



RFCS future focus

November 2007 no. 18

Future of the RFCS Program in the new Australian Government

In its policy document, *Plan for Primary Industries*, the Australian Labor Party announced increased funding of \$10 million for the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) Program.

This funding is included in the Climate Change Adjustment Program, which will provide financial assistance to primary producers for professional advice, training and re-establishment grants. You can download the policy document from:

www.alp.org.au/download/071119_labors_plan_for_primary_industries22.pdf

The Office of Rural Financial Counselling will provide more information as it becomes available.

National conference for rural financial counsellors February 2008

The Office of Rural Financial Counselling will host a national conference for rural financial counsellors, executive officers and state governments on 21-22 February 2008. Centrelink's rural services officers have also been invited, so we are expecting more than 180 people to attend.

The details are as follows:

Dates: Thursday 21 February, 9.00am to 5.00pm
Friday 22 February, 9.00am to 12.30pm

Venue: Aitken Hill Conference and Events Venue (www.aitkenhill.com.au)
20 Dunhelen Lane, Yuroke, Melbourne

Accommodation:
Aitken Hill Conference and Events Venue, and
Holiday Inn Melbourne Airport

Accommodation has been booked and will be paid for by the Office for rural financial counsellors and executive officers. We will let you know which venue you are staying at before the conference and will arrange buses to pick up people staying at the Holiday Inn to take them to Aitken Hill. Service providers will need to book and pay for travel for their rural financial counsellors. There is an official dinner on Thursday 21 February at Aitken Hill.

Note: Please send us the names of the rural financial counsellors who will be attending as soon as possible so we can confirm numbers for the accommodation.

Training for executive officers

There will also be a 2-day training course for executive officers on 19-20 February at Aitken Hill. This course, *High performance teams: blueprint for dynamic, global and virtual teams*, will be provided by IIR Executive Development. Accommodation has been booked at Aitken Hill and will be paid for by the Office. Service providers will need to book and pay for their own travel. There is an official dinner on Tuesday 20 February at Aitken Hill.

Outcomes from diploma working group

A group of executive officers and independent advisers met in Canberra on 8 November to discuss the content of the new units to be included in the revised Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling).

The diploma includes a core set of units required to be completed by all rural financial counsellors, plus four elective units. The group agreed that a new unit, provisionally titled 'Introduction to rural financial counselling', will be developed as a 'compulsory' elective. Rural financial counsellors will decide which other elective units to do in consultation with their executive officer. There will be further opportunity to discuss the revised diploma with service providers and rural financial counsellors before it is submitted for endorsement by the relevant department.

Once the revised diploma is endorsed (by June 2008), the Office of Rural Financial Counselling will work with registered training providers to develop the content and assessment materials for the new units. It is therefore unlikely that the new diploma will be available until late 2008. Newly employed rural financial counsellors should continue to enrol in the current diploma.

From the ARC helpdesk

Administrative assistance

The ARC database records client activities and rural financial counsellor workloads. The administrative assistant support is recorded to show any assistance provided to rural financial counsellors.

There are only four activities administrative assistants can perform in ARC:

1. Client - Research
2. ARC Data Entry
3. General Enquiry
4. Administration, Office.

ARC will not allow you to record any other type of activity as an administrative assistant. If you select an activity other than the four listed above, the checkbox to record administrative assistant support will become inactive and the activity will be assigned to the rural financial counsellor.

Logging into ARC

ARC was designed to allow only one rural financial counsellor to log into any one database. If another counsellor logs into your database with their own username and password, errors can occur - for example, the management report in ARC may have the wrong counsellor's name on the front cover. **Never log into another counsellor's database.** If a counsellor takes over from another counsellor, clients need to be transferred.

When to transfer clients

1. Transfer a client to another rural financial counsellor's database when that counsellor performs activities for the client.
2. When a rural financial counsellor leaves the service, transfer all the clients to the new counsellor.
3. When a rural financial counsellor moves to another area, transfer all clients to the incoming counsellor.

continued next page

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If you don't transfer the client within ARC and instead add the client as a new client, the reporting will be inaccurate.

Update patch 1.1.41.0

We expect to upload a patch in December that will improve and repair the transfer feature in ARC. We will send details of the enhancements and fixes included in the patch to executive officers soon.

If you need any assistance, please contact the ARC helpdesk on 02 6272 3549.



Merry Christmas from the Office of Rural Financial Counselling

The Office of Rural Financial Counselling would like to wish all chairs, board members, executive officers, rural financial counsellors and administrative staff (past and present), local reference groups and all subscribers to *RFCS future focus* a happy and safe Christmas. The next *RFCS future focus* will be published in February 2008.

NEWS

Helping community organisations communicate—A suite of online tools is available to help community organisations develop their marketing and communications strategies and work with the media. The resources are available from Media Team Australia at www.mediateam.com.au

AgCareers.com—AgCareers.com is a recruitment website for agricultural, food, natural resources and biotechnology industries. The site offers career searches, job advertisements, online tools for jobseekers and employers, and advice and information.

OnePlan web portal—The [OnePlan](#) web portal, developed by the Queensland Government, provides guidelines, resources and access to information to simplify the preparation of property-level management plans. The portal aims to reduce the cost of farmers' compliance with state regulatory arrangements through an integrated web-based 'one stop shop'.

For comments about *RFCS future focus*, email rfcs@daff.gov.au

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