

PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL

ALLOWANCES REPORT

Elaine Egan – Portfolio Holder, March 2018

Motions A1, A2 and A3: Regarding an increase to the Boarding Away From Home Allowance (BAHA), currently \$2,050 per student. The Royalties for Regions contribution of \$785 to the annual BAHA started in 2009.

The Minister for Education and Training Hon Sue Ellery MLC replied in writing in June to a written request by ICPA WA to increase the BAHA. Whilst understanding the importance of the BAHA to rural and remote families, the Minister stated the Government must prioritise funding. The Minister encouraged families to refer to the Department of Transport webpage as there are travel subsidies available.

In early August delegates met with Minister Ellery. ICPA WA were informed that due to budget restrictions there would be no increase to the BAHA.

On the 19th August, Minister Ellery announced that the BAHA would decrease as of 2018. The BAHA will reduce over 5 years due to the Royalties for Regions funding ceasing after 2017. The following rates will apply:

- 2018 \$1,948
- 2019 \$1,791
- 2020 \$1,643
- 2021 \$1,477
- 2022 \$1,320

ICPA WA wrote to Minister Ellery in September reiterating that at the August meeting she had given no indication that the allowance would decrease. The Minister replied by letter in October, stating the full impact of the reduction in the Royalties for Regions contribution will not occur until 2022.

In February 2018 ICPA WA made a submission to the Environment and Public Affairs Committee regarding Petition No. 042 - Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA).

There are 4 types of payment:

- Isolated children
- Children in respite
- Agricultural College Special Subsidy (all Agstudents qualify if boarding)
- Gifted and Talented program

BAHA	Number of Students	Actual Cost to Government
2012	2,056	\$3.5M
2013	1,474	\$3.0M
2014	1,233	\$2.5M
2015	1,346	\$2.8M
2016	1,556	\$3.2M

- 272 students boarding at the WA Colleges of Agriculture, supported through the Special Subsidy Boarding Away from Home Allowance at a cost of just under \$0.6m, similar to 2015.
- The WA State Government will save between \$228,000 and \$244,000 per year by removing the Royalties for Regions component of the BAHA.

	Students	BAHA cuts/student	Government Savings
2018	1,556	\$157	\$244,292
2019	1,556	\$157	\$244,292
2020	1,556	\$148	\$230,228
2021	1,556	\$166	\$228,296
2022	1,556	\$157	\$244,292
			\$1,191,400

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance is only available to resident Western Australians who have qualified for the Commonwealth Government Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) or Second Home Allowance (which is available from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink)).

BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE (FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN)

This allowance assists parents in isolated locations who do not have access to a primary or secondary school.

The allowance for 2017 is \$2105 for students who board away for the full year, with payment being made at the end of Term four. Where a student only boards at the 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 weeks for a pro-rata payment. The payment/advice will be sent directly to the boarding provider where the student attends a Country High School Hostels Authority residential college (i.e. Albany, Broome, City Beach, Esperance, Geraldton, Merredin, Narrogin, Northam or St James Residential College Moora); or where a student attends a Western Australian College of Agriculture (ie. Cunderdin, Denmark, Harvey, Morawa, Narrogin) and is to be deducted from the residential boarding fees only. If the student does not board at a Country High School Hostels Authority residential college or Western Australian College of Agriculture then the allowance is paid to one of the following at the discretion of the parent: the boarding facility, school or parent.

BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE FOR STUDENTS IN RESPITE

Respite students may board away from home because of physical or intellectual disabilities, health related conditions or learning difficulties. These students attend or board at a special institution which caters for their needs. Students who reside in respite care facilities (e.g. Activ Foundation or Autism Association) are eligible for a proportionate allowance if they attend 20 days or greater over the school year. Payment for respite will be calculated from the first day of the school term, until the last day of the school year (including attendance throughout school term holidays and weekends). Parents/Guardians who receive the Commonwealth Government Department of Human Services (Centrelink) Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) for short term boarding allowance can contact the Schools Resourcing and Support Directorate directly for the forms. Applications must be completed annually.

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. The college posts application forms out to parents in March and payment is made directly to the Agricultural College in October 2017. The closing date for the Agricultural College Special Subsidy Boarding Away from Home Allowance is 31 July 2017.

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 Parent/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 2017 is \$2105. The payment/advice 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 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 public schools and boarding at City Beach Residential College. The closing date for the Gifted and Talented Program Boarding Away from Home Allowance is 31 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 a public school; and the Student is boarding at City Beach Residential College Parent/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 2017 is \$2105 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.