

**ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA)**



SA ICPA Vice-President

Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

8th October 2015

Dear Senators,

The SA State Council of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (SA ICPA) seeks your support to ensure the passing of proposed changes to Youth Allowance, which would see the removal of the Family Assets Test and the Family Actual Means Test, as well as alterations to the Parental Income Test.

Ensuring our rural and remote youth are educated at the highest possible level for which they are suited is vital for the future of their communities and for the entire country. We need educated members of the community to bring their knowledge back and ensure the viability and progression of rural and remote areas. SA ICPA believes that all students should have the opportunity to realise their potential, including engaging in a tertiary education if they desire, regardless of their geographical location. Unfortunately, statistics show that coming from a rural or remote area has a massive impact on the likelihood of a young person commencing a tertiary education.

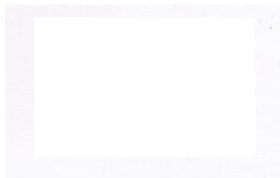
For many of our members who are geographically isolated, the financial burden of education begins in the pre-primary years where the only option is distance education. This means that a parent has to supervise their children during the school day or employ a home tutor to do so. For secondary schooling, these students often have no other option but to board away from home. The high costs of educating children through to the completion of high school often prohibits families from also supporting their students through tertiary study, particularly when there are several children being educated at the one time.

Sending children away from home to university or TAFE encompasses many relocation and ongoing costs including housing, utilities, furniture, fees, textbooks, clothing, food and travel. Children from rural and remote areas that are currently ineligible for Youth Allowance feel the pressure that is exerted on their parents to pay for their education. Many are unable or unwilling to take up opportunities for further study due to this financial burden.

Despite the often crippling costs of educating their children, these families are often not entitled to Youth Allowance for their tertiary student, as the family farm or station places them over the current assets threshold. While non-liquid farming assets may appear high on paper, their current income may be minimal or negative, forcing further debt.

Access to Youth Allowance for these families would go a long way towards ensuring equality in educational outcomes for rural and remote youth. We would expect, with the proposed changes, to see an increase in the number of students from these areas taking up opportunities for further study. We would appreciate your support in ensuring greater educational outcomes for our rural and remote youth.

Yours Sincerely



Kerry Williams
State Vice-President
SA ICPA

CC. Senator Bob Day OA
Senator Jacqui Lambie
Senator Glenn Lazarus
Senator David Leyonhjelm
Senator John Madigan
Senator Ricky Muir
Senator Zhenya Wang
Senator Nick Xenophon