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SUBMISSION TO THE QUEENSLAND TREASURY

REQUEST: AN INCREASE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REMOTE AREA TUITION ALLOWANCE (RATuA) OF THE LIVING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE SCHEME (LAFHAS)

WHAT IT IS: The Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS) is a Qld Department of Education allowance payable to geographically isolated (GI) students who do not have reasonable, daily access to a high school, and attend boarding school to access their education. Funds subsidise tuition fees and travel expenses. Other components of the allowance include a tuition subsidy for GI Agricultural College students and assistance for students with a disability.

Current Figures 2018 per student:

Average tuition costs	\$12 503	2% increase from 2017
Maximum RATuA	\$5 391	1.8% increase from 2017

Average Family Out of pocket costs for tuition \$7 112

ICPA Seeks: An increase to the LAFHAS (RATuA) to better reflect the cost of actual tuition fees for geographically isolated students.

WHY:

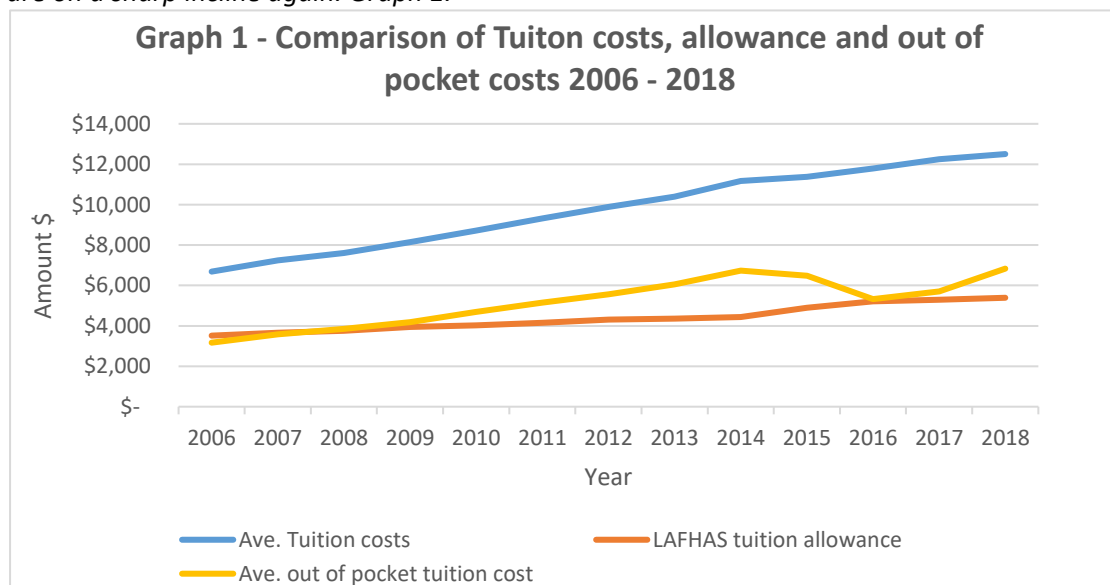
With the present climatic conditions affecting economic viability facing rural and remote Queenslanders, it is imperative that education costs are addressed for families whose children must reside away from home to access a quality education due to having no reasonable access to a high school. Please note there are 8 Shires without high schools in the state, therefore families living and working in these shires are affected. The financial burden of education has escalated for families with more than one child. Presently state and federal governments are consulting and discussing the future of rural Queensland during climatic changes that affect businesses. First and foremost ICPA QLD insist that the education costs of families in these areas be addressed to reflect an actual cost that government should be contributing towards these children's education. Parents are under undue stress when deciding on giving their children an opportunity to further their chances for a job and career, with a quality education, or using this money to pay for lick and hay.

An increase in the RATuA would benefit the agricultural industry by investing in the next generation and helping to create self-sustainable families and businesses during varying climatic conditions. Presently families, who have no other option for secondary schooling except Distance Education, fund nearly half of their children's education. If all 1384 students in 2017 were to attend a school of distance education, the state government would have to fund (as per 2015 recurrent funding of SDE p-12) on average \$12 228 per student, resulting in a total of \$16 923 552. The total dollars paid to RATuA recipients in 2007 was \$10 323 963. This amount has decreased to \$ 6 891 413 in 2017.

ICPA are extremely grateful for the allowances Queensland past and present governments have put in place but we believe it is time to review the needs of geographically isolated families allowances in education and invest in the future of not only the next generation but invest in the future of the viability of these communities. Families who leave these areas move to regional and metropolitan areas and put more pressure on services there.

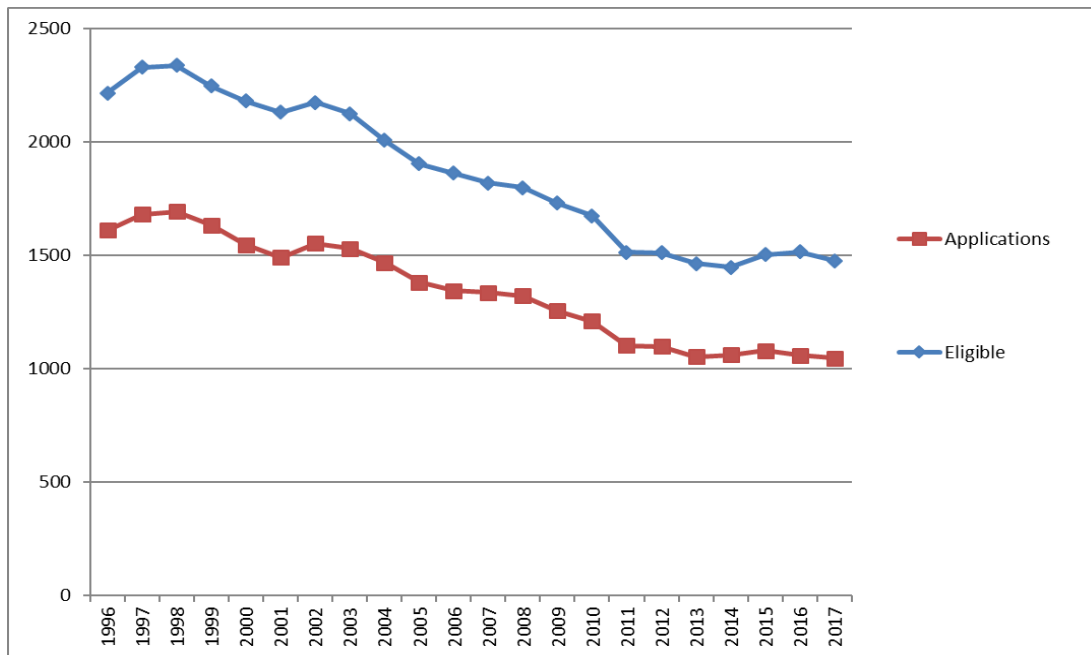
FACTS & FIGURES:

- Average Tuition fees at non- state boarding schools have increased by 69% over the last ten years from \$7 239 in 2007 to \$12 249 in 2017. Graph 1
- Increase in the LAFHAS Remote Area Tuition Allowance (RATuA) has only been 44.6% from \$3 662 (2007) to \$5 296 (2017).
- In 2017 parents contributed 46% of the tuition costs of their children's education.
- Since 2007 out of pocket costs have increased more than the RATuA , except in 2016 / 2017 when an additional \$1 250 was paid as a drought subsidy. Now that the subsidy has ceased out of pocket costs are on a sharp incline again. Graph 1.



- Eligible recipients have decreased from 1 639 (2007) to 1384 (2017).

Graph 2 – LAFHAS Recipients 1996 - 2017



BACKGROUND:

This scheme was first introduced in 1985 as a direct subsidy to families to assist with tuition fees charged by non-state boarding schools. The allowance now comprises other components, including a travel subsidy, assistance for students with a disability and tuition for Agricultural College students.

The below statement is taken from the Hansard document in October 1985:

Allowances to Assist Isolated Children: At the beginning of 1985, a new scheme of living away from home allowances was introduced to rationalise assistance available for isolated students who must live away from home in order to attend school. A remote area tuition allowance, a remote area hostel allowance, and an extension of the remote area travel allowance scheme were implemented. In 1986, the rationalised scheme will continue. Remote area tuition allowances are available to assist parents whose eligible children incur tuition costs in boarding schools. The assistance is designed to complement State and Commonwealth per capita grants and also to relate to the level of fees paid. The 1986 tuition allowances will be— \$945 (primary) and \$1,261 (secondary) for students at schools with the highest fees; \$473 to \$944 (primary) and \$632 to \$1,260 (secondary) for students at schools with modest fees; \$472 (primary) maximum and \$631 (secondary) maximum for students in schools with low fees (based on actual tuition fees payable).

(https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/hansard/1985/1985_10_17.pdf)

Ian Driver unable to provide the information so maybe insert here the info on the notes that relate to Blackheath Thornborough fees overtime?

The government has a constitutional obligation to provide each and every child access to a quality education, wherever their location.

The Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 No.7 Guiding Principles states that “the principles intended to guide the achievement of this act’s objects are the following” ...

(d): The state, parents, teachers, school communities and non-government entities should work collaboratively to foster a commitment to achieving the best educational outcomes for children and young people.

ICPA Qld believes a perfect example of cross-sector collaboration between government, parents and non-state school entities sited in this objective would be for State Government to provide more LAFHAS Tuition assistance that is in line with actual tuition costs. Presently the resources and infrastructure is in place in non-state schools across the state to provide high quality educational outcomes. We do acknowledge that state government does contribute to non-state schools however, this proportion of the total recurrent funding is minimal due to the federal government contributing to non-state schools and parents are significant contributors to recurrent funding for a student’s education.

The only other option is for the government to provide more capital infrastructure and resourcing in the distance education schools on top of the re current funding for a student’s education in these schools. This option would involve more costs to the government, for example, investing in high quality teachers in rural and remote locations, housing, professional development and an investment in more efficient technologies. For the Queensland Government to meet its responsibility of providing education to all students it is only through this collaboration that all geographical isolated students will have the opportunity to access a secondary education and receive the equity in education they deserve.

Chapter 10 of the Act (Compulsory participation in education or training)

(e) (i): The state should develop practical ways to improve the social, educational and employment outcomes of young people, including in particular those who are at risk of disengaging from education and training.

It is a well known fact that rural and remote students are more at risk of disengaging from education. Therefore increased financial assistance for tuition at a non-state boarding school is a practical way to allow geographically isolated students without access to a secondary school to be socially engaged (this is limited in distance education), have access to educational programs to meet their specific needs and engage them in pathways to employment. Upskilling and educating our youth leads to a greater opportunity for them to return home to their rural and remote communities and contribute to their economic and social growth in the future.

The following words are from the Premier herself in the introduction of the action plan for advancing education.

<http://advancingeducation.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/advancing-education-action-plan.pdf>

“Education changes lives for the better. The State Government is determined that all Queensland children and young people will benefit from the opportunities of a quality education. We will advance Queensland through a world-class education system that supports students to develop the knowledge, skills and qualities they need for the future. During statewide consultations in late 2015, Queenslanders overwhelmingly confirmed their support for the direction we have set for education in this state. Queenslanders told us we must continue to innovate to meet the demands of a globalised world and that they are ready to be our partners in preparing students for the opportunities of changing technologies and new industries. This requires continued effort so that children and young people become lifelong learners, connected global citizens and successful people engaged in their community. Building a knowledge-based economy is important to create jobs for all Queenslanders. More opportunities for students to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics – including coding and robotics – will prepare them for the

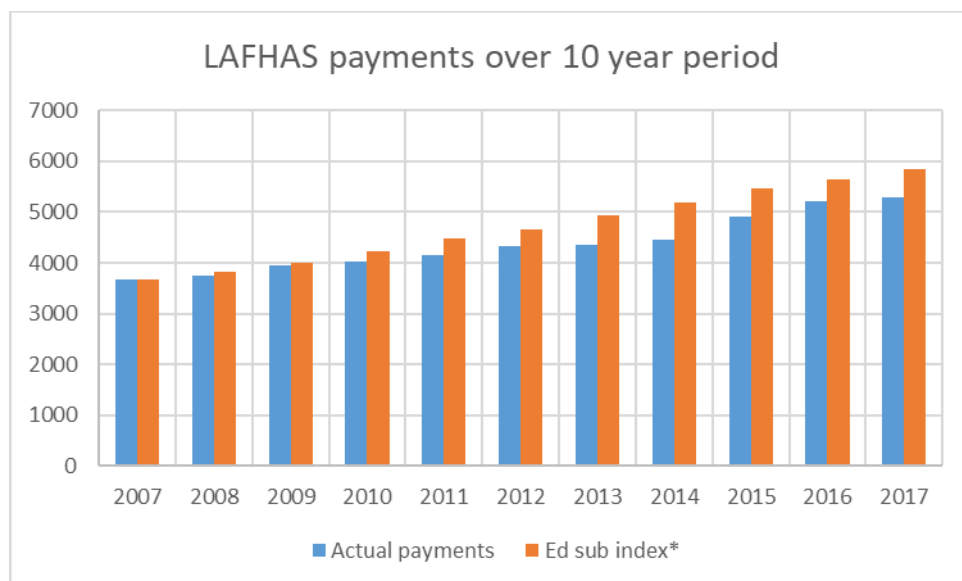
challenges of the jobs of the future. Working together we will make a difference for every child and young person.

The Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk MP Premier and Minister for the Arts

Holistically a significant increase in the RATuA will be of benefit on many platforms. We are needing to build and strengthen communities, plan for variable climatic conditions and create opportunities for the future. The Queensland government’s drought policy is based on the concept of self -reliance. For families in communities where secondary schooling is not available, assistance at a level that is more in line with tuition costs would allow families to invest more in their businesses for self -reliance in the future.

In a media release from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on the 24/05/18 it was stated ..”the value of Queensland Ag sector has risen nearly \$20 billion, rising by an annual average of 1.4% over the past decade despite a 6 year drought.” An increase in the RATuA is an investment in the families and businesses who contribute to the growth of the Ag sector in this state.

ICPA Queensland want treasury to consider a significant increase in RATuA and review the present LAFHA scheme in consultation with our organisation so that it meets the needs of the recipients and continues to annually increase with the education sub index of the CPI so that overtime this allowance doesn’t erode again. The graph below highlights the last ten years of the allowance increase comparing actual payments as opposed to if payments had followed the Education Sub Index. Gradually the payments are falling behind which then accumulates over time.



The definition of an ‘allowance’ is a sum of money paid regularly to a person to meet needs or expense. Presently this allowance doesn’t meet the expenses incurred by families to educate their children where access to a high quality education system doesn’t exist. This scheme is an investment in upskilling our future citizens who will be the drivers of viable, stronger and productive industries in our communities.