



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (Inc).

"Access to Education"

Submission

to the

Review of the Demand Driven Funding System

from the

Federal Council

of the

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc.

ICPA (Aust)

December 2013

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The Isolated Children's Parents' Association, (ICPA Aust), is pleased to provide comments in regards to improving access for students from low socio-economic status backgrounds and rural and remote communities, for the review of the demand driven funding system.

ICPA is a national, apolitical, volunteer organisation, formed in Bourke in 1971, representing families who live in rural and remote Australia. Our goal is to achieve equity of educational opportunity for all geographically isolated residents and thus ensure they have access to a continuing and appropriate education. ICPA is focused on ensuring that the destiny of students from rural and remote Australia is not limited due to their demography and therefore consideration must be given to factors which affect the education of these students that do not necessarily need to be considered within the context of metropolitan education.

ICPA appreciates all initiatives introduced to increase participation in higher education and has no doubt that students living in rural and remote regions would have benefited from the demand driven funding system that was introduced in 2012. However, any benefit to our members living in rural and remote regions to improved access, has been minimal. Our members strongly voice that it is the high cost of accessing university that has the greatest impact on their ability to attend university. The findings outlined in a research report, 'Tertiary Access Research', conducted by ICPA (Aust) earlier this year, clearly supports this.

While a number of the Youth Allowance changes introduced by previous governments have recognised that the costs associated with distance and relocating to university were impacting on a student's decisions as to whether he or she could undertake tertiary studies, the changes were limited in their effect due to the changes having to be cost neutral. Narrowing access to income support mechanisms and the ever-increasing expenses associated with accessing a tertiary education which requires relocation from home, are driving engagement in tertiary studies out of the reach of many rural and remote students.

Not enough has been done to address the needs of students who continue to be under represented at university. ICPA advocates that in order to substantially increase the participation of rural and remote students in tertiary studies, it is imperative that the government introduce a Tertiary Access Allowance, equal to the current relocation scholarship for all students who must relocate from rural and remote areas to study their chosen course.

ICPA thanks the Minister for Education for the opportunity to submit to the review of the demand driven funding system for higher education. Consideration must be given to the needs of rural students, wherever their family home and the limitations placed on their ability to access their tertiary course. ICPA is happy to provide further information should it be required.

Tertiary Access Research, May 2013
[Tertiary Access Research, May 2013](#)