



# 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**

### **NEW AMBASSADOR GIVES HOPE FOR OLD CRUSADE**

**Monday, April 13, 2015**

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) of Australia's long running quest to achieve a Distance Education Teaching Allowance took a huge step forward recently with the appointment of (DETA) ambassador, Catherine Marriott. Ms Marriott was the 2012 recipient of the Western Australian Rural Industry Research and Development Corporation's Rural Woman of the Year award, the runner up nationally and more recently, the provider of collective, strategic advice to Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, in her new role as commissioner for the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

For years now, ICPA Australia has been asking the federal government for a modest allowance of \$4000 per year for the 1500 families who have to teach their children through the distance education system. While this amount would have little impact on the federal budget, it would be hugely beneficial for those families obligated to providing the service. Ms. Marriott has committed to promoting the necessity of DETA to our federal politicians, and to raising the profile of ICPA whenever possible. "The home tutor's contribution to the education of regional and remote Australian children is a service that has remained largely unrecognised by the Australian government and I hope to help change that," Ms. Marriott declared. "People in town are able to drop their children off at school or child care and go to work and earn an income - this is not an option for home tutors who must educate their own children," she said.

Federal President of ICPA, Judy Newton said "the proposal to introduce a teaching allowance has been well received in principle by politicians during past federal delegations to Canberra, but there is still a lot of confusion surrounding the topic." While politicians recognise the huge contribution that Australian farming families make to the regional and national economy, they need to understand the unique educational challenges they face and commit to ensuring they have the support required. "These remote Australians have no choice, they must educate their children via distance education and once the school papers are posted out, each family must find a way to deliver the program," stated Mrs Newton.

In the end, this issue is about productivity. If doctors, corporate lawyers and policewomen had to stay home to teach their urban children, there would be a public outcry. What is happening in outback Australia is no different, just less visible to the Australian public. Combined with ICPA Australia, Catherine Marriott hopes to shed enough light on this subject to achieve the cultural shift needed within government.

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