

PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL

ALLOWANCES REPORT

Sam Greay – Portfolio Holder, March 2021

Allowances motions A1, A2, A3 and A5 raised at the 2020 State Conference were in regard to increasing the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA).

It has been made quite clear that the current Government considers the Royalties for Regions (RfR) BAHA supplementation 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 \$1,634 in 2020, with an overall decrease to \$1,320 in 2022. This equates to a 37% decrease over five (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 who are 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 so detrimental to family life, health and well-being, not to mention the impact this is having on rural communities. When the eldest child starts secondary school, all the children from the one family move. Coming from a small rural area, I have seen examples of this within my own community.

ASSISTANCE FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN (AIC) DISTANCE EDUCATION ALLOWANCE

This allowance assists students living in isolated locations who do not have appropriate access to a primary or secondary school who study via distance learning. Students who are in receipt of this allowance are either geographically isolated, have no reasonable access to a local school or have special education needs.

The 2020 annual rate for the Distance Education Allowance was \$4278.

ASSISTANCE FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN (AIC) BOARDING ALLOWANCE

This allowance assists students from isolated locations who do not have access to an appropriate education and have no other option but to board away from home.

The basic allowance for 2020 was \$8557 for students who board away for the full year, with payment being made in four (4) instalments usually at the end of each term. 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 (4) weeks for a pro-rata payment.

Parents may also qualify for the AIC Additional Boarding Allowance which is subject to parental income and actual boarding costs. This additional allowance was \$2454 for 2020.

The payment/advice is sent directly to the boarding provider when the student attends a country Residential College (i.e., Albany, Broome, Esperance, Geraldton, Merredin, Narrogin, Northam, or St James Residential College, Moora) 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 reside 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.

ASSISTANCE FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN (AIC) SECOND HOME ALLOWANCE

Another allowance that falls under the AIC is the Second Home Allowance. This allowance helps families with the costs associated with having to take on a second family home for geographically isolated students to access appropriate schooling. This allowance is paid fortnightly at rate of \$248 (2020 rate) per fortnight, per student up to a maximum of three students. A claim needs to be lodged for each child.

You will not be eligible for the AIC Second Home Allowance if you received a First Homeowner Grant, stamp-duty concession or similar assistance when you bought the home.

BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE (BAHA)

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) is only available to Western Australian students who qualify for the Commonwealth Government's Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance or the Second Home Allowance. This allowance is funded through the Western Australian Department of Education. Applications must be submitted before the end of November of the school year that you are applying for directly to the Department.

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 – 2020:

School Year	Total Applications
2014	1247
2015	1397
2016	1503
2017	1453
2018	1244
2019	1375
2020	1307*

* Applications still being accepted and paid

BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE FOR STUDENTS IN RESPITE

The provision of a Boarding Away from Home Allowance for students who may board away from home because of physical or intellectual disabilities, health related conditions or learning difficulties was REMOVED, effective 1st January 2020.

BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE - AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE 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 2020 is \$1,634. 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 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 2020 is \$1,634 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

On 19th October 2020, the Australian Government's Job-ready Graduates Package passed in parliament. This package aims to provide more opportunities for people to gain the qualifications they will require for the jobs of the future and will see opportunities for regional and remote students to attend university plus more investment in regional university campuses.

TERTIARY ACCESS PAYMENT

The Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) is a one-off payment of \$5,000 paid in two (2) instalments to assist school-leavers from outer regional or remote areas who relocate more than 90 minutes from their home to undertake full-time, higher-level tertiary education (Certificate IV or above).

The payment is intended to assist students with the additional costs associated with relocating to undertake tertiary study.

Vocational Educational and Training (VET) students must apply through Services Australia. Students studying via a university apply through their university. This payment is subject to parental income of \$250,000 or less.

A comprehensive list of allowances and eligibility criteria were published in the Bits and Pieces magazine; and are also available on the ICPA website or by contacting the portfolio holder.

YOUTH ALLOWANCE - INDEPENDENT (FEDERAL)

All applicants must check the Centrelink website www.centrelink.gov.au for detailed information and eligibility.

You may be an independent student if you support yourself through paid work. Applicants need to have:

- earned at least 75% of the National Training Wage Schedule within a 14 month period since leaving school, or
- worked part-time (minimum 15 hours each week) for the last 2 years since leaving school.
- Employed for 30 hours per week for 18 months in a 2 year period on leaving school.

The age of independence was 22 years in 2020. Eligibility for Youth Allowance also depends on your parents' or guardians' income. Your parents can have a combined parental income of \$160,000 per year. There is also an extra \$10,000 added to the parental income limit for each of your eligible siblings.

STUDENT START UP LOANS

Available to all Youth Allowance recipients. You may apply for up to two loan payments each calendar year. Loan periods run from 1st January to 31st December each year. The Start Up loan rate is \$1094 per loan period.

RELOCATION SCHOLARSHIP

Is only available to Dependent Youth Allowance recipients that need to live away from home to study. Relocation payments start at \$4626 for the first year and \$2314 for years the second and third year.

FARES ALLOWANCE

Available to eligible Youth Allowance recipients only who are enrolled in either on campus or external tertiary study. You are entitled to up to 2 return trips per study year. Applications must be made by 31st March following the year of study.

LIVING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE

Available to eligible young people who must move away from home to take up or continue with an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Payment is based on full-time or part-time apprentice or school-based programs.

Rates are: First year \$77.17
 Second Year \$38.59
 Third year \$25.

Applications are to be made through your local Australian Apprenticeship Support Network provider.
www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au