



# Remote Indigenous Parents Association

Roper-Gulf RIPA

Building bridges to boarding



# What is RIPA?



RIPA stands for Remote Indigenous Parents Association

RIPA was established in collaboration with Boarding Australia and using Australian Government grants

RIPA was established to work with parents in remote communities

RIPA Roper-Gulf is the first branch of RIPA–National  
(see RIPA Newsletter 1- November 2015 - for the story about how RIPA got started)

There are 12 communities in RIPA Roper-Gulf Branch



# Roper-Gulf boarding data

| Roper-Gulf 2016  |                                   |  |     |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|-----|
| Number of young people from Roper-Gulf in boarding                       |                                   | Total  | 196 |
| Number of different boarding schools young people from Roper-Gulf attend |                                   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. St Johns College</li> <li>2. Kormilda College</li> <li>3. Marrara CC</li> <li>4. Yirara</li> <li>5. Woolaning CC</li> <li>6. Callistemon</li> <li>7. AHL Fordimail</li> <li>8. Wiltja SA</li> <li>9. Shalom Qld</li> <li>10. Spinifex Qld</li> <li>11. Worawa Vic</li> <li>12. AHL Tennant Ck</li> <li>13. St Philips</li> </ol> |     |
| Bulman (7)   | Liticia Camfoo                    |  |     |
| Beswick (21)   | Lorraine Bennett                  |  |     |
| Barunga (15)   | Anita Painter                     |  |     |
| Jilkminggan/Mataranka (10)   | Cheryl Birch                      |  |     |
| Minyerri (62)  | Michelle Bennett                  |  |     |
| Borrooloola/Robinson River (30)  | Noela Anderson                    |  |     |
| Ngukurr/Urapunga (30)  | Cathy Huddleston & Justine Rogers |  |     |
| Numbulwar (15)   | Elizabeth Joshua (tbc)            |  |     |
| Manyallaluk (6)  | Rachael Kendino                   |  |     |



# What do RIPA do?

“The mission of the Roper-Gulf Remote Indigenous Parents Association is to ***advocate, inform, support*** and ***empower*** parents, families and young people about quality secondary boarding education opportunities and choices.”

(Roper-Gulf RIPA Strategic Plan, DRAFT, 2015)

How are we doing this?

- ◆ Parent information sessions
- ◆ Frequently Asked Questions about Boarding DVD
- ◆ Animated stories about boarding for young people
- ◆ RIPA webpage and FaceBook ([www.ripa.org.au](http://www.ripa.org.au))
- ◆ RIPA Restorative Principles of Engagement (RPE) Training

## RIPA ROPER-GULF ORGANISATION CHART



## How does RIPA Roper-Gulf work?

- RIPA work with families, boarders, parents, schools and communities
- RIPA representatives are all voluntary positions
- Each community has a RIPA Community Representative nominated by members from the Community
- Directors are chosen from the Community Representatives
- RIPA Roper-Gulf members meet regularly to talk about boarding issues
- RIPA Roper-Gulf representatives all have important roles in their Community

# How RIPA supports Roper-Gulf Communities



- Partnerships – Boarding Australia, Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association, Aboriginal Hostels Limited, Transition Support Unit (NT Education Department), Boarding schools and residential boarding Colleges
- Advocacy regarding Abstudy issues
- Training Resources in English and Kriol
- Research – Surveys/Data Collection

# Some of the biggest challenges facing families in remote Communities



What parents tell us.....

1. Abstudy forms – too hard and complicated to complete
2. Homesickness & separation (Both-ways communication)
3. Skilling parents to support their children's education



# Abstudy

What parents tell us.....

- The Abstudy form is too long and complicated for most Indigenous parents
- Centrelink agents in Communities are not skilled-up in completing Abstudy forms
- Centrelink agents ask parents to phone 1800 number – the wait can be up to 90 minutes
- The Abstudy response can take up to 6 weeks and if there is a problem, the process can take another 6 weeks





# Homesickness & Separation

What parents tell us.....

- Parents need to be notified early when there are any issues of concern
- Houseparents need to be trained to support students in culturally appropriate ways
- Many Communities are not equipped with technology for effective communication and mobile coverage (eg Telstra towers)
- Boarding schools and residential boarding Colleges should have 1800 numbers for easy access



# Parenting Skills

Parents in remote Communities need:

- Encouragement and training in how to better support and engage their children in education
- Better understanding of the different boarding models and how they meet the needs of their children
- Skills in how to communicate effectively and confidently with boarding providers and support agencies

# LONG-TERM FUNDING & RESOURCES NEEDED FOR RIPA



- ◆ Meetings (parents, RIPA committee, other stakeholders)
- ◆ Employ an administration officer (contact person, organise events, manage the programme, marketing & promotion)
- ◆ Training (RIPA, Parents, Admin officer)
- ◆ Travel (Communities, inter & intra State)
- ◆ Resources (Website, equipment, stationery, transport, operating expenses, office & meeting facilities)



# Thank You

Building bridges to boarding