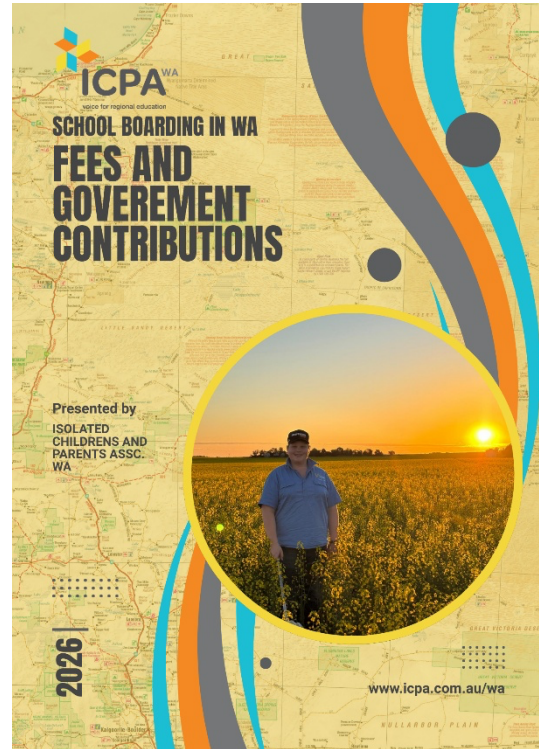


ICPA WA Allowances Portfolio Overview 2026

The Allowances Portfolio of the **Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Western Australia (ICPA WA)** advocates for fair and equitable financial support for geographically isolated families whose children must travel, board, or study via distance education to access schooling.

Students in rural and remote Western Australia often face significantly higher costs to access education compared with metropolitan students. These costs include boarding fees, travel to and from school, establishment of second homes and relocation for tertiary study. Government allowances therefore play a critical role in enabling rural and remote students to access education opportunities comparable to those available in metropolitan areas.

The Allowances Portfolio works to advocate to the Western Australian Government to ensure allowances remain relevant and reflect the **true cost of accessing education from isolated locations**. ICPA WA State council met with The Minister for Education in February 2026 and addressed the shortfall of our states offerings for access to education. The following information has been supplied to the Ministers office to further understand how far behind WA is in our state based boarding contribution. Strong advocating of all motions that were raised in the 2025 conference from our members has been actioned and communicated to both the Department of Education and Ministers Office.



State/Territory	State Scheme / Contribution	Funding level 2026
WA	<i>Boarding Away From Home Allowance (BAHA)</i>	\$1461
QLD	<i>Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA)</i> <i>Remote Area Tutition Allowance (RATuA)</i>	\$10,891
NSW	<i>Living Away From Home Allowance (7 -10)</i> <i>Extra \$593 in yr 11 and 12</i>	\$2,580
SA	<i>State Education Allowance; SEA</i>	\$5,105.98
NT	<i>Interstate Boarding Allowance (ISEA)</i>	\$4700
TAS	<i>Student Accommodation Allowance (SAA)</i>	\$1472
VIC	No known specific statewide boarding allowance	
ACT	No known specific statewide boarding allowance	

Current Key Allowances (2026) Federal Government Allowances

The **Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme** (AIC) remains the primary Federal support payment for geographically isolated students.

From 1 January 2026 , payment rates are:	Allowance	2026 Amount
Payments are indexed annually to the Consumer Price Index.	Basic Boarding Allowance	\$10,555 per year
	Additional Boarding Allowance (income tested)	Up to \$3,027 per year
	Maximum Boarding Allowance Total	\$13,582 per year
	Distance Education Allowance	\$5,278 per year
	Second Home Allowance	\$307.46 per fortnight per child

Tertiary Support Payments

Students moving away from home to undertake tertiary education may access Youth Study, Austudy, ABSTUDY and the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) up to \$5,000 for regional students relocating for study) However, income testing and eligibility criteria continue to restrict access for many rural families.

Western Australian Government Allowances

Boarding Away From Home Allowance (BAHA)

The **Boarding Away From Home Allowance** assists Western Australian families whose children must board away from home to attend school. The **2026 payment is \$1,461** for students boarding for the full school year. Eligibility typically requires families to qualify for the AIC Boarding Allowance. In 2024, 1024 successful claims were made for the BAHA, totalling a cost to the State Government of \$1,422,336.00. The BAHA has risen over the last 8 years by \$86, it is now significantly out of date with the rise in cost of boarding.

Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS)

The **Student Travel Subsidy Scheme** assists geographically isolated students with the cost of travel to boarding facilities or school and can include Tertiary students. Support is subject to your home address being classified as being a “defined remote’ and further than 56kms from education institution. Scheme offers vouchers and reimbursement for air travel, bus or train transport and private road subsidy. Despite this support, travel costs remain a significant expense for many rural families. ICPA WA is keen for our members to make use of this scheme into the future to ensure viability of the funding and continuation. <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/about-us/grants-subsidies/student-travel#anchor-link-4>

Boarding Cost Comparison (2026)

Boarding costs in Western Australian schools continue to rise and represent the largest expense for many rural and remote families who must send their children away to access secondary education.

Indicative annual boarding fees at several Western Australian schools:	School	Estimated Boarding Fee (2026)
	Hale School	\$31,710
Average Non-Government boarding fee (sample right):	Guildford Grammar School	\$28,580
\$31,297 per year	Scotch College Perth	\$31,860
	Aquinas College Perth	\$33,039

	Support Payment	Amount
Allowance Contribution	Assistance for Isolated Children – Maximum Boarding Allowance	\$13,582
	WA Boarding Away From Home Allowance	\$1,461
Comparison (2026)	Total Government Support	\$15,043

	Item	Amount
Actual Cost Gap for Families	Average boarding fee	\$31,297
	Government support	\$15,043
	Average out-of-pocket cost	\$16,254 per student per year

Government allowances therefore cover approximately 48% of non-government boarding costs, leaving families responsible for over half of the total cost of boarding education.

This estimate does **not include additional costs**, such as travel to and from boarding school, Tuition, Uniforms and Equipment, Technology Requirements, Extracurricular activities, medical and incidental costs. For many rural families, these additional expenses can increase the total annual cost of educating a boarding student to **\$ 25,000 to 35,000 per year**. The most expensive secondary education in WA now sits at **\$69,425.00** for both boarding and tuition, on **average the cost of boarding has risen by 5% in the last 12 months**.

The cost of education/boarding at a Department of Education **Ag school is \$9,563** and **Residential College is \$15,536**. It is **important to note** that very few families are eligible for the full AIC allowance, leaving a **shortfall of around \$3000** for Department of Education Public boarding houses.

The distance Education Allowance has been set at \$5,278 for 2026. We would very much like to hear from our members on the true cost of teaching children through distance ed, both as a cost to yourself as a parent and the cost of employing a home tutor to supervise.

Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme allowance	Maximum rate for 2025	Maximum rate for 2026
Boarding Allowance (Basic and Additional)	\$13,303 per year, made up of 2 parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10,338 - basic \$2,965 - additional, subject to parental income and actual boarding costs 	\$13,582 per year, made up of 2 parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10,555 - basic \$3,027 - additional, subject to parental income and actual boarding costs
Second Home Allowance	\$301.13 per fortnight, per child	\$307.46 per fortnight, per child
Distance Education Allowance	\$5,169 per year	\$5,278 per year
Assistance for Isolated Children Pensioner Education Supplement	\$62.40 per fortnight	\$62.40 per fortnight