

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

1. **A17.** ALPHA BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobbies the Minister for Education for the introduction of a natural disaster subsidy component of LAFHAS to be applied during a natural disaster event and to continue for an additional 2 years after the event.”

Word Change

A17. ALPHA BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobbies the Minister for Education for the introduction of a hardship subsidy component of LAFHAS to be applied during times of hardship and other significant events and to continue for an additional 2 years after the event.”

Carried

Explanation: If families in these areas or shires received an additional component to LAFHAS when affected, and for an additional two years after the end of the event, it would give them the security to continue the consistency in their children’s education.

2. **A18.** ALPHA BRANCH

“That ICPA QLD Inc. lobbies the State Government to implement an additional means tested component to LAFHAS, to enable those on low incomes to afford the increasing costs of boarding school tuition fees.”

Withdrawn

3. **A19.** SOUTHERN DOWNS BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc lobby the Minister for Education and the Premier of Queensland for an immediate increase to the LAFHAS of \$4000.”

Carried

Explanation: For too long there have been calls for an increase to the LAFHAS. In response to a recent Question on Notice in State Parliament where the Member for Gregory, Lachlan Millar, asked the Minister for Education for an immediate increase to the LAFHAS payment (outlined in the media release dated 20.3.19) the Minister for Education, Hon Grace Grace, showed a lack of understanding of educating rural and remote students. Her response included suggestions that parents send their children to one of the two State run Boarding Schools (Dalby and Mt Isa), enrol in Distance Education or select a Boarding school based on the fees that they charge. This in no way solves the problem for families of children whose educational needs are not met by these facilities and continues to place a huge financial burden on families. There is no option for fair or equitable access to education for rural and remote students in Minister Graces’ reply.

Costs for 2018:

Average Boarding Fee: \$19,294

Average Tuition Fee: \$12,503

LAFHAS: \$5391

Costs for 2019:

Average Boarding Fee: \$19,961

Average Tuition Fee: \$13,499

LAFHAS: \$5483

4. **A20.** TAMBO BRANCH

“That ICPA QLD Inc. continue to lobby the Minister for Education for the \$4,000 increase to the LAFHAS.”

Deem covered by A19

Explanation: Tambo ICPA continues to support ICPA Qld in the lobby for a \$4,000 increase to the LAFHAS. This increase is essential to rural and remote families who have no local options of education for their children. An increase to the LAFHAS would bring the cost of educating at boarding schools to a more equitable level.

5. **A21.** MITCHELL/TOMOO/DUNKELD BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc continues to lobby the Department of Education and other relevant Departments to ensure the Living Away from Home Allowance is increased and then indexed to the Education sub-index of the consumer price index to more closely reflect the real increase in costs of boarding fees.”

Word change

A21. MITCHELL/TOMOO/DUNKELD BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc continues to lobby the Department of Education and other relevant Departments to ensure the Living Away from Home Allowance is increased and then indexed to the Education sub-index of the consumer price index to more closely reflect the real increase in costs of tuition fees.”

Carried

Explanation: For geographically isolated families for whom boarding school is a necessity in order to gain access to an equitable secondary education, the shortfall between the actual cost of tuition fees and the LAFHAS is an ever-widening gap. With the devastating droughts and flooding that has impacted most arms of the Primary Industries in this State, the struggle for parents to make the education of their children the greatest priority, is very real. The deaf ears of our Government to our pleas over many years as well as some very uninformed statements from our Education Minister, shows a continued lack of understanding of the needs of our families who are struggling to continue to give their children, the future of this country, the education they deserve. In a state the size of Queensland that has only three state boarding schools, there is no option for many rural families but to send children to private boarding schools. Advocacy efforts need to continue in order to not only minimise the current disparity but ensure that increases in allowances are an automatic response as fees inevitably rise.

6. **A22.** QUEENSLAND STATE COUNCIL

“That ICPA Qld Inc lobby the Minister for Education to provide equitable tuition funding for geographically isolated LAFHAS recipients, comparable to other state school sectors.”

Carried

Explanation: Students living in Geographically Isolated locations do not have access to mainstream schools due to the tyranny of distance. The majority access their primary schooling via Schools of Distance Education, however once students reach secondary year levels, Distance Education lacks the access to extra-curricular and social opportunities as well as specialised subjects students may need to realise their future career aspirations.

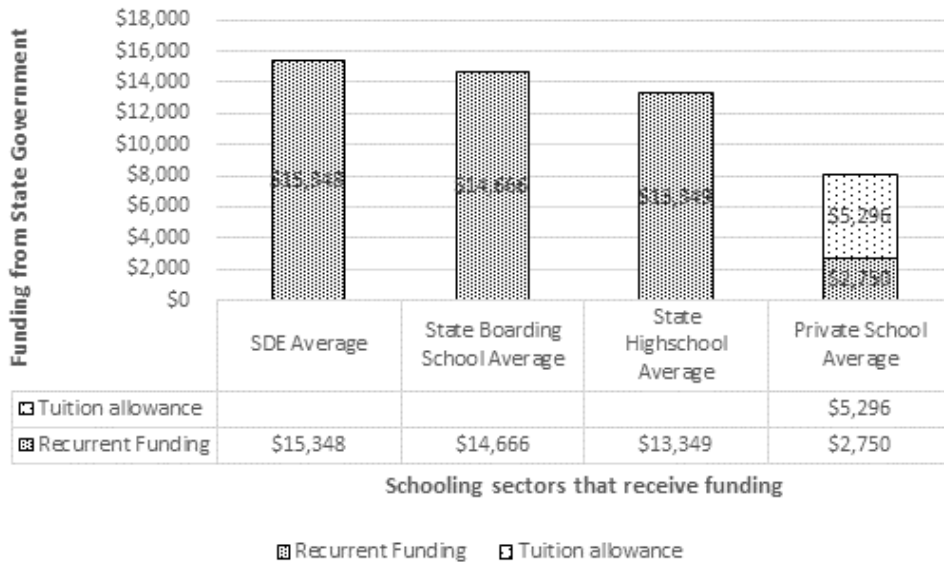
State Boarding Schools can be an option for secondary schooling; however, with only three of these in Queensland, it is simply unfeasible to house all geographically isolated secondary students at these facilities.

For the majority of geographically isolated students in Queensland, secondary schooling is accessed via the 43 private boarding schools throughout the State. While sending children away from home at as young as 11 years of age is an extremely difficult undertaking for parents, siblings, and most importantly the child. However, there is very little choice if parents are to provide the academic, social and extra-curricular needs geographically isolated students deserve and are entitled to expect.

The State Government provides recurrent per capita tuition funding to all secondary students accessing their education via Schools of Distance Education, mainstream State High Schools, State Boarding Schools or

Private Schools. The table below shows recurrent per capita funding for Private Schools plus the LAFHAS tuition allowance, in total, is disproportionately lower than state funding provided to other school sectors.

Breakdown of Recurrent Per Capita State Funding to Schools for Tuition Costs (2017)



In 2018 the average out of pocket expenses for private boarding school tuition fees was \$6833 with parents contributing approximately 56% of the tuition costs of their children’s education.

In order for the State to meet its obligations to provide an appropriate education to all Queensland students, regardless of circumstances or location, the equitable solution would be to increase the LAFHAS tuition component to be comparable to the average recurrent funding per student provided to other schooling sectors. No government would agree that it is ethically or validly reasonable for parents to continue to bare the significant financial burden of providing an appropriate (and compulsory) education for their children. This relentless expense continues to ravage rural and remote communities beyond repair as young, innovative families leave to access more affordable education options, taking future generations with them.

7. A23. SPRINGSURE/ROLLESTON BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc lobby relevant parties to ask that they consider bypass for LAFHA, in rural and remote schools, for all senior years where subjects are limited.”

Lost

Explanation: Many small high schools and P-10 schools are not able to offer a range of subjects’ students may need for future career choices.

8. A24. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH

“That ICPA (Qld) Inc continue to raise understanding and awareness amongst relevant authorities of the limited choices families have with regards to accessing a secondary education.”

Carried

Explanation: Minister Grace’s recent response to a significant increase to the Qld Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHAS) was “that a family can choose one of the state boarding schools, attend a school of distance education or access one of the numerous private schools with lower fees and sibling discounts to minimise their out of pocket expenses.”

There are only three state run boarding schools in Queensland. There are eight shires in Queensland without a secondary school. It costs more to fund a secondary student to attend a school of distance education than it does to provide the LAFHAS assistance.

We need those who are making decisions about the educational future of our children to understand why the options provided by Minster Grace are not viable choices for a significant number of geographically isolated families.

With improved understanding, we anticipate that a substantial increase in LAFHAS will be realised.

9. **A25.** YARAKA ISISFORD BRANCH

“That delegates at this conference express thanks to ICPA Qld Inc. for their continued efforts to obtain a realistic increase in the Living Away from Home Allowance.”

Carried

Explanation: There is an enormous amount of VOLUNTEER time and effort which ICPA Qld Council Inc continues to devote to lobbying for opportunity, access and support for all rural and remote students.

10. **A26.** YARAKA ISISFORD BRANCH

“That delegates at this conference fully endorse and support ICPA Qld Inc.’s continued efforts to obtain a realistic increase in the Living Away from Home Allowance.”

Carried

Explanation: Most ICPA members must utilise boarding schools due to lack of reasonable daily access to face-to-face education. (We would remind delegates that there are EIGHT shires in Queensland without a high school). The agricultural industry in Queensland (and the towns and communities supported by agriculture) are 1) still coping with the worst drought in recorded history and/or 2) slowly recovering from this drought and/or 3) devastated by floods and unprecedented stock losses.

Economic hardship seems to have become an unavoidable way of life some families. The costs of accessing education should not preventing any families from residing in rural and remote Queensland and should not limit the educational opportunities of those students whose families do live in these areas. The burden imposed by the costs of education needs to be recognised by and ameliorated by the Queensland Government.