



Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (Inc)

**FEDERAL COUNCIL
"Access to Education"**

SUBMISSION

to the

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

on the

**Inquiry into Rural and Regional Access to Secondary and Tertiary
Education Opportunities**

from

**Federal Council
of the
Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc
ICPA (Aust)**

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The Federal Council of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia, ICPA (Aust), welcomes the opportunity to have input into the Senate Inquiry into Rural and Regional Access to Secondary and Tertiary Education Opportunities. Our aim is to provide an overview of the experience of ICPA members living in rural and remote Australia, and to make recommendations to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee on what could be done to further assist those children living in rural and remote areas in accessing secondary and tertiary education.

ICPA (Aust) is a voluntary parent body dedicated to ensuring all geographically isolated students have equity of access to a continuing and appropriate education. It encompasses the education of children from early childhood through to tertiary. Member families of the Association reside in rural and remote Australia and all share a common goal of access to education for their children and the provision of services required to achieve this. Our children are educated in small rural schools, at boarding schools and by distance education and they may have access to early childhood services. Students wishing to study at a tertiary level almost always need to live away from home to do so.

Access and affordability to education from early childhood to tertiary education is of paramount importance to rural and remote families. There are approximately 3,500 ICPA members who reside in rural and remote Australia. These members are reporting, with increasing desperation, the difficulty they are having accessing and affording appropriate secondary and tertiary education, for their children. Seventy nine motions have been tabled on the agenda for the 2009 ICPA Annual Federal Conference being held on the 13th and 14th August, in Longreach, many of them highlighting this desperation that families are currently experiencing. Students wishing to access an appropriate education frequently must relocate from their homes and their families in order to access most education institutions. This involves substantial upfront costs which are often out of the reach of students and their families. In many cases students choose not to participate and hence do not reach their full educational potential.

ICPA (Aust) has put three proposals to the Federal Government.

1. To revise the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) guidelines to enable a child to receive an education through having access to the AIC allowance when a school within the context of a rural or remote community cannot meet the educational needs appropriate to that child.
2. To introduce a tertiary access allowance as financial assistance for those rural and remote students who must relocate and live away from home to access tertiary education.
3. To identify rural and remote students as a distinct disadvantage group when assessing Independent Youth Allowance, when their only choice to study is to relocate from the family home.

It is with these issues as a background that ICPA (Aust) has chosen to address the points of reference in the **Inquiry into Rural and Regional Access to Secondary and Tertiary Education Opportunities.**

a. The financial impact on rural and regional students who are attending metropolitan secondary schools, universities or TAFE

Educating rural and remote students at metropolitan secondary schools, universities or TAFE requires a significant financial commitment by the family and the students themselves. Students, who need to relocate, often face the prospect of having to move hundreds of kilometres away from home. Their family has to generate enough 'after tax' income to pay for the following expenses:

- 1) Relocation expenses
- 2) Boarding/accommodation expenses, which often includes a bond with rental accommodation.
- 3) Tuition/university expenses
- 4) Travel expenses (including family visits)
- 5) Communication expenses (telephones etc.)

These costs are essential expenditure, because the local community does not have the resources to provide an appropriate education. Such expenses place an enormous strain on the student and their family's financial resources.

Currently the average cost of boarding and tuition fees for a secondary student is between \$25,000 and \$30,000 per annum. The Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Basic Boarding Allowance (2009) is \$6,824 per annum. Generating sufficient income to meet education expenses is extremely difficult for families. As the AIC Additional Boarding Allowance is linked to a Parental Income Test, many rural and remote families are often not eligible, because the Parental Income Test (2009) is \$32,800 at the lower limit, and this figure is unrealistic in relation to wages/salary earned. AIC provides warranted support but the payments have not kept pace with boarding fee increases, which regularly exceed the CPI.

The negative emotional impacts endured by rural and regional students and families in the situation of a student needing to relocate to pursue their education, must also be recognised. Usually the decision to send a child away to obtain an appropriate education is made reluctantly, and finally decided upon when all other options prove to be unsuitable for the child's needs. Not being able to be with your child to guide and support them as they assimilate and meet the challenges of living within a very different school community, can be very distressing for the whole family. The extent of the financial and emotional strain associated with the process of separation can sometimes culminate in health issues for all concerned, and/or poor academic and sporting performances for the student.

When the local school cannot deliver an appropriate education, an alternative action undertaken is that the entire family relocates to ensure the children reach their full potential in a competitive academic, cultural and sporting environment. The negative impacts of having to move are both financial and emotional, and communities lose vital members and skills. ICPA (Aust) believes that if a school does not offer an education appropriate for the student's needs, that family should be eligible for AIC.

The Review of Australian Higher Education (The Bradley Report, 2008, p 46) (1) stated, "the additional living and study costs associated with higher education enrolment, particularly for those students who need to move away from home to study, are considerable". Feedback from ICPA members also indicates that the current measures for student income support, including Youth Allowance, Austudy, and Abstudy, do not adequately recognise the extra costs incurred by a rural or remote student attempting to

access higher education. Narrowing access to support mechanisms and ever increasing costs (living expenses, rent, college fees, travel and fuel) are rapidly multiplying the difficulties involved in accessing studies so far away from home.

As AIC is only available to assist families of primary and secondary students, ICPA (Aust) continues to lobby for a tertiary access allowance. The tertiary access allowance advocated by ICPA (Aust) is to enable the student to access their place of study. Access would include securing a place of accommodation, assisting with relocation expenses, travel and other costs associated with leaving home to study. This allowance should ideally:

- Be an annual payment for the duration of the student's full time course on proof of initial enrolment.
- Be a minimum of \$6000 per year (indexed to CPI)
- Not be classed as income and hence not jeopardise the student's eligibility for existing support payments such as Youth Allowance.
- Be a non means tested allowance due to current means testing criteria being excessively restrictive.

Rural and remote apprentices experience disadvantage in their efforts to skill themselves. It is necessary for the majority of these young apprentices to relocate to a larger centre to access businesses with the capacity to train them. They also incur great costs when relocating the considerable distance from their family home, accessing accommodation and setting up in this accommodation. Most of these apprentices incur further costs when attending TAFE placements. TAFE institutions are often hundreds of kilometres away from the apprentice's workplace. Consequently the cost of travel and additional accommodation are a significant impost and often impossible to fund without outside help from employers or family.

The Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) for apprentices does not reflect the real cost of living for a person in their unique situation. Currently first year apprentices are eligible for \$77.17 per week, second year apprentices for \$38.59 per week and third year apprentice for \$25 per week. The gap between this allowance and the actual cost borne by rural and remote apprentices living away from home is substantial. At a time of financial uncertainty, it is essential that our young people pursue further training in vocations of their choice. Affordable access to this training is essential to build sustainable rural and remote communities. ICPA (Aust) requests that urgent consideration be given for an increase in the LAFHA for apprentices from rural and remote areas to reflect their actual cost of living expenses.

b. The education alternatives for rural and regional students wanting to study in regional areas

State governments provide alternative options for undertaking secondary and post secondary education, other than attending metropolitan schools, universities and TAFE, but not all available options provide a suitable or appropriate education for every students living in rural and remote areas. Many families cannot readily access these educational facilities due to not having a school at their doorstep or a bus service which will take them to school.

Not all secondary schools located within rural and regional centres offer an education that is appropriate to all students' individual educational needs. The spectrum of 'appropriate education' can span from the academically talented (gifted), through English as a Second Language school to a student with learning difficulties and disabilities. In smaller centres the education facilities frequently do not have the resources to meet the needs to all their students. Subject choice is often limited to a range which potentially narrows the student's career choices. Lack of competition, interaction and learning with class members are all things which leave these teenagers at a disadvantage when class sizes are small. Some schools do not have core subjects taught face-to-face with a teacher presenting in the classroom, and many schools are adversely impacted upon by community social problems. This creates a very difficult learning environment. In these circumstances, students either receive an education locally that is not appropriate, or their families elect to move them away to access a more appropriate educational facility in another centre.

There are families in some areas of rural and remote Australia who have access to a student hostel while they attend the local school. These hostels may be state funded or private facilities, known as Non-Government School Term Hostels. These facilities are not attached to any individual school. Some cater for both primary and secondary children, while other smaller hostels only cater for primary aged students. A number of these facilities in small towns only cater for a small number of children. Their overheads are high and they struggle to keep afloat with the rising costs of insurance and wages. Many small student hostels have closed over recent years so the students living in these communities are required to move to a larger centre to access an education. In December 2008 the Non-Government School Term Hostel Programme finished. This four-year programme was very successful. In 2009 the funding became state administered. To date, only one state has guaranteed funding and in this case only for a further 18 months. Continued recurrent funding is critical for student hostels. They provide a vital service and option so rural and remote children can access an appropriate education.

Many regional centres have secondary schools however they are not always accompanied by a boarding facility to enable students who live beyond the 'school bus route' to board. These students must leave home and board in larger regional or metropolitan locations. There are limited boarding facilities and hostels located in regional centres where students can stay while they attend government schools. Families incur huge costs to meet boarding expenses. The Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) scheme assists some families, but many families fail to meet the strict eligibility criteria. By denying financial assistance to these families, their children are denied an education appropriate to their individual needs.

Distance education is another option for secondary students who do not have daily access to a school. At this level it is usually a successful alternative for highly motivated, self-directed learners. Many students find it is difficult to stay 'on track' at home without the support of face-to-face teaching and easy access to the school's educational resources. Young people require social contact, peer support and interaction to mature and develop into responsible adults. Access to efficient internet services is paramount to the success of distance education. Internet services are limited in rural and remote locations and are expensive when available.

Accessing tertiary education via on-line learning is sometimes touted as a suitable mode of study. This form of study is available to all students regardless of where they live. For many of our rural and remote students this is not a viable option. These students may have already completed much of their education by distance education, with the associated educational and social disadvantages. Distance education has restrictive face-to-face interaction with teachers, peers and mentors.

Many courses either cannot be totally completed on-line or are not offered. Most courses that provide the professions and skills needed in our rural communities (eg mechanics, engineers, nurses, and teachers) have compulsory residential segments. Rural and remote students need opportunities to gain appropriate personal communication skills in addition to academic qualifications if they are to contribute to sustaining and advancing our rural communities. They must be given an option as to how they will access their course. Rural and remote students should not be restricted to on-line learning because the financial costs associated with relocating away from home to study are not affordable.

Unlike students from rural and remote areas, the majority of metropolitan tertiary students do not have to leave home to access their studies. In addition to enrolment costs, many rural students need to find accommodation and finances to assist them to relocate. Assistance from the Government is again dependent on each student's situation and affects their eligibility to receive Youth Allowance. If the proposed criteria for independent Youth Allowance eligibility take effect, rural and remote students will have to defer university studies for two years. Currently, most universities will not allow for a two year deferment. This will dramatically affect the number of rural students attending university. Students will become less inclined to pursue higher education if they are forced to work full time first and remain away from the study environment for two years. Studies have shown that on completion of their university studies, rural and remote students are more likely to return to their communities or another rural community to seek employment than non-rural students. Rural and remote students who choose to study at TAFE or commence an apprenticeship are faced with similar challenges in accessing financial assistance for relocation and eligibility for Youth Allowance. Rural and remote students need to be encouraged to pursue post secondary education and receive financial assistance to access study options.

Education is vital for all Australians. Parents in rural and remote areas are required to make difficult decisions on what is best for their child's education and well-being due to limited educational options where they reside. A family's decision will depend on each student's needs and what is available in their community. Government initiatives need to financially assist rural and remote families in the decisions they make to educate their children, to ensure equity of access to education for these students.

c. The implications of current and proposed government measures on prospective students living in rural and regional areas

Government policies propagate inconsistent standards throughout rural and regional Australia. The overlap of Federal and State Government responsibilities pertaining to education creates disorder. Inequities between states, in regard to accessing an appropriate education with financial assistance, are being caused by state education authority's definitions of an appropriate school under the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) scheme. ICPA has lobbied the Federal Government, through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, to revise the AIC guidelines, to enable a child to access an education by receiving the AIC allowance when a school, within the context of a rural or remote community, cannot meet the educational needs appropriate to that child. The aim is to provide equity of access to education, regardless of the child's location.

ICPA (Aust) strongly believes in regional development and generating employment and training opportunities in rural and remote communities. Access to an appropriate education is a key element in assisting the sustainability and viability of rural and remote Australia. If a student, on reaching secondary school, is denied assistance to access a school appropriate to their educational needs, and which enables that child to develop to their full educational potential, it is the experience of rural communities Australia wide that the entire family will relocate to access a school which does meet the student's educational needs. The result is the removal of the younger siblings from the primary school and as parents leave, professional and trade skills vital to the health of the local community are lost.

A family unable to relocate and/or unable to support their child to access an appropriate education without some financial assistance, risks their child disengaging from study, with a similar result for some students if they have to travel long distances by school bus to access their daily education. This disadvantages the student and in turn, the community in which they live. There are schools across Australia where it is extremely difficult for students to learn, regardless of race, culture, social background or ability. Social problems in the community, resulting from several generations of passive welfare dependency, alcohol, drugs, and associated law and order issues, are often reflected in the school classroom and playground.

ICPA (Aust) does not believe rural school enrolments will decline with the introduction of the option for students to access an appropriate education with financial assistance. This has already been demonstrated where state education polices have allowed this to occur. The AIC Basic Boarding Allowance is less than 25% of the total cost of educating the child.

The lack of face-to-face teaching, limited subject choice, limited opportunities for team sports and social issues created from very small peer groups are common problems in communities where only one small secondary school exists. ICPA (Aust) has requested that the Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations approve the following change to the AIC Scheme 2009 Policy Guidelines.

4.2.1 Summary of geographic isolation rule

Additional Rule 4: "Where a student does not have reasonable daily access to a secondary school that provides an education appropriate to a student's needs, eligibility to apply for AIC will be available as an option".

Tertiary education is an important pathway to successful employment for Australian students as the job and skills market grows in size and complexity. Students can reach this pathway by having equitable access to tertiary institutions. Lack of affordable access is severely restricting equity of entry to such institutions for young Australian people, and in particular for rural and remote students. The costs incurred by rural and remote students accessing an institution offering further education, is often beyond their financial means. The high up-front and on-going costs of relocating, securing accommodation, fuel for travel to access their place of study, along with the rising costs of basic living commodities, are all impacting on rural and remote student access. Some of these costs are borne not only in the first year of a student's course but are recurrent over the duration of their higher education. ICPA (Aust) has continued a strong lobby in pursuit of an allowance that will enable rural and remote students to have the right of access to tertiary education that is available to most Australian students living in metropolitan locations.

Governments of all persuasions have recognised, through the provision of the Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance, that there are significant additional costs involved in educating children both at primary and secondary level, who do not have reasonable daily access to a school. Unfortunately, to date, no government has acknowledged that this assistance needs to be extended beyond the secondary years to encompass students who wish to pursue a post-secondary education. Rural and remote primary and secondary students make up 33% of the school population, but these students make up less than 17% of the tertiary population. (3)

Tertiary participation by regional, and particularly rural and remote Australians, has been declining for many years, when viewed as a comparison with urban peers. The greatest barrier to access to higher education is the lack of adequate financial means to fund the access. The Centre for Rural Social Research at Charles Sturt University has recently reported that living away from home costs a student up to \$20,000 a year and that start up costs are up to \$6,000 a year. The support mechanisms of Youth Allowance, and part-time work that many students undertake, contribute to supplementing the living costs of students once they actually have the financial ability to access their chosen tertiary institution. ICPA (Aust) believes that the proposed changes to Youth Allowance will not adequately correct this. The discontinuance of Commonwealth Scholarships will impact on our students and there is little recognition of the increased access costs incurred by rural students.

In addition to the financial barrier to access post-secondary education or training, students are physically and emotionally isolated from family support networks. This means a student has to manage study, balance their study and work commitments and cope with the requirements of living independently. It is often too far and too costly to return home at weekends to maintain this physical contact.

In the Bradley Review, students from rural and remote Australia were not recognised as a separate disadvantaged group when looking at access to higher education. This has serious implications when reviewing Youth Allowance eligibility for these same students who wish to pursue higher education. Despite the recommendations made in this report, the Government has failed to address the distinctly unique requirements of rural and remote students.

The Government has proposed changes that will benefit a student's earning capacity per fortnight before their Youth Allowance payments are affected. The personal income threshold for Youth Allowance will be increased to \$400 per fortnight in 2011. The Parental Income Test threshold will be increased with the aim of more students qualifying for dependent Youth Allowance. Students who already qualify as dependent will receive higher benefits. Unfortunately the Government has failed to address the fact that the net value of many rural businesses is worth more than the cutout level of \$2,286,000 even if the business has not made a profit. A large proportion of our isolated students who come from families with little income but large asset bases will not be eligible to receive Youth Allowance or associated benefits. Many students, who would have qualified for independent Youth Allowance under the current criteria and received the full rate of Youth Allowance, will not be able to do so if the proposed criteria changes are adopted. These students will not qualify at all unless they meet the new workforce criteria to qualify for independence.

The majority of independent students are unlikely to qualify for the proposed Relocation Scholarships. The Relocation Scholarship is to replace the current Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships and will only be available to independent students if they are disadvantaged. Restrictive criteria surround the classification of the term 'disadvantaged'. This will result in many rural and remote students being unable to afford the cost of attending a tertiary institution.

Another proposed measure announced by the Government, is to align the treatment of equity and merit based scholarships up to the value of \$6,622 in 2010, with current Commonwealth Scholarships. These scholarships will be exempt from being treated as assessable income for means testing. This is a positive measure. The proposed cessation of the Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships will significantly disadvantage rural and remote students. At present students who qualify for a Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship, receive \$4,415 per annum so over a 4 year degree, a total of \$17,660 would be received. Under the new proposal, a Relocation Scholarship will be available mainly to dependent Youth Allowance recipients. The sum of \$4,000 is to be available the first year of eligibility with this amount reducing to \$1,000 for each year thereafter, giving a total of \$6,000 over a 4 year period. A Student Start-Up Scholarship of \$2,254 for all university students receiving income support is proposed to be available in 2010. In spite of these initiatives, the result will be a greater expense for rural and remote families, with a large number of students unable to access the university gate.

Currently many students defer their study to take a gap year. This year is spent working full time to earn sufficient funds to support themselves during their time undertaking study, in addition to meeting the current independent criteria for Youth Allowance of earning \$19,532 during 18 months within a two year period. Deferral of study is not always an acceptable option. Some courses are not able to be deferred and academically some students are better suited to maintaining continuity of academic application and moving directly from school to tertiary study.

The proposed change that has turned rural and remote students' tertiary hopes into confusion is the change in workforce participation criterion for establishing financial independence for Youth Allowance. Earnings of \$19,532 over an 18 month period no longer will establish a student as independent. Instead independent status requires working 30 hours per week for at least 18 months during any period of two years.

Employment opportunities in many rural towns are often not available, especially for youth who are relatively unskilled. If the student moves away from home to find a job, then there is very little prospect of them making the necessary savings to fund their university entry. Meeting this single new workforce participation criterion will prove extremely difficult and unachievable for our rural and remote students, and drive tertiary study out of their reach.

ICPA (Aust) requests that the Federal Government establish a tertiary access allowance for all students who need to relocate to study. A tertiary access allowance would provide assistance to students to access their place of study. Access would include securing a place of accommodation, assisting with relocation expenses, travel and other set-up costs associated with leaving home to study. This initiative would make a significant contribution to the affordability of a tertiary education for students in non- metropolitan Australia. It is essential to provide equity to students who need to move away from the family home to access their chosen path of study.

d. The short and long-term impact of current and proposed government policies on regional university and TAFE college enrolments

Proposed changes to independent Youth Allowance will most certainly impact on the number of enrolments in regional universities and TAFE colleges, particularly from the student cohort who have to live away from home. Geographic location is a major barrier to almost all rural and remote students wishing to access tertiary study. Many anticipated qualifying for independent Youth Allowance to help them financially.

The health of regional universities and TAFE colleges will continue to decline unless government policy ensures rural and remote students are able to access them. The continued provision of high quality education and training is dependent upon sufficient enrolments. With dwindling and/or insufficient numbers enrolling in regional universities courses may become reduced in number or subject choices.

e. The adequacy of government measures to provide for students who are required to leave home for secondary or post-secondary study

As already highlighted, the current Government measures are grossly inadequate in enabling most rural and remote students to access the most appropriate secondary and post-secondary study.

The Australian Government has recognised geographical disadvantage for rural and remote secondary students through provision of the AIC. Once a student progresses onto tertiary education, access allowances cease to exist and some of these same students who were eligible for the AIC must rely on qualifying for welfare payments to enable them to undertake tertiary education. In Australia in 2009, students who live in rural and remote areas are being denied the right of access to a tertiary education. In addition, a significant number of rural and remote secondary students are ineligible to access the AIC allowance, at secondary level, due to its stringent criteria.

The extension of the Commonwealth Scholarship Program to include National Accommodation Scholarships for students relocating interstate to study specialist courses not available near their home, demonstrated that the Government was aware of access and associated relocation costs. The Government has suggested that assistance is needed for students who have to move interstate (e.g. from Alice Springs to Adelaide) but has not acknowledged the costs if they need to move vast distances intrastate (e.g. from Mount Isa to Brisbane).

The establishment of the Indigenous Access Scholarship (IAS), which aimed to improve higher education access for indigenous people, particularly those who needed to relocate from rural and remote areas, was acknowledgement by the Government that there are additional costs incurred by students who must move away from home in order to study at the tertiary level. It is clear that indigenous students are not the only residents of rural and remote Australia who must relocate in order to access a suitable tertiary institution and support mechanisms must be put in place for all students.

The report, 'Regional Young People and Youth Allowance: Access to Education' (Godden 2007), (2) found that the strict eligibility criteria for Youth Allowance is the key barrier to accessing a tertiary education for rural young people. Students who do meet the criteria and who must live away from home cannot manage on Youth Allowance alone. Students are reporting that the allowable income bank for Youth Allowance (\$6,000) is too low, rent assistance has not risen comparatively to relation to rises in rent and additionally, the amount students are able to earn (Personal income threshold) before reductions to Youth Allowance take place, is also too low to enable them to meet on-going living costs. We acknowledge there has been a proposal for a rise in the personal income test, but suggest that a further increase is warranted.

Rural and remote apprentices experience significant disadvantage in their efforts to skill themselves. They receive low income, while frequently needing to meet the costs of relocation, accommodation, travel and TAFE costs. The incentives and provisions for apprentices and trainees are welcome but are only of benefit once an apprenticeship or traineeship is secured. The Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) for apprentices is inadequate in rural and remote areas as it does not reflect the real cost of living for these young people.

f. The educational needs of rural and regional students

Regardless of where students live, they should be provided with or have access to an appropriate education. All students have the right to a quality education and have the right to pursue a career that best suits their needs and talents.

ICPA (Aust) believes that the rural and remote students, who do not have daily access to affordable and appropriate education, should be acknowledged as a separate equity group. Although their education needs are the same as their urban counterparts, the cost of accessing such an education is high and they can suffer educational disadvantage as a result. Rural and remote students should therefore be recognised as an equity group in their own right. It is imperative that the disadvantage they face when trying to access and participate in education is addressed as a result of this review.

It is essential that the young people from rural and remote areas are encouraged and supported in their pursuit of education and training. They are the future of sustainability in rural and remote Australia.

g. The impact of government measures and proposals on rural and regional communities

It is widely recognised that once rural and remote students have completed their schooling and/or further education and training, a large percentage of them return to their community or other rural and remote communities to live and work. These young people return being very much aware of the conditions and lifestyles. Many choose to be with family and to return to these rural and remote communities as skilled adults, wishing to make their life in this setting.

The entire community is impacted when young people are unable to access an education that is appropriate to their needs and aspirations. Without adequate government measures to support education and training entire families choose to move away so that their student can access a better education. Once they move there is an increased chance that they will never return, which has the added disadvantage of removing valuable skills and committed community members from these areas. Young people who are unable to access an appropriate secondary and tertiary education often become disengaged and disillusioned, which in turn leads to social problems that erode the strength of the rural and remote communities. The cost to government of dealing with these social problems will be far greater than the amount of financial assistance these students require to enable them to access an appropriate education.

ICPA (Aust) would welcome further interaction with the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee on this vital issue of improving rural and regional access to secondary and tertiary education opportunities for our youth.

References

- (1) Review of Australian Higher Education, Final Report (December 2008)
- (2) Regional Young People and Youth Allowance: Access to Education (Godden 2007)
- (3) ABS website: www.abs.gov.au