



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia

*Working together for equity of access to education for all students who live in rural & remote
Australia*

MEDIA RELEASE

RURAL ANGST DRIVES DELEGATES TO LAUNCESTON

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Delegates representing Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) branches from around Australia will converge on Launceston Tasmania next week as the 43rd Federal Conference gets underway on August 7. Uniting under this year's theme "Together Towards Tomorrow" branch representatives will travel from as far afield as the Kimberley in the north west of the country, to Alice Springs in the centre and Broken Hill in western New South Wales, to tackle the many challenges facing rural and remote students today.

President of ICPA Australia, Judy Newton, said the two day conference would be officially opened by the Member for Lyons, Mr Eric Hutchinson, on Thursday morning and the appearance of "Hook Line and Sinker" presenter and guest speaker Nick Duigan later that day, would be a conference highlight.

Mrs Newton said the increased pressure rural families have been under has resulted in a much larger than usual number of motions being presented by branches this year. There were many issues of concern reflected in those motions, but they focussed on five main problems the rural community believed needed to be addressed right away: the failure of the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance to keep pace with the cost of boarding; the massive impact the lack of NBN access is having on families and distance education; the call for extension of the AIC to include four year olds trying to begin their formal education; the pursuit of the Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA), to recognise distance education tutors for providing what the government cannot and the provision of a Tertiary Assistance Allowance (TAA), to improve rural participation at university level.

Families have borne a huge personal and financial cost in providing education at all levels in rural and regional Australia. They have had to continue fighting to address the growing chasm between the well represented tertiary educated city dwellers and their academically underrepresented rural cohort, starting with the battle for equity of access to education for four year olds.

National Broadband Network's Lead Community Stakeholder Relations Manager, Mrs Lalla Mackenzie, and Telstra Country Wide's Executive Director, Mr Andrew Coull, will be present to address the current rural communication crisis first hand with delegates. Social media, cloud computing and family internet safety will be the focus of the conference workshop on Day 2.

For further information and comments please contact:

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