MEDIA RELEASE

ICPA-NSW TAKES RURAL EDUCATION PRIORITIES TO SYDNEY

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of NSW (ICPA-NSW) will travel to Sydney on the 22nd June 2026 to meet with key Ministers and education stakeholders to advocate for equitable educational access for geographically isolated (GI) students across New South Wales.

The deputation follows the recent ICPA-NSW State Conference held in Broken Hill, where members from across the state presented their current issues impacting rural, remote and distance education families.

ICPA-NSW President Annabel Strachan said the delegation would use the opportunity to ensure the voices of geographically isolated families are heard at the highest levels of government.

"Families who produce the food and fibre that sustain our state and nation should not be disadvantaged when it comes to educating their children. Our members have identified clear priorities that require action to ensure rural and remote students can access equitable educational opportunities as their metropolitan peers, regardless of where they live."

Some of the Key issues to be raised during the deputation include:

- *Reclassifying NSW remote TP1 and TP2 primary schools as Education Hubs, enabling them to support dually enrolled Distance Education preschool and secondary students and strengthen access to education within isolated communities.*
- *Permanently adopting the Preschool School Drive Subsidy (SDS), recognising that significant travel distances continue to create barriers for remote preschool-aged children and their families.*
- *Reforming the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) by increasing payments to better reflect the actual cost of boarding and inflation and removing the adjusted income test. Boarding school is not a luxury, but a necessity for GI students.*
- *Establishing Agricultural and/or Sporting Pathways Colleges with boarding facilities in the Far West (Gol Gol–Buronga region) and Central West (Dubbo) to provide greater educational and sporting opportunities for rural students.*
- *Equitable remuneration and pay parity for Early Childhood Teachers. The disparity between incentives offered to public school teachers and those available to early childhood educators creates significant workforce challenges in remote and very remote areas. Accommodation support and rental subsidies are critical to attracting and retaining qualified Early Childhood Teachers in these communities.*
- *A Tertiary Drive Subsidy, similar to the School Drive Subsidy for rural & remote students ie: 4 trips per year*

ICPA-NSW represents families whose children often travel hundreds of kilometres, attend rural schools, board away from home, or rely on Distance Education to access their schooling.

"Education is critical to the long-term sustainability of rural and remote communities. When families cannot access equitable educational opportunities, they are often left with no choice but to relocate, taking future generations, skills and community capacity with them. We look forward to constructive discussions with Ministers and stakeholders about practical solutions that will improve educational access and outcomes for geographically isolated students across NSW."

The ICPA-NSW delegation will meet with government representatives and stakeholders throughout the week before reporting back to members on outcomes and future advocacy opportunities.

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