



## **EDUCATE AND EMBRACE**

Presented by Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA)

Beef24, Rockhampton

### **Panel Brief**

Education access = Educated communities.

For the vibrancy of Rural Australia, education access needs to be a priority, whatever age or stage from pre-kindy through to the workforce. Being raised in a rural or remote location is not a limiting factor to future success, nor should it limit options and opportunities when education is accessible. By ensuring accessibility, individuals can achieve educational excellence and rise to any level of their choosing and path.

To maintain a diverse industry, agriculture also needs to feature in education, showing our upcoming generations, regardless of where they receive their education, that this is a viable industry and is here to stay.

### **Speaker info**

<https://beefaustralia.com.au/home/2024-program/seminars-symposium/seminar-program/thursday-seminars/speaker-profile-2/>

### **Discussion Summary**

Although some deeper topics, like the skills shortage and the tendency of young people to leave the bush and stay in cities, were discussed, overall, the panel discussion left the audience positive and inspired about the future.

- Panellists were asked to think of some rural and remote success stories, and the factors that made them successful – common denominator was that they were surrounded by proactive influential people – teachers, family members, mentors and peers. They were resilient and recognised that learning occurs in every aspect of life, not just classrooms. Kate Drury – “you are the average of the ten people you surround yourself with”
- One key aspect of improving access to education in rural and remote areas is attracting and retaining quality teachers to these locations – “it’s not a death sentence, it’s an opportunity” (Wendy Henning). The panellists had ideas around developing partnerships with corporate agriculture to help overcome this challenge, for example, providing professional development for teachers and scholarships for students to help support families. Note to Editors: To address the teacher and carer skills gap, ICPA is also advocating for changes to the Working Holiday visa (subclass 417) of the Working Holiday Maker Program to include,



as eligible employment, the positions of governess, nanny or au pair for Working Holiday visa holders. This is in place of the farm work.

- It was noted that agriculture needs to be on the curriculum even for our youngest learners, in early childhood education. Industry collaboration is key to making sure there is a greater understanding of the ag supply chain. People in the industry need to be informing educators, speaking up. We need to promote ag as a solid career path and an esteemed profession, which will help kids picture their lives staying in, and contributing to communities in rural and remote areas.
- With the workforce ageing, How can we “sell” careers in ag in a more effective way? Oli from Humans of Agriculture encouraged the audience to use unconventional and creative ways to tell the success stories of those who choose to live regionally or remotely, and that distance has not been a barrier to them living a fulfilling life. He mentioned that ag and the rural/regional way of life is really in the spotlight at the moment for audiences that would not typically be exposed to this, thanks to TV shows like Muster Dogs and Yellowstone, and celebrities like Beyonce and the Kardashians embracing country. How do we capitalise on this exposure?
- The parting message was to “just start trying things” and explore different models for achieving the best outcomes for students in rural and remote locations.

### Quotes:

**Arlie Felton-Taylor** – “Being raised in a rural and remote location is not a limiting factor to future success”

**Louise Martin, ICPA Federal President** – “Ensuring equitable access to education in isolated regions is not just a matter of policy; it’s a commitment to the future vitality of our communities. The panel discussion today further highlights the key role education, and access to it, plays in shaping the lives of students based in rural and remote areas.”

“As advocates, we must explore the ways we can collaboratively engage with policymakers and industry stakeholders to encourage sustained and ongoing change to bridge the gap.”

“Further, by forging strategic partnerships with agricultural entities, we gain valuable partners who share the same goals of championing inclusive policy, ensuring a brighter future, where every child, regardless of their geographic location, can thrive academically and contribute meaningfully to the communities they reside in.”

**Wendy Henning, ICPA QLD President** – “ICPA has been around for more than 50 years. It is wonderful to have a legacy, but you have to have a future and maintain your relevance. Today’s panellists have given us some powerful insights as to how we advocate in the



future.”

**About the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA)**

Established in 1971, ICPA is a voluntary, not-for-profit, apolitical parent body dedicated to ensuring equity of access to education for all students who live in rural and remote Australia. To find out more, visit representatives at their stand at Beef 2024 or visit their [website](#)