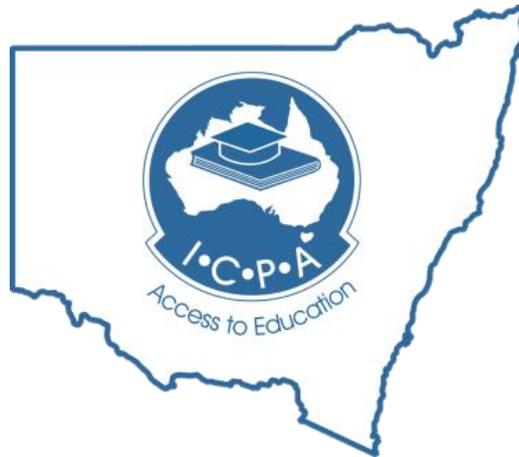


Isolated Children's Parents' Association of New South Wales Inc.



Submission to the
**Inquiry into measurement and
outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools**
NSW Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee No 3 – Education
August 2019

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Thankyou in anticipation of your attention to the following submission presented by the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of NSW (ICPA-NSW).

ICPA-NSW is a voluntary non-profit advocacy group that has its roots firmly embedded in rural, remote and regional areas across the state. ICPA-NSW believes that all students - irrespective of where they live -are entitled to equitable access to education that enables them to participate to their full potential in the social, economic, political and cultural life of a community.

The NSW State Council of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association advocates for members who have children who:

- Attend a rural pre-school or access early childhood education through a mobile service
- Attend a small rural or remote school
- Study by Distance Education and School of the Air lessons
- Travel to school by bus or private vehicle (daily, weekly or at the end of term)
- Board away from home to access primary or secondary school at a boarding school, agricultural high school, hostel, private board or maintain a second home
- Attend a Tertiary institution- University/TAFE/ College

The following arguments refer, in particular, to the: -

Inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools – Term of Reference 1. (C) (i) “the needs of and impact on disadvantaged schools and students from a disadvantaged background.

It is well documented families educating children in geographical isolation are disadvantaged.

Negative consequences of the introduction of outcome-based budgeting for New South Wales schools:

- If outcomes determine funding, how is it possible to compare outcomes of vastly differing schools for example, a school in eastern/northern suburbs of Sydney with a remote school? The schools obviously would be needing to target different outcomes. The supports and pastoral care would need to be different.
- Many of the domestic issues of families in low Social Economic Status (SES) remote schools occur outside the school gate (refer table 1) and these issues severely impact on school academic outcomes. It is inequitable to target funding towards schools that are disadvantaged by problems that teachers have little impact on. Children who are educated in geographic isolation face extra stress such as large distances from health and education facilities, compounded by drought, flood and other climate vagaries potentially affecting educational outcomes.
- In many isolated communities Distance Education (DE) and School of the Air (SOTA) are supported by supervisors at home who are not paid. The inequity of judging their performance against schools (which are staffed by qualified teachers) outcomes, is obvious.

- Extreme caution would need to be practised so that outcomes-based funding never provides a disincentive for schools to welcome rural/remote or otherwise educationally disadvantaged children with open arms. For example, there could be a negative influence on high schools that take students from regional/remote areas where those children who may not have had the early educational opportunities of others (refer table B). Those students may potentially lower the school's academic outcomes. Distance is a barrier for children to access the 600 hours of recommended pre-school therefore many rural and remote children commence school having had limited or nil access to pre-school. If anything, those schools must be financially able to remediate lack of early educational opportunity.
- The outcome-based budget system should be designed in a fashion that allows schools to continue to provide wide curriculums; students to study subjects which are not provided in their schools, through distance education; schools to continue to offer high quality Vocational Education Training (VET) pathways to students etc.
- Furthermore, there is an equity issue with outcome-based budgeting as it rewards schools that have the greatest number of proficient students. The gap would recognisably widen between the above-mentioned schools and those with less proficient students.

Solution

ICPA-NSW believes there is a need to ensure that a funding model meets the needs of rural and remote schools. A more appropriate option may be to allocate **extra funding to schools based on the proportion of students not meeting standards.**

In the almost fifty years since ICPA was formed, equitable education advocacy has resulted in significant improvements of access and standard of education in rural and remote schools. ICPA-NSW recommends an even more equitable funding model to continue to support these improvements in rural and remote schools so families can stay and not be disadvantaged.

Needs based funding - rather than outcomes-based funding - would support ICPA-NSW's belief in regional development and keeping employment and training opportunities in rural and remote areas.

Table 1

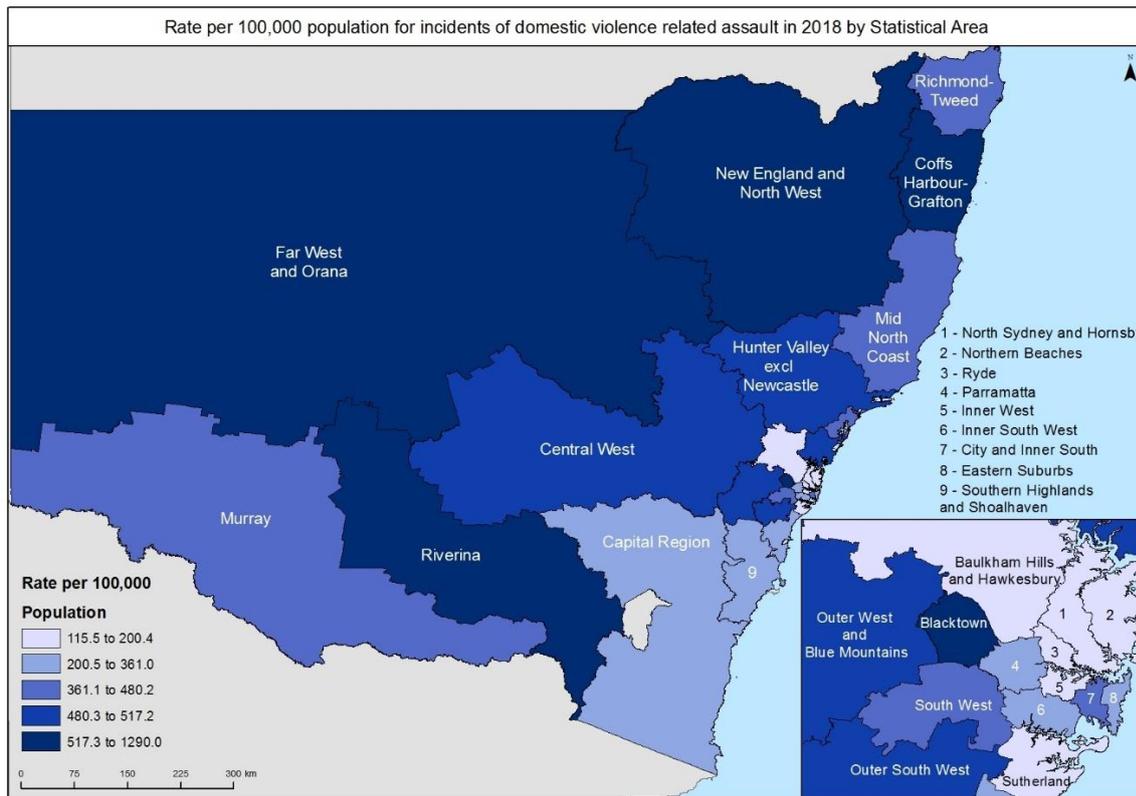


Table 2

Pre-Schoolers' Access to Pre-school in Far Western NSW 2016

Currently still no access to pre school in these areas except for Weilmoringle- August 2019

Primary Schools	Public	Distance	Numbers of		Needs & Issues
			3yr	4yr	
Wanaaring		200km dirt road	3	3	4yr old mandated to have access to preschool. 3yro indigenous low socio-economic
Louth		100km dirt	0	1	4yr old needs early intervention:- speech and socialisation
Weilmoringle Currently in operation as of October 2018		100km bitumen 02 68744941	2	0	3 yr old indigenous low socio economic. There has been an unsuccessful trial to bus high school children to Brewarrina. Education must come to children. No local SLSO, must travel from Brewarrina
White Cliffs		100km dirt/ bitumen	3	3	Inconvenience and negative impact on family businesses in having to provide schooling at home or transporting students long distances.
Tibooburra		330km 100 km dirt 220km bitumen	2	1	There is a long day care centre in Tibooburra Multipurpose Hall and a child doing DE pre school there.

Clare	75km Ivanhoe 155km Balranald	0	1	<p>4yr old will be enrolled in Kindergarten for two years if no preschool is available.</p> <p>Possible disadvantages:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principal may not be EC trained • student possibly has developmentally inappropriate inconvenience and negative impact on family businesses in having to provide schooling at home or transporting students long distances. <p>2019: School has commenced an Early Transition Orientation Program and there is a fortnightly mobile preschool service - in an attempt to halfway meet the 600 hours of pre-school children need to prepare for school.</p>
Palinyewah	60km(average)bitumen	4	2	Inconvenience and negative impact on family businesses in having to provide schooling at home or transporting students long distances.
Pomona		2	3	Families travel past the school -sometimes having dropped siblings there - to access pre school in Wentworth
Marra Creek	Dirt 42.8kms	2	6	Families travel past the school-sometimes having dropped siblings there to access pre-school in Nyngan
Hermidale	Bitumen	1	2	Families travel past the school-sometimes having dropped siblings there to access pre-school in Nyngan
Carinda		2	1	Families travel past the school-sometimes having dropped siblings there to access pre-school in Walgett