

PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL

Student Accommodation Report

Chandra Ridley – Portfolio Holder, March 2022

Two motions were presented at the 2021 State Conference.

A7 presented by Kimberley Air Branch.

“That ICPA (WA) work with the relevant departments to ensure that our WA children who are boarding at schools outside the state are allowed the same permissions as essential workers and granted special permission to quarantine at home rather than in a hotel away from family (if state regulations require a quarantine period).”

Letters were sent to various Government departments with Minister for Education Hon. Sue Ellery responding stating that the Western Australian Government remains committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all students and the continuity of student learning. She also stated that the movement of individuals who are working or boarding in other states and territories and who wish to enter Western Australia is restricted under the directions of the State Emergency Coordinator and anyone wishing to enter Western Australia would need to apply for an exemption.

Ms Ellery went on to state that: *“On 17th September 2021, National Cabinet endorsed the National Code for Boarding School Students. In endorsing the Code, states and territories committed to a nationally consistent, COVID-safe approach to intrastate and cross-border movement for boarding students, and their families and carers.”* Ms Ellery will continue to receive advice from the Chief Health Officer in relation to the implementation of the Code.

A8 was presented by Lakes District Branch

“That ICPA (WA) requests the Minister for Education works collaboratively with the Department of Education, the Catholic Education Office of WA and the Association of Independent Schools WA; and any other relevant authorities to develop policy that will ensure the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) guidelines be adhered to with uniformity and consistency across all boarding facilities in Western Australia.”

Letters were written to various Government departments as well as Catholic Education WA (CEWA) and the Association of Independent Schools WA (AISWA). The responses received stated that Residential Colleges were following advice from the Western Australian Chief Health Officer.

Department of Education COVID-19 policies, processes, and operational advice (including those for the management of residential and boarding facilities) are currently shared with Catholic and Independent schools and each sector operationalises the guidelines at their own discretion.

The upgrade to Moora Residential College was completed and officially opened on 3rd March 2021 with a restricted guest list due to COVID-19. At the time boarding numbers were at forty-three (43) students out of a possible fifty (50).

With the easing of restrictions an open morning was held on 3rd July for the general public to see upgrades.

National Boarding Week was from 16th to 22nd May 2021. Boarding Schools celebrated with a variety of events including invite a day student to boarding, invite a staff member to dinner and various in-house activities and competitions.

It was a chance to acknowledge and reflect on the role all students and staff play in a successful boarding community.

From 2022 regional Year 7 students accepted into Albany Senior High School's Gifted and Talented Program that reside outside of Albany will be able to board at the Albany Residential College.

The main issue affecting student accommodation is the restrictions placed on students who attend interstate boarding schools wanting to return home for breaks. ICPA put forward a joint submission for the development of a National Framework for Students who attend boarding schools across state or territory borders. This was an attempt to bring consistency in restrictions between all states and territories.

The full submission can be found on the ICPA website.

On 17th September National Cabinet endorsed a National Code for Boarding School Students which provides states and territories with principles to develop common-sense, COVID-safe travel arrangements to help students and families navigate border restrictions. The full code can be found at: www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/resources/national-code-boarding-school-students

All boarders over 16 years of age will need to be fully vaccinated and show proof of vaccination to participate in certain recreation activities. Residential, agricultural and boarding colleges will get priority with vaccination delivery.

There is still confusion over quarantine requirements for interstate boarding students even after the release of the National Code for Boarding School Students.

Rulings and guidelines are constantly changing in the boarding environment with most parents receiving regular updates to requirements.