



RFCS future focus

July 2006 no. 6

Western Australian service provider announced

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Peter McGauran MP, has announced that the successful applicant for the provision of the rural financial counselling service in Western Australia is Western Australian Rural Counselling Association Inc (WARCA). WARCA will deliver the rural financial counselling service across the whole of Western Australia from 1 August 2006 and will be known as Rural Financial Counselling Service Western Australia (RFCS WA).

Importantly, RFCS WA will maintain strong links with rural communities by involving existing rural financial counselling organisations in some functions of service delivery arrangements, where these organisations want to remain involved with the program. This involvement will also allow RFCS WA to access valuable, 'on the ground' information and retain cash or in-kind local contributions to support local rural financial counsellors.

Tasmanian service provider announced

Minister McGauran has announced that the rural financial counselling service in Tasmania will continue to be provided by Rural Support Tasmania. From 1 September 2006, this service will be known as Rural Financial Counselling Service Tasmania (RFCS Tasmania).

SA RFCS Advisory Committee members

The four members of the new South Australia Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) Advisory Committee are:

- Tim Scholz, representing primary producers
- Kay Hocking, representing rural communities
- Ben Bruce, representing the South Australian Government
- Glenda Kidman, representing the Australian Government.

The SA RFCS Advisory Committee held its inaugural meeting on 27 June and assessed the grant applications for delivering the rural financial counselling service in South Australia. An announcement by the Minister on the successful applicant is expected shortly. The committee will help recruit the counsellors and will oversee the delivery of the RFCS Program in South Australia.

Drought relief counsellors

The Drought Relief Counsellor Service has now concluded. Centrelink still offers support for farmers in drought-affected areas and rural and regional areas generally. The Drought Assistance Hotline (ph 13 23 16) and Farm Assistance Line (ph 1800 050 585) can give you advice on drought assistance and other rural issues.

2004 review report and audit report now available

The final report of the 2004 Review of the RFCS Program is now available at www.rfcs.gov.au (look under 'Publications'). You can download the whole report or just the sections you are interested in.

A summary of the 2003 Acumen Alliance performance review and audit reports is also available.

Payments for extension period from 1 July

To be eligible for a grant payment from 1 July, we need your signed letter of agreement (letter dated 11 April), your reply to the budget drafted for you for the extension period, ARC statistics as at 30 June, a tax invoice and the statement of certification for the period 1 March to 30 June 2006.

Please phone Michelle Macaulay on (02) 6272 4617, email michelle.macaulay@daff.gov.au, if you are unsure of the status of your payment.

RCC statements of results

Congratulations to all rural financial counsellors who took part in the recognition of current competencies (RCC) assessment for the Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling).

We understand that some training organisations are taking some time to provide statements of results (or 'academic transcripts'). If this is the case, please fax or send a copy of your results to the Office of Rural Financial Counselling as soon as you receive them.

You can fax them to Michelle Macaulay on (02) 6271 6619.

For more information about the RCC process, phone Michelle on (02) 6272 4617, email michelle.macaulay@daff.gov.au

From the ARC helpdesk

Adult Learners Week: 1-8 September

Adult Learners Week is an international festival for adult learning. It is an opportunity to celebrate, promote and advance all forms of education.

You may be asking why I am telling you this and what it has to do with the ARC database help desk.

From the help desk, I have noticed that some counsellors have difficulty using their computers in general. A formal computer course could help make using your computer easier and more productive.

Also, you may find it useful to have background information about computer training in your area to give to your clients.

Computer training can help your clients improve their:

- farm and financial management
- productivity
- career options, and
- self esteem.

At adult learning associations, people can network with like-minded others in the pursuit of increased skills and knowledge.

There's plenty of information on the www.adultlearnersweek.org website, including links to training services near you or alternatives such as distance education.

'Learning is an essential tool that helps individuals and society grow and respond to change.'

NEWS

FarmBis e-newsletter—The Farm Business Management Section of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has produced an e-newsletter containing industry snapshots, testimonials and news from around the states on the highly successful FarmBis program. Visit www.daff.gov.au/farmbis for the latest issue.

Capacity Building in Indigenous Communities Seminars—These seminars are designed for field workers, health workers, government and community council employees, medical staff, council clerks, tradespeople and anyone interested in learning more about Indigenous culture. The seminars provide an opportunity to explore a wide range of issues relating to community development, health and education in Indigenous communities. Information including dates and venues is at www.ards.com.au/seminars.htm or contact Alice or Zinnia, ph 08 8987 3910.

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

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