

TEACHER EDUCATION

A 40. TAMBO BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to expand the criteria of the Beyond the Range scholarship program to accommodate applications by students already residing in rural and remote areas and performing placements within the regions.”

Explanation:

Under the current criteria for Beyond the Range, students have to reside 120 minutes from their home address while on prac experience – BUT if a student already has permanent residence in the regions they might not have to travel those distances to get a placement at a school (band 4-7) that is targeted by the Beyond the Range program, as you already live there. We are talking about students who have a permanent address in a rural or remote location and study from that address. By encouraging rural and remote students to do their placements in the regions the department is investing in pre-service teachers who are likely to be the permanent teachers who will stay. These students know the environment and the communities, and you don't have to convince them that living rural and remote is a great place to be. Example case – Student X lives 120mins from placement school in Morven and home location is Tambo – Morven is a band 5 school; Tambo is a band 5 school – so that student is travelling every day to Morven and they are not eligible for the grant because the school is not more than the required KM from their home address. This is even though they are doing placement at a school that Beyond the Range scholarship would target for a regional/city-based student to attend. Accommodation costs for student X could be \$135 per night, so to perform the placement it becomes very costly. If you weigh up travel KM (200km) and fuel costs – both options are expensive. If criteria were expanded to accommodate these types of students, it would help them continue in the regions and it fills some of the rural and remote teaching jobs. Supporting rural and remote-based students, through Beyond the Range, will benefit the Department of Education long term by having teachers who want to be in the regions while having had the same access to scholarship dollars as their city counterparts do to access rural and remote placements. We feel an extension or adjustment to accommodate this cohort of pre-service teachers would be an enormous benefit to communities as well as the students.

CARRIED

A 41. WESTMAR INGLESTONE BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education and other relevant education stakeholders to ensure that any scholarships, bursaries or programs promoting ‘Teaching Rural’ as a career are inclusive of, and indeed targeted towards, students from rural and remote areas who are studying at private and independent schools as well as those in regional & rural state high schools.”

Explanation:

Students who are born and raised in the country are far more likely to return to the country after completing their secondary and tertiary education in the profession they choose, and teaching is no different. The criteria of the recent pilot program ‘Future Teachers Bursary’ required any applicants to be studying at a state school, completely ignoring the fact that the bulk of Year 11 and 12 students from rural and remote areas have little alternative but to head to private boarding schools to complete their education. It is these students who need to be targeted and encouraged to take their career back to the rural and remote areas of Queensland, and it is these students who should be offered every opportunity and assistance to do so. Including these students in any future projects offering financial incentives or opportunities is crucial when attempting to address the shortage of teachers who are wanting to teach rural, and we urge the Department of Education to take note of this in their efforts to promote Teaching Rural as a viable career path for students.

CARRIED

A 42. WESTMAR INGLESTONE BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education and other relevant stakeholders to provide opportunities and financial assistance to potential ‘teachers’ who are already living and working in rural and remote areas to enable them to study Education.”

Explanation:

There are many mature-age people already living in rural and remote towns across Queensland who may be interested in studying teaching if they were provided with the appropriate levels of support and financial assistance by the Department or another education employer. The teacher aide, the distance education home tutor or simply a parent who has older children – if people such as these were given the opportunity to study in their own community to become a teacher, the benefits for these communities would be substantial. ‘Growing Your Own’ is not a new concept, and it is people such as these examples who would then remain in our rural communities, thus addressing the ongoing issue of attraction and retention of teaching staff. Too many new teachers are sent out west, unprepared for the realities of life in rural communities – they don’t want to be there, and their unhappiness affects their mental health and their ability to teach capably, thus affecting the education of our children. Teacher shortages are becoming critical across the state and the nation, and rural and remote schools are bearing this burden – action must be taken to ensure that we are utilising all of the resources that are already there for us – the people who already love where they live, love the people they are surrounded by and want to stay in that community and be a part of it.

CARRIED

A 43. WINTON BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby the Queensland Council of Deans to consider implementing one rural and remote placement for all teaching degrees.”

Explanation:

In the past, some universities had the requirement of pre-service teachers having to undertake a rural and remote placement. The Winton Branch asks that this be revisited for the benefit of our small communities who often struggle to attract and retain high quality educators to their local schools.

CARRIED

A 44. TAMBO BRANCH

That ICPA Queensland lobby the Department of Education to offer more professional development and support including human resourcing to schools of distance education where there has been an increase in enrolments of students with special needs.

Explanation:

Charleville School of Distance Education is experiencing an increase in enrolments of students presenting with disabilities, anxiety, mental health, school refusal and family trauma.

The enrolment process is demanding of time and staff input; developing the appropriate program is difficult

without deep understanding of the child; understanding the students' needs and supporting an untrained tutor/supervisor in the home to deliver the program is difficult for a class/subject teacher; distance is a barrier to meeting with the student/family to build relationships and support the family. Current staffing ratios, professional development and resourcing do not support these increased levels of support.

CARRIED

S 22. WESTERN DOWNS BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby the relevant authorities to encourage the uptake of mentorship roles by experienced teachers to mentor graduates in their first year of teaching by offering more flexible and inclusive options for senior teachers to do so in a rural context.”

Explanation:

There is a program in place within QLD Ed that has teachers volunteer to mentor younger teachers, generally those within the first year of their teaching career. This isn't taken up particularly well within rural areas due to distance, time, and lack of opportunity to demonstrate teaching practices in an appropriate setting. We are not aware of how private schools in rural areas address mentorship within their schools and as such our motion speaks to our experience of the QLD Ed system.

Currently, mentor teachers do not receive designated release time from class to mentor first- year teachers. It is often necessary for the mentor teacher to demonstrate teaching strategies in front of a class of students, to the first -year teacher to give a hands-on experience of the situation, especially in a multi age classroom situation. This is not possible when mentorship activities need to occur outside classroom contact hours e.g., after school finishes. Added to this, is the time burden of the mentorship placed on the mentor teacher, in addition to their regular workload. The problem can be compounded in small rural and/or remote 2 or 3 teacher schools, where a mentor is at a school nearby, which may be still 100km + away. In this case, release time needs to be blocked into a whole day to allow mentor and mentor teachers quality time together, to facilitate shadow teaching and classroom observation by the mentee and /or teacher of either or both of their classes.

Dedicated mentorship release from contact hours' time for mentor teachers, would be an incentive to recruiting more senior teachers to take up mentorship roles which would be instrumental in supporting the growth and capability of our younger teachers in rural areas and positively impacting the education of rural children going forward.

CARRIED