

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT - June 2024**

At the 2023 State Conference held in Julia Creek there was one motion passed for the Distance Education portfolio.

The motion was in relation to priority postage for Schools of Distance Education learning materials during severe weather events. Positive discussions were held at the August delegations in Brisbane regarding solutions to this issue. ICPA Qld look forward to the implementation of identifying learning materials as airmail eligible packages, with priority delivery, as informed by the Department.

The timely delivery of learning materials to geographically isolated students from the Schools of Distance Education in time for the commencement of Term 1 of the school year has been varied. Far North Queensland, areas of the Gulf and North-West Queensland experienced a severe weather event at the commencement of the school year. Some families remained isolated for weeks and had not received their learning materials prior to school starting. This resulted in the learning within these home school rooms being impacted. On a positive note, feedback from other schools was that they had not been contacted by families advising that they had not received their learning materials in time. Mail delivery issues continue and need to be addressed to ensure that students can commence the school year with all the required learning materials.

At delegations in March the topic of Home Tutor/Supervisor was on the agenda. Families/carers sign a formal agreement upon enrolment at the School of Distance Education indicating that they have a supervisor in their school room, among other requirements. Each School of Distance Education has their own requirements regarding supervision of students. The process for enrolment eligibility at School of Distance Education schools is currently under review by the Department. The importance of geographically isolated students remaining priority within the distance education schools has also been reiterated whilst at delegations and within the various publicity documents circulated throughout the year.

Wendy Henning – President ICPA Qld and I have attended the monthly Queensland Virtual Academy (QVA) Stakeholder Reference Group meetings. These meetings commenced in February and are held monthly via ZOOM with the Department of Education. The QVA was announced in 2022, the foundations were laid in 2023 and in 2024 priorities are being discussed. The QVA is complementing to distance education and utilises quality teachers and resources already in the system who are underutilised, to give students opportunities to learn a subject when it is not available locally.

Although not directly a portfolio motion, distance education home tutor allowance has also been supported and discussed.

It is pleasing to note that campus upgrades to meet compliance standards at Schools of Distance Education have enabled students to return to utilising the accommodation facilities whilst at school activities.

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