

## TEACHER EDUCATION

### A 35. FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education and training providers to support the creation of accredited training pathways for Home Tutors to not only formally recognise their educational and teaching skills and experience in the distance education home classroom, but also to improve their future employment opportunities upon finishing up as a Home Tutor.”**

#### Explanation:

Distance education for geographically isolated students who have no access to daily face-to-face schooling and students that have other barriers to attending face-to-face school is founded on the assumption that a ‘Home Tutor’ is available to supervise the students in their home classroom. While most distance education services are well structured and ably staffed, the successful delivery of distance education requires students to have ready daily access to a Home Tutor who can teach and supervise the program in the home classroom.

The Home Tutor must be present to commit six to eight hours a day to teach and supervise the distance education program, in addition to necessary preparation time. The Home Tutor role requires dedication and commitment and often lasts several years. The Home Tutor must be capable and confident in delivering the distance education program in order that their students can achieve educational parity with their peers in face-to-face schools who have daily access to professionally trained teachers and support staff. The delivery of distance education is not possible without the commitment of Home Tutors who are accountable for the face-to-face delivery of educational support, supervision, and educational evaluation of their students.

Particularly for geographically isolated families, the role of Home Tutor often falls on the mother, which means they are then unable to participate in, or have to juggle, other day to day work, either in the family business, on the property on which the family resides or elsewhere. They often forego their own careers, earning capability and study ambitions to teach their child/ren enrolled in distance education. Some families may employ a tutor or governess, but this comes at substantial cost and finding a governess/tutor is often difficult in isolated areas<sup>1</sup>

Often over many years in the role, the Home Tutor develops a range of invaluable educational and teaching skills, but there is no formal recognition of these skills and experiences, or upon finishing as a Home Tutor, limited future employment opportunities in face-to-face schools. Home Tutors should have the opportunity to take up accredited training pathways in order to attain formal qualifications in the education field. With the shortage of teachers and high demand for teacher aides in Australia, particularly in rural and remote areas, Home Tutors are an ‘untapped asset’ and formally recognising their many years of commitment, skills developed, and experience is a benefit all round.

As part of the training pathways, it is proposed that due to the nature of the role Home Tutors play in the

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home classrooms and their participation in professional development delivered at distance education community engagement events, they should be eligible for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for some course units, as well as reduced classroom time for placement. Investigation into suitable courses offered by Queensland TAFE found that the Certificate III in Education Support requires 100 hours of placement.

This would be difficult to achieve, particularly for a geographically isolated Home Tutor, so it is proposed that time teaching in the home classroom and opportunities for supervised teaching at distance education minischools count towards placement. Current barriers to achieving this aim should be addressed and dismantled.

As an example, ICPA Northern Territory have teamed up with Charles Darwin University to create training pathways for Home Tutors. The scheme supports Certificate III, Certificate IV, and Diploma qualifications for both Home Tutors and people who may work as governesses for children doing distance education. The program supports RPL, reduced class time, and once completed the qualifications count towards an education degree.

Further, finding and retaining Home Tutors and governesses can be difficult, and having the opportunity to upskill and come away with a qualification while working, will encourage more people into the role of Home Tutor.

<sup>2</sup> Isolated Children's Parents' Association Inc (Australia) 2023. Distance Education Portfolio 2022-23 Briefing Paper.

**CARRIED**