

TERTIARY, TRADE AND TRAINING PORTFOLIO MOTIONS 2024

A 45. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH

“That Clarke Creek ICPA Branch commends the work of Queensland State Council and encourages ongoing advocacy for the establishment and expansion of Regional University Hubs.”

Explanation:

Regional University Hubs support regional, rural, and remote students to successfully pursue higher education and vocational studies or training, while remaining in their communities with family, friends, and local employment. By expanding the Queensland network of these centres an increased number of rural students and communities will benefit.

CARRIED

A 46. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Small Business and Training (DESBT) to increase the travel and accommodation allowance paid to apprentices and trainees (VET students) who must travel away from home to complete their training.”

Explanation:

In 2022 the Queensland Workforce Strategy emphasised the importance of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in helping regional areas to “Grow your Own.” VET ensures skills development in a wide range of occupational fields through school-based and work-based learning. It plays a key role in ensuring low school dropouts and facilitates the school to work transition. The recent Education, Employment, and Training Parliamentary Committee Review highlighted travel and accommodation costs, associated with all training, including apprenticeships, as a significant barrier for rural and remote students. These additional costs are potentially adding to an increased dropout rate across the sector. Therefore, it crucial that funding covers costs associated with accessing and undertaking training regardless of location.

Students undertaking training are often some of society’s lowest wage earners, and the additional financial pressures of accessing their training should not be a barrier to completion. Currently, apprentices and trainees (VET) receive a kilometric travel allowance of 32c/km for road and rail travel (travel must be at least 100km return to their closest training organisation), and \$55 per night for intrastate accommodation. With the increased costs of living, the support that is currently available falls well short of adequate. Immediate attention is required to ensure that all apprentices and Trainees (VET) can successfully complete their chosen training.

CARRIED

A 47. BELYANDO / MT COOLON BRANCH

“That ICPA QLD lobbies the relevant Departments, Ministers and tertiary sector for the provision of paid practicums for rural and remote tertiary students undertaking placements to ensure students are given equitable access to opportunities by reducing financial and geographical barriers.”

Explanation:

Some tertiary students study degrees that have a considerable number of practicums that must be completed to successfully graduate. These students are encouraged to travel from their study-based location to complete their practicums to broaden their knowledge and experiences, often considerable distances and without any reimbursement. During these practicums, students are experiencing enormous financial hardship with loss of income, as they are unable to continue their part-time job on top of at times having to pay a second amount of rent or accommodation costs at their new location.

It has been recommended by the Australian University Accord Summary Report that paid placements in the areas of nursing, care and teaching professions be introduced to reduce the financial burden on tertiary students undertaking unpaid work placement and tackling the "Placement Poverty". This would reduce the financial hardship on tertiary students and increase the completion rate.

For example, Bachelor of Nursing Science and Midwifery requires 46 weeks of practicums over the 4 years of study. Weekly share-house rent at their study-base location is \$200/week. During practicum they continue to pay their normal rent plus accommodation expenses, e.g. \$150/week at the practicum location (some locations are considerably more, and some are subsidised), equating to an extra \$7000 in additional rental expenses for the duration of study. These considerable expenses are compounded by a significant loss of income over \$34,000 for the duration of practicums. A paid practicum would enable students to complete the practical requirements without the added stress of financial costs allowing more students studying these degrees to experience a variety of practicums including rural and remote areas.

Rural and remote tertiary students who have had to overcome many educational barriers due to geographic isolation must be given every opportunity to succeed in their chosen career path as these students are often undertaking studies in areas where there is an acute skills shortage.

CARRIED

A 48. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL

"That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education and the Minister for Education to provide tertiary students studying Education degrees who undertake placements in rural or remote state schools with paid practicums."

Explanation:

ICPA Qld is a huge advocate of pre-service teachers experiencing rural and remote locations during practicums. Undertaking time in such a setting often creates a connection to small schools and sees students who have taken these placements returning to similar rural communities. Different universities have different placement requirements and ICPA Qld has been advised by a regional university placement officer that 4th year students specialising in secondary teaching are required to do a 3 week placement in Semester 1 and 5 weeks in Semester 2, as an example. The duration of these practicums places a huge financial burden on pre service teachers, especially in the current economic climate where cost of living is high. In October 2023, a James Cook University placement officer enquired about ICPA branch incentives to financially assist 3 pre-service primary teachers who were wanting to do rural placement at Longreach. Various options were investigated including the use of the Distance Education quarters and private residences of Longreach branch members however

the opportunity for Longreach to host these young teachers was lost purely based on the increased expense of travel to Longreach and not being able to find shared accommodation.

ICPA Qld advocates that a rural placement for a pre-service teacher is imperative to attracting graduate teachers to rural and remote areas. Placement poverty is a barrier to study and enticing preservice teachers to rural areas. Paid practicum would alleviate financial hardship and drop-out rates created by undertaking lengthy mandatory practicums in rural areas away from their usual place of study and residence and better prepare students for the diverse workplaces they will enter upon graduation. Paid practicums would enable pre-service teachers to experience a robust and diverse placement program not limited by financial barriers to increase their work readiness, career development and aid in attracting quality teachers to rural and remote areas.

Australian Universities Accord - Final Report (Page 267)

7.4.1 Barriers to Study

7.4.1.3 The financial hardship caused by mandatory placements

Regional students provided strong feedback about the vexed issue of mandatory placements. As discussed in Chapter 2 – Meeting our current and future skills needs, mandatory placements and clinical training requirements often lead students to forgo paid work to undertake placements, creating considerable financial hardship. These placements can also require students to move or travel long distances, incurring additional costs. The Employment White Paper noted these financial barriers to participation, stating “additional upfront costs such as transport, childcare, and forgoing unpaid work during placements can result in students changing courses or withdrawing from study entirely”.⁴⁰⁷ The Review considers this a crucial issue and has made recommendations in Chapter 2 – Meeting our current and future skills needs

Financial support for placements

14. That to reduce the financial hardship and placement poverty caused by mandatory unpaid placements, the Australian Government work with tertiary education providers, state and territory governments, industry, business and unions to introduce financial support for unpaid work placements. This should include funding by governments for the nursing, care and teaching professions, and funding by employers generally (public and private) for other fields.

Source: *Australian Universities Accord Final Report, Findings - Financial Support for Placements* – Page 23

WITHDRAWN

A 49. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL

“That ICPA Qld encourages the Department of Education to develop and provide training programs for the accreditation of Teacher Aides in Queensland.”

Explanation:

Difficulties attracting staff in rural and remote schools has resulted in teachers operating without the support of trained or experienced teacher aides. Programs aimed at developing teacher aide skill set would result in better educational outcomes for students and support for the teaching principals. Also, these programs would help increase earning capacity and teaching career pathways for teacher aides.

CARRIED

A 50. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL

“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to provide ongoing Fee Free TAFE Certificate 3 in School Based Education Support courses for all Teacher Aides and learning support staff in rural and remote schools.”

Explanation:

Fee-Free TAFE courses have been specifically chosen based on local skills demand and advice from industry. These in demand skills in high-priority areas such as Education has seen Certificate III in School Based Education Support included in the Fee Free TAFE funding. This qualification is perfect for those looking to work as a teacher aide across various school settings. It provides the foundation skills required of a Teacher Aide and covers core skills such as assisting in the implementation of planned learning experiences, supporting the numeracy, literacy and communication skills of students, supporting students at risk and working with diverse communities.

Small rural and remote schools often have a reduced pool of applicants to fill positions of Teacher Aides and Learning Support Staff. This is further exacerbated in small rural schools where the school is isolated and ‘stand-alone’ and not situated in a town precinct where there are additional benefits of a wider community support network and basic requirements such as accommodation to attract applicants. This often results in having to draw staff from the local area or properties within the district and most candidates do not have any experience in education. This situation creates an increase in workload to teaching principals in these small schools as they are often providing on the job training to these staff whilst undertaking their teaching duties. The provision of ongoing Fee Free TAFE courses would incentivise candidates who may find the cost of gaining a qualification prohibitive due to the cost as well as offering a solution to the need to upskill teacher aide and learning support staff in these areas where it is difficult to source staff.

WITHDRAWN

A 51. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL

“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to provide ongoing Fee Free TAFE Certificate 3 in School Based Education Support courses for all nominated supervisors of students enrolled in Distance Education programs.”

Explanation:

For geographically isolated families where distance education is a common or the only education option, the responsibility of having to educate children in an isolated setting without any experience in education is extremely overwhelming. It is an enrolment requirement of State Delivered Distance Education to have an adult 'supervisor' to assist with the students learning in the home schoolroom in conjunction with explicit teacher instruction. Similar to that of a Teacher Aide role within a mainstream school, these 'supervisors' play a critical role within the delivery of distance education and are responsible for a wide variety of learning support to compliment the delivery of virtual teaching by a qualified teacher across all year levels including literacy, numeracy, reading, handwriting, e-teach (arts, technology & physical education) and consolidation of explicitly taught concepts across all subject areas. Interestingly, the vast majority of these 'supervisors' undertake this critical role without any qualifications specific to education. Without the assistance of these 'supervisors' in remote home school rooms, this form of state delivered education could not be delivered. ICPA QLD conducted a Home Tutor survey in October 2023, the results indicated that a qualification in Education Support was the preferred pathway for Home Tutors.

Currently, due to the in-demand skills in the high priority area of Education, Certificate III in School Based Education Support is included on the 'Fee Free TAFE' list. This course covers core skills such as assisting in the implementation of planned learning experiences, supporting the numeracy, literacy and communication skills of students. These core skills would provide a strong foundation skillset to a 'supervisor'. Given, it is an enrolment requirement of a State Delivered Distance Education school, to either be or provide a 'supervisor', ICPA Qld would urge the DoE to provide these ongoing 'Fee Free' accredited training pathways to gain formal qualifications to all nominated 'supervisors' of enrolled students within all seven schools of distance education. This initiative would provide those 'supervisors' who are willing to upskill themselves the education specific foundation skills required to support and increase the educational outcomes of the students in their care. These foundational skills can be further bolstered by additional professional development often provided by SDE's during in-service.

WITHDRAWN

A 52. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Small Business and Training (DESBT) and other relevant stakeholders to provide a formal graduation ceremony for Apprentices and Trainees, to recognise and celebrate student achievements.”

Explanation:

Apprentices and trainees invest a considerable amount of time and effort into obtaining their qualification, often similar or equal in duration to that of a university degree. There is currently no formal ceremony or opportunity to celebrate this sector. A graduation ceremony, similar to that carried out at universities, would positively influence public perceptions, promote the value of training, and create pride in the sector, while delivering deserving recognition for students.

CARRIED

S 10. CAPRICORNIA BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education (DoE) to subsidise CHC30121 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care and CHC30221 Certificate III in School Based Education Support for VETiS students pursuing a pathway to teaching.”

Explanation:

Given there is a national teacher skills shortage, a \$5,185 and \$4,095 Fee for Service charge to complete either of these qualifications is prohibitive for student who is wishing to undertake these courses as a VETiS pathway to gaining teaching qualifications. This ‘Fee for Service’ charge places additional financial burden on families whose children are attending boarding school due to Geographic Isolation and are already paying tuition and boarding fees. Both of these courses are currently on the ‘Free TAFE’ list; however, within VETiS both courses are listed as being ‘Non Subsidised’.

<http://www.cqu.edu.au/study/entry-pathways/start-tafe-now/course-options>

This pathway would greatly assist students looking to undertake Certificate Courses to gain qualifications in either area prior to leaving school to increase ‘Job Readiness’ and employability within Early Childcare and Teacher Aide settings. Additionally, these courses could be advantageous for any student wishing to gain the desirable skillset to be a Nanny or teaching Governess/Home Tutor within a distance education home school room.

CARRIED

S 11. ICPA QLD STATE COUNCIL

“That ICPA Qld lobbies Registered Training Organisations (RTO’s) who deliver Teacher Aide qualification courses to review and develop explicit research-based units to include how to support neurodivergent learners and diverse disabilities present in an inclusive classroom setting.”

Explanation:

There are approximately 30,000 autistic students in Queensland State Schools. In rural and remote

areas, where face to face visits of allied health are infrequent due to vast distances of travel, it is imperative that all staff supporting students have a thorough understanding and variety of skills suited to adequately support neurodiverse learners and diverse disabilities. Therefore, certificate courses for Teacher Aides will continue to require explicit, current, evidence-based course content.

This content needs to have a child centred focus and build the capacity of Teacher Aides to assist the classroom teacher with small group tasks and adequately support neurodiverse learners and diverse disabilities within an inclusive classroom setting. Additionally, Teacher Aides need professional development to ensure a deeper understanding of the Disability Discrimination Act and Disability Standards for Education.

CARRIED