

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A13. YARAKA ISISFORD BRANCH

“That delegates at this conference thank ICPA Qld for their ongoing efforts to secure, firstly, an immediate increase of \$4000 to LAFHAS (Living Away From Home Assistance Scheme.) and, secondly, annual increases in LAFHAS in line with the CPI (Education sub-index).”

CARRIED

Explanation: The LAFHAS is a much welcomed and needed financial assistance scheme for rural and remote families for whom boarding school is the only realistic option. However, while tuition costs have increased steadily over the years, LAFHAS has not kept pace with those increases (or the CPI). In 2006, LAFHAS covered 52.6% of tuition costs: fourteen years later it covers 41.9% - a downward slide of 10.7%. The rising cost of boarding school tuition fees has seen the steady erosion of the financial benefit of the scheme. There is an urgent need for a significant increase in the LAFHAS Remote Area Tuition Allowance. Swift and ongoing action is required to halt the ever-widening disparity between the cost of tuition and the support that the Queensland Government provides to assist families in meeting those costs.

S5. RICHMOND BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby DoE to ensure the Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS) is not reduced if the Consumer Price Index (CPI) drops due to the economic impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic.”

CARRIED

Explanation: At present, the Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHAS) is aligned with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and generally increases annually as the CPI rises. The COVID 19 pandemic will impact Australia economically for many years to come. Given the country is now in a recession, it is imperative to ensure that if the CPI deflates in the coming years, the LAFHAS is not decreased as a result. Rural and remote families will need this subsidy more than ever as the economic downturn places unprecedented stress on the economy, employment, agriculture and small business.

S6. WESTERN DOWNS BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby the State Government to address the inequities faced by rural and regional communities where secondary schools are not able to meet the specific educational needs of individual students by allowing their carers/families to access education allowances.”

CARRIED

Explanation: From grade 7 our children are encouraged by the Department to choose subjects to which they intend to pursue careers after high school. Whether this be in further education, trade or immediate employment it is important that they are given the best chance possible to achieve their dreams. Some may even grow up believing that their dreams are impossible because of where they live and the obstacles in their way. These could include financial, distance, subject unavailability, appropriate teaching staff, access to required tools, instruments, facilities. There are a great deal of issues which may be difficult to overcome if a child shows particular interest in a subject for which there is no easy access to.

A young lady in our district is a talented musician and was not able to access appropriate tuition in her chosen subject at the local high school. Her parents chose to send her to a school which could provide the tuition and expertise to support her goals and dreams. This is a large financial burden on her parents as they are not entitled to any financial assistance due to their proximity to a bus service which goes to the local high school. Enabling equity of access for children with specific education needs in rural areas to pursue their chosen field of study would improve education outcomes for the regions and ensure rural children have a possibility of achieving their career goals.

F3. BELYANDO/MT COOLON

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby the relevant Qld authorities to introduce a financial support package for those that employ a home tutor to supervise and educate geographically isolated distance education students, where distance education is the only option.”

CARRIED

Explanation: The government provides a free state school education for all Qld students. For geographically isolated children, attending onsite schooling, is an impossibility. Families provide education at home via Distance Education in these situations.

In many cases providing DE requires the employment of a home tutor to supervise and deliver the curriculum. For example, an owner operated enterprise who has no face to face schooling opportunity have to educate children at home and may need to employ a home tutor to assist in the delivery of education. These costs are currently met by families which negates the free state school education for these geographically isolated children and families. This creates great inequity in access to education.