

## ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



### 2023 FEDERAL CONFERENCE DISTANCE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO MOTIONS

---

**A19. CONJOINED MOTION presented by:** **CARRIED**  
**Western Australia State Council, Alice Springs Branch (NT), Far North Queensland Branch (QLD),  
Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA), Katherine Branch (NT)**

“That ICPA (Aust) continues to advocate to the Minister for Social Services, the Minister for Education and all other relevant government departments to establish a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) in recognition of the role Home Tutors play in educating geographically isolated students via distance education.”

**Explanation Western Australia State Council:**

Repeatedly states are advised to advocate for this Allowance to be implemented at a state level. Whilst we absolutely support the intention of DETA and would embrace its introduction WA members feel that dealing with this at the state level could detract from the importance of such an Allowance and potentially leave a situation where some states have a version of DETA and others do not.

The argument from the Federal Government is that the deliverance of education is a state's responsibility. That responsibility is being borne by the state through the deliverance of education utilising distance education and School of the Air.

Each eligible child, who boards away from home, is afforded a Federal Allowance (AIC) from the Federal Government to assist with the cost of boarding, as boarding is a necessity for those children to have equitable access to an appropriate education. Children who access distance education through School of the Air are no different. Instead of boarding away from the family home, these students, due to their age, are reliant on Home Tutors as a necessity for equitable access to an appropriate education.

We feel that Federal ICPA representing all states on this issue will if DETA is adopted, support ICPA members fairly across Australia.

**Explanation Alice Springs Branch (NT):**

An introduction of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA), as financial recognition of the essential work a supervisor/Home Tutor performs in Distance Education classrooms, would help alleviate the pressure placed on remote families, whose only option is to home-school their children via Distance Education. It is a government requirement under the Distance Education Schools Guidelines that students enrolled in Distance Education schools have appropriate supervision, and these guidelines state that this may be an employee or parent. In many cases, a parent, usually the mother, is forced to forgo paid work on the property, community or outstation where they live, due to the need for them to stay home and teach their children. This in turn strips the family of a second income, and places further financial pressure on families who educate their children via Distance Education. This can amount to a family paying a Home Tutor between \$25,000-\$50,000 per year, depending on salary/wage agreements. On top of the wage a Home Tutor is paid, in many cases, Home Tutors are also living with the family, and have all food, board and other sundry expenses such as

internet, paid by the family as part of their wage package. If the family employs a Home Tutor to deliver Distance Education lessons and provide support and supervision, the family is effectively paying award wages for a child to receive a public education.

We would like to suggest that DETA be incorporated into the existing AIC framework. If a family is eligible for AIC, it is extremely likely that they would also be eligible for DETA, and combining DETA into the AIC would streamline the application process.

**Explanation Far North Queensland Branch:**

Far North Queensland Branch thanks ICPA (Aust) for the work they have done advocating to the Federal Government for the establishment of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA). Like many ICPA Branches across Australia, our long-term and new members are familiar with the strong advocacy of ICPA (Aust) on this issue over many years.

We support the position of ICPA (Aust) that this situation requires a collaborative and consistent approach involving both state and national levels of government and our Branch has put forward a similar motion to the ICPA Queensland State Conference requesting ICPA Qld lobby the state and federal governments on this issue.

Many of our members have spent tens of thousands of hours as Home Tutors teaching their children through distance education. Like many roles in rural and remote properties, the role of Home Tutor often falls on mothers. Due to dedication to their children, and by necessity, they often forego their own earning potential and careers, to ensure their children have access to an education equal to their city counterparts, an education which is compulsory and supposedly free.

The delivery of distance education is not possible without the commitment of Home Tutors. It is a full-time job. Some geographically isolated families may employ a tutor or governess to perform the Home Tutor role, but this comes at considerable cost and finding a governess/tutor is often difficult in isolated areas.

Consideration must be given to the burden on approximately 1,500 families in geographically isolated areas for whom distance education is the only option to educate their children. The vital role of the Home Tutor should be remunerated through an allowance, which recognises the essential work they perform.

**Explanation Goldfields Eyre Branch (WA):**

The service provided by Home Tutors in the delivering of education to students in rural and remote Australia who have no choice but to be educated via the distance education mode of delivery needs be acknowledged. Home Tutors provide what the government simply cannot cost effectively supply and as such should be recognised and remunerated fairly.

**Explanation Katherine Branch (NT):**

Katherine Branch thanks ICPA (Aust) for your continuing pursuit of this motion and considers the Distance Education Resource Video to be a great resource illustrating the commitment of Home Tutors to education and the challenges faced by families on distance education. For many young people living in remote regions, their only access to education is to study by distance education. It is clear that distance education provision is provided on the assumption that all children have ready access to a person able to deliver the program in the geographically isolated classroom. This person is the distance education tutor who must be available and able to provide the practical, day-to-day supervision and support required for the effective delivery of a distance education program. With the responsibility of the distance education tutor position often falling on the mother, fulfilling this position further

compounds her workload. This can place increased pressure on other family members and may necessitate the employment of additional staff.

**A20. Northern Territory State Council**

**CARRIED**

“That ICPA (Aust) investigates the existing precedence of Centrelink Jobseeker payment being available to single principal carer with exemption from mutual obligation requirements because they are a home or distance educator of child/ren in their care, and its possible application, adaption and or leverage for the creation of an applicable Distance Education Tutor Allowance for geographically isolated families.”

**Explanation:**

“Australian Government Social Security Guide, version 1.307, released 8 May 2023, at 5.1.8.20 Common benefit rates” describes a payment for a “Single principal carer with an exemption from mutual obligation requirements EITHER: because of caring for large family or foster child/ren, OR who is a home or distance educator of child/children in their care.” This is currently \$949.30 per fortnight.

It is payable to Jobseeker Payment (JSP) recipients who have an exemption from mutual obligation requirements under paragraphs 40P(2)(a) or (b) of the SS(Admin)Act.

**Source:** <https://guides.dss.gov.au/social-security-guide/5/1/8/20>

**Act reference:** SSAct section 1068 Rate of JSP, section 1068-B5 Maximum basic rate for certain JSP recipients.

SS(Admin)Act section 40P Caring responsibilities

**Policy reference:** SS Guide 5.1.4.10 PP - current rates, 3.7.1.80 Determining the rate of SpB

Benefit rates			
This table shows the basic rates in dollars per fortnight (pf) as at 20 March 2023*. Current rates can be found in the <a href="#">A guide to Australian Government payments booklet</a> on the <a href="#">Services Australia</a> website.			
Recipient status			Rate (\$ pf)
Single	no children	22 or over	693.10
Single	with children	-	745.20
Single	no children	60 or over after 9 months	745.20
Single principal carer with an exemption from mutual obligation requirements EITHER:	with children	-	949.30#
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>because of caring for large family or foster child/ren. OR</li> <li>who is a home or distance educator of child/ren in their care.</li> </ul>			
Partnered	without children	-	631.20
Partnered	with children	-	631.20
Partnered - illness separated couple ( <a href="#">1.1.1.04</a> ), respite care couple ( <a href="#">1.1.R.240</a> ), or partner in gaol ( <a href="#">1.1.P.85</a> )			745.20
<p><b>Example of single with children:</b> JSP recipient with dependent YA child under 18 years.</p> <p>*The maximum rate of payment may be higher if the person is eligible for supplementary payments (see below) in addition to the basic rate.</p> <p># This amount is equal to the maximum rate of <a href="#">PPS</a>, including pension supplement, and is payable to JSP recipients who have an exemption from mutual obligation requirements under paragraphs 40P(2)(a) or (b) of the SS(Admin)Act. Recipients may be eligible for such an exemption if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they are a registered and active foster carer of a child, or children, for whom they are a principal carer</li> <li>they are the principal carer of a large family (4 or more children under 16 years of age)</li> <li>they are a home educator of a child, or children, for whom they are the principal carer, OR</li> <li>they are a distance educator of a child, or children, for whom they are the principal carer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Act reference:</b> <u>SSAct</u> section 1068 Rate of JSP, section 1068-B5 Maximum basic rate for certain JSP recipients</p> <p><u>SS(Admin)Act</u> section 40P Caring responsibilities</p> <p><b>Policy reference:</b> SS Guide <a href="#">5.1.4.10</a> PP - current rates, <a href="#">3.7.1.80</a> Determining the rate of SpB</p>			

It appears that to be eligible as it currently stands, one needs to be eligible for Jobseeker payment and be a single parent plus looking after a large family (4 or more under 16 years) OR teaching via home-schooling or distance education.

This Centrelink payment is an acknowledgement by the Federal Government that being a home or distance educator of a child is equivalent to full time work and has a value.