



14 June 2019

Budget's lack of Grace for Rural and Remote Families

The lack of financial support for rural and remote education in the recent State budget has left Queensland members of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) reeling in disbelief.

"It is clear after the Federal Election that Queenslanders feel the Labor government is not listening to the regions," states ICPA Qld President Ms Tammie Irons. "Labor had an opportunity this week to prove this isn't the case by supporting families who are struggling to provide their children with a quality education by allocating funds in the budget to increase the Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS) – they have failed to do so."

Minister Grace's recent comments regarding hundreds of geographically isolated secondary students making use of the three state run boarding schools, or accessing distance education for secondary schooling were met with a public outcry from rural and remote families all over Queensland. Despite the recent flood event and drought continuing to ravage the state, the Labor government continues to dismiss the importance of rural and remote children's secondary education, and the need for the majority of these students to access private boarding schools.

"In an education budget of \$13 billion, how was there no room for an extra \$3.5 million to assist rural and remote drought and flood stricken families with LAFHAS tuition payments, especially in our current climate," Ms Irons questions. "Educating all Queensland children is a state responsibility and yet so many families are being forced into financial hardship as they continue to fund the majority of the cost."

Whilst ICPA Qld appreciates the commitment to the Centres for Learning and Wellbeing (CLAW) in regional areas, as well as the potential for increased air-conditioning in some schools, the fact that Minister Grace has once again ignored the importance of an affordable secondary education for the 1300 geographically isolated recipients who access LAFHAS indicates a significant lack of commitment to rural and remote education in Queensland.

ENDS

More Information:

ICPA Qld President – Tammie Irons – 0427931629

ICPA QLD Publicity Officer – Melissa Iland – 042820387