

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT – June 2024

The increase to the Living away from Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS) announced at last year's Conference was a positive boost to the Financial Assistance Portfolio and had us enthused for the year ahead.

At the Julia Creek Conference there were several motions raised around year 10 being included as a by-pass year at some schools. ICPA Qld raised this issue with the Department of Education (DoE) at our August Delegations and liaised with branches to make sure there was community support for the change. The branches that raised this issue currently have strong numbers in the higher year levels and do not meet the eligibility criteria. The DoE has no plans to change the current eligibility criteria for bypass schools which can be found on the Department's website. ICPA Qld have no control or input into which schools are deemed by- passable.

The motion for families who reside in Queensland, but whose students board interstate, seeking to be eligible for LAFHAS is still on our agenda. It was raised with the DoE and with Tim Shipstone, Minister Grace's adviser. With the most recent changes in Cabinet, we, unfortunately, have not had the opportunity to raise the issue with the new Minister for Education, Hon Di Farmer, but we will at our first opportunity.

August Delegations also gave the Financial Assistance Portfolio the opportunity to raise Rural and Remote Access Program (RREAP) funding for natural disasters that affect schooling. The response was the DoE set aside funds for emergent needs annually, with the discretion to use these funds decided by the Assistant Director General. If the education of members' children is affected by a natural disaster, I would urge the school community to liaise with their principal and request them to ask for assistance on behalf of the school community.

The DoE also informed ICPA Qld that RREAP Funding is available to be used for school representative sport and transport if prioritised by the principal and the P&C. This was raised in the discussion around the motion seeking an increase to funding for school and representative sport. The DoE also mentioned the availability of both the Emerging Athletes pathway which can be accessed by Rural and Remote Students and the Local Sporting Champions Program which can assist with costs of attending representative sporting events.

Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) has been a long-standing motion at both State and Federal levels. This year in February at the Joint Councils meeting, which includes ICPA Australia and all the State Councils, it was decided that the advocacy for DETA needs an update. The decision was made that there needs to be a united collaborative message from all States and Federal ICPA. Going forward ICPA Qld will be advocating for a Distance Education Supervisor Allowance known as DESS. ICPA Qld will be asking for forty thousand dollars per year per family paid in four, ten-thousand-dollar instalments. ICPA Qld will be putting the call out to members for support in our advocacy and I am sure you will not let us down.

Kate Bradshaw
Financial Assistance Portfolio Leader