



*Isolated Children's Parents' Association Qld Inc*

*Submission*

*Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Income Support for Students)  
Bill 2009*

The ICPA Qld Inc would like to make comments on the following elements of the proposed amendments to the relevant Acts of Parliament.

In relation to the following elements where the bill:

- changes the criteria upon which a youth allowance recipient is considered to 'independent' by reducing the age at which a person is automatically independent from 25 to 22 years (to be phased in over three years commencing in 2010);

The Tertiary Access Allowance as proposed by the ICPA Aust Inc is the best solution for rural and remote students. It must be acknowledged by governments that rural and remote students desperately need financial assistance for tertiary study and being eligible for Independent Youth Allowance provides necessary alleviation of this problem as income support. It however does not address the problem of the costs of relocation and setting up home for students who must live away from home to access higher education. Waiting four years after completing Year 12 would be an extreme solution for some rural and remote young people, but this change would not raise the higher education participation of rural and remote students. It is too long to wait. Two years is too long. Changing the parents' asset test would bring more immediate increases in participation rates. The change proposed above would see urban students who are living with their parents receiving Independent Youth Allowance having already commenced their studies as they could afford to do so due to the lower costs of living at home. Rural and remote students must live away from home to access their course from the commencement of their course. Rural and remote parents continue to financially support their students who must live away from home to access university courses following their receipt of Youth Allowance as it does not meet the living expenses of students.

ICPA Qld Inc believes that there should be a strong alignment of income support for students with the goals of the National Partnership Agreements for Youth Attainment and Transition. The Youth Attainment and Transition National Partnership is intended to assist young people aged 15-24 to make a successful transition from schooling into further education, training or employment.

- makes major changes to means testing for payments to students and youth from 1 January 2010, and increases the personal income-free area for youth allowance and Austudy students, an Australian Apprentices, from 1 July 2012;

It is necessary to increase the amount they can earn. The pittance they can earn makes earning and learning a vicious circle. The means testing changes will help some but needs to go further.

- provides for new scholarships for students on income support; and

It would seem that to access these scholarships the student must already be eligible for Youth Allowance (income support); this would exclude rural and remote students who do not qualify at all for Youth Allowance. Do the scholarships discriminate in favour of rural and remote students as an identified disadvantaged group?

More scholarships should be available. The monetary value of the scholarships should be increased to support full time students. There must be no reduction in the value of the scholarships compared to those currently offered. Bonded scholarships are not unreasonable. Scholarships should not affect the amount that students are able to earn before their allowances are affected.

There is a perception by parents that these 'new' scholarships are new in name only.

- exempts merit and equity based scholarships from the income test under social security and veterans' entitlements legislation.'

This is an excellent commonsense proposal which is fully supported by ICPA Qld Inc.

**Compiled by ICPA Qld Inc**

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**For further information, please contact:**

**Lorraine McGinnis (Mrs)**

**Email: [QldPresident@icpa.com.au](mailto:QldPresident@icpa.com.au)**