

BOARDING SCHOOLS AND HOSTELS PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT – June 2024

The Boarding Schools and Hostels Portfolio had one motion presented and carried at the Julia Creek 2023 Conference. The motion was seeking the mandating of the 'Boarding Standard for Australian schools and residences.

ICPA Qld State Councillors have held several meetings with Key Stakeholders as well as the Department of Education and their Non-State Schooling division. The feedback we have received is that Independent Schools (of any denomination or independence), are truly independent and are definitely not governed by the department. Independent Schools and Non-State Schools are private businesses, and the Department and other organisations cannot dictate what they do. Each school has its own processes and policies, ensuring they stringently adhere to child protection and child risk strategies whilst providing age-appropriate care and supervision.

The limitation with 'Boarding Standards for Australian schools and residences' is that the document was developed by a private business which is then difficult to have mandated to other private businesses who have their own policies and procedures. The mandating of this has the potential to have an adverse effect on not only fees for schools, but also staffing and enforcing of the standards.

With any grievance or concerns procedure, it is always best to communicate with the Head of Boarding and the School (Principal) in the first instance. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, then the next step would be to take it to the governing body of the school, whilst always following the school's grievance procedure.

ICPA Qld State Council notes the handing down of the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSA) review in March 2024 where it is noted that there is a recommendation that an additional standard for boarding schools is created. The intent for this stand is for it to reflect the higher risk and vulnerability of students being educated whilst living away from their families.

ICPA Qld is very fortunate to have such strong support from the boarding schools throughout Queensland, and we appreciate your support not only for our students and their families but also for your support of our organisation. We are a committee of dedicated volunteers who, with your continued and ongoing support, can advocate for all rural and remote students.

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