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Better support for boarding school students from regional Australia

The Australian Government is establishing a Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program to better support the families of boarding school students from regional, rural and remote communities with the costs of education.

Assistant Minister for Education Senator Anthony Chisholm said the scholarships would be available for up to six years, starting in 2024, to support boarding students over the entire period of their secondary school education.

A two-tier approach to scholarship support will also provide longer and additional support to families who need it the most.

Scholarships of \$20,000 per student, per year will be available to support low-income families meet the cost of boarding school.

A second tier of scholarships worth \$10,000 per student, per year will also be available to students from low-to-middle-income families experiencing financial hardship.

“The Albanese Government wants to ensure that all Australian’s have access to high quality education and for many families, boarding school is not only the best option for a quality school education experience for their children, it may also be their only option,” Senator Chisholm said.

“In some regional, rural and remote communities there can be few, if any, local secondary schools, which makes boarding school so important for these families, and the support available through the Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program so critical.

“Making the scholarships available over six years will help the families of boarding students over the full period of secondary school education, rather than just the senior secondary school years, allowing students to achieve their full potential.

“The Albanese Government has acted on the feedback of the Regional Education Commissioner to ensure that this program supports students and families for longer, while making it easier for students from rural and remote families to get the best opportunity to succeed in school.”

Regional Education Commissioner, the Hon Fiona Nash, said it is important families from our regional, rural and remote communities, particularly those experiencing financial hardship, have options that support students to go to, stay in and succeed at high school.

“The Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program will provide financial support to families who need it most,” Ms Nash said.

Rockhampton Grammar School Headmaster, and Independent Schools Queensland Chair, Dr Phillip Moulds OAM said the Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program further highlights the importance of education in regional areas of Australia, and will greatly benefit many families who, without financial assistance, would otherwise be unable to attend a boarding school.

“The boarding experience has a special place at The Rockhampton Grammar School,” Dr Moulds said.

“Boarding allows students to develop core values, friendships and experiences which inform their character, enrich their school lives and leaves them equipped for life beyond school.”

Scholarships available under the Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program will commence from the start of the 2024 school year, with up to 100 scholarship places available, or 50 places across each of the two support tiers.

The program settings will be piloted and the outcomes evaluated to inform decisions about future ongoing support, including additional scholarship places in future years if the program is successful.

The Department of Education will release more details of the scholarship process in coming months, including information on how families can apply.

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