

**COST OF LIVING CRISIS BITES BUSH KIDS WITH NO HIGH SCHOOLS**

**\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\***

**WHO:** ICPA President Louise Martin

Mrs Patricia Mitchell OAM, Patron of ICPA and Amanda Walker, ICPA Qld member, will also speak.

**WHERE:** Outside the front of Parliament House, George St, Brisbane

**WHEN:** 8.30am, Thursday 23rd March

**Invitation to attend the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA Qld) press conference.**

Please come along, grab an interview, or get in contact. ICPA Qld feel this story needs to be told and we would welcome contact before or after our press conference to share the story of equitable access to education for bush students. We welcome your contact for interviews.

Queensland families whose children are forced to travel thousands of kilometres just to access high school, are demanding the Premier steps in urgently, as the cost-of-living crisis deepens.

Twelve Local Government Areas in Queensland - a massive region covering a quarter of the entire state - have no state secondary schools.

Queensland's rural education advocacy group, the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA Qld), is calling on the Palaszczuk Government to boost its Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS) immediately, to ensure the children affected can continue to get access to secondary education.

ICPA President Louise Martin says, *"We live in a country where education is supposedly free and without more help with tuition fees, our rural and remote families will be left further out of pocket"*.

*"For most of them, the only option for face-to-face secondary schooling is to live away from home,"* Ms Martin says. *"Therefore, boarding school is not an extravagance for these children; it is a necessity, and it comes at a great financial and emotional cost."*

Ms Martin notes, *"The soaring cost of living is straining families' budgets, and access to affordable education is essential. Families living and working on the land and in remote towns are equally affected. Ms Martin warns that no increase to the LAFHAS will force more families to move - threatening the survival of Queensland's rural communities."*

**FACTS:**

- 12 Local Government areas (455,238 sq km) have no secondary school - that is an area 338 times the size of Brisbane City Council
- The [Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme](#) (LAFHAS) supports the tuition fees of students who must board to access secondary school.

- After the subsidy has been applied, most families are left with an \$8,000+ bill annually for tuition fees (that does not include the boarding component)
- Approximately 1400 Queensland students access the LAFHAS subsidy.
- ICPA Qld has made a submission to Treasury, calling for a \$4000 increase to LAFHAS <https://icpa.com.au/qld/news/submission-treasury-2023>
- These students lead an isolated life and equitable access to a secondary school community is essential for the best student outcomes.
  - Tony Cook, former Director-General of Queensland's Education Department, acknowledged in a 2021 letter, that *social isolation and loneliness are complex issues, and the Department is committed to contributing to work that decreases social isolation and loneliness.*

**ENDS**

**More Information:**

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