



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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Renewed hope for geographically isolated education needs



The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (ICPA Aust) is hopeful that some measures required to address the access and equity needs of geographically isolated students may be delivered following announcements made in the 2021 Federal Budget released this week while Federal Council was in Canberra for delegations.

The 2021 Budget pledged to invest a landmark \$2 billion in support across the next four years to provide 15 hours per week of quality learning for children in the year before school, irrespective of where they live. Although there was no direct reference to rural and remote early childhood education and mobile playgroups, ICPA (Aust) has urged the Government to specifically address the needs of geographically isolated students in this funding allocation.

ICPA (Aust) welcomed recommendations in the 2020 Report into Education in Remote and Complex Environments 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 delivered by distance education, recognising these long-term advocacies of ICPA (Aust).

ICPA (Aust) is extremely hopeful the Government will include the above measures as part of the Budget's new preschool funding thereby increasing much needed access to early childhood education for rural and remote children regardless of geographical location.

ICPA Federal President Alana Moller says the Association is optimistic, "For families living in geographically isolated areas the affordability and accessibility of early childhood education programs is concerning and the introduction of measures to directly address these issues would play a significant role in ensuring equitable Early Childhood Education is available to all children in rural and remote regions.

Implementing these recommendations would be a relatively small monetary investment yet would go a long way to achieving the government's objective of universal access to Early Childhood Education for our nation's most geographically isolated children".

The Morrison Government also pledged \$600 million towards the newly established National Recovery and Resilience agency tasked with assisting local communities respond to natural disasters. ICPA (Aust) is hopeful that the agency will be in a position to consider the much needed Rural Hardship Education Fund to support the educational needs of rural and remote families in times of hardship and are advocating strongly for this outcome. Further information regarding ICPA (Aust) advocacy can be viewed in the Briefing Papers presented at the recent delegation to Parliament [here](#).

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