# ICPA Qld
## Isolated Children's Parents' Association Queensland Inc.

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## *Design of Alternative Voice Service Trials – Comments and expressions of interest*

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association Qld Inc. (ICPA Qld) advocates for equitable access to quality educational opportunities for children in rural and remote areas. ICPA Qld represents 46 branches, comprising over 1200 families throughout rural Queensland.

ICPA Qld is a voluntary apolitical parent organisation and is the only community based parent group with interests in all sectors and levels of education – state schools, independent, church or boarding schools, early childhood and care through to tertiary education and all methods used to facilitate access to that education.

ICPA Qld Inc. acknowledges and thanks the Federal Government for its commitment towards modernising the telecommunications environment in Australia through a variety of programmes – nbn™ Fixed Wireless, Sky Muster Satellite and Mobile Black Spot Funding. These advances have significantly improved outcomes for many regional, rural and remote customers. Notwithstanding this progress, ICPA Qld believes there are indeed more than 'some' challenges remaining in regional and remote Australian to reach the much mooted transformative telecommunications market.

The Queensland State Council of ICPA Qld welcomes the opportunity to provide comments for the Design of Alternative Voice Service Trials to be held in 2020, focussing on the unique needs of rural and remote students.

**Question 1: Should the department be seeking to achieve other objectives through the trials? If so, how would this affect the design?**

The trials should include, in addition to nbn Wireless and Sky Muster, any non nbn Wireless / Wi Fi networks currently deployed. For example, Just ISP, which is providing low latency fast point to point networks around the regions.

**Question 2**: **In terms of the deliverables for customers, do you have any concerns about the proposed design of the trials or suggestions to improve it, for example, locations for the trials, how best to recruit consumers to take part, requirements on CSPs, and service requirements?**

The overarching outcome must be voice quality. Delivered solutions must have the same or better voice quality than the existing technologies and a testing protocol must be in-place for subjective and qualitative testing.
Previous studies have shown that small children and the elderly are most likely to have issues with usability when voice services are carried over higher latency internet services. Male and female users will likely rate voice performance differently due to their conversation characteristics. Therefore, a good mix of age and gender will be essential.

The trials must include:
- primary, secondary and tertiary students who are learning through distance education.
- Students who are learning music or are involved in speech or other therapy
- Students at rural and remote schools learning LOTE (Language other than English) via distance education.

Educational institutions must be included in the planning to ensure there is no disruption to education programs.

CSP's must demonstrate that their solutions are fit for purpose prior to any deployment.

CSP's must show that their final solution will exhibit the same reliability as existing customer radio systems that would likely be replaced by their solution.

CSP's must have in place service restoration processes and procedures that would allow issues to be resolved within CSG type timeframes.

**Question 3: In terms of the needs of CSPs, do you have any concerns about the proposed design of the trials or suggestions to improve it, for example, information required, capping of customer numbers, timeframes, level of funding available, and the approach to payment?**

Initial rollout should be to a small group to allow full testing before it is released to the bulk of the trial.

**Question 4: Do you have suggestions on what should happen at the end of the trials, noting that Government funding will cease?**

It is imperative that the results are made available in a timely manner. The stakeholder reference group's considerations should be recognised and acknowledged and given weighting in the final evaluation.

The services should be offered to users, post-trial as reserve or emergency services at a suitable tariff.

**Question 5: Do you have any comments on the stakeholder reference group? What stakeholders should be represented on the groups? Would you like to nominate anyone as a possible member?**

ICPA Qld would also recommend participants from the following:
- ICPA NSW, ICPA SA, ICPA WA, ICPA NT, ICPA TAS and ICPA QLD
- Schools of Distance Education
- All State Education Departments
- CWA
- A local Government located in an area of the trial.
- BIRRR

ICPA Qld would like to nominate Vice President Louise Martin (Communications Portfolio leader) as an SRG member.

**Question 6: Do you have any comments regarding the criteria for assessing proposals and contracting CSPs?**

All proposals must show that they will deliver a quality solution that will be a suitable replacement for existing telecommunications systems. All call types must have been modelled and the expected results supplied.

All proposals must take into account variable weather systems i.e. must work in overcast conditions.

All proposals must ensure that the system is robust and able to cope with climate extremities and remain consistently reliable.

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There must be variants for all proposals that allow for the unique situations at some sites.
The solutions must allow for the diversity of power supplies at user sites. It is essential that they will operate 24 hrs. a day with a number days of reserve. e.g. sites with either no mains power, non continuous mains power, limited solar or in areas where the mains power can fail with long lead times to repair.

The inclusion of the various teleconference solutions currently in use (Standalone, centralised (Telstra Optus)) in the modelling with cases for mixed voice delivery technology including high latency solutions is essential to ensure that the learning of Distance Education Students is not compromised in any way.

The end user configuration for the trial and possible final solution must show that the solution will match existing services in reliability and performance.

It must be demonstrated that devices such as Medi Alert or its variants will reliably operate over the solution offered.