
Tertiary Report

Madam President, Distinguished Guests, members of ICPA, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to present the Tertiary Portfolio Report for 2020.

At the State Conference held in Buronga in 2019, there was one tertiary motion;

“That ICPA-NSW lobbies the relevant ministers to ensure that universities providing teacher training include a standalone mandatory unit on Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in their curriculum”.

In State Council post-conference actions this issue is being pursued when opportunities arise with state and federal members.

Federal Government

Youth Allowance Eligibility:

- 18-24 years and studying full-time
- 16-17 years studying full-time, and need to live away from home to study or are considered independent
- 16-24 years and undertaking a full-time Australian apprenticeship

Students need to be studying an approved course on a full-time basis at an approved institution.

Independent (self-supporting) student is required to earn 75% of the training wage (\$26,550 in 2019) in a 14 month period.

Dependant students require an assessment of the parents’ or guardians’ income. The parental income test has been changed from \$150,000 pa to \$160,000 per annum plus \$10,000 per additional child – meaning that the income level for a couple with three children is now \$180,000 pa. It is expected that the number of bush kids who qualify for Youth Allowance under this criterion will increase by 75%.

ICPA Australia has up to date information on their website.

Federal Budget provided some good news for students.

- Teachers who commit to a teaching role in a remote school for a minimum of 4 years will have their debt remitted
- Students studying aviation at VET level can access to a higher loan limit of \$150,000
- The application fee and annual charge for holding a HELP debt will be delayed by 12 months
- The Unique Student Identifier (USI) was previously used for VET-level education, but will now extend to higher education. Currently, uni students receive an ID number specific to their university, but the USI will track a person’s studies at any institution Australia wide
- The post-secondary school sector got a boost with \$500 million dollar into vocational training, which comes under industry policy. Central to that is the creation of a \$48 million National Skills Commission
- Other outcomes from the review by New Zealander Steven Joyce include a new \$42 million National Careers Institute and a National Careers Ambassador

- These are intended to align industry needs more closely to the courses being taught in TAFEs and private colleges. The sector has been seen to be failing to respond quickly enough to the changing needs of manufacturing especially
- The government also provided \$10 million for a grants program to support better coordination between schools, tertiary educators and employers.

Country University Centres

The six operational centres are well support this past academic year with 292 students enrolled (Snowy-Monaro/Cooma, Goulburn, Far West/Broken Hill, North West/Moree and Narrabri, Clarence Valley/ Grafton and Western Riverina/Griffith and Leeton. Central West (Young) is pending as part of the new town library precinct.

Three quarters of students who leave regional areas to study do not return – a real loss of academic and economic capital, and a loss of youth in the areas that CUC’s are directly trying to redress.

TAFE

TAFE is a big player in the provision of tertiary education to rural and remote students. Another review of the TAFE system has been announced in February 2020. Some of the things to be considered are HECS-style loans, more industry involvement in course design and content, and getting students “job ready” especially in emerging technologies such as 3D printing and robotics

Universities Admissions Centre

Our State Council delegation to Sydney occurs at the start of the HSC exams. This also coincides with the annual bun-fight over the role of Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR). Whilst it is not a perfect system, a score or rank of all the students across Australia in different states doing different exams is really helpful for universities.

An ATAR is not the only way into higher education with 30% of students coming through vocational pathways or mature entry.

Thank you to my fellow Councillors for their support throughout the year.

Tim Fletcher
Tertiary Convenor

Footnote:

Since the 2019 State Conference, State Council has met with;

- John Barilaro - Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW, Industry and Trade
- Bronnie Taylor – Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women
- Prue Car – Shadow Minister for Education
- Kim Paino – Universities Admissions Centre
- Duncan Taylor – Country University Centre
- Professor Jim Pratley – EH Graham Centre