

DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT

Jo Murphy

The Distance Education (DE) portfolio, has made some incredible headway this year on our lobby to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA).

The DE portfolio continues to work on practical measures by which the government might recognise the need to support and recognise the vital work distance education tutors do.

Much consideration and research was undertaken to source an appropriate Ambassador for our DETA lobby. We were seeking someone passionate about the needs of parents in isolated areas, with a presence in the media and political arenas. Catherine Marriott, a rural based dynamo who is a highly regarded advocate for agriculture in Australia, has accepted our invitation to undertake this role and will use any opportunity to raise the awareness of the DETA issue.

The portfolio action plan has focused on new publicity and media material and researching the means to develop a promotional CD and YouTube clip to enhance awareness of our members' needs. Currently we are sourcing funding and negotiating with media teams to create a story to be used as a promotional tool for politicians, media and support networks.

The need for a DETA was included in our response to the White Paper on the Reform of Federation. This paper seeks to clarify the roles and responsibilities of states and territories and to eliminate duplication of roles within different levels of government.

The DE portfolio has worked closely with the Communications portfolio and State Councils, on the problems involved in doing distance education using the National Broadband Network's Interim Satellite Service. Federal Council appreciates the time and work that State Councils and members devote to this.

As my second year involved in Federal Council concludes, it truly amazes me to see the time and effort put in by extraordinarily committed councillors, all working together for members' requests. I have just completed 12 months back in the classroom, one week each month, teaching eKindy, Prep, and Year 1, with a toddler to look after as well. This has kept me considerably compassionate to the relentless cry of ICPA branches from all over Australia, to keep pursuing our DETA lobby. The contribution distance education tutors make to the families of the bush is immeasurable.