



# Student measures

## 2018 Budget

There are a range of changes to support students in the 2018 Budget. These changes will begin in 2019 – the 50th anniversary of ABSTUDY.

### What was announced in the 2018 Budget?

In recognition of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ABSTUDY, the Government is investing \$38.1 million, over five years, to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who need to travel away from home for education.

### 50 Years of ABSTUDY

#### ***Improving school attendance through safer, fairer and more flexible travel arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying away from home***

Changes to ABSTUDY Fares Allowance will improve the safety, fairness and flexibility of travel arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students.

These changes support families of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students to become more involved in their children's education through visits to the school for important events.

### Key facts

- From 1 January 2019, the changes include:
  - Safe Travel Plans for school student travellers;
  - increasing the maximum number of supported family and community member visits for school events each year;
  - providing greater flexibility for travel to or from locations other than the student's home and school;
  - fairer rules for travel to interstate schools and streamlining the process for determining cost effectiveness of that travel; and
  - introducing fairer penalties for missed travel appointments.

#### ***Consistent ABSTUDY Living Allowance rates for students studying away from home***

From 1 January 2019, the ABSTUDY Boarding Supplement and Living Allowance rate will combine to create one consistent payment for boarding students.

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students who need to live away from home to study will have access to the same maximum rate of assistance.

This change will make it easier for students, their families and their boarding schools or hostels to understand the rates. It will also ensure that

payment rates better reflect the actual costs of boarding.

## Key facts

- From 1 January 2019, boarding payments will increase by \$5,258.60 (2018 value, subject to indexation) per year for almost 1,900 secondary students.

### ***ABSTUDY payments in instalments to boarding providers***

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students will be supported to stay in school and continue to receive ABSTUDY payments if they move to a new school or boarding arrangement during the school term and are approved for ABSTUDY Away From Home benefits.

This measure will change the frequency of ABSTUDY payments to boarding providers and encourages schools to keep students engaged for the entire term.

## Key facts

- From 1 January 2019, more than 5,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students, who are approved for ABSTUDY Away From Home Benefits, will have continuous ABSTUDY support if they change school during the term.

### ***Simplified criteria and guidelines for approval of scholarships under ABSTUDY***

From 1 January 2019, it will be easier for institutions to offer scholarships approved under ABSTUDY and ABSTUDY payments will not be delayed for students in new programs.

The process will be streamlined to make it easier for schools and third-party providers to have scholarships approved for students who receive ABSTUDY assistance.

The revised criteria will apply to all new scholarship recipients for the 2019 school year and later years.

## Key facts

- The minimum scholarship value will be the greater of \$6,000 in 2019 (indexed to Consumer Price Index), or 25 per cent of the school's annual boarding school and tuition fees.

## Improved access to Youth Allowance for regional students

From 1 January 2019, regional students who must relocate to study will have better access to Youth Allowance.

By increasing the parental income cut-off for the regional workforce self-supporting independence criteria, more students from regional and remote Australia will qualify for Youth Allowance, or receive a higher rate of payment.

Regional students will also be provided with additional certainty about whether they will meet this parental income cut-off, by making the year in which the parental income is assessed the financial year before the beginning of their 14 month self-supporting period.

This measure supports young people in regional Australia to complete university degrees and recognises the extra costs of raising larger families.

## Key facts

- The current \$150,000 parental income cut-off will be increased to \$160,000.
- The new \$160,000 cut-off will be increased by \$10,000 for each additional child. This means the cut-off will be:
  - \$170,000 for families with two children;
  - \$180,000 for families with three children; and
  - \$190,000 for families with four children.
- As a result of this change, students will know before they decide to take a gap year in order to work, whether their parental income will be under the cut-off.
- This measure will cost \$53.9 million over four years.

## More information

For more information about this measure and other Department of Social Services' Budget measures, visit the [Department of Social Services](http://dss.gov.au) website ([dss.gov.au](http://dss.gov.au)).

For information about the 2018 Budget, visit the [Australian Government Budget](http://budget.gov.au) website ([budget.gov.au](http://budget.gov.au)).