



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia

Advocating for equitable access to education for students in rural and remote Australia

BUDGET 2022-2023 STATEMENT

1 April 2022

ICPA (Aust) welcomes the Federal Government's 2022-2023 Federal Budget announcement which includes initiatives supporting regional Australia and more specifically rural and remote education and children.

Key points which address issues for ICPA members in the 2022-2023 Budget are:

- **Regional Child Care** - \$19.4 million to enable more childcare places in regional, rural and remote Australia supporting families to access services and boosting women's workforce participation.
- **Access to Boarding** - \$10.9 million for the creation of a new Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program to assist up to 200 families from low-socioeconomic status (SES) communities with the cost of boarding school fees. Eligible families will receive \$15,000 per student each for three years and receipt of these scholarships will not impact on students' Assistance for Isolated Children eligibility.
- **Skills and Training** - \$2.8 billion to increase take-up and completion rates of apprenticeships in priority industries. including a \$5000 payment to new apprentices to assist with cost-of-living expenses and up to \$15,000 in wage subsidies for employers who hire apprentices.
- **Regional Road Safety** - \$7.1 billion in funding for programs to upgrade essential roads, rail and community infrastructure in regional communities.
- **Regional Communications** upgrade initiatives - \$1.3 billion in funding for regional telecommunications including \$811.8m for a new Connecting Regional Australia Initiative:
 - Up to 8,000 kms of new open access mobile coverage
 - Emerging technology trials
 - Affordability initiatives
 - Targeted broadband and mobile upgrades
 - Indigenous connectivity initiatives
 - Improved resilience against natural disasters
 - More coverage - NBN fixed wireless area expanded by up to 50 per cent
 - Better quality services - Higher speeds on fixed wireless (100 Mbps and up to 250 Mbps) for most users and increased data allowances with more reliable service for satellite customers

A comprehensive list of the announced education measures can be found on the Department of Education Skills and Employment website <http://www.dese.gov.au/about-us/corporate-reporting/budget/2022-23-budget>.

ICPA (Aust) continues to seek a number of other key measures which would further assist to level the playing field for geographically isolated children to access education. Amongst these are the expansion of the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) to include 3–4-year-olds and the establishment of a Rural Hardship Education Fund. We also continue to advocate for an increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Allowance and the alignment to the CPI Education sub-index.

ICPA (Aust) is very appreciative of the support for regional communities that has been shown in these announcements and will continue to work closely with Government and other education stakeholders to bring about further improvements for students and their families in geographically isolated areas.

Further information and comments please contact:

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