecture Awards.

In 2015 Her Honour was a Territory (State) Finalist in the Australian of the Year Awards. In 2013 she was appointed to the Northern Territory Government Events Ambassador Program, a position she held for two years. Her Honour was named Telstra Northern Territory Business Woman of the Year in 1998.

Her Honour has represented the Northern Territory on the national stage promoting the importance of good governance and social inclusion. During her tenure as Chief Executive Officer of Somerville Community Services the organisation was nationally recognised as an employer of choice and champion of cultural diversity.

Her Honour was invested as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2019 for her distinguished service to the people of the Northern Territory and to the disability sector. In 2014 she was invested as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her significant service to people with a disability. Her Honour holds a Bachelor of Children's Services and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Her Honour and Mr O'Halloran married in 1993. They have one daughter, Coco, who attends university in Melbourne.



# 2020 State Conference Reports

## ICPA NT STATE PRESIDENT SARAH COOK

I am so pleased to warmly welcome members and guests to the 38th Annual Conference of Isolated Children's Parents' Association, Northern Territory. I am especially grateful we organised a Webinar, as we do every third year, although it turns out the timing couldn't have been more fortuitous.

On behalf of our State Council, I am delighted you could join us today to support ICPA and discuss the important business of advocating for Equity of Access to Education for Rural and Remote Children.

Josh Corbat, who holds a Master of Education, said "In today's schools, the most direct way students receive an assurance of proper support is for the family to act as strong advocates".

Geographically isolated families may be comfortable driving hundreds of kilometres to get somewhere, to deliver not just education to their children but jobs, sustenance, health, innovations and many other necessities to their community, and to live on the wide sea or a million acres of soil. But for many years these very same families have relied on ICPA to be their voice, to act as their strong advocate, in equity of access to education.

ICPA is a way for geographically isolated families to reach out for help, where they can relate to and join with other families who are in the same situation and propose solutions to problems most people don't necessarily understand.

There are many groups across Australia advocating for education, disabilities, parents rights, early childhood and so on, yet there is no other group advocating for geographically isolated families on all of these issues, like ICPA has done for a long time - and continues to do today.

Advocacy takes time; it takes commitment, practice and persistence. But most of all, it takes passion. While ICPA can be a voice, members must be the passion and today is another occasion where we proudly acknowledge the passion and commitment of our members, keeping our organisation strong.

In the Northern Territory, one of ICPA's most loyal advocates has been our Patron, Mrs Jan Heaslip OAM.

Jan has been committed to ICPA's advocacy for over 40 years and is a founding member of ICPA Northern Territory. Jan could not be here today, so she has asked me to pass on her apologies and regret, which I humbly do.

I also regrettably share with members that, after eight years as our Patron, Jan will be standing down at this AGM.

Deciding to stand down was very difficult for Jan, and she expressed that being our Patron has been a very special time in her life, but time now for someone to bring their own gifts and skills to this amazing organisation.

On behalf of ICPA Northern Territory, President's and State Councils past and present, and members over the many years, I express our most sincere appreciation to Jan for her loyalty, love and commitment to ICPA. I know Jan's branch, the Alice Springs branch, will especially miss Jan and of course, let us remind Jan she will always be part of the ICPA family. I personally hope Jan will join us at the 50th celebration of ICPA Australia, in Queensland next year.

Thank you all for attending the conference today and on behalf of rural and remote children and families everywhere, thank you for your passion and commitment to ICPA. I invite you all to please read through the Portfolio Report document, provided with the meeting papers, for a comprehensive update on the advocacy work our State Council have conducted around member motions in the past year. I applaud what our Council has achieved, and I sincerely thank them - individually and collectively - for their support in my first year as President.

Sarah Cook

## KATHERINE BRANCH PRESIDENT KERRIE SCOTT

On behalf of the Katherine Branch, I'd like to thank the NT State Council for convening the 38th Annual NT State Conference webinar. Whilst we all agree that face to face meetings are far more rewarding, enabling us to debate, talk to, and discuss motions and issues freely, it is a credit to the organisation as a whole that we can utilise the resources we have available to us and enable branches to minimise the time and cost associated with

members attending conference every third year. We all wish we could be sitting in a room together, but like most areas of our lives, we are accustomed to the many sacrifices we make to get things done, and we can only hope what we do is for the greater good.

Katherine Branch has had another memorable year, with our membership numbers holding firm and filling each of the positions on our committee with some new and old faces. It is always a productive dynamic to have - experience and enthusiasm! We have three branch members currently on State Council representing the entire Territory, as well as giving State Council valuable insights from the Katherine region perspective.

The community rallied behind us again through our collaborative fundraiser, and we were lucky enough to receive in excess of \$100,000 in proceeds raised at the Landmark Auction. The branch is very humbled by the support, and we are proud and excited that we can utilise these funds to assist our isolated families with the ever-increasing burden of education in isolation, and advocate on behalf of our members.

These funds have enabled us to:

- Send Katherine Branch delegates to the ICPA Federal Conference in Adelaide to represent our regions isolated families.
- Introduce a new 'ICT Grant' of \$500, for members students entering or enrolled in Yrs 7-12.
- Continue to support our members with Extraordinary Opportunity Grants, where we were able to help the Katherine School of the Air students in both the Primary and Middle Years attend their interstate excursions, and helped members attend extraordinary educational opportunities, as well as issued Personal Development Grants.
- Run the ICPA Mataranka Sports Camp - with Distance Education and Mataranka School students accessing various sports over two days, learning new skills, making new friends, and bringing our community together.
- Support isolated kids engagement in sports by sponsorship of Horse Funkhana's at both Mataranka and Timber Creek Campdrafts.
- KSA Athletics Carnival medals.
- Financial support to both our State and

Federal Councils. (\$10,000 and \$5000 respectively)

- Financial support to Katherine Isolated Children's Services mobile playgroup. (\$5000)
- Administer the 'Landmark Bursaries'
- Roylene Hill Art & Val Utley Memorial Awards. Carol Armstrong Biggest Morning Tea.

Katherine Branch was also integral in the implementation of the 'Internet Equity Grant'. Through our motion at the 2019 Conference, highlighting discrepancies between the NT Education Act stating 'Government education to be free' whilst many isolated families are forced to pay for their essential schoolroom internet in order to access the distance education program. The Dept of Education acted swiftly and implemented a reimbursement grant of \$50 per month per family toward internet costs. Whilst this is appreciated, it still falls substantially short of the actual cost of schoolroom internet and the increasing data requirements, and we will continue to work with our State Council in advocating the NT Govt to abide by legislation and there be no 'out of pocket' costs to access a Territory education for geographically isolated students.

I always feel that I am repeating myself in every report, but it is a shame that so many of our bigger issues have been lobbied for so long without resolution. It certainly isn't through lack of effort on behalf of our Branch, State and Federal Councils. I don't think there are many organisations, if any, that would work at the level we do and with the passion we do, on a voluntary basis. The votes just aren't in the isolated families, which means we need to keep going – louder and stronger. They will never truly understand, but every now and then, someone comes along that might just be willing to step up and see how valuable these kids are to the survival of our rural economy. It's not always about money, it is about recognising the unique circumstances and hardships these kids face, through distance education and boarding, and providing what these kids need in order to thrive. Let's hope we can kick some more goals this year!

Kerrie Scott

## **ICPA NT SECRETARY REBECCA CADZOW**

Firstly an enormous thank you to Sarah Cook, our President, for her guidance and dedicated and tireless leadership. Sarah has filled in so many parts of my role whilst I have been absent, but as the saying goes, there is no I in team. And that is what makes ICPA NT State Council so great, the team work really does come together even though we are so far apart.

I was elected Secretary in Katherine last year at the AGM. Unfortunately, due to so many commitments (don't we all have plenty of them?), I was unable to dedicate myself wholly to the position so our wonderful President has been keeping the emails rolling out to the members, and our super organised Vice-President Suzanne Wilson was able to organise delegations. Being part of this team has made me realise that if someone is having a bad time, there is always someone there to pick up the pieces, so again a big heartfelt thanks to all the ladies in doing this for me.

I was able to attend Delegations in the later part of the year. Delegations are the BEST part of being on State Council. I implore anyone that has a 'fire in their belly' over certain aspects of the education of remote and geographically isolated students to put their hand up. This experience has made me more aware of how little people know of our circumstances. The major 'break-through' for ICPA NT this year has been the continuous and positive interactions with both Departmental Staff in the Department of Education as well as the Minister of Education, Minister Selena Uibo. These meetings have kept our motions on track, and as such we are seeing some movement and understanding of our place and needs in educating our children. I thank the Minister and her Department for such open, frank meetings.

This year during delegations we felt that in order to make the most of our meetings was to have a meeting agenda based wholly on our motions. This has been instrumental on keeping these meetings on topic, and with specific outcomes. It has also formalised the way in which we conduct our meetings, as everyone is sent an agenda beforehand to be organised and have resources at the ready when we come together. All meetings are then outcomes based on actions- again

helping the flow of information that directly relates to the motions presented.

As always this time of the year is busy for the state council bringing the ICPA NT State Conference together – and a massive thank you is extended to Alice Springs School of the Air, Suzanne and Michael Wilson of REACT and all those who have taken the time to attend and give their input to the direction of ICPA NT in the coming twelve months.

Rebecca Cadzow

## **ICPA NT TREASURER SARAH MEASEY**

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the State Council of the Northern Territory Isolated Children's Parents' Association to thank the Department of Education for their continued support of our organisation and funding of \$26,307.40

State Council uses these funds for a variety of expenses including enabling councilors to attend State and Federal Conferences and face-to-face meetings with interstate counterparts in order to stay abreast of issues relating to education of isolated students. During 2019 with the funding support from the NTG we were able to have two delegations in Darwin where council met with Ministers, education department staff, key stakeholders and relevant industries on current ICPA matters and to have a representative at other relevant meetings and conferences as they arose.

During 2019 ICPA NT were able to offer a new grant thanks to the generous donation from ITS Contracting Remote Concrete NT along with the four annual grants to assist rural and remote students with their endeavors. I would like to thank Helen Harding for her diligent, outstanding work organizing these grants yet again.

Brooke Weir was the first recipient of the new Remote Concrete Access Grant, receiving \$500.

Zara Milton was awarded the Post-Secondary Bursary - she was selected by the ICPA NT Patron. This \$2000 bursary is to assist with the costs of furthering the recipient's education and personal development.

The SIBA Ships -Wellard Rural Exports Bridging the Gap grant of \$1500 was awarded twice in 2019. These grants are to be used to assist with the costs associated for a child to attend an educational activity or the purchase of materials relevant to their current studies. Round One was awarded to Brian Stockwell and Sasha Bowman received the second round grant.

**Continued...**

# 2020 State Conference Reports Continued

It is with thanks to Zoetis Australia we were able to award Brian Stockwell the ICPA NT Zoetis Australia "Pastoral Industry" Student Grant. The Grant of \$1500 is awarded to a student in March of each year to assist with costs associated with studying accredited courses leading to careers in or associated with the Pastoral Industry.

We saw the hand over of editor for Down The Track from Ruth Woerle to Annika Bell. Three issues of the magazine were produced in 2019. The magazine is posted to ICPA members, remote schools, politicians, Department of Education personnel and interested organisations.

ICPA NT received the following generous donations during 2020:

- The Australian Hotels Association (NT Branch) very generously donated \$6,936 to ICPA
- Katherine Branch kindly donated \$10,000

Telstra supported our 2019 conference donating \$1,500

Thank you very much to all these organisations/businesses!!

Jane O'Brien, the Federal Membership Officer is to be commended and thanked for the amazing work she does processing the memberships for all ICPA members. It is mind boggling how much time she devotes to this enormous task.

State Council has an operating/cheque account used to manage day to day transactions predominantly by Internet Banking. The balance of this account on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March was \$45,647.97 and the Business Notice Term Deposit account currently has \$16,530.76.

The SIBA Wellard funds are kept separately from the operating account, we were financial enough to not need to draw from this account during 2019 which currently has a balance of \$6,471.74.

During 2019 the NT ICPA Treasurer also separately managed the Lone's online savings account which on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2020 had a balance of \$1,547.00. This account was only used for membership fees.

The NT ICPA cheque account, term deposit, SIBA account, Lones account and PayPal account are all included in the annual audit prepared by Marlow, Canete and Associates which is available for all members to view.

This is my last report as Treasurer as I am stepping down from the position at this AGM. I have enjoyed my time as Treasurer and wish the incoming Treasurer all the best.

Sarah Measey

## MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

*Corona – from the Latin root meaning crown or ring of light. The Latin origin of virus refers to a venom; put together a potent adversary.*

*To isolate  
1: to separate from others, to cause to be alone.  
2: to place into quarantine – from the Latin root, insular, island.*

Most of us who live in the geographically isolated regions of this country can relate to the notion of being physically separated from family, friends, team sports, entertainment, face to face teaching, and we're pretty darned good at it; however, for most of us remote living was/is a choice. In the present global environment, this is not the case for the greatest number;

**for most of the world's population, enforced quarantine in the confines of four walls, with added financial challenges, isolation has a whole different meaning.**

I have a sister who has lived in the heart of New York in excess of fifty years, now retired from being part of a busy cardiac surgical team, who is "holed up" in an apartment two minutes from Central Park. Most of her social contacts live in similar circumstances. They would normally meet for meals in the ground floor restaurants where they would debrief on the day's events – no longer an option for the foreseeable future. So near yet so far – a situation I would find difficult.

**So, what does isolation mean to you?**

I began to reminisce about the relativity of isolation and how it impacted on our situation sixty years ago when we first chose to make "somewhere" "in the great outdoors our focus for the future.

From a sheltered upbringing in rural Melbourne, but with an inbred love of the bush and adventures, transition from a the city to the open plains of Arnhem Land and later , two thousand square miles of virgin cattle country in the Victoria River District, was physically demanding and very different from a safe, structured home where family came and went at will, Sunday church and regular visits to the theatre, celebrity concerts together with an ordered classroom, the move was psychologically liberating.

At the end of 1963 we moved from Darwin to the open plains of Mitchell and Flinders grass of our newly acquired station, six hundred and twenty kilometres to the south, south west of

Darwin. The closest neighbours, fifty kms away, a fortnightly mail service collected fifty kms to the south of us. I had a crash course in the meaning of isolation.

**A year living under a tarpaulin by a waterhole that dried up by July/ August, no running water, no power, no contact with the outside world, two toddlers and a five-month-old baby, the realities kicked in.**

Days were busy with normal domestics, building fences, yards, mustering, daily culling of King Brown snakes etc.etc. Night time brought silence broken only by the cry of a curlew or the howling of a dingo, but it also brought a canopy of endless galaxies, tranquillity, serenity and blissful togetherness.

The access of an HF radio gave us contact with the outside world and built up a network of friendship spanning thousands of square kilometres. Visitors were few and far between and consisted mainly of government "inspectors". A biannual trip to town for supplies, staying in a motel where, at midnight, we watched obscure soccer matches from overseas because TV was a novelty!

**It was to be six years before we had a proper roof over our heads; unlimited running water, a standard shower, a flushing toilet and graduation from cooking over an open fire and in-ground oven to a large one fire stove sitting , in all its glory, out in the middle of the flat.**

Time added a proper home where my main focus changed from development of the property to school. School of the Air (KSA) was a daily contact with people from that other world that existed outside our boundary. The children did not experience isolation because this was their normal; not having a radio due to not having a "suitable place for the school radio to be housed", posed no problem, but there was great excitement when we managed to visit neighbours and my lot would join in "on air" for the day.

A visit to home by Miss Jolly from KSA resulted in a report that she was horrified by the fact we had no formal classroom. In the beginning, I was still very much part of a developing station, school, was done on the run.

We had days dedicated entirely to school , others when the boys learnt tables multiplying the number of wires by droppers or posts; addition , tallying cattle

through the yards, counting the ducks on the waterhole, hanging nappies on the line, stones on the ground – you name it, we made use of it. Lying on the lawn at night counting stars, satellites and competing to tell the scariest story which were later written into journals.

The schoolroom never did materialize as such. The breezeway became that place where the children were expected to front up, and after being provided with a school radio, attend their on-air lesson for the day. The secondary kids did not have that ability, but their teachers at the Secondary Correspondence School were incredible and provided some of the best material I have seen to this day.

### **The proof is in the eating of the pudding when you reflect on the success of so many isolated students who have gone on to tertiary study, trades and positions of responsibility.**

Communication improved from daily schedules with Wyndham Aerial Medical centre, to radio telephone and later, to Digital Radio Concentrator System (DRCS) that allowed us a two-way conversation. It took many of us years to overcome saying “over” in between sentences. The highlight of eighteen years improvising and accepting a life away from the acceleration and speed of a developing technological world, electricity lit our lives. Our first generator, electric jug, lights, electric washing machine (my pride and joy!), refrigeration that did not rely on kerosene, a school radio connected to power instead of a twelve-volt battery.

As a mother, snake bite and (of all things), appendicitis were the only problems lying in the nether-most regions of my brain. We had our fair share of accidents and dramas, most of which we dealt with ourselves, some that required evacuations to Katherine and Darwin hospitals; mostly, “necessity was the mother of invention” and we dealt with whatever eventuated.

Pregnancies? – usually two visits to a doctor in Katherine, no ultra sounds; left in town two weeks before due date and picked up “whenever I can get back to town”, then home with swaddled babies sleeping peacefully in a washing basket and smothered in love and kisses from siblings. Mother was cherished and would be thoroughly indulged for the first twenty-four hours!

Wet Season- two fast-flowing creeks between us and the main road, twenty-four kilometres away, would dictate access to and from town, or indeed access to mail deliveries fifty KS away, sometimes until mid

-April. I confess to welcoming those times except when nature overdid things and we had to concoct, contrive, improvise and tolerate. One incident, following very localised flooding when it took three weeks for friends to realise, we had not been in contact. I have only a hazy memory of a radio being out of action, for whatever reason. Our diet became wild duck and yams, collected by the children and their father each day. Puftaloons made from weevilly flour provided carbs and protein, but I will never eat duck again!! Eventually my closest friends in town organised an airdrop that resulted in a feast of sardines (because every tin that hit the deck, split) and flaked potatoes, bags of which followed the sardines around the flat. However, never have those items tasted better.

Some time during the following years the then principal of KSA, organised for a Japanese Film crew to visit Birrimba. They wanted to film a typical family living in remote Australia – we were contacted at 7:30 on a school morning to ask if we would, at such short notice, be fine with this. Father was not too impressed, but as the focus was education, he fell into line. Ultimately three vehicles (Nissan - if I remember correctly, they were part of the deal) pulled up outside our humble abode. One could speak fluent English, two limited, three with relatively no English. A generator appeared as we had no power. Tape recorders, light, electrical cords and all manner of indescribable “things” appeared. The kids were flabbergasted. The director must have had a second sense because he chose the extrovert of the family to take the first shoot.

**“Campbell, you are appearing on Japanese television to nine million children.”**

**“What?”**

**“Nine million children Campbell (On air and on film)**

**“Is that a big mob?”**

**“Many, many, many children Campbell.”**

**“Mum I’ve only got one sock!”**

I then remembered I had Harpiked the toilet, but I hadn’t completed the operation. I mentioned to my spouse, Mike,

“I forgot to wash the Harpic off the toilet!!!” – only to find we had been discussing the virtues of the ‘little house’ into a concealed tape recorder.

**Then Gatchupen appeared. A huge more than life sized puppet. All four kids raced out of the house and hid in the back of a vehicle, terrified.**

One by one Gatchupen cajoled and performed for them and the day developed into a wonderful day of multicultural communication through play and demonstration.

The Japanese crew learnt how we sourced our meat by riding the bull catcher to get a killer. They rode horses, walked the creek bed, saw snakes and tried to comprehend distances. Contact with one member of the crew continued for many years.

At times like this, “tolerate” becomes the operative word. Imposed isolation takes on a unique significance as distinct from one of choice. In the past the effect on the children was minimal, but there were times when I noticed feelings of frustration with short bursts of doubt as to why we endured endless challenges exacerbated by barriers that gave us no choice. Right now, despite the best place to be in the world today is probably remote Australia, those feelings have reared their doubtful heads again. Common-sense prevails, logic takes over and feelings of self-indulgence are replaced with thoughts of those who cannot enjoy the same privileges.

**So many lovely, funny, sentimental, angry, frustrating, incredibly sad, incredibly uplifting memories would fill volumes.**

The loss of friends, the gaining of others. The loneliness, sometimes “aloneness” of isolation can be overwhelming, but character strengthening like nothing else. For those of us in geographic isolation, it works. The blood, sweat and tears are worth it. The bond we develop with our children because of the privilege of close involvement in their lives, is without compare.

**May we not forget the human lessons of Covid-19. Stay safe, stay strong, stay passionate about loving one another.**

“This above all – to thine own self be true”  
Shakespeare





ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS ASSOCIATION  
NORTHERN TERRITORY STATE COUNCIL INCORPORATED



SIBA SHIPS - WELLARD RURAL EXPORTS  
'BRIDGING THE GAP' GRANTS PROGRAM

A donation from Siba Ships and the Wellard Rural Export group has allowed NT ICPA to offer the 'Bridging the Gap' Grants program.

**WHAT ARE THEY?**

These grants shall be awarded in February and August each year to assist in the costs associated for a child to attend an educationally based activity, purchase materials, which are relevant to their current studies or chosen career path or undertake personal development activities.

They are intended to cover course costs, books, equipment, travel and study aids. This is also extended to include activities that relate to student's study course or personal development: leadership skills, information gathering, networking with peers, and course extension activities.

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

1. The applicant's family must be geographically isolated and have been a Branch or Lone Member within the NT for at least two years.
2. The applicant must be aged between 15 to 22 years at the 1<sup>st</sup> January in the year of application.
3. Applicants do not have to be enrolled in fulltime study.

**CONDITIONS OF APPLICATIONS**

As part of the claim the applicant must provide a 500 word (approx) application which would include:

- How are you or your family isolated
- Details of family membership with the ICPA in the NT
- Details of costs and how the activity or materials that you are applying for will benefit you and what is its relevance to the course you are studying; or your career pathway; or personal development.

Payment will be made in the form of a cheque payable to the successful recipient or guardian, once the application has been deemed successful or alternatively, when a receipt or invoice has been presented to the NT ICPA Treasurer, pertaining to the activity or materials from the educational body.

Retrospective applications can be made for an activity or cost associated that has occurred within the previous semester.

The successful applicants will be required to provide a brief written report outlining the content and achievements obtained, for inclusion in the following NT ICPA 'Down the Track' Newsletter. (photographs encouraged)

A successful applicant may not apply for consecutive bursaries.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

All applications will be strictly confidential. The names of the applicants will only be known to the current State Council Assistant Secretary, who will not be eligible to sit on the selection panel.

If in the opinion of the selection panel no suitable application is received, grants will not be awarded and the budgeted amount rolled over into the next semester. Amounts awarded each semester will be decided by the panel, ensuring that any single payment is not under \$750 and with the annual amount available to the grants being reviewed and allocated after each AGM.

The decision of the selection panel will be final. Parents of applicants shall not be eligible to sit on the panel.

**CLOSING DATES**

January 31<sup>st</sup> July 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

The application must be received by the Returning Officer by C.O.B. on the closing dates. Please forward the application along with your current address, email and contact phone number to:

NT ICPA Secretary:  
Helen Harding  
Gorrie Station  
RSD MS 1953  
Katherine NT 0852  
T: 8975 9965  
E: [hardingnt@bigpond.com](mailto:hardingnt@bigpond.com)

**Note: As this mailing address is in a remote location, please allow plenty of time for delivery - email is preferred.**

*It is advisable that you ring to ensure that the application has been received.  
If sending by email, please ensure you have a 'read receipt' on your outgoing message and that your email is confirmed as received.*



If you are educating your children online due to the COVID-19 crisis you may benefit from the recent announcements from NBN regarding satellite internet.

- NBN has increased the data limits to RSPS by up to 45GB to standard NBN Sky Muster plans. This will apply automatically to current Sky Muster plans (\*dependent on RSP).
- Sky Muster plans now include an expansion of unmetered content. All traffic on SM+ plans unmetered except for video streaming and VPN content.

ICPA Australia encourages you to review your current plan and contact your provider to make changes.

Turn to page 24 and 25 for tips on how to manage your data usage with your Sky Muster plans

# SKY MUSTER CHANGES AND UPDATES DUE TO COVID-19

**Information on internet plans is changing really quickly at the moment**

Whilst ICPA NT have a *Communications and Technology Portfolio Leader – Sarah Cook* (shared with *Kerrie Scott*), the best place for information is the Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia website, or follow them on Facebook (BIRRR).

Most internet Retail Service Providers have increased data allowances with C-19, especially while families are educating their children from home. Consequently, Education Ports are no longer the value for

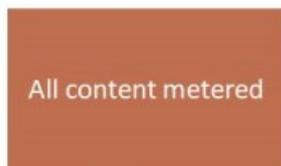
money they once were, especially when compared to Sky Muster Plus plans.

Education Ports require an ID number from a Distance Education Institution. Returning boarding school kids, UNI/TAFE students etc need to be reclassified and the application process is very slow:

Customer > RSP > NBN > State Department > NBN > RSP > Installer > Customer

You can compare plans on the BIRRR website.

## THE TWO SKY MUSTER PRODUCTS AVAILABLE



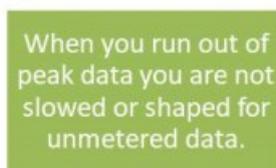
Sky Muster Standard data increase during the C-19 pandemic

Sky Muster Standard plans have an extra 45g/month for the expected increase of data usage due to the C-19 pandemic.

It is up to individual Retail Service Providers as to how they allocate this to customers.

Members are encouraged to check with their providers.

\*nbn will continue to work with industry to monitor demand and any further potential required measures\*



Sky Muster Plus plans explained:

nbn Sky Muster Plus enhancements have been available since April 1, 2020

- Plus plans will include an expansion of unmetered content. All traffic on nbn Sky Muster Plus plans will be unmetered, except for video streaming and traffic via a VPN, both of which will continue to be metered.
- In addition to this expansion of unmetered activities, nbn is also introducing several other enhancements to nbn Sky Muster Plus plans, including:
  1. A new 25GB+ entry plan offering 25GB of peak data and 25GB of off-peak data for video streaming and VPN traffic, which will improve accessibility for lighter users.
  2. Functionality to give RSPs greater flexibility to customise the data allowances on their retail plans in increments of 5GB (starting from 25GB of peak data and 25GB of off-peak data, up to 150GB of off-peak data).
  3. A new 'top-up' feature, which will provide RSPs with the option of offering of 'top-up' data, should their customers use their monthly metered data allowance (available in coming months).

**FOR HINTS AND TIPS ON HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR DATA PACKAGE, TURN TO PAGES 24 AND 25**

## Conference Guest Speaker - DYSLEXIA AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

**Sheri Fogarty**

PAST ASSOA STUDENT AND MOTHER

Sheri is like many of you, she lives miles from anywhere, her family manages millions of acres, thousands of cattle, hundreds of responsibilities and tens of people.

Sheri also successfully educated four children under the extremely challenging circumstances of trying to understand dyslexia and how best to tackle it in the home schoolroom.

Her story is why ICPA exists; because together we share stories to ease the burden, and come up with a plan to improve our circumstances.

While Sheri's children finished School of The Air many years ago, we heard in the motion discussion during the conference that despite improvements in technology and delivery, we still have some way to go when it comes to Equity of Access to Education for Rural and Remote Children.



Katherine ICPA branch and Katherine School of the Air made the combined decision to cancel their annual combined mini-school and sports camp which was to be held Week 10 of Term 1 due to COVID-19. A hard decision to make at the time, but in hindsight was the right decision.

The Student Leaders and staff of KSA organised a fun week over IDL – pet parades, presentations of work done in Project Lay of the Land, a movie night, skype birthday parties and a visit from Tom Curtain.

It shows that even in tough times, rural and remote students can manage to continue “isolation living” – as its what distance education does best!



The Murphy Family watching Tom Curtain over Skype



### Val Utley Memorial Award Winner

“I want to say thank you for letting me be able to upgrade my chicken pen. This will keep the predators out, so my little chicks will be safe. I hope I can start breeding some more turkeys and chickens this year. Thanks to Dad too.”  
- Zahli Scott



G'day my name is Oliver, I'm doing Distance Education with Mum. We do spelling, reading and writing and heaps of other stuff. It's a truck load of fun. I love it! We started Distance Education, so as a family we could travel up North to work on a cattle station.

We are staying on Aileron Station. I have been helping the cattle station. I walked cattle to Ten Mile yards. We drafted cattle for pink eye. We moved cattle in a truck and Hayes and I checked some bores. My Dad has a job on this cattle station. He has been working very hard for me and my Mum and the Station. I love doing this... before I came to this station I lived on a dairy farm.

A cattle station uses rainfall and bores whereas a dairy farm uses irrigation for its water source. A farm is so reliable that it can have up to 400 cows in each paddock. A cattle station can have the same amount in a paddock but the paddock is much bigger than a farm paddock. On a dairy farm the production is milk which is made at the dairy farm. A cattle station production is beef which is taken on a truck and made at the abattoir.

Since I have been on this station I have noticed a different social life between a dairy farm and a station, because at the station you eat together and live on the station and at a dairy farm you mostly live off the farm and eat by yourself. I prefer to eat together, as we can tell stories together.

That's my opinion. I love doing what I'm doing. I think you should give it a go. I'm having fun, so you can too.

By Oliver Christopher Seamer

# BEST WISHES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR GRATITUDE

NT State Council extends their best wishes to three of our own who stepped down at our 2020 AGM. Jan Heaslip OAM is one of our very treasured founding members, who has been our Patron since 2012. Tiani Cook held the position of State President for three years and during her many years involved in ICPA in the Territory, Sally Sullivan has held almost every executive position, including that of State President.

It's difficult to find the appropriate words to both express our appreciation, and to acknowledge the success of Jan, Tiani and Sally in their commitment to ICPA in the Territory. Families across our regions, and indeed across rural and remote Australia, have all benefited from the commitment of these three outstanding women and State Council invite all members - past present and future - to acknowledge Jan, Tiani and Sally in their legacy to our very special organisation.

Thank  
You



## BOARDING SCHOOL AND HOME AGAIN

BY HAYES COOK

I have been attending boarding school now for about 4 years, and something that is always in my head, and I would take a pretty good guess to say this question swims around in a lot of boarding kids minds, "when is home time, how much longer till I can throw all my stuff in my bag, get on a plane and head home?" Well this all happened about 2 weeks earlier than it normally does as Term 1 of 2020 was cut short for many students because of the COVID-19 crisis.

It's not because my school shut down early or anything, but my parents had to make a quick decision. I miss two weeks of school or I stay an extra two weeks and may not get home for at least a month, because of airlines cancelling flights. The final decision was to bring me home two weeks early, which I was pretty happy with at the time until I realised I might not see all of my mates for at least 2 ½ months, which was not something I was planning on.

I have been home now roughly 5 weeks, with most of it spent working on the property helping dad out mainly with cattle work and new infrastructure projects. I didn't give much thought to the whole going back to school thing until I had been home for about a month

and I asked mum "so what's the go with school these days?" not knowing that the answer I was expecting was nowhere to be found.

The other day my mum told me "well, next week we have to get the computer set up for you to do online learning. That will bring back some old memories of the School of the Air days, wont it?" Hearing this, my mind was flooded with emotions of how to actually take it all in. At first, I was sad that I wouldn't see my mates for 5 weeks longer than I expected, and our daily yarns about how crap boarding school was would have to wait, and for some reason I didn't feel very excited about having round 2 of home schooling with mum again.

Over the last few years of me attending boarding school, I have grown into the life and its grown on me. If you had of asked me 3 years ago whether I was excited about going back to boarding school, I would have looked at you sideways and walked away. But now, this being my 4<sup>th</sup> year, I have grown to love it for what it is, and one thing I have come to learn is you can make boarding school life as good or bad as you want. I think a lot of my mates would agree with me saying that, even though most of them would never say it out loud to their parents.

I will let you know how home schooling goes over the next 5 weeks.

Till next time,  
Regards Hayes.



ABOVE: Jamie Hayes, John Fearby and Hayes Cook at boarding school. BELOW: Hayes at home working with his father



## ICT GRANT WINNERS

### THE WORTLEY FAMILY OF RUBY PLAINS STATION

Rope and Wes are boarders at St Phillips College in Alice Springs and Pepper is in Year 8 at Katherine School of the Air

We were lucky enough to receive the first ICT Grant vouchers from Katherine Branch of the ICPA and Pepper took great delight in spending them at Katherine NT Tech on behalf of us and herself. We chose to put them together and buy a laptop computer and the programs and accessories for it. We thought this would be the best use of the vouchers for our family.

We all use computers every day in our school work and they are now a necessity in school. Rope and Wes use them at boarding school to write up our notes, prepare Assessment tasks, research on the internet, and keep in contact with our teachers and other students. Pepper also uses technology to do her IDL lessons from Katherine School of the Air as well as research,



Pepper, Rope and Wes Wortley of Ruby Plains Station

using programs for media studies and assessments, speak with her teachers using Skype and email and be in contact with other students. We could not do school without technology. At the moment we are using technology to do our school work at home while the current Corona virus pandemic is occurring.

Technology also teaches us patience and perseverance as it takes time to learn new things like how to use the different programs and how to keep on going finding solutions when things don't work the first time. Technology also teaches us to be independent and confident learners especially when your Home Tutor is not very tech savvy and you can teach her how to use the technology.

Having a laptop means we can take it with us and do our schoolwork where ever we are and keep in touch with our teachers.

The laptop came in very handy on a recent trip to Queensland as Pepper could keep on with her schoolwork and when school was finished we could all watch some movies. It also gave us something to do at the airport.

We would like to thank the Katherine Branch of the ICPA for giving us the Grant and assisting us with our learning in the future.

### PETER JOHNSTON OF VANDERLIN ISLAND

A huge thankyou to Katherine NT Tech [Emerge IT] for the \$500 voucher which helped buy my new laptop for Year 7 at High School.

I would also like to thank ICPA for their help with this grant offer. My first laptop was very slow and annoying to use, I had that laptop for 7 years. It's nice to have a brand new HP laptop, it is so much faster and also looks pretty good. I am sure with this new technology it will serve me well for many years to come.

Regards Peter Johnston

## 'ZOETIS AUSTRALIA' PASTORAL INDUSTRY STUDENT GRANT 2020

### SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT - LORI FOGARTY



Lori Fogarty

My name is Lori Fogarty, I am 19 years old and I am in my third year of studying Agricultural Science at the University of Adelaide. I grew up on my family's cattle station, Lucy Creek, which is located 430km North-East of Alice Springs. Our family have been members of Isolated Children's' Parents Association since 2001. My mother, Jo Fogarty has been a committee member of the Alice Springs Branch, helped out at numerous fundraising events and attended NT State Conferences.

All of my Prep schooling was through Alice Springs School of the Air, and from year seven I attended Westminster School in Adelaide, where I graduated in 2017 with good grades and an above average ATAR. After graduating I applied through Adelaide University hoping to get into Agricultural Science. Due to my ATAR being above the acceptance score I was approved to commence my study in 2018.

I chose the University of Adelaide for my degree as it is one of the most highly recognised Agricultural degrees in Australia, and covers a wide range of subjects, such as Agribusiness, Horticulture, Agronomy and Livestock breeding. The opportunities that this degree will give me will be endless, as there are so many employers looking for agriculture graduates. Whilst I really like the course I am studying, I prefer livestock and the science aspect that is involved in breeding and genetics, this is due to my background working with cattle. Currently I am specialising in Animal Reproduction and Livestock Breeding and Genetics, which I hope to learn some important skills of how to breed superior cattle, and be able to use them in a practical sense on the cattle station.

Agriculture annually makes up 12% of Australia's GDP yearly, earning over \$155 Billion every year. This can increase with the advancement and diversity of technologies, to improve both profit in the horticulture and cropping industry, and in the livestock industry. Once my degree is completed, I hope to pursue a career in the Education sector to teach young men and women on the importance of their impact on the Agricultural industry. The average age of farmers in 2017 was 54 years old, with this age increasing as more young people move to populated areas to pursue different careers. The teaching of Agriculture in schools is one I am very passionate about. The current global trend tends to see more people being blindsided by social media and not actually learning about the true facts themselves, this is becoming very detrimental to our Primary Industries in Australia.

I would also like to pursue a degree in Agribusiness, to learn more about the global food market and how that affects Australian Agriculture, as well as educating myself about where money should be prioritised when running a business. If I were lucky enough to receive the grant, I would put the money towards a uni trip which is planned to undergo in October to Indonesia, but due to the current COVID-19 virus, the trip may be replaced with a domestic tour looking at different livestock enterprises in the Northern Territory. If this trip is cancelled, I will use the grant money to undergo placement to gain more skills in the livestock industry.

## 'REMOTE CONCRETE' ACCESS GRANT

### SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT - BROOKE WEIR

The Remote Concrete access grant would benefit me as it is my dream to further my education and become a nurse.

I am currently applying for universities in Brisbane to move somewhere different from the Northern Territory, and South Australia where I went to boarding school, so I can gain experience in other parts of Australia. I have recently been accepted into the Women's college at the University of Queensland for my accommodation, as it is a

supportive environment where I will be able to meet people in a new city and make the most out of my university experience. Therefore, the "Remote Concrete" Access Grant would greatly help my move over, and contribute to the costs of buying textbooks and medical equipment that nurses are required to have.

Not all bush kids are lucky enough to get the opportunity to go to university or complete the education that they wish for, so I and many others are grateful for help that ICPA gives, and Remote Concrete for this opportunity and their support.

In the future the Remote Concrete grant will benefit me as it will contribute to me having a degree that will take me anywhere in the world. I will try to give back the community by helping people in need, whether it be in big hospitals or in small rural clinics.



Brooke Weir—the first ever recipient of the 'Remote Concrete' Access Grant

# SIBA SHIPS - WELLARD RURAL EXPORTS 'BRIDGING THE GAP' GRANT 2020

## FIRST ROUND SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT - HANNAH JOHNSON



My name is Hannah Johnson and currently a year 11 boarder at The Rockhampton Grammar School. I started boarding in year 10 as my Dad managed a cattle station 250 kilometres south-west of Katherine. Before boarding, I attended Katherine School of the Air where I received many academic awards as well as an NT Board of Studies excellence award.

Towards the end of last year, my Dad moved to Julia Creek where he now works as a Livestock Agent for Elders. He is hoping to return back to the NT in the near future, as this is our home. As Julia Creek is also remote and there are no secondary schools available, my Mum and sisters moved to the Darwin rural area, so they can attend Taminmin High School and pursue their endeavours. I have also been approved for Assistance for Isolated Children. As such, we have continued our membership with the Katherine Branch ICPA, where my Mum is now in her second year of being a committee member. We as a family became members of the Katherine ICPA branch at the end of 2017.

The opportunities that Rockhampton Grammar has afforded me, have allowed me to broaden my career options and pathways. I have always had an interest in the science behind agriculture and have found this area of study to be very interesting. I studied agricultural science in my previous year, where I maintained an A grade, and will continue to do so through my final years at Rockhampton Grammar.

Once I complete year 12, I am aiming to gain entry into a Bachelor of Agriculture, majoring in either agronomy or animal production. I have also elected to complete a Certificate III in Agriculture during year 11 and 12, which has an additional cost of approximately \$2400. I have also committed to The Rockhampton Grammar School cattle club to improve my knowledge of livestock handling, judging and husbandry. By completing a Certificate III in Agriculture through RGS, I will also receive a letter of recommendation for entry into the University of Central Queensland Bachelor of Agriculture.

I also plan on completing a 'gap' year where I am aiming to return to a station in the NT where I hope to establish a foundation for my career. Once I reach the age of 18, I would also like to pursue roles within organisations such as The Future NT Cattlemen's Association program or the YLEN (Young Live Exporters Network). Upon completion of my degree I hope to be able to return to the NT in a professional role and play an integral role in the growth of the agricultural sector.

Should I be successful in receiving the grant, I would like to use the funds to help with the cost of my Certificate III in Agriculture. I thank you for the opportunity to apply for this grant and thank you for the ongoing support given to isolated children.



Hannah Johnson participating in training at Rockhampton Grammar School in Queensland.



## ICPA NT POST-SECONDARY BURSARY 2019

### SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT - ZARA MILTON



My name is Zara Milton and I am currently in my second year of the Bachelor of Nursing at Flinders University.

My family moved from Adelaide to an Aboriginal community known as Ernabella located on the APY Lands, when I was around 6 years old. Ever since the age of 6 my family has lived on the APY Lands, only moving in 2011 thirty minutes south to Umuwa which is another Aboriginal community – my dad still currently lives in Umuwa.

My high school years were spent in Alice Springs where myself and my younger sister attended a boarding school called St Philips

where I graduated in 2018.

Ever since moving to Adelaide in 2019 I've realised how unique my childhood has been from living and growing up in a rural setting; and the more I live in Adelaide for my studies, the more I begin to miss my red bush home.

I chose to study a Bachelor of Nursing, partly because I love medical shows, but as I'm progressing in my studies, I've realised it's because I love caring for people; bringing them hope when hope seems thousands of kilometres away. Before I had my first placement, I wasn't sure on where I wanted to settle as a Nurse.

My 2019 placement was in Alice Spring, it helped me understand why I wanted to go into nursing; to better the healthcare that people living in rural and remote areas are receiving.

The ICPA grant went towards my nursing uniforms for when I'm partaking in placements; towards textbooks that are required for me to complete my course work; The Fundamentals of Anatomy & Physiology, Microbiology, and Critical Thinking For Person-Centred Care to name a few (the rest are a little bit of a tongue twist). And lastly, some of the money went towards my accommodation whilst living at university

Thinking back to 2019 I remember feeling excited for what my future studies may bring out in my goal to improve rural and remote nursing. I also remember feeling an immense gratitude towards the NT ICPA members for granting me the ICPA Post-Secondary Bursary that helped me progress through my first year studies.

Thank you for your help and support in 2019, and for the help the NT ICPA will continue to provide to other young people like myself.

## ICPA NT POST-SECONDARY BURSARY 2020

### SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT - PHILIP SULLIVAN



It was announced during the ICPA NT State Conference held in March, that Philip Sullivan has been selected as the successful applicant of the ICPA NT Post-Secondary Bursary for 2020.

**CONGRATULATIONS PHILIP!**

# 'WERE THE GOOD OL' DAYS REALLY SO GOOD?'

*One of the greatest challenges for families living in isolated outback Australia is the need to educate their children.*

Correspondence School and School of the Air lessons fortunately make primary school study possible, which is all thanks to the vision and hard work of pioneers such as John Flynn, Alf Traeger and Adelaide Miethke OBE.

In the 1960s and 70s I did primary school lessons on our station, Bond Springs. I studied the '3 R's' through Correspondence School (Adelaide) and School of the Air (Alice Springs) and loved every minute of it.

But there was no opportunity to learn social skills, or to play sport, or learn art, or music.

**When I shouted through the static of our two-way radio every morning, 'Sierra Victor Uniform to VJD, good morning Mrs Hodder, over,' I could never have dreamt of the possibilities available in 2020.**

Today, things have improved beyond anything I could have imagined.

With state-of-the-art facilities, School of the Air Australia wide now enables bush kids to actually see their classmates and their teachers on a screen. The curriculum has broadened



*Bond Springs school room*

enormously as a result, with art, dance, music and even sport included in lessons.

This is in large part thanks to the tireless work of ICPA and dedicated teachers. The gap between educating bush children and city children is lessened every day.

I still think that's a miracle!

But challenges remain.

**Parents and children are still isolated and nothing can really prepare an isolated bush child for the shock of sitting in a city classroom with other students and a live teacher for the very first time.**

Secondary education for bush children remains an even greater challenge. Teenagers do need to engage with the outside world to learn survival skills for life. Hence, I gather boarding school is still considered one of the best options for bush children once they reach their teens.

That was certainly the view in the 60s and 70s, when the NT government actually paid a subsidy to bush parents to send their children away. The government did this because it



*ASSOA greatly loved teacher Mrs Hodder, running a music class over the air—with help from others.*

couldn't offer a decent secondary education alternative here. As a result, children were usually around twelve or thirteen when they were dispatched to cities for their first year of secondary education - far, far away from home. They had to stay a whole five years if they were to matriculate, and become self-reliant to survive.

The emotional and mental cost of such a transition was enormous. How could it have been otherwise? Bush children, particularly back when I was growing up, knew only cattle, horses, stockmen, family, and the freedom of the bush. We rarely had experience being separated from our families, especially our mothers, and we knew almost nothing of city life. Boarding schools back in the 60s and 70s, especially for girls, were Victorian in style, and we students ended up being more isolated behind stone walls than we'd ever been in the outback. We saw our families only three times a year, communication was limited to weekly letters and telegrams in emergencies, and the homesickness, fear and sense of alienation that went with such restrictions were rampant and immeasurable.

Of course, it wasn't just the child, but also the family left behind, who grieved. Their loved one had been taken from their care and sent off into the wide world alone - for a good cause, it was agreed by one and all - but that didn't lessen the loss.

Fortunately, organisations like ICPA have fought tirelessly over the decades to bring these emotional and mental issues to the attention of boarding schools. ICPA has changed the way boarding schools engage with children from the bush - and that is much for the better. There is now support, a lot of it, and most importantly, parents have a voice.

Parents, friends and family can speak to their children through mobile phone calls and texts, see their faces through FaceTime or Skype, and share emails, photos and pretty much everything about home that the child might be missing, except for smells. Nothing can replicate the aromas of bull-dust in the cattle yards or the sweetness of a horse!

But those communication tools were not even a dream in the 60s and 70s. Moreover, the parents back then had No Voice.

When I went to my Methodist boarding school

in Adelaide, Mum lost all say in my life the day she handed me over to their custody. In fact, Mum lost all rights to us for the duration of the time we were inside that school.

The Headmistress, and her (mostly) unsympathetic mistresses, assumed *loco parentis* control of our lives, and nothing Mum could say or do or write or champion could affect or impact that. Even a personal letter by Mum to the Headmistress, pleading for help and intervention for me in my first year when I was struggling, was resolutely ignored. As were Mum's phone calls to the Headmistress.

But that was a very deliberate approach by the boarding schools of the time.

Boarding schools took the view that there should be no communication, or at the least very little, with family, as it was the quickest and most effective way of 'breaking the child into its new life.' It was the same approach taken by the military, a well-known strategy, and a very successful one. You take a gaggle of

**Mum didn't even receive the courtesy of a reply saying, 'no we can't help' or even better 'don't worry, your daughter is doing fine' (although I wasn't).**

**She received *nothing*.**

**Radio silence.**

individuals from the outside world, herd them together into one space, break them down through isolation, rules, and punishment, until they are just one group speaking with one voice, obedient and structured. The boarding school approach, eerily similar to the military, was to break the child's link with the life they had come from in order to fully adapt to a new one.



*Tanya doing a School of the Air lesson*

There were obviously pros and cons with that approach. I suspect it works better with volunteers, adults, people who have some life understanding to manage it. For a naive, twelve-year-old child with no worldly knowledge, it was brutal and confusing.

Likewise, for the parents.

On the few occasions Mum came to Adelaide, Mum had to write or telegram in advance to seek an appointment to see me, which in turn had to be approved in a special book, and it



M'Lis and Tanya with guitars in a creekbed around the fire in the camp

was subject to my behaviour. If and when it was granted, it was on limited and very strict terms. We received about two or three precious hours for a visit outside the school, and about one hour of a visit inside, where we had to sit in a special waiting room next to the mistresses' study.



Tanya in her hat

As a result, Mum suffered enormous mental anguish for years, as it wasn't just me who went to boarding school, but I was followed by M'Lis, Brett and Ben.

**Mum's rage and fury at the injustice of it all - and powerlessness of parents over their own children - grew.**

One day she finally decided to do something about it.

She became one of the founding members of the NT ICPA and its first NT President. She started – and has never stopped - championing the rights of bush children and particularly for children at boarding school.

She also became the first Chairman of St Philip's College and pushed hard to grow the school so that bush parents would have a local option if they didn't want to send their children south, or east, or west. She worked tirelessly to ensure they had secondary education opportunities here equivalent to any school in the cities.

Mum was involved in designing the boarding school windows of St Philip's to make sure the panes overlooked the red ranges of Central Australia. She wanted boarders to gaze upon a landscape they knew and loved. She was desperate to ensure they weren't homesick; or if they were, they could be comforted. Because Mum knew one thing for sure. The grief and homesickness that children sent away to boarding school felt

included the wild, outback land itself, which had nourished and sustained them for all the early years of their life. A rapid transition to concrete, asphalt and stone walls was akin to being thrown in prison, with no stars, no sun, and no earth underfoot. She was determined it would be different for children at St Philip's.

For so many reasons, I have much for which to thank Mum.

She and Dad slaved and sacrificed everything to send me away so I could have a good education. She suffered herself, but never once said, 'You have to come home.' Instead she turned her energies into creating better opportunities for children who came after us.

And I *did* receive a brilliant education. The school might have been entirely absent kindness and community care, but it excelled in education.

So I got to use my passion for reading and writing to go on to university and study law. I was the first NT School of the Air student to undertake such a strange venture. I was then the first to graduate in law. Receiving my Bachelor of Laws and Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice, and then admission to the bar in Adelaide and Darwin and Perth, and finally the High Court of Australia, was a privilege and an honour that would never have been open to me had I not gone away to boarding school.

Our outback society has also come a long way. The rights of children and parents in the bush have improved significantly. The balance has shifted. Bush children now have new opportunities during primary years which while not completely reducing the challenges of isolation, certainly go a long way towards overcoming them (even if it's a 'satellite down' these days, rather than wireless static, that stops a lesson in its tracks!) And bush children who have to go away to boarding school now have a wonderful option in Alice Springs – which is not so far, and is still in the outback – or if the children do go interstate, boarding schools are very different beasts today. There, parents do have a voice.



Tanya on her horse Lucy at Everard Park.

**I look in awe at the vibrant, invigorated ICPA of 2020, filled with young hopeful parents, all enthusiastic and committed to better education outcomes for their children.**

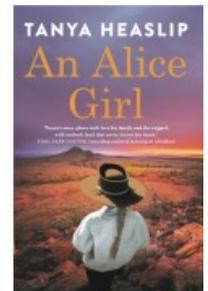
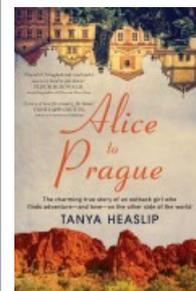


Tanya's father on Limerick and Tanya on Backtofront.

And I think, 'Don't ever stop. Your work is invaluable. You have no idea how much.'

**WRITER BIO**

Tanya Heaslip was raised on a cattle station in Central Australia during the 1960s and 70s and learnt about the outside world through the Correspondence School, School of the Air and storybooks. She spent many hours dreaming of the overseas lands depicted in those studies and stories. Tanya went away to boarding school as a twelve-year-old, which later led to her becoming a lawyer, but she never stopped dreaming. In between practising law, she travelled to many of those lands, and later wrote about both her bush life and travel experiences 'Alice to Prague' (AU 2019) and 'An Alice Girl' (AU 2020), Tanya now lives back in Alice Springs with her husband. She is the Regional Vice President of the NT Writers' Centre.



### MOTIONS UPDATE

Motions from the previous year/s continue as state council policy, unless the motion has been resolved, or a new motion in the current year (i.e 2020) changes our position from the previous year (i.e 2019).

Each year, before state conference, all Portfolio Leaders submit their final motion updates for that year. Following are motion updates for 2019 in Curriculum, Distance Education and Rural and Remote Schools. The full motion update 2019 report – for all portfolios – can be found on the ICPA NT website.

### PORTFOLIO | Curriculum PORTFOLIO LEADER | Rebecca Cadzow

This is an update on the Curriculum motion put forward at the 2019 State Conference held in Katherine:

***That ICPA NT reinforce to the Department of Education and other relevant Government Departments the importance of integrating sustainability into appropriate learning areas of the primary and secondary school curriculum.***

This motion by the Alice Springs branch was carried, and therefore formed my portfolio for the year.

In the first round of conversations with the Department of Education I was able to have certainty from the Department that they do value and will continue to integrate sustainability into appropriate learning areas of the curriculum. This has also been highlighted at the recent Landcare NT awards where a special School is awarded for their sustainable practices. I do believe that this motion needs to stay within the motions as with the closing of the Ag colleges in Queensland and the downsizing of the CDU operations we need to be proactive about teaching children sustainable practices in our ever changing world.

The motion this year also includes the words ‘food and fibre’. This inclusion is paramount as the world, and in particular Australia, comes to realise the importance of both food and fibre to our existence. I do believe that the circumstances we are finding ourselves in presently highlights just how important this motion really is.

On a Federal Level within this Portfolio, the Federal ICPA councillors are championing for a de-cluttering of the crowded curriculum. Watch the Federal ICPA Facebook page for their updates on this topic. Also released was the news that this year NAPLAN will be cancelled. This is a direct action from the corona virus, with so many students now doing school by distance education. It will be interesting to see if this changes NAPLAN for the future.

### PORTFOLIO | Distance Education PORTFOLIO LEADER | Amanda Murphy

There were five motions carried at the 2019 Conference for the Distance Education portfolio.

***That ICPA NT seek an assurance from the NT Government that they will continue to keep the Northern Territory Schools of the Air open. That ICPA NT lobby the Department of Education and other relevant Government Departments to ensure Schools of the Air remain in their respective regions, regardless of enrolment numbers.***

The Minister has expressly reassured ICPA that School of The Airs will remain open, and no consideration has been given to an alternate plan, under any circumstances.

***That ICPA NT supports ICPA (Aust) to continue to lobby the Federal Government to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role of the home tutor plays in educating students via distance education.***

ICPA NT took this motion to Federal Conference and the issue remains on the Federal ICPA agenda. ICPA Aust recently passed on advice they had received from their Federal Minister, that state should take this motion to their state Ministers, being that education is a state-based responsibility.

ICPA NT have a motion for 2020 state conference, to seek support from NT branches for us to do this.

***That ICPA NT monitors the effect of the ‘Aged Grade Census’ funding model the Department of Education applies to distance education to ensure all subjects are offered by the school despite enrolment numbers.***

The student needs-based funding model was introduced in 2015 to provide distribution of funds on a per student model. It is meant to take into account the diverse and complex needs of the Northern Territory, and uses individual student data from the Age/Grade Census to build a cost profile of students enrolled in each school.

ICPA note the three NTG distance education schools (Northern Territory School of Distance Education – NTSDE, Alice Springs School of the Air – ASSOA, Katherine School of the Air – KSA) receive an additional weighting for each student to recognise the higher cost of service delivery for distance education (not remoteness).

This motion requests this model to be monitored, and rightly so. We already know many of the complexities of delivering distance education is not recognised, let alone well understood nor properly accounted for.

ICPA can only advise stakeholders based on feedback and case studies, so we ask parents and members remain vigilant in sharing their experiences where combined classes and scarce resourcing for example, impacts on the home school room.

**NOTE: The student needs-based funding model does not recognise the work of the Home Tutor. The average salary for a Teaching Assistant in Australia is \$39.26 per hour.**

***That ICPA NT lobby the Department of Education and other relevant Government Departments to ensure Schools of the Air supply one computer or laptop per enrolled student.***

This motion received different levels of support from members, depending on which school was in question, so may be influenced by school budgets rather than Department budgets. However, ICPA advocated this motion directly to the CE of the DoE; we were told there simply wasn't available funding in 'the budget' for such a motion.

In an education environment where the main mode of delivery is via computer, ICPA are astounded to even receive such a motion. ICPA continue to advocate for one computer per student as a reasonable minimum standard requirement.

**PORTFOLIO |  
Rural and Remote Schools  
PORTFOLIO LEADER | Sarah Measey**

There were three motions carried at the 2019 Conference for the Rural and Remote Schools portfolio.

The first motion:

***That ICPA NT appeal to the Minister for Education to reduce the requisite requirements of rural and remote living teachers to maintain their teacher registration to prevent the loss of those teachers from the workforce.***

ICPA's concerns on this issue have been raised with the Department of Education since the changes were first introduced. To date the government has not been open to make any changes to the teacher registration process as it is in line with the other states throughout Australia. In my personal opinion unfortunately, I feel we will just have to accept the registration requirements but continue to monitor any impact the loss of teachers has on schools.

The second motion was:

***That ICPA NT lobby the Department of Education and other relevant Government Departments to ensure there is funding and relief teachers available to relieve teachers at***

***geographically isolated schools with only one qualified teacher in the NT.***

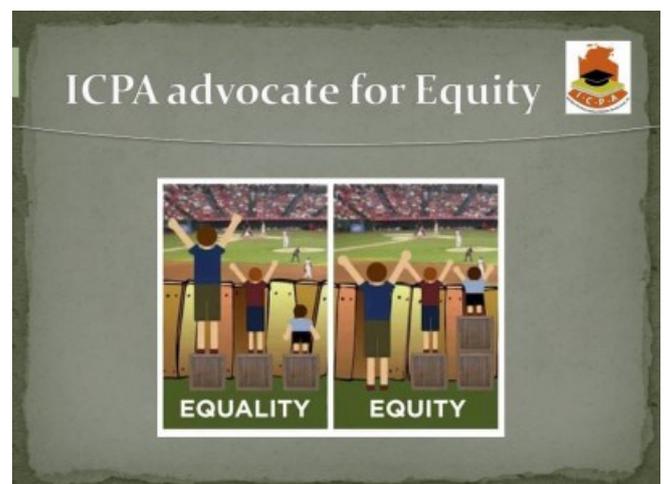
This motion was discussed at Delegation with the Department of Education who appeared genuinely surprised that a school has closed for two weeks due to not having a teacher as highlighted in the motions explanation provided by the Alice Springs Branch. They assured us that all schools should have money allocated within their budgets to ensure a relief teacher is employed to keep schools open when the permanent teacher is absent. Due to the time lapse between the motion being carried, the Delegation meeting and then the ICPA member who raised the concerns leaving the school and ICPA, I was unable to get any further information about the school's closure and therefore was unable to follow up for any more details. I encourage all families with children attending rural and remote schools to raise any concerns regarding school closures due to a lack of staff with their school council and the department of Education each time the issue arises and to contact ICPA.

The final motion was:

***That ICPA NT explore with the NT Department of Education and ICPA (Aust) mechanisms to reimburse costs incurred for education-related costs when a school is closed for 5 consecutive days or 20 days per term during the published school term dates.***

This motion was given to the Department of Education however was mainly covered in the discussions with the previous motion. Given our current health concerns throughout Australia I can not see the Government ever agreeing to reimburse families if a school is closed for any reason.

Recently ICPA NT was contacted with concerns about the lack of support to small school principals. This is a significant issue for many schools since the closure of Group Schools with the increasing workloads expected of teaching principals reaching unattainable levels. Another concern raised was about the absence of student support positions in rural areas. Both these concerns should be followed up on in the coming year.



# THE BORDING SCHOOL UNIFORM

## NOVEMBER, 1974

**'But Mum!' I said with tears in my eyes. 'If I wear this, I won't know who I am'.**

The image staring back at me from the mirror was definitely someone I didn't know.

It might as well have been a scarecrow.

Thin arms stuck out of an oversized stiff wool maroon tunic and blazer. Thin legs were stick-like below, in brown stockings and brown shoes. A white and maroon striped tie was pushed hard up against the top button of a white shirt, as if to choke her. Long, loose hair was now tightly entwined in maroon ribbons and pigtails. Her eyes were wide and scared through the speckled glass.

The strong, but scrawny, twelve-year-old bush body had disappeared.

The free-spirited and free-living bush child who lived in jeans, riding boots and checked shirts had been replaced by someone – *something* – unrecognisable.

And, to use an expression I'd learnt in a book, now looked 'quite hideous.'

No, no, no! You'll be *you*, of course,' Mum said. 'Just you in your *uniform*, darling.'

But she looked down at her hands and I saw a tear pooling on her cheek.

'I won't!' I crumpled, turning away from the mirror. 'I'll be someone different! Look at me – a stranger!' I yanked at the tie, hot tears now falling onto my cheeks.

'Why would you say that?' Mum's voice sounded strangled.

'Because I went down to the horse yards a while ago. Wanted to show everyone what I looked like in my new school uniform. And Mick saw me and said to M'Lis, 'Who's that?''

M'Lis was my soulmate sister. Fourteen months younger than me, M'Lis and I were like twins. The thought of leaving her was even more unbearable than practising 'dress-ups' in this new boarding school uniform. She was always there for me, always had my back. But this time Head Stockman Mick's question left her lost for words.

Finally, she shouted, 'It's Tanya of course!' but Mick simply shook his head and said, 'Strike me pink. Would never have recognised her. Never seen her in a dress before.'

I was lost for words too. If Mick couldn't recognise me, there was no hope. I'd done more musters with Mick than I'd eaten steak for breakfast, and that was saying something. He'd known me for years. Did I look *that* unrecognisable?

'Mick was just teasing!' said Mum, fussing now with the ribbons, but I wasn't convinced.

I'd spent my life surrounded by cattle and stockmen, with dogs and horses for friends, with family as my foundation, with the wild empty space of the outback in which to play. I'd sat with my sister and brother in a little schoolroom, following Correspondence School 'sets' under the supervision of our governess, and talking to our teachers at the Alice Springs School of the Air by radio for half an hour each day.

I knew almost nothing of the outside world except when I'd read in books.

And, I didn't wear dresses.

Going away to boarding school would transform me into someone else, in every way. It would transport into a new world where even I no longer recognised myself. It would change me for ever. I knew that because of what I could see staring horribly back at me from Mum's mirror.

And Mick's comment, joking or otherwise, had confirmed my fears.

My face burnt, my hands felt sweaty. 'Mum, I've got to take this stuff off!' I started ripping the tie from my neck. 'And anyway, this uniform is toooo big!'

But the boarding school introductory letter had instructed Mum to buy the uniform several sizes bigger than necessary. And Mum had dutifully complied.

'Girls grow quickly at this age,' the Headmistress had written in tones that sounded brisk and no-nonsense, 'and as you will not see your daughter for some months to come, it is best to provide clothes she can grow into. Shopping is only permitted in certain circumstances.'

Mum and I had both felt a bit sick when we read the bit: '*as you will not see your daughter for some months to come.*'

It would be many, many months in fact. Holidays were only three times a year - otherwise I would be under the control of that Headmistress, in a city one thousand miles south from home. Communication would come through weekly letters and telegrams in emergencies. I would be alone like I had never experienced and could not begin to imagine. I was going to another planet, where I would be transformed into a scarecrow alien.

Just as I thought I might actually be sick, voices rang through the still air outside.

'Hey Tanya!' It was M'Lis and our younger brother Brett. 'C'mon! We're going to get the horses in. Dad wants us to move that mob of cattle out of the yards into the Bullock Paddock. Got to do it before dark. Hurry up!'

I gazed at Mum, who looked grey. Neither of us knew how to manage this new world ahead of us. How would I live without her? Without my whole family? I was the eldest child, stepping out into the unknown, with no knowledge of what I was stepping into.

But the question was too big, the answer impossible to know, and so I did the only thing I knew how to do - escape, back out to the bush, and forget everything.

So I threw my new clothes into a pile on the bed, pulled back on jeans, checked shirt and boots, hugged Mum who was sitting quite still, and ran.

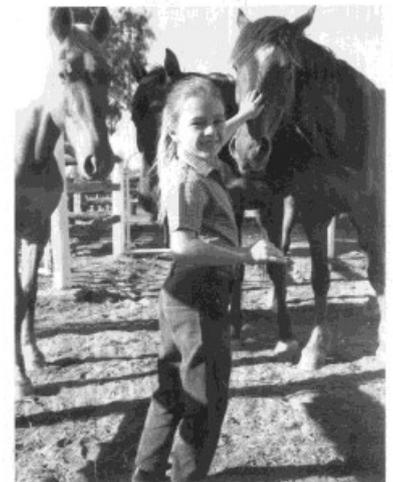
As fast as I could.

Out the door, into the dry, hot air, into the blue sky, into my outback world – the place where I knew who I was and where I belonged.

The pink cockatoos squawked in the gum trees along the creek. Eucalyptus hung heavy in the afternoon air. The cattle bellowed contentedly as we drove them towards the hills. I breathed in the sweetness of my mare, her pricked ears, her gentleness. We laughed as we rode, told jokes to each other – *this* was what I knew.

I breathed in deeply and felt happy again.

***Everything else –  
my future and how I'd  
survive it – could wait for  
another day.***



Tanya at the horse yards

Short story by Tanya Heaslip  
Author and ICPA NT Lone Member

# DOWN THE TRACK COLOURING COMPETITION

It's time to get colouring to be in the draw to win an FRRR \$50 Voucher.

Entry submissions close 27th of July and winners will be contacted via email.

There are 5 Categories to enter under:

1. Preschool / Transition
2. Year 1/2
3. Year 3/4
4. Year 5/6
5. Middle School and Up (bored parents?)

Winners will also be announced in the next edition of Down the Track as well as on the ICPA NT Facebook Page.

Email the Editor to get a copy of the image for additional students.

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE CATEGORY: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Scan or photograph your completed masterpieces and email to Down the Track Editor, Annika Bell at [dtc@icpa.com.au](mailto:dtc@icpa.com.au)





NT State Council, together with our members across the Territory, pay sincere tribute to ICPA NT Life Members, for their commitment to advocating for equity in education for rural and remote Northern Territory families, and in doing so, for their support to all rural and remote families across Australia, who educate their children in the bush.

This photo was taken at the 2019 NT State Conference in Katherine. Left-right are four ICPA NT Life Members able to attend the conference; Merriel Lawrie, Pat Elliott, Jan Heaslip and Del Harlan.

Thank you ladies, and all of our Life Members. We are eternally gratefully for the work you've done in our support.

## STATES AND FEDERAL PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY'S MEETING

MELBOURNE | FEBRUARY 2020

In February the President and Secretary of ICPA Australia, together with State Presidents and most Secretary's from Tas, WA, QLD, SA, NSW and NT met for a joint council meeting to discuss shared issues, including;

- ICPA website upgrade (all states and federal)
- Child Safety Policy
- State and Federal Conferences
- Memberships
- Succession planning, and
- Constitutional changes.

We also had a very important discussion about the Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA), which has been advocated by ICPA Australia (Federal Council) for many years.

The Federal Government has since advised Federal Council this is a state-based issue, being education is a state responsibility.






**ANZAC DAY**

They shall grow not old,  
As we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them,  
Nor the years condemn;  
At the going down of the sun  
And in the morning  
**WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**



**ANZAC DAY WITH A DIFFERENCE**

COVID-19 was not going to stop us from paying our respects to all the brave men and women who have, and continue to, protect our way of life and this incredible country we call home.

We are living with family (12 of us!) in rural Darwin and despite being a long way from our neighbours, we could still see the candles and hear the distant trumpet tunes from others as we each gathered at the end of our driveways to mark this important day.

I feel that we may in fact have been a part of a new, very personal movement for paying our respects to our ANZACs and armed forces that will continue in the years to come - history in the making in more than one way.



# MANAGING YOUR DATA ON SKY MUSTER

**Internet accessibility can be a constant struggle out bush. It's another one of those services where it seems the people who can most benefit from it have the least access to it.**

Australia has come a long way in the past several years with the Sky Muster service and more recently Sky Muster Plus. We are, however, still not on par with our city counterparts with regards to download limits and price for service.

Running out of data is easy to do even on the priciest Sky Muster plans. This impacts on things as important as kids' education, something that comes up at every Isolated Children's Parents' Association Federal conference. We continue to advocate for equity of access to internet in remote areas. There are interesting new internet solutions on the horizon.(1) But while we wait for things to change I thought it might be helpful to have some information on managing data usage.(2)

## Misconceptions

One common scapegoat for data usage is VOIP, or making phone calls using the internet. This has many other names including internet telephony, wifi calling, softphones, SIP phones, voice over wifi, etc. You can breathe a sigh of relief, because VOIP is not your enemy when it comes to data usage. Each minute of talk time will use between 0.5 and 1.3MB of data.(3) To put it simply, if you're on the phone for an hour a day you will use somewhere between 930MB and 2.5GB of data in a month. It is conceivable that if multiple people used the phone for several hours a day you could use a sizeable chunk of data, but my advice around VOIP is, if it is helpful to you or your business don't be scared of making the most of VOIP. There are lots of interesting low-cost solutions around, including setting up a work phone number that you can answer on your mobile phone or have it forwarded to another number automatically.

Similarly, simple web browsing, emails, Instagram and messaging apps (including skype and Facebook Messenger when used with audio only) are probably not your problem.

It is also important to add that just because you're accessing something over Wifi doesn't necessarily mean you are downloading it from the internet. It could be stored on another computer on your local network, or even in your wifi router itself or another Network Storage device in your home.

So what IS using all your data? There are only a handful of heavy data users floating around.

## Big Data Users

### Video content

The top one these days is probably anything to do with video. Video streaming (e.g. YouTube and Facebook videos), downloading movies, video calling (e.g. Facetime, Facebook Messenger video calls), and educational software that includes videos or live cameras will all chew up lots of data.

### Video Content: What you can do

It is worth checking what settings you have control of on websites and services that use a lot

of video streaming. To save your settings you may have to enable cookies or sign up for a free account. Some websites and video services will allow you to choose a default quality setting for video playback. This includes Facebook and Netflix. Change your default to a low quality setting like Standard Definition (SD) or 240p/360p (the lower the number the better). Then, if you're watching something and are getting annoyed by the quality you can easily bump the quality up just for that video, but when you start watching something else it will default to the lower setting again. Some services also allow you to disable automatic playback of videos (including YouTube and Facebook). Some tablet and phone app developers may offer a version of their app for older hardware. This is good because it usually limits data usage including video downloads. Facebook Lite is an example of a data-friendly app.

Unfortunately, not all websites allow you to choose a default video quality setting. In these cases you will have to remember to change the video quality setting each time you open a video. Some don't even allow you to change the quality manually at all! SBS OnDemand is in this category, which is poor form for a government-funded public broadcaster. If you have time maybe you could send an email to them and other websites with limited controls advocating for manual control of your video settings.

Free content, especially from video content providers, is being supported by video ads more and more these days. It may be worthwhile to pay a cheap subscription to your favourite video-based services if it means avoiding video ads.

Finally, when it comes to video content it is a matter of choosing what is most important to you. Movie rental and subscription services like Netflix, Google Play, iTunes, Telstra TV, etc are very convenient but will be heavy on download data. Rent SD versions if available. Often the difference is not noticeable when you're immersed in a good film, unless perhaps if you're watching on a massive TV. Another option is to use PlayON Cloud. This app allows you to record and download video content from places like YouTube and Netflix off-peak.(4) You could also consider supplementing your movies with DVDs from the public library when you're in town.

## The Cloud

Another big data user is the mysterious "cloud" everyone is talking about these days. Cloud computing and storage is becoming more and more prevalent. Think Google Docs, Xero, Dropbox, etc. Some phones ask if you want to automatically back up your phone's photos to a cloud-based storage service (E.g. Google Drive). This is extremely convenient and a great way to keep your memories safe but it will take a toll on your download data.

Another cloud service culprit might be Microsoft's OneDrive. If you subscribe to Office 365 you get 1TB of free OneDrive storage. All your Microsoft documents might be automatically backed up or even stored on OneDrive, depending on your settings. Anything added to the OneDrive folder on your computer is also being synced to the cloud. This is great for keeping files safe but may not be so good for your data limit.

A quick note on cloud storage: Files that are already on the cloud aren't using up any of your internet data limits. So don't go deleting all your valuable cloud-based backups! It won't help your internet data situation. It's only when you upload or back up new files to the cloud or access files you have stored in the cloud that you're making a dent in your internet data.

### The Cloud: What you can do

Check your settings for cloud-based services to see if you can reduce the number of backups they make, and see if there's a way to store a local copy on your computer so you don't have to access the cloud-based version as often.(5)

There are non-internet-based backup and storage options available that still have the convenience of working automatically over Wifi. The beauty of this is you can store the movies, photos and music you own onto them and access them from anywhere in your house. Many hard drive manufacturers have wifi-enabled storage solutions. Many Wifi Routers themselves can even function as cloud storage by simply plugging in a USB memory stick and doing some basic setting up. If you want to go the route of creating a local "cloud" storage (often called a Network Address Storage or NAS) it's often prudent to pay a bit more for an advanced model. These will be easier to set up and more seamless to use. One thing to look for is RAID backup for extra security of your data.

The trade-off with locally-based backups is that they may not be as secure as internet-based backup for your most valuable data (think house fire, power surge). Please note that some NAS devices can also be configured to be accessed from anywhere over the internet (your own personal cloud). You'll want to turn that function off.

## Software and Updates

Something else that can use lots of data is software and Operating System updates. Software is often bought online these days and the initial download can be quite large. Then there are updates like Windows updates, antivirus software definition updates, phone app updates, Android updates and more. Unfortunately for us, more and more of these are becoming automatic and invisible to the user. Again, great for keeping you up to date and secure; not so good for reigning in data usage.

### Software and Updates:

#### What you can do

If you sign up for a Sky Muster Plus Plan, Operating system updates for PCs and smartphones are unmetered. The downloads might be slowed down by the NBN in high usage times, so just make sure you leave your devices on overnight if you're having trouble downloading updates. Delivery Optimisation allows all the Windows 10 PCs on your network to update each other after a single PC downloads the updates from the internet.(6) Unfortunately, game console and most other software updates are still metered on Sky Muster Plus.

## Gaming

Gaming doesn't need to be online to use lots of data. If you buy a game online, the download may be 20-60GB! Many games, even if you buy them on a disc, require updates and patches that

can run into the Gigabytes. And we're talking gaming consoles here, not just PC games. Another trap is DLC, or Downloadable Content.

For online games there are other considerations. To play online, even single player games, will require data usage. For some games this can be comparable in data usage to VOIP (discussed above), which isn't too bad, but can be as much as 1GB per hour depending on the game. Games that are hosted peer-to-peer tend to have larger data requirements than those hosted on dedicated gaming servers. Voice connections will add a similar amount of data usage as a VOIP call, but if there are multiple people connected this could increase.

### **Gaming: What you can do**

Pick and choose what games you allow to be played based on data usage.(7) Consider taking gaming consoles, laptops and other portable devices into town to update them, or downloading updates while in town and bringing them back on a USB drive.

### **Audio and Music**

Downloading podcasts and audio books or streaming music can be a bigger user of data as well. Generally you're looking at about 60MB per hour for music or podcasts. If you're listening to 8+ hours of podcasts or streaming Spotify all your waking moments you might run up 15 or more GB of data in a month. And that is per person. If everyone is streaming their own music to their phones all day download data will definitely accumulate rather quickly.

### **Audio and Music: What you can do**

Encourage your family and employees to buy downloadable music so they can download it once for all instead of using streaming services like YouTube or Spotify.

## **The Right Plan**

Another thing you can do if you're constantly running out of data on SkyMuster is to check if you're on the best Sky Muster plan. Head over to [www.birrraus.com](http://www.birrraus.com) for a great comparison table. (8)Sky Muster Plus(9) only came out in August 2019, so unless you have changed your plan since then you're not on Plus. The idea of SkyMuster Plus is that for a small premium you can have unlimited basics like web browsing, social media (text and still photos only) and emails. This means that even when you reach your data limit for the month these services are still accessible at full speed.

You are entitled to a Sky Muster connection on each habitable house on your property. Make the most of free installation and monthly contracts to get Sky Muster put on everything you can.

Basically, it will cost you as little as \$33 to get a new connection. That's right. \$33. If you don't need it straight away, just cancel your subscription during the first month. The hardware will be ready and waiting for the next person who uses that house. It is better to have 5 Sky Muster connections on your property than try to share, because each connection has maximum download limits. Consider requiring your employees to pay for their own internet plan. Then it's their problem if they run out of data in a month, not yours.

There are other interesting new Sky Muster services being introduced that may help as well. If you have children in school you may be eligible for an Education Port. Some, but not all state and territory governments provide a subsidy to pay for it too. Not all States and Territories have a government subsidy. Soon to be introduced is Sky Muster Business, which will allow Sky Muster connections to be added to addresses and buildings which are not residences. This may help if cost is less important to you than download limit.

## **Other tips for reducing download data**

1. Android and Apple phones allow you to check your wifi usage and see which apps are downloading the most data.
2. Install an Adblocker. All major web browsers can have adblocking add-ons installed. Not only will you see fewer ads and annoying pop-ups while browsing, you may reduce your browsing data usage by up to 40 percent! More and more webpages now are requiring you to disable adblockers to access free content. With a good ad blocker you can easily do that on a website-by-website basis, while still blocking the majority of ads from other websites.
3. Your Retail Service Provider (RSP – previously ISP) can let you know what has been using the most data. Some of this information (e.g. the last 24 hours) might be accessible by logging into your account. You also may need to call them up to find out the top 2-3 data hogs for the previous month. Some RSP's are better at this than others though.(10)
4. If you are concerned some of your employees are using all your data streaming movies or watching porn, you may be able to limit the amount of data they can access. Some Wifi Routers have a per-device quota built in which you can customise per device. You may be able to get a router that is compatible with Gargoyle(11), a free router firmware that assists with assigning user quotas and can also be used to set times when internet is available on particular devices.



5. NEVER click or download "speed up my computer"-type ads! And make sure your virus and malware software is reputable, up to date and working effectively.
6. Filtering Content: some more modern Wifi routers allow a certain amount of content filtering and "Parental Controls". This can help limit access to pornography websites and other high-bandwidth sites, or limit access at certain times of day. Doing the filtering at the router level instead of each device means you don't have to configure each device separately, and it is harder to circumvent. If you really want to get serious about filtering you can set up a cheap "server" with filtering and quota software on it. This could allow things such as each user with a separate login (and data limit), and content filtering that is updated online so it doesn't get out of date.
7. Check to see if your smart TV is accessing your internet.

Hopefully this information will be helpful to some. There is plenty of other information available online. A first port of call might be the Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia (BIRRR). (12)

***Benjamin is the Frontier Services Bush Chaplain for Central Australia, and a member of the Alice Springs Branch. He is happy to answer questions about this or other technical matters and may even be able to travel out to help you implement some of these suggestions if you live in Central Australia.***

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- (1) For example, SpaceX's Starlink <https://www.itnews.com.au/news/spacex-takes-prerequisite-step-for-starlink-aussie-approval-533089> and Google's Loon <https://www.technologyreview.com/f/613916/googles-loon-internet-balloon-project-is-about-to-start-its-first-commercial-trial/>
  - (2) Disclaimer: information accurate at time of writing (November 2019). Things can and do change in this area on a rapid basis.
  - (3) <https://www.genvoice.net/how-much-data-does-voip-use/>
  - (4) <https://birrraus.com/2019/08/17/playon-cloud/>
  - (5) For more tips see <https://birrraus.com/2015/11/19/cloud-computing-dropbox-icloud-onedrive-google-drive/>
  - (6) For more helpful tips see <https://www.howtogeek.com/249254/how-to-stop-windows-10-from-using-so-much-data/>
  - (7) <https://www.nbnco.com.au/blog/entertainment/how-much-data-does-gaming-use-through-popular-examples>
  - (8) <https://birrraus.com/satellite/satellite-providers/> Note, however that their comparison table only covers regular SkyMuster connections at the moment, not SkyMuster Plus or SkyMuster Business.
  - (9) <https://www.finder.com.au/sky-muster-plus-guide>
  - (10) Apparently SkyMesh are the best with regards to data usage statistics
  - (11) <https://www.gargoyle-router.com/>
  - (12) <https://birrraus.com/data-tips/data-saving-tips/>



Isolated Children's Parents' Association

NORTHERN TERRITORY MEMBERSHIP FORM FOR 2020



DUE JANUARY 1ST EACH YEAR.

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

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Please fill in this form and forward with a cheque, to one of the below treasurers.

Make it payable to the "Branch (e.g. Alice Springs) ICPA" or "NT ICPA" for Lone Members.

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

These are important to use for bursary qualifications and for ICPA lobbying 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 Bursary qualifications and lobbying purposes )

Names (of Children)	Age (turning in 2020)	Year Level (in 2020)	School/University/College Attending

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

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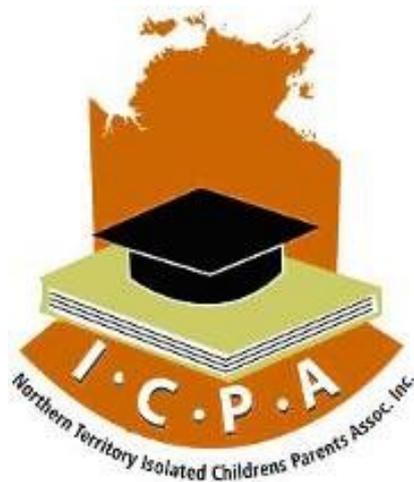
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### NTICPA LONE MEMBERS

This is a group who wish to be informed of ICPA issues, but do not wish to belong to a 'branch' as such. Anyone who lives anywhere can be an NT Lone Member.

The Lone members do not hold meetings, but they do hold two votes at conferences (State & Federal).

If you would like to receive regular publications from state council 'Down the Track' and Federal Council 'Pedals' then Lone Members is for you!



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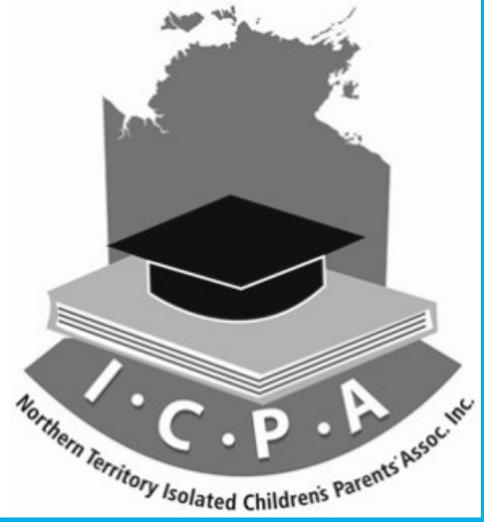
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ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENT'S ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

# DOWN THE TRACK NEWSLETTER

