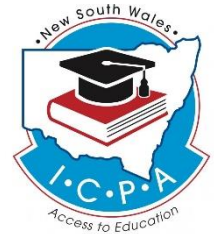


MEDIA RELEASE

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of New South Wales

Working together for equity of access to education for all students who live in rural and remote Australia
28 October 2024



Perseverance Pays Off School Enrolment Policy

The Public Schools fee waiver of \$6000 per year for the child of a Temporary Skilled Worker visa holder in Rural, Regional and Remote NSW is warmly welcomed by ICPA-NSW.

"ICPA-NSW often deals with nuanced issues that have a ripple effect across the broader community. One such issue is the Temporary Skilled Worker Shortage Visas (482 Visas). People may ask what these Visas could possibly have to do with education, however some of our members told us that they sponsor 482 visa holders to fill the workforce gap in regional/remote NSW and those workers were required to pay \$6000 per child per year for Public School Fees." Tanya Mitchell, President said.

"For a 482 Visa holder sponsored to work in rural/remote NSW, with multiple children, Public School fees of \$6000 each child, per year, adds up to a big expense and sometimes leaves them no choice but to enrol children into a cheaper option at a religious school that may not align with their own cultural or religious beliefs." Ms Mitchell said.

The rule was also a disincentive for a visa applicant to be sponsored in NSW, because public school fees for 482 visa holders had already been waived by the Qld and Victorian State Education Departments.

"We thank the NSW Department of Education and the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning Prue Car for recognising this as an equity issue and waiving the fees – every child deserves access to an education and apart from the fact that we desperately need skilled workers in the regions because of dwindling numbers in the bush, small public schools, bus runs and even the local P and C's need to have the benefit of more residents in their communities, with the added bonus of cultural experiences that new families bring."

ICPA-NSW delegates recently held meetings in Sydney to highlight the myriad of issues affecting access to education and also meets regularly online with the NSW Department of Education officials. In May, the organisation wrote to Minister Car, after a member in the Riverina area was advised that their visa employee was not eligible for a fee waiver.

Ms Mitchell said that as a trusted voluntary advocacy group it was pleasing to see the partnerships with the Department of Education playing out in a policy change, which now reads:

"All students on a temporary resident visa will now be able to enrol in their local school, based on their residential address. Enrolment fees will be waived for families that are regional holders of Temporary Skills Shortage visas (subclass 482) (Residing outside Greater Sydney and Wollongong.)"

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