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## Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia

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

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ISOLATION NO BARRIER**



Not to be deterred by challenges stemming from a global pandemic and an intergalactic event, one hundred and twenty determined parents met online last week for the Isolated Children's Parents' Association 49<sup>th</sup> annual Federal Conference that took place via a web conference.

The conference commenced with a series of telecommunications motions ironically calling for continued improvements to internet services for education in remote Australia while the SkyMuster satellite that provides internet to the most remote parts of Australia was disabled nationally by a solar flare shortly before proceedings began, meaning many of the conference attendees were left without an internet connection for the online event.

Nothing could get in the way of ensuring the conference could continue however, with some delegates driving hundreds of kilometres to find enough reception to dial in to the event once it became apparent that the network outage would take some hours to rectify.

Following on from conference, ICPA Federal President, Alana Moller reflected on the events which transpired leading up to and during the event "in organising the online event, ICPA Australia aspired to provide an opportunity for our valued members to come together and be able to tell their stories. It certainly serves as a reminder of the tenacity and resilience of our members that this was able to be achieved despite the extreme difficulties faced before and during the Conference and shows the determination we all have to ensure our messages are heard and ICPA Australia was pleased to be able to facilitate this."

The insightfully themed conference of "Learn from the past, build the future" has set the benchmark for the persistence, resilience and sheer determination our members hold for ensuring they have a platform to bring the issues facing rural and remote families and their children to the forefront.

The establishment of an isolated children's pandemic advisory group, consistency and uniform adherence to the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee guidelines which have impacted on students who need to board away from home for schooling during the COVID-19 restrictions, the inclusion of remote apprentices in schemes such as the Coronavirus Supplement assistance, and extending and expanding the Allied Health Services presently delivered by telehealth are some of the new rural and remote issues discussed at the ICPA Federal Web Conference.

At the root of ICPA policy and keenly reflected throughout the conference was the need for ongoing specialised and targeted assistance and support for geographically isolated students to access and attain equitable educational opportunities and outcomes.

More information can be found on [ICPA website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) with the hashtag #ICPAconf2020.

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