

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW1013_12

Senator Nash provided in writing.

Question

Assistance for Isolated Children

Refer to ICPA letter to Minister for School Education Peter Garrett dated 5/10/11 (copied to Senator Nash) regarding Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding and Second Home Allowances. In 2011, the Basic Boarding Allowance was \$7141 with an additional \$2366 available subject to parental income, and the Second Home Allowance was \$208.04 per fortnight per child. These have increased slightly in 2012 to \$8813 for Basic Boarding Allowance and \$215.52 for the Second Home Allowance.

The AIC allowance is indexed to the CPI though the ICPA states this small increase each year is nowhere near the actual increase in boarding school fees and rent paid by rural/remote families. Has the govt/dept, or will consider increasing the allowances to reflect the true costs in boarding fees etc.

NOTE: Senator Back raised this issue on behalf of Senator Nash though this question was not specifically answered. The dept touched on it but did not say if an increase was being considered.

http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/aic_rates.htm"

Answer

The Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme continues to support families with the costs associated with educating their children, including the purchase of technology, the establishment of a classroom in the home, or to assist with boarding costs or relocation. While the Scheme is intended to assist with these costs, it is not intended to cover the entire cost associated with accessing education.

Since 2002 the AIC allowances have been indexed annually according to CPI changes. Prior to that, allowance increases were ad hoc and based on Budget decisions.

In 2012 the Additional Boarding Allowance was also increased in line with the CPI to \$1,415 per year (subject to parental income and actual boarding costs).