



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia

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

MEDIA RELEASE

26 November 2020

1 DECEMBER IS GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED DISTANCE EDUCATION DAY

“ We cannot allow a situation where parents are forced to choose between putting food on the table through their employment to support their kids and their kids' education

Prime Minister Scott Morrison
15 April, 2020 www.abc.net.au

ICPA Australia is calling on the Federal Government to formally recognise the role that parents play in distance education with the launch of Geographically Isolated Distance Education Day on 1 December. The day recognises and honours the ongoing plight of geographically isolated families who must educate their children at home at all times.

A heightened awareness through the COVID-19 pandemic of the challenges associated with educating children at home has highlighted the challenges faced by geographically isolated families who, due to living in isolated parts of Australia, have no choice but to educate their children by distance. It has also validated the necessity of an adult tutor to be available to assist and supervise students while they participate in online learning and learning from home, drawing attention to the commitment, responsibility, time and financial impost required to facilitate children's full-time learning in the home environment.

ICPA Australia Federal President Alana Moller explains, “Geographically isolated distance education families, often across generations, have dedicated themselves to educating their children at home. This needs to be recognised and lauded.”

The provision of distance education to geographically isolated children is founded on the assumption that there is a distance education tutor present in the home schoolroom to supervise, assist and essentially provide fulltime support and facilitation of their schooling on a daily, full-time basis.

There is however no recognition of the essential role this person plays in the success of geographically isolated education, nor the implications and costs associated with providing this person for the families for whom this is a way of life. There is an urgent need to support those families for who, due to the tyranny of distance, this form of educational delivery is a full-time commitment. ICPA Australia calls on the Federal Government to recognise and provide extra financial support to assist the approximately 1500 families this affects.

ICPA Australia research shows that there are over 4000 students from approximately 1500 distance education classrooms across Australia for whom access to schooling is limited to this mode of educational delivery as a result of geographical isolation.

National Geographically Isolated Distance Education Day is a day to honour those in distance education classrooms across remote Australia for their ongoing commitment and resilience.

For further information and comments please contact:

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