

Dear Premier and Dr Young,

After hearing numerous stories of emotional hardship from our members who still have children schooling at home due to the stringent restrictions currently placed on boarding schools, ICPA Qld would like to ask for a moment of your time to explain the impacts that boarding school families and their schools are feeling at this time.

Whilst everyone understands the basic premise of Covid 19 transmission and nobody wants to see an outbreak anywhere in schools, we feel that our boarding schools have worked tirelessly to implement extreme measures to ensure these facilities are some of the safest in the country. With these measures in place our children should ALL be allowed to get back to face to face educational instruction immediately.

Rural and remote families with boarding students are facing -

For those still at home...

- isolation, not just in a physical sense, but educationally and socially, from their peers and support networks, particularly as extra-curricular activities recommence
- a disconnect educationally as they find themselves disadvantaged in comparison to their classmates
- strain on their mental wellbeing and disengagement from their social network
- vulnerability as inconsistencies with restrictions mean they are not able to engage in the return to a traditional form of learning with their peers, and for some, even with their siblings

For those in boarding...

- isolation, not just in a physical sense, but emotionally and socially, from their families and friends
- an emotional rollercoaster as they struggle with the concept that during school hours they are able to interact with their cohort, yet after 3.30pm their equality and freedom ceases as they step through the doorway of their boarding house
- their home away from home being in such an altered state that it is no longer conducive to their emotional and mental health and thus impacting their learning journey

For those boarders in alternative accommodation...

- physical attendance during school hours, however emotional disconnect from their peer group as they struggle with their sense of identity
- anxiety and apprehension being accommodated with less familiar surroundings for extended periods of time

Queensland boarding facilities, management and staff have our children's whole wellbeing as the core purpose of their business, however they are not being allowed the opportunity to return to their normal function of housing and supporting children in their 'home away from home' journey.

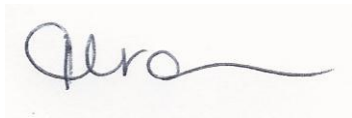
There is growing frustration and anger from rural and remote boarding families at what appears to be a hypocritical and inequitable set of guidelines being forced upon their students, when it is apparent that day students are exempt from the same set of guidelines. Day students are interacting daily on a much broader scale within the community and are now enjoying the easing of restrictions along with the rest of Queensland. Our boarding families are distressed with the apparent inconsistencies and

the detrimental impact on their children's educational outcomes, as well as their social and emotional wellbeing.

On the 25th May 2020, not EVERY school student in Queensland was able to return to face to face learning. As Term 3 approaches, families need to be making arrangements immediately to relieve the stress and emotional turmoil that they are currently experiencing.

With all schools now having an exit strategy in case of a confirmed case, we implore you to make a decision immediately around the return to boarding for our families in Term 3. Ultimately the mental wellbeing and educational success of rural and remote students' rests in your hands. Please bring our boarders back.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tammie Irons', with a long, flowing horizontal line extending to the right.

Tammie Irons

ICPA Qld President