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**Events****Professional Development****Workshops**

**Toowoomba** - 3rd October 2007

**Melbourne** - 26th September 2007

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**Welcome to the AAAC electronic newsletter**

Page 1 of 5

**From the President**

I apologise for the delay with this Newsletter – I had hoped we would have something for members a little earlier but the move of AIAST National Office from Melbourne to Canberra has been more disruptive than we ever bargained for. However the move has been made, Karin Schiller has been appointed as the new CEO and Sue Pearce is her Administrative support and a new era for AIAST and for AAAC has begun. I take the view that Canberra is the natural home of the Institute and AAAC and we now have to ensure we build on the competitive advantage that being in the national capital brings us. For communication, recognition, advocacy and credibility of the profession Canberra has the potential to deliver provided we have the strategies, actions and commitment for implementation.

**AAAC Executive Committee**

The Annual General Meeting of AAAC was held in Wagga Wagga at the end of March – the 2006 Executive Committee stood unopposed for re-election so we commenced the 2007 year with a stable committee platform. Unfortunately Queenslander Ralph van Gelder has since elected to stand aside from the Executive as he felt that his overseas consulting assignments were preventing him representing the northerners adequately. I am very pleased to be able to report that Peter Wylie (Dalby) has agreed to join the Executive in Ralph's place – Peter has previously had extensive AAAC Executive experience and I am confident his contribution to AAAC will be significant.



## **AAAC Newsletter Printable version.....**

A printable version (pdf format) of this newsletter can be downloaded via [www.aiast.com.au/aaac.php](http://www.aiast.com.au/aaac.php)

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## **Separate 'Badging' for AAAC**

Your Executive has felt for some time that there was a need for AAAC to be 'badged' quite separately to AIAST. We have moved to do that via the website and had anticipated that the 2007 subscription notices would be AAAC renewals rather than an AIAST renewal with AAAC tacked on the end. From 2008 onwards that will be the case. While the NO was still in Melbourne, a good deal of development work was completed on the AAAC individual website ([www.agconsultants.com.au](http://www.agconsultants.com.au)).

This site is interactive with specific components available for AAAC members only (Discussion Forum, Register). The Register remains to have further work completed and needs to be linked to the membership database. I understand that the move from Melbourne has hastened the requirement to update the AIAST membership database into a more modern and flexible format. This requirement may slightly delay the finalization of website inputs and its commissioning for use.

## **Workshops for 2007**

There will be workshops in Melbourne, Toowoomba and Adelaide before the end of 2007 – watch this Newsletter and the Weekly Alert for details. I encourage you to attend a workshop to be stimulated, to broaden your professional network, to facilitate your on-going professional development and to simply enjoy yourselves. I will be back from overseas for the Adelaide workshop and apologise in advance for my absence from Melbourne and Toowoomba – I found Wagga Wagga and Launceston to be excellent (well run, informative & great value) and well received by attendees.

## **AgCredited Pilot Scheme and CPAg**

I sit on the AIAST AgCredited Committee with a cross section of stakeholders from Ruralco, Elders, AIAST, DAFF and Tocal Agricultural College. We met by phone today and I am able to report that the pilot involving 64 participants including 35 from the NRM sector is going well if a month or two behind schedule. Participants are drawn from all the states and represent a wide age range. All 29 agricultural candidates have completed their assessments and are AgCredited with a handful of the NRM group in the same position following a late start. Feedback via a structured evaluation process to the service providers Tocal from those who have completed the course is positive to very positive.

This pilot project is being partly funded through RIRDC and the final report to RIRDC will be a public document which I will ensure members have access to once it becomes available. The AgCredited Committee will be holding a major workshop in Canberra on 20<sup>th</sup> September which will be attended by a AAAC Executive member as well as a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders. The Committee is anticipating the major launch of the AgCredited program late in 2007. As the program is running a few months behind schedule and so as to provide a smooth transition, it is very likely that AIAST will continue CPAg throughout 2008.

## **Visit to National Office in Canberra**

Last week I had the opportunity to catch up with Karin and Sue in the new Canberra office. They made me welcome and we had a useful conversation about the Institute, the history of AAAC, the current operating environment and our aspirations for the future. I urge AAAC members who are in the national capital to take a few minutes to visit the NO and meet the people who are the face of the organization. The office is located in Deakin a stone's throw west of the Parliament, easy to find and only a minute or so off Adelaide Avenue which runs down to Woden.

## **AIASST PI Scheme**

I have had little feedback from members regarding the PI scheme which AIASST administers. The contract with brokers Jardine Lloyd Thompson expires later this year and AIASST will be seeking expressions of interest from the marketplace in determining which broker will act for the Institute going forward. I would be grateful for members comments on the quality of service, premiums charged, exclusions and conditions of policies offered from our existing broker in addition to other brokers being used by members.

## Taxation Implications for Overseas Consultants

I have recently been advised by an accountant that the ATO has moved to restrict consultants access to Per Diems for consultants working overseas to a maximum of 30 days under tax ruling TR 2004/6. This flies in the face of the 23AG ruling which allows consultants to be tax free on fees etc after 91 days in the field on a continuous basis. If TR 2004/6 is applied it will create serious financial disincentives for consultants who work overseas particularly on short term assignments.

I would be grateful if any consultants who are or have been working overseas and have come across this or similar problems would email me [bob.hudson@bigpond.com](mailto:bob.hudson@bigpond.com) or ring on 02 6746 2212

## Practice Management Workshops for Consultants

The next practice management workshop for consultants (part of a national series) is being held in Melbourne on Wednesday September 26<sup>th</sup> 2007. The workshops are being run by the Australian Association of Agricultural Consultants (AAAC) and are sponsored by the National Australia Bank. The workshops are open to AAAC members (\$110) and non members (\$160).

The workshop is being facilitated by Ian Benjamin who is a consultant to consultants. Ian will challenge participants to review the manner in which they manage and market their consultancy practices. Specific themes include;

- KPI's relevant to successful consulting,
- Growing and maintaining a client base,
- Relationship marketing strategies,
- Quality management issues,
- Training and ongoing improvement,
- Competitive tendering.

Participants will also have the opportunity of discussing these issues with other consultants. Ian has already conducted two similar workshops at Wagga Wagga and Launceston, both of which had excellent evaluations from participants. The workshop also

