



Isolated Children's Parents' Association Queensland

Access to Equitable Education

STRENGTHENING RURAL & REMOTE COMMUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION

Each and every student in Queensland deserves a quality education to sustain them into the future. ICPA Qld is passionate about ensuring rural and remote communities remain vibrant and sustainable through the provision of an equitable, affordable education for students living in these communities. If access to a quality education for their children is not available, families will no longer choose to reside in our rural and remote areas.

There are several key issues critical for the provision of quality education in country Queensland. A commitment from government to prioritise rural and remote education in these areas will lead to a strengthening of Queensland's small communities which provide such vital services to our state.



PRIORITISING GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED STUDENTS AT SCHOOLS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

KEY ISSUE 1

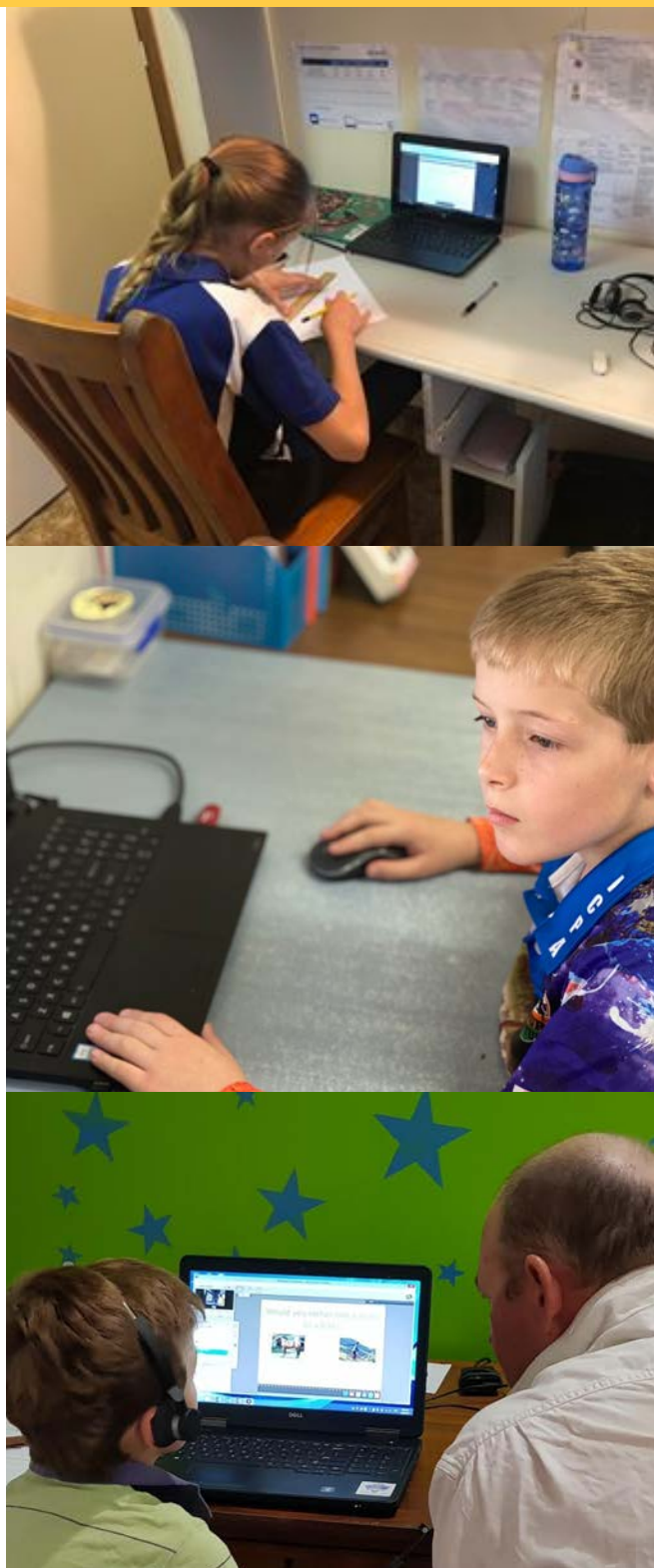
ICPA QLD seeks the commitment of Government to:

- Ensure that Geographically Isolated students within Schools of Distance Education are prioritised in regard to adequate space, resources and support
- Provide a consistent formula for allocation of teaching and student space within Schools of Distance Education
- Cap enrolments of non-geographically isolated students where Schools of Distance Education cannot physically cater for increased teaching and student space

Queensland's seven Schools of Distance Education (SDE's) were designed and built for the education of geographically isolated children across the state who have no daily access to face to face, publicly funded schooling. The last five years has seen escalating enrolments within these schools as a result of 'by choice', medical and 'single subject' students. SDE's are at their capacity across the state and are struggling to provide safe and effective teaching and learning spaces for geographically isolated students.

These children, already disadvantaged by distance, are quickly becoming a minority within the environment which was purpose built for their unique circumstances. Distance Education schools provide the opportunity for these children to come together and be a part of a school community, participate in a sporting team, a school musical, sit at a desk or enjoy a visit to their library. These classrooms are also essential for sitting exams. Many of these students have lost their 'classroom' as there is no longer any room for them. The "classroom" space is being allocated to teaching staff required to service the increased non-geographically isolated enrolments. In many cases face to face learning is now occurring off-campus wherever a suitable space can be found. These students require, and deserve, consistent and constant access if they are to feel included and a part of their school community whenever they physically attend their campus for mini-schools, Home Tutor workshops and sports days.

Geographically Isolated families have no other viable option for educating their children and these students must return to being a priority with the provision of space and resources allocated adequately and appropriately.



REINSTATEMENT OF REGIONAL SCHOOLS TOURING ARTS PROGRAM

KEY ISSUE 2

ICPA QLD seeks the commitment of Government to:

- Provide permanent funding to ensure the longevity of the Schools Touring (Arts) Program, particularly in rural and remote areas
- Develop and deliver programs from a central location

The Schools Touring Program had run for over 50 years, delivered by Artslink QLD and Queensland Arts Council prior to being overseen by Queensland Music Festival for the last 2.5 years. No announcement was made when the program ceased to exist under the oversight of the previous organisers in December 2019, and the new program offers endless hurdles to rural and remote communities seeking to offer their young students exposure to similar cultural experiences previously provided.

Attracting a tour to travel out to perform in small rural and remote areas will now require the artist themselves to apply for funding, or small schools to apply on their behalf. Such administrative tasks are likely to prove a hindrance to all involved and, hence, will be detrimental to the number and range of tours available to these communities. In light of the extensive research espousing the exponential advantages of exposing children to music and art, it is absolutely critical that ALL students, including those in rural and remote schools, be given extensive exposure at every opportunity and that the methodology to enable that access be transparent, simple and administered/allocated by a centralised point within the Arts Department.



EDUCATIONAL AFFORDABILITY

KEY ISSUE 3

ICPA QLD seeks the commitment of Government to:

- Provide an immediate increase to the Remote Area Tuition Allowance (RATuA) as part of the Living Away From Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS)
- Ensure that this Allowance does not stall or decrease due to the economic impact of Covid-19
- Provide ongoing increases to this Allowance to offset the rising cost of tuition fees for boarding school students, which have caused a steady erosion of the financial benefit of the scheme since its inception

The impact of Queensland's drought, flood events and bush fires over the past decade has left numerous families with potentially no measurable income for the foreseeable future. Financially the impost upon local businesses, families and communities is vast and exponentially increases the impact on students, facilities and ultimately successful high quality learning outcomes. It is imperative that students living in these areas, however they access their education, are the highest priority and that they are left neither vulnerable nor wanting during this time of need.

The economic impact of Covid-19 in 2020 and beyond is presently immeasurable however it is of paramount importance that the RATuA is not negatively affected by this event, and that annual increases continue to be implemented to ensure the ongoing education of our students at boarding schools across the state.

Many families who have children attending boarding school are finding it increasingly difficult to continue to pay fees without assistance from schools and government. For these children it is imperative that the government steps forward to provide an immediate increase to the RATuA (LAFHAS) in order to keep these students at boarding school. Should the disparity and its ever-widening trajectory remain unaddressed, there is an increased risk of students not reaching their potential or realising their dreams due to a schooling option being chosen by price rather than suitability to meet the student's needs and ambitions.

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%



ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF QUALITY EDUCATORS

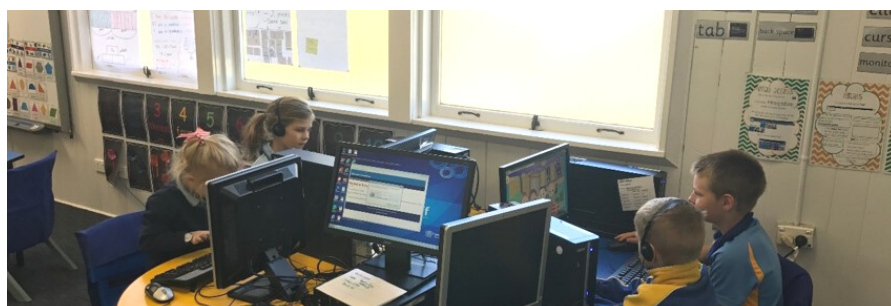
KEY ISSUE 4

ICPA QLD seeks the commitment of Government to:

- Provide ongoing funding to assist preservice teachers to participate in rural and remote schools thus demystifying country service
- Extend the Future Teachers Bursary currently available only to Queensland State School students, to also include students in Queensland Independent Schools

Rural and remote schools continue to be the hub of any small community and quality teachers are regarded highly by community members. The struggle to attract and retain these educators continues to impact on school communities. It is vital that preservice teachers be required to complete at least one practicum at a school 'beyond the range' and that financial support is offered to assist these students with accommodation and personal commitments during this time. These experiences in rural and remote schools will allow student teachers to familiarise themselves with country life and thus be more likely to return after graduation.

The Future Teachers Bursary offers senior school students in State Schools an opportunity to get a head start on their university subjects prior to completing Year 12, with financial support provided to enable them to cover more than one subject before graduating. Many students from rural and remote areas attend independent boarding schools in their senior years, and therefore are ineligible to apply for this bursary like their state school peers. It is these students who are more likely to return to rural and remote locations to pursue a career in teaching and as such they provide an essential pool of potential teachers to the Department of Education and should be eligible to apply for such a bursary.



ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION INC QLD

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) Queensland is a voluntary, non-profit, apolitical parent body dedicated to ensuring that all rural and remote students have equity of access to a continuing and appropriate education.

"Offering support to families living in rural and remote communities delivers the message of their importance"

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