



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (Inc)
FEDERAL COUNCIL

"Advocating for equitable access to education for students in rural and remote Australia"

Federal Secretary
ICPA (Aust)
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Telecommunications Reform
Broadband Implementation Branch and Infrastructure and Access Branch
Department of Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 2154
Canberra ACT 2601
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January 12, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

ICPA (Aust) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the consultation of the Telecommunications Reform Package. ICPA (Aust) is a voluntary, non-profit, apolitical parent body, dedicated to ensuring all rural and regional students (be they indigenous, requiring special needs or battling drought and other hardships) have equity of access to a continuing and appropriate education. It encompasses the education of children from early childhood through to tertiary. The majority of member families (around 3 000) of the Association reside in small communities in rural and often isolated areas of Australia and all share a common goal of seeking access to an appropriate education for their children and the provision of services required in achieving this.

ICPA (Aust) supports the introduction of the Telecommunications Reform Package, which includes the Telecommunications (Regional Broadband Scheme) Charge Bill 2017 that would establish an effective funding arrangement towards the long-term costs of regional Australia's **nbn** satellite and fixed wireless services through contributions sourced from the **nbn** and networks comparable to the **nbn**.

ICPA (Aust) also supports the Statutory Infrastructure Provider regime to ensure that students in rural and remote areas of Australia can access a superfast broadband service, as long as there is no reduction in quality of the service as this is essential for distance education and online learning.

In relation to accessing education in rural and regional areas our members are increasingly reliant on adequate and affordable internet and are still dependent on fixed line telephony, particularly as mobile phone coverage is not available in many rural areas. The assurance of funding for this noncommercial **nbn** service is something that we as an organisation are highly supportive of as long as the cost of providing this funding is not ultimately transferred over to the customer.

ICPA (Aust) supports this new Reform Package in order to facilitate equity of access to education for our rural and remote students with the best technological opportunities through superfast broadband and commends its future development.

Yours sincerely

Jane Morton
Federal Secretary
ICPA (Aust)