

BOARDING SCHOOLS/ HOSTELS

A1. RICHMOND BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld State Council are thanked for their tireless advocacy on behalf of boarding students and families during the COVID 19 border restrictions.”

CARRIED

A2. RICHMOND BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld support ICPA (Aust) in their advocacy for the establishment of an Isolated Children’s Pandemic Advisory Group made up of State and Federal Education Ministers and relevant authorities, the Australian Boarding Schools Association and ICPA representatives to ensure consistent decisions are made specific to the needs of geographically isolated children who must cross State borders to access education.”

CARRIED

Explanation: The situation which has arisen in 2020 due to inconsistent and often confusing COVID 19 border restrictions have placed boarding students and their families in extremely difficult circumstances. A united approach is required to ensure uniformity and consistency, with input from organisations highly cognisant of the logistics, challenges and needs of geographically isolated students who attend boarding school to access their education.

A3. QUEENSLAND STATE COUNCIL

“That ICPA Qld thank the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) for their support of boarding schools and families especially in regard to the impact of COVID-19.”

CARRIED

Explanation: ABSA has been supporting ICPA since its inception, they have offered their assistance to assist with the organisation of conference and the sharing of information, which has been invaluable during COVID- 19.

A4. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld applaud the actions of boarding schools and thank them for working collaboratively with the Australian Boarding Schools Association and ICPA to achieve the very best outcomes for our children during challenges relating to COVID.”

CARRIED

S1. WESTERN DOWNS BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby relevant authorities to make compliance for Non-State Boarding Schools to the Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences mandatory, and encourage continued compliance by imposing a certification/auditing system through which they and their boarding staff must comply on a regular basis.”

CARRIED

Explanation: The Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences is a document which has had input from many distinguished groups related to boarding in Australia including the ICPA. This document recommends a minimum standard for boarding schools and residences to comply with to provide children with a safe and secure living and learning environment while they are away from home.

Currently the State-run boarding facilities in Queensland (of which there are 3) are mandated to comply with the *Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences* and consequently be certified against them. However, there is no such legislation applying to non-state boarding schools. Western Australia have an accreditation system for their boarding schools which uses the *Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences* as a benchmark.

The 2012 Royal Commission into the institutional response to child sexual abuse uncovered atrocities in which we would never have believed possible by those who were in such trusted positions as the care of vulnerable people. Incidents continue to occur today in our boarding facilities and beyond. As our rural and remote children have little choice but to attend these residences to achieve an equitable education, then they deserve to do so in the safest and most supportive environment possible. This can be made possible by ensuring compliance with the minimum standard of care through the *Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences*

S2. WESTERN DOWNS BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby relevant authorities that any staff member working in a school boarding facility with children in their care be required to undertake regular boarding specific training to assist them with their work, especially in the areas of child protection and welfare.”

CARRIED

Explanation: A recommendation from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is;

Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.

This is reinforced through the Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences Document Section 4.3 Competence and Professional learning of staff.

c) Provision of annual professional learning relevant to the role and context.

Educating staff regularly in child protection and safety is of utmost importance. As parents we send our children away to boarding school with our hearts in our mouths and hope that they don't forget their manners and that they find good friends to stand by them as they go through their schooling years. It is every parent's nightmare to receive a phone call to say that your child has been assaulted by a trusted staff member. There needs to be measures in place which minimise these incidents and protect our children. Requiring staff to undergo specific training could go a long way towards achieving this goal.