



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia

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

MEDIA RELEASE

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Recommendations for Education in Remote Environments Must Be Implemented



The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (ICPA Aust) implores the Federal Government to accept the recommendations made by the *Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training* in the recent *Report into Education in Remote and Complex Environments* and calls on the Government to implement the early childhood education recommendations in the 2021 Federal Budget.

ICPA (Aust) welcomed the Report's recommendations that the 2021 Federal Budget include funding assurance for Mobile Early Childhood Services as well as provision of the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme Distance Education Allowance for Early Learning Programs, recognising these long-term advocacies of ICPA (Aust). Implementation of these will promote equitable educational opportunities in the early years for geographically isolated children, with a focus on the year prior to starting formal schooling.

Despite ongoing requests from ICPA (Aust) no assurances have been forthcoming that the 2021-2022 Federal Budget will include assistance to ensure geographically isolated children can access early childhood services.

ICPA Federal President Alana Moller says the association remains disheartened that while the Federal Government's commitment to the Universal Access to Early Childhood Education Program should improve the availability, delivery and accessibility of early learning programs for children in the year prior to starting formal schooling, "for families living in rural and remote regions, the affordability and accessibility of early childhood education programs has never been more concerning".

For many rural and remote families, early childhood education is proving beyond their reach due to unavailability of services and/or staff to fill positions, limited flexibility to allow for individual family's needs, high out-of-pocket costs exceeding the family budget and funding concerns.

While the Australian Government maintains that they are committed to giving all Australians an opportunity to gain a first class education and acknowledges the financial difficulties that some students and their families may experience in undertaking education and training in rural and remote Australia, the ongoing barriers to accessing early childhood education for geographically isolated families are still not being adequately addressed".

Further information can be viewed in ICPA Australia's Early Childhood Education and Care Briefing Paper [here](#).

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