

### **BOARDING SCHOOLS AND HOSTELS PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT – June 2023**

The Boarding Schools and Hostels Portfolio has had another busy lobbying year with three motions at the 2022 Blackall Conference. Two of the motions were “thank-you” for tireless work for our boarding students during the peak of Covid 19 Policy restrictions affecting our rural and remote students. The third motion was asking for awareness and consideration of rural and remote students during the enrolment process who have been unable to sit online testing either externally or through their schools.

The 2022 conference floor listened to support from Boarding Schools in attendance, along with the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA), reassuring members that their schools take connectivity and associated factors very seriously for future enrolments.

Reassurance was given to members that no child would be discriminated against due to not having sat any form of testing, especially if it was due to connectivity or geographical reasoning.

Following conference, QLD State Council has met with ABSA, Independent Schools Queensland, Queensland Catholic Education Commission and included this motion in a letter to all Heads of Schools and Heads of Boarding at QLD boarding facilities. The feedback has been reassurance that schools, whilst the testing may be mentioned in their enrolment process, does not affect a student's application process; schools prefer to do their own point in time testing once the child is enrolled and beginning their education journey at their school.

It was noted by all the schools and organisations that communication is also imperative with families concerning any situations they are facing that affect their child, not only during the enrolment stage, but also during their boarding years.

Whilst also not directly a Boarding Schools and Hostels Portfolio motion, the portfolio has been supporting the Financial Assistance Portfolio with the lobbying for and awareness raising the need for an increase in LAFHAS (Living Away From Home Allowance Scheme). This allowance has a direct impact on students, families, and schools as the cost-of-living increases along with educational costs. For rural and remote families in Queensland with no viable access to secondary schooling, education is of real concern not only for educational reasons but emotionally and crucially financially.

In conclusion, ICPA QLD would also like to thank the schools along with ABSA and ISQ who provided supporting videos and messages for our campaign to have the LAFHAS increased.

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