

EDUCATION ALLOWANCES

May 2005
Amended 2008

POLICY: ICPA seeks to achieve equality of access to educational opportunities for rural and remote students living in rural and remote areas by way of government funded allowances to compensate for the costs incurred in gaining access to an appropriate educational facility.

DEFINITION: ICPA believes the definition of “appropriate schooling” pertaining to the geographic isolation of secondary students is a school that:

- a. meets the social, sporting and cultural needs of adolescents through face to face education;
- b. offers the particular vocational certificate that the student needs to achieve;
- c. offers face to face lessons at that year level for at least fifty percent of the subjects;
- d. offers face to face education in an appropriate range of subjects from year 10 onwards to enable students to gain post secondary entrance or chosen career pathways.

OBJECTIVES

ALLOWANCES

1. That there be a basic non-means tested allowance for students in boarding institutions or private board, equal to the average boarding fee less the cost of maintaining that student at home for the school calendar year.
2. The provision of an additional graduated living away from home allowance for those in need, with appropriate concessions for other dependent siblings, for a total allowance up to the level of the average boarding fee based on the applicant's:
 - a. current income or
 - b. the previous year's taxable income or
 - c. the average of the previous five years' taxable income.
3. That there be a basic non-means tested allowance and an additional means tested allowance for families who establish a second home to provide their child/children with daily access to an appropriate school.
4. That the Second Home Allowance (AIC) is equivalent to the Basic Boarding Allowance (AIC).
5. That the AIC allowance continues for all school aged students to the end of senior secondary education without affecting entitlement to other income support schemes.
6. That students whose home is geographically isolated and who qualify for the AIC allowance at school level be entitled to a living away from home allowance if they undertake post secondary studies.
7. That there be a realistic Distance Education allowance to defray the cost of educating rural and remote children at home, including the cost of technology, and the allowance to be indexed annually and to be free of income and asset testing.
8. That there be a realistic allowance in recognition of the essential role played by home supervisors in Distance Education and payable to rural and remote families with children receiving Distance Education materials.
9. That there be a short term boarding allowance for distance education or small rural school students who need to leave home temporarily for special or remedial education.
10. That the State Education Allowance, or equivalent, be payable to enable students to access area schools with a primary industry focus.

11. That living away from home allowances be structured and indexed in line with changes to the average boarding fee and maintained by legislation.
12. That there be provision for one hundred percent deductibility for owner operated rural and small business assets for the purpose of calculating means-tested allowances.
13. That primary producers and small businesses who are members of a husband/wife partnership be exempt from the Family Actual Means Test.
14. That the dependent student can use the wages legitimately earned from their employer/parents, as a deduction from the Actual Means Test within Youth Allowance legislation.
15. That an asset test should not be applied to education allowances for rural and remote children.
- 16 a) That the State Education Allowance be payable from Year 7.

b) That a supplementary component of the State education Allowance be payable to families living more than 150km from the nearest public transport
17. That AIC access allowances be recognised as specific to rural and remote students and should not therefore affect or be affected by social security entitlements or income support schemes.
18. That students who choose schools that offer special vocational courses be eligible for AIC.
19. That where it can be demonstrated that the local school cannot meet the needs of a child, then that child be eligible for financial assistance and/or inclusion in the Distance Education system.
20. That the South Australian Education Department CE send a copy of the letter of support, or otherwise, to bypass, to the parents of the applicant.
21. That government departments, including Centrelink, must contact the applicant regarding application for educational financial assistance, before refusing eligibility for an allowance, and fully explain the reasons for refusal.
22. That there be a living away from home allowance to provide access to face to face education where the local school can only offer years 11 and 12 by Distance Education.
23. That Youth Allowance continue to be paid to rural and remote students unless there is a significant increase in the applicant's financial situation.

ADMINISTRATION

24. That there be reciprocity of state allowances for children attending schools across state borders.
25. That the Commonwealth departments recognise and accept the South Australian Department's support of children wishing to bypass.
26. That the Commonwealth work efficiently with the South Australian Education Department regarding the State Education Allowance.
27. That payments be made quarterly in advance for all access allowances (including the Distance Education allowances) directly to the place of board if requested by the parent/guardian, or to the person responsible for paying the boarding fees.

28. That the Youth Allowance be payable to students for the full calendar year.