

Established in 1971, the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) is a national organisation representing rural students and their families at all stages of education and has a large network of branches throughout Australia.

ICPA WA works within the community to provide support and assistance to rural and regional families across Western Australia. We advocate and lobby to assist families to access appropriate education for their children.

Media Release

Budget Cuts to WA Schools of the Air

9 September 2015

The widening gap in education provision for remote students in Western Australia is set to increase due to the decision by the Department of Education to change the funding arrangements for WA's five Schools of the Air. The five WA Schools of the Air are located in Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Carnarvon, Derby and Port Hedland. As of 2016, each of the schools will fall under the WA Department of Education's Student-centred funding model, with funding to be directed for each student enrolled in every school.

Under the new funding arrangements, each of the five schools, which provide the education for many children living on isolated pastoral properties, mining leases and remote communities located in the remote areas of the State schools are set to lose \$50,000 to \$60,000 per year for the next five years until 2020, and represents a cut of 25% in all five of the schools. At the end of the announced five year transition, these schools will receive no additional funding to compensate for the tyranny of distance between the location of school and its students.

"These changes will have serious ramifications for the students and their families," Isolated Children's Parent's Association WA (ICPA WA) State President Liz Sudlow said.

"Most of the students live hundreds of kilometres from the schools and have no other way to access appropriate education. The cuts will mean that students living in remote areas of Western Australia will be even more isolated and disadvantaged, with higher teacher/student ratios and less money for vital educational resources, camps, teacher visits and home tutor seminars."

"These schools are unique from every other school in the State, as the only school interaction the students have is the daily "classroom" air lesson, with the parent or home tutor required to perform the day to day teaching of their students in consultation with the teacher, and three face to face opportunities a year, where they can socialise with their school peers."

"Due their unique nature and importance to remote and isolated families, these schools should not fall into the same funding pool as those in Perth, and the ICPA WA calls on Education Minister Peter Collier to intervene on this matter to ensure that students in remote Western Australia enjoy the same access to education as their urban peers," she said.

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