

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CONFERENCE REPORT – June 2021

As usual Financial Assistance continues to be a key issue for many of our members. The disparity continues to widen between (ever increasing) costs to complete the compulsory years of education (usually in a boarding school setting) and the fiscal support given by the State Government.

In 2021, boarding fees rose by 2%, tuition by 1% in contrast to no increase of LAFHAS. In the past ten years, the value of LAFHAS as a support towards tuition costs borne by families has eroded by a further 3% from 44.6% of costs to 41.2%. Another way of looking at the ever-widening gap is to compare the increase in tuition fees over the past ten years. Tuition has increased by \$4145 while LAFHAS tuition component has increased by \$1418 - a further \$2727 difference in out of pocket expenses for families.

Year	Av. Tuition Costs	LAFHAS State Allowance	Drought Subsidy State	Av. Out of Pocket Tuition Costs	Subsidy % of Tuition cost
2006	6686	3517		3169	52.6%
2007	7239	3662		3577	50.6%
2008	7612	3758		3854	49.4%
2009	8142	3950		4192	48.5%
2010	8716	4029		4687	46.2%
2011	9316	4158		5158	44.6%
2012	9887	4317		5570	43.7%
2013	10402	4356		6046	41.9%
2014	11172	4444		6728	39.8%
2015	11373	4898		6475	43.1%
2016	11793	5217	1250	5326	54.8%
2017	12249	5296	1250	5703	53.4%
2018	12503	5391	279	6833	45.3%
2019	13209	5483		7726	41.5%
2020	13317	5576		7741	41.9%
2021	13461	5576		7885	41.2%

As on previous occasions, ICPA Qld wrote to Minister Grace following conference to highlight the issue and then raised the matter at delegations. The three Financial Assistance related motions passed at Conference have been raised as issues with the relevant Department authorities with no response as of yet to two of the motions.

- Access to LAFHAS for student's whose secondary school does not provide the required subjects to meet their specific educational needs.
- Support package for families that employ home tutor where Distance Education is the only option.

In regards to the motion about LAFHAS funding not reducing if the CPI drops, Shadow Education Minister the Hon Dr Christian Rowan has been able to get a response back from the department. The Government has given the undertaking not to reduce the LAFHAS funding even though CPI has fallen by -1%

We have used available opportunities to increase the knowledge of other politicians around rural and remote students and the essential role boarding schools play in reaching desired educational, social and communal outcomes. ICPA will continue to lobby for rural and remote families and strive for a better LAFHAS deal.

While the past year has not seen the desired change in LAFHAS funding arrangements, it has not been for want of effort. Members may be rest assured this issue is still at the forefront of our advocacy and will continue to be so.

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