

TEACHER EDUCATION PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT – June 2023

Throughout the year the Teacher Education Portfolio has continued to work towards ensuring that rural and remote schools are attracting and retaining quality educators. With a nationwide teacher shortage, the complexities around attracting, securing and retention has notched to new heights. Teaching staff and Principals across the state are stretched as they strive to cover the gaps and Teacher Relief Staff (TRS) are in the highest demand in decades.

Delegations

During delegations ICPA Qld met with the Department of Education, The Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) and various universities. Topics of discussion included, teacher shortages, rural teacher placements and preparedness, mentoring opportunities for beginning teachers, scholarships/ bursaries and incentives available to attract quality teachers to rural schools.

Grants & Bursaries Update

The "Regional Professional Experience Grant," is now available to preservice teachers undertaking a placement of three weeks or greater in priority regions. The grant is a one-off payment of up to \$3400 to assist with travel, accommodation and living expenses. The Turn to Teaching (T2T) Internship program has had a good uptake and applications for 2023 will open in August. Applicants must have an undergraduate degree in a field other than education. As a result of our lobby the "Aspiring Teacher Grant", has now been extended to include students who take a gap year after graduating. The grant is a one off, lump sum payment of \$2500 for general applicants and \$5000 for rural or remote residents. We thank the Department of Education for taking on our members' concerns and making the welcome adjustments.

Queensland College of Teachers (QCT)

In late August, The Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) provided an opportunity for me to present at the QCT Professional Standards Board Meeting in Brisbane. I was able to discuss the role ICPA plays in ensuring equitable access to all facets of rural education, deliver firsthand recounts from a parents and educator's perspective, and discuss ways to attract and retain quality teachers into rural and remote school settings. The meeting was attended by various stakeholders including, the Director of the Queensland College of Teachers, Deans of Education, School Principals and Teachers, Union Representatives and various other QCT Staff/Board Members. Later in the year I was invited to attend the QCT Teach X Awards in Brisbane. These awards showcased excellence in teaching across the state and I was impressed with the rural teachers that were nominated and recognised for their outstanding achievements.

Branch Incentives for Preservice Teachers

ICPA Qld continues to be a presence on several Initial Teacher Education (ITE) advisory groups and maintains connections with Higher Education Institutions ensuring that ITE students are encouraged to complete at least one of their practical experiences in a rural and remote area. Many ICPA branches around the state have offered incentives for preservice teachers and this list has been distributed to several universities and stakeholders to encourage engagement. Since updating the incentive list this year we have noted an increased interest and uptake. Any branches that are not on the list and would like to be included, please contact State Council.

Mentoring of Graduate Teachers

In response to last year's motion relating to the mentoring of graduate teachers, the Department of Education has advised that the Educational Futures Institute is in development and will aid in addressing this shortfall. The Institute will provide capability and learning opportunities for teachers throughout their careers. Additionally, the Centres for Learning and Wellbeing (CLAW) also provide mentoring and coaching to beginning teachers at schools within their catchment. A focus has been made to ensure contextualised support is offered to new teachers in remote areas.

As the key representative of rural and remote families in education across Queensland, we look forward to maintaining this presence and advocating for equity in education for our children.

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