

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12
15 February 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: Financial assistance to Tertiary Students

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Nash

QUESTION No.: AI-55

Refer to ICPA letter to Senator Evans dated 10/10/11 (copied to Senator Nash) regarding the need for financial assistance to tertiary students who have to relocate to do clinical placements, block releases and practicums as part of their course. Students doing certain course that require placements face additional financial hardship in paying for travel and accommodation while away, as well as rent on their usual place of residence.

- Can the dept confirm that the govt provides assistance to apprentices and trainees when required to attend training away from home (as claimed by ICPA).
- Is there any assistance at all for tertiary students who have to travel to clinical placements? If not, how come?

ANSWER

Australian Apprentices who are required to move away from their parents' or guardians' home for the first time in order to take up or remain in an Australian Apprenticeship may be eligible for Living Away from Home Allowance (LAFHA). A factsheet on LAFHA is available at <http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/FAQ/Publications.asp#Factsheets>. LAFHA is not available to Australian Apprentices who:

- have lodged a claim for ABSTUDY, Austudy or Youth Allowance; or
- receive rental or accommodation assistance from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) or their employer; or
- moved away from their parental or legal guardian's home three months or more before starting their Australian Apprenticeship.

Tertiary students in receipt of ABSTUDY or Youth Allowance at the 'at home' rate may be eligible for the higher 'away from home' rate as well as Rent Assistance during periods they are required to move away to undertake formal clinical placements.

The Review of Student Income Support Reforms recommended development work be undertaken on the feasibility and merit of an income-contingent loan scheme targeted at students who are required to move away from home to undertake formal clinical placements or other formal practicum periods as part of their course. The Australian Government's response to the Review of Student Income Support Reforms includes a commitment to research in this area for which funding was allocated in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook. Advice from this research is expected to be presented to the Government in mid-2012.