



ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION (ICPA) TO CONTINUE EDUCATION ADVOCACY WORK WITH DELEGATIONS IN CANBERRA

MEDIA RELEASE

- Leading national education advocacy group, ICPA (Aust) is heading to Canberra this May to continue valuable advocacy efforts
- May's delegation securing meetings with key MP's across all major parties
- ICPA to advocate for three key issues:
 - Improvements to connectivity
 - Equitable higher education opportunities for rural and remote tertiary students, per the Australian Universities Accord Final Report findings
 - Changes to the Working Holiday visa to help address teacher shortages, specifically in rural and remote areas.

8 May, 2024: National leading advocate for equitable access to education in rural and remote Australia, Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) Aust, is preparing to descend on Federal Parliament in the coming weeks to continue their important advocacy for rural and remote families.

As the leading remote and isolated education advocacy group, ICPA has lined up meetings with the following MPs to flag issues requiring action by the Federal Government:

Senator Gerrard Rennick (LP)
Senator Matt O'Sullivan (LP)
Senator Anthony Chishom (LP)
The Hon Nola Marino (LP)
Ms Angie Bell (LNP)
Senator Sarah Henderson (LP)
Senator James McGrath (NATS)
Mr Colin Boyce (LNP)
Mr Dan Tehan (LP)
Mr Mark Coulton (NATS)
Senator Slade Brockman (LP)
Mr Patrick MacGinley / Gavin Pearce (LP)
Senator Perin Davey (NATS)
Ms Lisa Chesters (ALP)
The Hon Darren Chester (NATS)

The focus of this delegation is to address key issues such as the need for



telecommunication services to be maintained and upgraded in rural and remote areas, to ensure school-aged children have equitable access to online learning opportunities.

"The Universal Service Obligation must uphold its commitment to serving the unique needs of regional, rural, and remote communities. With the upcoming closure of the 3G network it is imperative that existing mobile coverage is not diminished, and the USO is upheld said ICPA Federal President, Louise Martin.

The long-standing challenges faced by rural and remote students wishing to undertake tertiary studies is another important topic of discussion on the agenda. The key recommendations outlined in the Australian Universities Accord Final Report released earlier this year present an opportunity for greater support to be provided to these students.

"These recommendations recognise the financial hardships faced, particularly by those who have relocated for their studies and addresses cost of living pressures, where government is encouraged to focus on students with the most needs, which the ICPA has long been advocating for. We feel a number of these recommendations can be implemented quickly and effectively by the Federal Government and can make an immediate difference to students and their families", says Kate Thompson, Tertiary Education Portfolio lead with ICPA.

ICPA will also discuss small yet incredibly beneficial changes to the Working Holiday visa (subclass 417) of the Working Holiday Maker (WHM) Program to include as eligible employment the positions of governess/nanny/au pair for visa holders Intending to complete the required 88 days of work within the specified Industry of 'Plant and Animal Cultivation In Regional Australia'.

Due to the restrictive job criteria of the WHM program, many capable applicants are not applying for childcare or education-related positions in rural areas, as these roles currently do not count towards visa extensions.

"We urge urgent action to harness the untapped potential within our regions. While Australia rightly incentivises farm work for visa extensions, we overlook a glaring opportunity: the dire need for governesses to provide quality education in remote areas," said Martin.

"By extending visa incentives to include educational roles, we bridge critical gaps in access to education creating a favourable environment for kids to learn. Bridging the skills gap means quality education for even our most remote kids and represents a real opportunity to attract experienced talent to the regions, transforming our communities through quality education," said Louise Martin.



Event Details:

Date: Wednesday, 15 May 2024

Venue: Parliament House, Canberra

For more information on ICPA's advocacy and to support ICPA via membership, visit [ICPA's website](#).

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For further information and comment, please contact:

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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 their [website](#)