



COMMUNICATIONS

It is recommended that this Policy be read in conjunction with the Education Allowances Policy, other individual Portfolio Policies and associated ICPA Aust documents

POLICY

ICPA seeks to ensure, as the minimum standard of communications for rural and remote residents, services at a level at least equivalent to that available to the majority of urban Australian residents.

OBJECTIVES

1. Quality communication services, comparable to those available in urban areas and demonstrating similar reliability, speed, economy, features, voice quality and data rate, are available at no greater cost to people residing in rural and remote Australia.
2. That the Universal Service Obligation and the Universal Service Guarantee obligations, for telephone and internet services, are fulfilled in the provision and functionality of essential communications services that are:
 - a. reliable
 - b. fit for purpose
 - c. maintained at fully a functioning standard
3. New Universal Service Guarantee voice services exceeds the reliability and quality of existing voice services.
4. Fast, reliable and affordable two-way voice and data communication be available for all students, including those whose families work in remote areas away from a permanent place of residence for the majority of the school year.
5. Appropriate communication services and resources be available for rural and remote students to access, participate in and complete remote learning across all levels of education.
6. Appropriate, suitable, independent information and advice be easily accessible for rural, regional and remote residents to assist with the set up and maintenance of any communication service, software and hardware required and/or utilised.
7. Mobile phone service coverage be increased throughout rural and remote Australia, with areas including rural and remote schools as a priority and coverage to extend beyond school grounds.
8. Mobile towers have consistent and uninterrupted service delivery.
9. Communication services installation, fault reporting and repairs are:
 - a. prioritised for rural and remote students,
 - b. completed within Customer Service Guarantee Guidelines (CSG),
 - c. reviewed regularly, and
 - d. provided by call centres based in Australia.



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10. Students have a dependable, affordable voice service for education and
 - a. voice services in rural and remote areas are not replaced unless an equivalent or better voice service is available,
 - b. rural and remote students have at least two independent forms of communications for voice and data.
11. Uniform price objective of the Universal Service Obligation (Postal) be retained to protect the economy of services in rural and remote areas.
12. Australia Post uphold their Customer Service Guarantee to provide a twice weekly mail delivery service, where requested, to the resident's nominated point of access.
13. Universal Service Obligation (Postal) includes parcel delivery for rural and remote residents.
14. School materials be classified as essential mail and ~~as such~~, their delivery prioritised during mail disruptions, such as a natural disaster.
15. Federal Government retains the Remote Air Service Subsidy (RASS) Scheme and ensures it provides a free regular mail service, where required, and a regular and affordable passenger and freight service to isolated remote families and communities where there is no reliable alternative.
16. Residents in rural and remote Australia have access to at least one free-to-air commercial television channel.
17. Universal Service Guarantee obligations are fulfilled in the provision and functionality of essential communications services that are:
 - a. reliable
 - b. fit for purpose
 - c. maintained at fully functioning standard.
18. New Universal Service Guarantee voice services exceeds the reliability and quality of existing voice services.
19. State and Territory Governments deliver and maintain a high-speed internet connection to geographically isolated families with children enrolled in Schools of Distance Education and Schools of the Air at no cost.
20. NBN Co to establish Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellite internet services under nbn obligation for remote Australian students.
21. Funding/rebate given to rural and remote people having to upgrade devices and infrastructure to access basic communications services for education.
22. Alternative temporary network supplied to town/area when major network disruptions in rural and remote areas greater than 24 hours to ensure lack of disruption to students' education.



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23. Provision of connectivity to ensure the safety of rural and remote students, their families and school staff at standalone schools.

24. Request a guaranteed action plan from Minister of Communications including an appropriate timeline should the switch from 3G to 4G not deliver the 'equivalent or better coverage'.