

VIEW Clubs of Australia call on the State and Federal Governments to work together to ensure all young Australians have the digital resources and skill they need to fully participate in education particularly in rural and remote areas.

Rationale:

- Remote areas are defined as places that are out of the way or considerably secluded from civilisation. Remote and very remote areas of Australia comprise the largest proportions of land mass of WA, NT, SA and QLD. 28% (7 million) of Australians live in rural/remote areas. 17.8% of First Nations people live in remote and very remote areas.
- Many families educate full time at home via remote learning. With Distance Education in all States being delivered mainly online, students miss major sections of their study if they do not have internet. Families in remote camps (stock, fencing, earth moving camps) which involve moving from place to place away from their permanent residence during the season transportable satellite units are the only means students can keep up with their school work.
- Currently all equipment in a standard installation is provided free of charge to consumers and is covered by NBN in urban areas. The ratio of Mb/\$ between rural and remote areas of Australia and urban areas is significantly higher thus further highlighting the internet divide.
- Families have installed a Sky Master service but the cost is prohibitive for most families. Installation costs in excess of \$30,000 to purchase and ongoing data costs \$500-\$1,000 per month.
- The proportion of very remote students who meet each education milestone is between 19-48% points lower than the general population. Children in these areas are less likely to attend school and have less positive disposition towards school on every measure (belonging, self confidence, purpose and perseverance) than their regional and metropolitan peers.
- The prioritisation of installation required for education is paramount. There are currently no grants, subsidies or concessions to help with the cost of transportable units of schooling.
- Assurance is sought that the Government provide access and cost of internet to rural and remote students that is comparable to students in urban areas of Australia.

Arguments for the resolution:

- All Australian children deserve access to educational programs of study.
- This gives them further access to Tertiary study or TAFE and then employment.
- Education is a basic need not a luxury restricted to those who can afford it. It is a human basic right.
- Internet access is essential for inclusive education programs including testing such as NAPLAN.
- Families in rural and remote areas experience a lack of access to many essential services and education is a way forward for them.
- Many who live in rural and remote areas have a lower rate of employment and lower income levels so cost of this Internet provision would be prohibitive for them.

Arguments against the resolution

- Cost for a marginal few.

References:

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics
2. Isolated Children's Parents' Association – Australian Conference 2022 Documents.