

### BOARDING SCHOOLS/HOSTELS PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT – 2020

COVID-19 has seen an enormous amount of pressure on all boarding schools and indeed, all schools across Qld.

ICPA would like to applaud all boarding schools for their communications to boarding families around the planning and actions that each individual school implemented in response to COVID-19. There has been a lot of confusion around the COVID Safe Plans that boarding schools have been asked to submit to Qld Health as the directives are ever changing, parents have had a heightened level of anxiety around the uncertainty of their children returning to Boarding school especially around the closure of the QLD and NSW Boarders. ICPA Qld have been in constant contact with the Education Department and Qld Health to try to come to a solution for the return of our rural and remote students to boarding school.

#### **There are 50 boarding facilities throughout Queensland**

2019 saw the closing of Emerald Agricultural College, Longreach Pastoral College

The 50 actual boarding schools are: -

- Two state run, namely **Dalby State High** and **Spinifex Residential College** in Mt. Isa.
- Four boarding schools catering for indigenous children: **AFL House** –Cape York, **Cape York Girl Academy**, **Djarragun College** at Gordonvale and **Western Cape College** at Weipa.
- A boarding school called **Holy Spirit College** at Cooktown catering for children unable to attend mainstream education.
- Tech NQ
- leaves 43 independent and church run boarding schools throughout the state to cater for geographically isolated children.

#### **COST OF EDUCATING A CHILD/CHILDREN**

The cost of educating a geographically isolated child who has no reasonable access to a school is expensive and the where and how is not a decision made lightly or easily by a rural and remote parent. One of the single biggest issues facing an isolated family will be whether to make the decision to send a child to boarding school or make alternative arrangements for the family to allow that child to complete their compulsory school years. In most cases boarding is a necessity, especially considering 8 shires within Qld have no high school.

Some boarding schools have seen a shift towards Mums basing themselves in town and children attending school as a day student rather than as a boarder.

Average boarding fees for 2020 equate to \$20 214.65 and tuition costs \$13 317.53 per child and that doesn't take into account necessary expenses such as uniforms, text books, IT equipment etc. Many rural and remote families are struggling to meet these costs.

**Boarding school fees in 2020 have risen by 8% while tuition has risen by 1%.**

**In 2020, the basic AIC allowance for 2020 rose by 2% or \$135 and LAFHAS by 2% or \$93.**

Although greatly appreciated, these modest increases mean allowances are still a long way off meeting the ever increasing costs necessary for rural and remote students to successfully complete their compulsory education.

ICPA continues to lobby the relevant areas for better understanding of issues facing rural and remote families.

ICPA Qld is still requesting that the Boarding Standard for Australian schools and residences be implemented nationwide, at present Qlds the only state that has not fully embraced this standard.

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