

Isolated Children's Parents' Association Queensland

Every Child's Education Matters

STRENGTHENING RURAL & REMOTE COMMUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION

Each and every student in Queensland deserves a quality education to carry them into the future. ICPA Qld is passionate about ensuring rural and remote communities remain vibrant and sustainable through the provision of equitable access to education. Without equitable access to education in rural and remote areas, attraction and retention of families will continue to be a constant challenge.

ICPA Qld requests that the Queensland Government and Stakeholders prioritise several key issues for the provision of quality education for rural and remote Queensland communities. Equitable access to education will lead to these communities remaining resilient.



SMALL SCHOOLS STAFFING

ICPA Qld seeks commitment from the Minister for Education to lower the requirements for the allocation of two full-time teachers in small schools from 21 to 16 enrolments.

- Appropriate levels of staffing are critical for the delivery of education to students at small schools. Unlike the majority of their metropolitan colleagues, teachers in small schools are required to teach and support seven different year levels from Kindergarten to Year Six, juggling all classes every day: a challenging and stressful task for one teacher. The expectations of and demands on teachers in these positions are extremely high and the ability to provide equity and excellence in their teaching is severely compromised when managing so many classes at once. To ensure that a quality education is provided to students in small schools where enrolments are between 16 and 21 students, it is imperative that the teacher-student ratio is lowered to one teacher to 16 students, to eliminate disadvantage and ensure that students and teachers achieve the best educational outcomes.

ICPA Qld seeks commitment from the Minister for Education to increase the minimum funding for a second teacher in Level 1 small schools.

- With funding currently being provided in Level 1 small schools to support the employment of a second teacher for only three days per week, students' class participation is interrupted by the reduction from two teachers to one, for almost half their classroom time each week. Additionally, school communities cannot attract quality teachers to part-time roles due to location and alternative full-time employment opportunities. Increasing the funding allocation would attract teachers to these small school positions and small school communities, ensuring their students have access to quality, and consistent staffing. In some small schools P&C Committees are providing the funding to ensure the presence of a second teacher.

ICPA Qld seeks commitment from the Minister for Education to ensure small schools with teaching principals are allocated and resourced with the required levels of administrative support to ensure administration tasks do not take away valuable time from teaching and planning in the classroom.

- Regardless of the number of school enrolments, demands on principals of small schools continue to increase. In addition to teaching and planning, principals are required to attend to time-consuming administrative tasks. This places more pressure and responsibility on principals, and they desperately need more support. The current teacher shortage leads to teaching principals being unable to access the administrative time needed. If principals do not get the support needed, "burn out" is a likely result and they will leave the profession, further compounding the problem.



TRAVEL & KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

ICPA Qld seeks the provision of the Conveyance Allowance to families travelling to access a Kindergarten program.

- The Conveyance Allowance is currently unavailable to families taking Kindergarten children via private transport to either a location where they could catch a school bus or, to the place of learning, a Kindergarten facility. In rural and remote locations, the kilometres covered can be considerable. The ability to access the Conveyance Allowance, would be of great assistance to parents and carers, and increase the likelihood of these students attending Kindergarten.

ICPA Qld seeks a guaranteed seating allocation on school buses for children attending Kindergarten in their local community.

- The Queensland Government's strong and ongoing investment in the State Delivered Kindergarten (SDK) program is a sign of the high level of value placed on this program. In rural and remote communities, attendance often requires transport to and from school on a bus. Provision of "fit for purpose" seating on these buses should be ensured so this young cohort can safely and consistently attend Kindergarten and develop strong foundational skills in preparation for future formal learning. Service operators need to be recompensed appropriately and they require extension of insurance coverage for the carriage of these students.

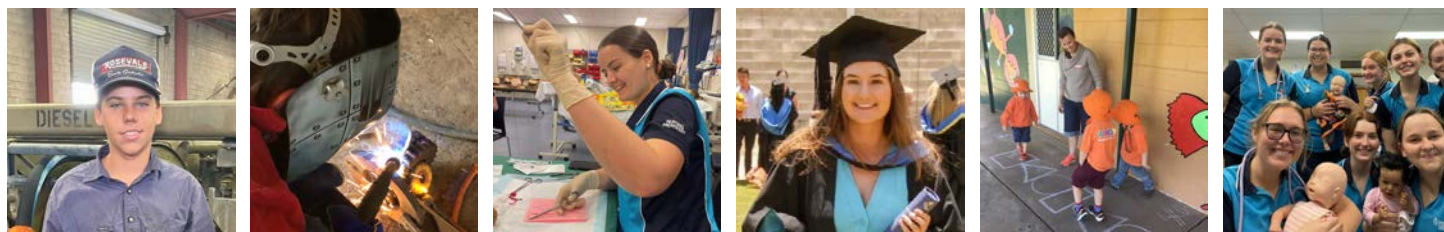
TERTIARY, TRADE, TRAINING

ICPA Qld seeks the implementation of a measurable indicator for Rural and Remote apprentices, to ensure adequate pastoral and financial support is provided.

- Alarming, high incompleteness rates of Rural and Remote students across apprenticeships indicate that current support is inadequate. Rural and Remote apprentices who are forced to relocate to undertake their apprenticeships, require elevated levels of pastoral care and financial support. It is imperative that Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) provide regular, audited, and measured levels of timely assistance to all apprentices, in collaboration with other key stakeholders.
- Implementation of a comprehensive pastoral care program would ensure Rural and Remote apprentices receive critical and targeted support, resulting in increased apprenticeship completion rates.

ICPA Qld strongly supports the expansion of Country University Centres.

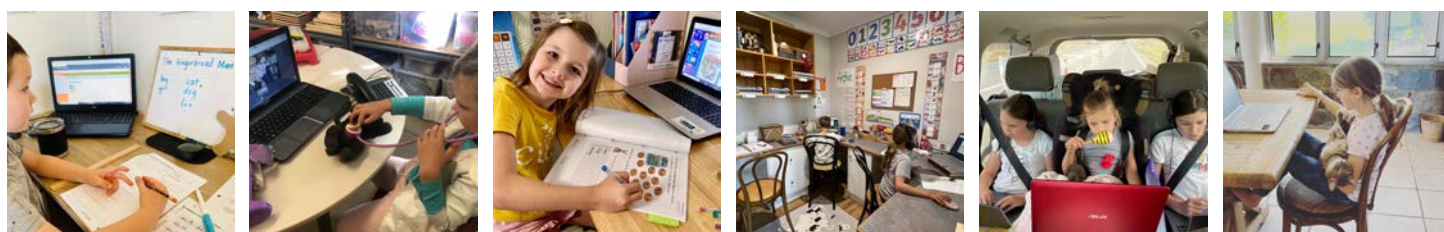
- Country University Centres (CUC) are dedicated learning spaces offering regional and rural and remote communities high tech facilities, and access to essential resources and support services. These centres assist local tertiary and vocational students to pursue higher education, whilst remaining in their communities with family support.
- Country University Centres are slowly rolling out in Queensland and need to be supported by all levels of government, Local and State, to ensure rural and remote students have equitable access to higher education.



DISTANCE EDUCATION

ICPA Qld seeks commitment from the Department of Education that Geographically Isolated students will always be the priority within Schools of Distance Education.

- Geographically Isolated (GI) students have become a minority in Schools of Distance Education (SDE) which were originally, and specifically, established for their unique learning needs. Distance Education is the only education opportunity for these students, and now with only 16% of students identified as GI, they would be considered as a minority enrolment group in the very schools built for this purpose.
- There is a real concern that GI students' needs are no longer being met. GI students have a small window of opportunity to meet face to face with peers and teachers; when this valuable time is absorbed by non-GI students who are enrolled at SDE schools, GI students are disadvantaged. Flexible curriculum delivery methods need to be maintained. Grouping GI students together in lessons ensures these students do not become more isolated in virtual classrooms. Additionally, field services are a critical element for GI students, being not only vital to their learning, but also to the development of their social skills. GI students need the commitment to the continuation of field services.



ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION INC QLD

Regardless of their location, rural and remote students must have equitable access to an education that meets their academic, social and extra curricular needs.



Offering a voice to families living in rural and remote communities.



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CONTACTS

PRESIDENT

Wendy Henning
Email: president@icpaqld.com.au
Phone: 0427 708 943

SECRETARY

Annette Boyle
Email: secretary@icpaqld.com.au
Phone: 0412 165 007



The Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) Queensland is a voluntary, not-for-profit, apolitical parent body dedicated to ensuring that all rural and remote students have equity of access to a continuing and appropriate education.

