



2025 Distance Education November Report

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Remuneration for the Isolated Classroom Supervisor (RICS) Roundtable and Delegation – Wrap Up

Twenty six participants met online on Monday, 27 October, to discuss remuneration for classroom supervisors. The Commissioner for Regional Education, Fiona Nash, brought everyone together. Stakeholders included representatives from every state and territory education department, the Commonwealth Department of Education, the Australasian Association of Distance Education Schools (AADES), the Department of Social Services, the National Farmers' Federation (NFF), Federal Council ICPA, and all state and territory ICPA representatives.

The two hour roundtable was well received by all participants, with a strong position on the path forward. Commissioner Nash will continue hosting online meetings to progress discussions on how we can achieve remuneration for Distance Education supervisors. The primary focus was geographically isolated children completing their schooling through Distance Education.

In her opening remarks, Commissioner Nash highlighted the challenges, opportunities, and barriers involved in establishing a **RICS program** (Remuneration for the Isolated Classroom Supervisor). She emphasised the need to find a solution that recognises and values the work of supervisors supporting isolated children.

Key points of note:

- There are approximately 1,700 geographically isolated Distance Education students in Australia, representing around 850 DE classrooms.
- Remuneration should reflect the annual cost of having someone in the classroom.
- Clear criteria are essential to determine eligibility for payment, given the wide range of reasons for Distance Education enrolment.
- Recognition of industry is important. Australia relies on agriculture and resources located in rural and remote areas. Supporting Distance Education supports these industries and the communities that sustain them.
- Remuneration should acknowledge the skills required. DE supervisors undertake tasks such as resource preparation, lesson support, behaviour management, time management, and communication.
- Professional development opportunities for supervisors should be promoted to recognise their role and the value of education in rural and remote regions.
- The supervisor role is currently not formally recognised and does not appear on any job classification list, creating challenges for recognition of prior learning and award payment.

- Constitutionally, the Commonwealth has limited involvement in school operations. Supervision sits largely with the states and territories, which receive funding and determine how it is allocated.

Another productive week is complete in our nation's capital. I had the opportunity to visit and tour the Finigan School of Distance Education in Queanbeyan, NSW. The facility is purpose built for Distance Education, featuring state of the art classrooms where teachers deliver their lessons. It was a wonderful opportunity to speak with the Principal, Ms Harvey Wilson, who kindly showed Shennah and me through the school and answered our questions.

The RICS proposal was a key issue on the agenda for all ministers and external stakeholders. Robust discussions were held, with strong support for recognising the essential role played by supervisors.