



The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (Inc)

EDUCATION ALLOWANCES

It is recommended that this Policy be read in conjunction with individual Portfolio Policies and associated ICPA Aust documents

POLICY

ICPA seeks equity of access to an appropriate education for rural and remote students by ensuring the provision of suitable government allowances which assist with compensating the families of these students for the additional costs incurred in educating their children.

OBJECTIVES

1. All components of the current Federal Government funded Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme be continued.
The components of AIC are:
 - a. a non-means tested distance education allowance for students who do not have reasonable daily access to a government school and are studying primary or secondary education by distance education.
 - b. a non-means tested basic boarding allowance for students who do not have reasonable daily access to a government school and must live away from home to access an education.
 - c. an additional boarding allowance, based on a parental income test, for students living away from home to access an education.
 - d. a non-means tested second home allowance, equivalent to the basic boarding allowance, for families who establish a second home to access an appropriate education for their children.
2. Assistance for Isolated Children allowance be:
 - a. adequately meeting the needs of geographically isolated students
 - b. reviewed annually.
 - c. increased annually by at least the CPI Education sub index.
 - d. exempt from income tax.
 - e. Administered by the Department of Education
 - f. Extended to include travel allowances using the ABSTUDY framework
3. AIC allowance be available for all pre-compulsory school students enrolled in a recognised early childhood distance education program
4. Distance education Supervisors are paid a government allowance in recognition of the essential work they perform.
5. Geographically isolated students be categorised separately within the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme.
6. Fares Allowance be added to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme.



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7. The Federal Government establish a fund to assist students living in rural and remote areas with the cost of accessing an education in times of rural hardship
8. The Federal Government introduce and maintain a tertiary access allowance as financial assistance for rural and remote students who must live away from home to access tertiary education.
9. Scholarships and bursaries be excluded from assessable income for the purpose of student income support.
10. Support payments and adjunct payments be appropriate and commensurate with the costs incurred by rural and remote students who have to live away from the family home to access a tertiary education.
11. Eligibility criteria for Youth Allowance:
 - a) be exclusive of the assessment of family assets and family actual means for rural and remote students and
 - b) be responsive to exceptional circumstances.
 - c) takes into consideration the rural and remote students' unique disadvantage.
12. Parental Income threshold used to determine Youth Allowance eligibility and calculate payment, reflect the ability of the family to support rural and remote dependent student/s when having to relocate to access a tertiary education.
13. Rural and remote tertiary students, who must live away from home to access further education upon completion of secondary school and do not qualify for Youth Allowance as a dependent be classified as independent for Youth Allowance purposes.
14. Youth Allowance eligibility for independent rural and remote students be irrespective of Parental Income criteria.
15. Students in receipt of Youth Allowance as an independent due to family assessment based on entitlement to the Farm Household Allowance and due to assessment based on drought, fire, flood or other natural disaster impacts remain eligible for payments at that rate until the completion of their course.
16. The Federal Government annually reviews the following for students applying and in receipt of Youth Allowance:
 - a) the personal income limit,
 - b) the liquid asset limit and waiting period and
 - c) the student income bank limit.
17. Scholarships for relocation be made available to rural and remote students and all Youth Allowance recipients who need to relocate to access tertiary study.
18. Financial assistance for travel for students who must live away from home to access further education be maintained and reflects the needs of rural and remote students.



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19. The Federal Government departments dealing with student financial assistance ensure:
 - a) staff have adequate training and knowledge around allowances and assistance for rural and remote students,
 - b) wait times on student helplines are reasonable and
 - c) a service that is suitable for rural and remote families.
 - d) information on the website is clear, concise in respect to eligibility criteria, information and application details and
 - e) processing of financial assistance payments and debt repayments is timely.
20. Financial assistance be available for tertiary students who must relocate to undertake compulsory practicums.
21. Financial incentives be available for teachers and health professionals working with students in rural, remote and very remote areas.
22. A Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA) be available for apprentices and trainees who are required to move and live away from their family home to access components of their qualification.
23. The LAFHA for apprentices and trainees closely reflects the actual cost of living away from home and is indexed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
24. The LAFHA for apprentices and trainees' eligibility period post-school, be longer than 36 months for rural and remote school-based apprentices who transfer, at the completion of secondary schooling, to full-time employment with the same apprenticeship.
25. Travel and accommodation allowances be paid to apprentices and trainees when required to travel to access a training provider.
26. Relocation assistance be available for rural and remote apprentices and trainees who need to relocate away from their family home to pursue their qualification.
27. Additional financial support for GI school students with disabilities and for the boarding facilities, where they reside.