

PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL

Allowances Report

Samantha Greay – Portfolio Holder, March 2022

Motions A1, A2, A3 and A4 regarding an increase to the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA).

It has been made quite clear that the current Government considers the Royalties for Regions (RfR) BAHA supplement only to be funded for a finite period and is not considering reinstating it. The cessation by 2022 of the (RfR) BAHA component will result in a loss of financial support of \$785, not per family, but per student. This allowance has already decreased from \$2,105 to \$1,477 in 2021, with an overall decrease to \$1,320 in 2022. This equates to a 37% decrease over 5 years.

With the increase in costs and decrease in accessibility, education is increasingly becoming less affordable for some rural and remote families. We are seeing families having to fragment with one family member moving away from the family home to access an affordable secondary education for their children. The option of a second home allowance is often more advantageous but is also detrimental to family life, health, and well-being, not to mention the impact it is having on rural communities. When the eldest child starts secondary school, all the children from the one family move too. Coming from a small rural area, I have seen examples of this within my own community.

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance is only available to resident Western Australians who either:

- qualify for the Commonwealth Government Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) or Second Home Allowance (which is available from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink)).
- attend a Western Australian College of Agriculture
- are enrolled in a Gifted and Talented Program and reside at City Beach Residential College

BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE (FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN)

This allowance assists parents in isolated locations who do not have access to primary or secondary school with the cost of boarding.

The allowance for 2021 was \$1,477 for students who board away for the full year, with payment being made in term four of the school year. Where a student boards at a college for only part of the year, a pro-rata payment will be made based on the number of terms attended. The minimum stay with a boarding provider is four (4) weeks for a pro-rata payment.

The payment will be sent directly to the boarding provider where the student attends a Residential College (i.e. Albany, Broome, City Beach, Esperance, Geraldton, Merredin, Moora, Narrogin, Northam) or where a student attends a Western Australian College of Agriculture (i.e. Cunderdin, Denmark, Harvey, Morawa, Narrogin) and is to be deducted from the residential boarding fees only. If the student does not attend at a Residential College or Western Australian College of Agriculture then the allowance is paid to one of the following at the direction of the parent: the boarding facility, school, or parent.

Table of BAHA Rates 2013 – 2022:

2013	\$2,105
2014	\$2,105
2015	\$2,105
2016	\$2,105
2017	\$2,105
2018	\$1,948
2019	\$1,791
2020	\$1,634
2021	\$1,477
2022	\$1,320

Table of Applications 2014 – 2021:

School Year	Total Applications
2014	1247
2015	1397
2016	1503
2017	1453
2018	1244
2019	1375
2020	1338
2021	1238*

*Applications still being accepted and paid

BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE-AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES SPECIAL SUBSIDY

This allowance is to assist parents with secondary students attending and boarding at a Western Australian College of Agriculture. Claimants apply for the subsidy through the Western Australian College of Agriculture where their child is boarding.

ELIGIBILITY: The Student is enrolled and boarding at the Catholic Agricultural College or the Student is enrolled and boarding in a Western Australian College of Agriculture.

The student is not in receipt of:

- Youth Allowance at the away from home rate
- Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance (through the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) or
- ABSTUDY Boarding.

Note: This allowance is only available to students boarding at the Agricultural Colleges. If students are boarding at another location, they are not entitled to claim this special subsidy (they may be eligible for the Boarding Away from Home Allowance for Isolated Children if they are in receipt of Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) boarding or Second Home Allowance from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink).

PAYMENT: The Allowance for 2021 is \$1,477. The payment will be sent directly to each Agricultural College and it is to be deducted from the residential boarding fees only. If a student only boards at the Western Australian College of Agriculture or Catholic Agricultural College for part of the year, a pro-rata payment will be made based on the number of terms attended. The minimum stay with a boarding provider is four (4) weeks for a pro-rata payment.

BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE- GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

This allowance is to assist rural and remote parents with secondary students enrolled in gifted and talented programs at selected public schools and boarding at City Beach Residential College. The closing date for the Gifted and Talented Program Boarding Away from Home Allowance is 31st July. Forms should be submitted direct to City Beach Residential College. Applications must be completed annually (an application does NOT automatically cover all school years).

ELIGIBILITY: The student is enrolled in a Gifted and Talented Program at selected public schools and the student is boarding at City Beach Residential College.

The student is not in receipt of:

- Youth Allowance at the away from home rate,
- Assistance for Isolated Children Allowance (through the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) or
- ABSTUDY Boarding.

Note: If students are boarding at another location, they are not entitled to claim this special subsidy (they may be eligible for the Boarding Away from Home Allowance for Isolated Children if they are in receipt of Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) boarding or Second Home Allowance from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink).

PAYMENT: The allowance for 2021 is \$1,477 for students who board away for the full year, with payment being made at the end of Term 4. The allowance is paid directly to City Beach Residential College.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SKILL AND EMPLOYMENT

The Government’s Job-Ready Graduates package will see opportunities for regional and remote students to attend university, and more investment in regional university campuses.

The Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) of \$3,000 or up to \$5,000 is available for eligible students from inner regional, outer regional and remote areas to relocate to study commencing in the year following year 12.

SECONDARY ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The Secondary Assistance Scheme (SAS) is available to parent/guardians with children enrolled in secondary schooling who hold an eligible concession card. The SAS comprises of an Education Program Allowance which is paid to the school and a clothing allowance that is paid to the parent. (If the student is enrolled in a public school, the parent may nominate the clothing allowance be paid to the school.)

For public schools, the Education Program Allowance (EPA) of \$235 for students in Years 7 to 10 will be paid to the school and will be applied towards voluntary contributions. Any balance will be applied against charges or as negotiated with the parent/guardian. For students in Years 11 to 12 the EPA will be applied to cover charges in the first instance.

How to apply:

Application forms are available at Secondary Schools. Students or parents need to provide proof of eligibility and a School Officer is to witness the application form. Applications must be completed in Term 1 of each school year.

ELIGIBILITY: Available to parents/guardians of secondary students if a parent is a holder of:

- Pensioner Concession Card, or
- Health Care Card (NOT children’s concession card which has been issued for medical purposes) or
- Department of Veterans Affairs Pensioner Concession Card.

Note: Eligible parents/guardians that home school their children can also apply through their Education Regional Office. Parents of students in receipt of the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) ABSTUDY are only eligible for the ABSTUDY Supplement Allowance.

Available to independent secondary students if the student is a holder of a Department of Human Services Health Care Card. Independent students in receipt of Centrelink ABSTUDY are only eligible for the ABSTUDY Supplement Allowance.