

Education Support Awards FAQ

Q: Who is eligible to apply?

A: Any person commencing their first year of a tertiary qualification in 2024. This includes undergraduate (bachelor) degrees, post-graduate & masters qualifications, and TAFE courses at any Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in Australia. Students may be school leavers or mature aged students, and this does not have to be your first tertiary course.

Q: Do I have to live in Mirboo North?

A: Not specifically. You may be from Mirboo North, Thorpdale, Boolarra, Dumbalk, Narracan, Yinnar, Hallston, Allambee and the surrounding districts. You may not reside in/have grown up in these places if you can demonstrate a strong connection to our district.

Q: My university or TAFE course is free under a government incentive, am I still eligible?

A: Yes, definitely. While your course fees may be covered, there are lots of expenses when it comes to education, such as textbooks and other course materials, travel, accommodation, technology etc that the ES award can be used for.

Q: What if I am not sure which course I will be doing just yet?

A: Please apply anyway. While the application asks for your course details, we know a lot can happen between now and next year. You can change these details at any time, and the course you are studying does not impact the outcome of your application.

Q: Why are there questions about income, disability, and health issues?

A: The ES Award applications are open to **all students** from our district, as being from a rural area is an identified barrier to accessing further education. Other barriers include long term health issues and disability, families with low income, having caring responsibilities etc. These questions help the assessment panel to make allocations based on demonstrated need, please give as much information as you feel comfortable.

Q: Who will see my application?

A: A staff member from the Community Foundation collates the applications and removes identifying information before the applications are viewed by the assessment panel. If you have any concerns about confidential information, please discuss this with our staff prior to making your application.

Q: What is the definition of low income?

A: Centrelink and the ATO define low income for a couple with 2 children to be under \$67,000 per annum, or \$1300 per week (before tax). If your family income falls below this figure, or your family has a health care card you would be considered to fall in the low-income category.

Q: Who should be my referee, and what should they say?

A: Ideally your referee would not be a parent or family member, but a member of the community who knows you well. This could be a teacher, employer, person from a community group you are involved in or a medical professional (if relevant). Your referee is asked to provide information about you as a person, and to comment on the challenges you face as you commence further information. Your referee should be aware of the disadvantage categories you have indicated on your application and be able to give some insight into those challenges. It is a good idea to show you application to your referee and discuss their submission with them, as this will assist them in providing quality information, and ensure they are not commenting on anything you might wish to keep private.

Q: What is the Community Bank Award?

A: Each year the Community Bank Mirboo North & District sponsors the education support awards. The Community Bank award provides support for the first 2 years of eligible study and is available to students from Mirboo North Secondary College who are undertaking a university degree.

Q: What is the Jean Moir Award?

A: The Jean Moir Award is named in memory of Jean Moir, a long-term resident of Berrys Creek who was very active in the community – particularly in the farming sector. The Jean Moir Award is awarded to a student from Mirboo North Secondary College, who is studying a course in the agricultural sector.

Q: I have submitted my application, what happens next?

A: You will receive an email confirming receipt of your application, and we will be in touch if we require any further information. The applications are assessed by a panel in late November/early December, and we advise students of the outcome before Christmas. Successful students are required to attend a presentation evening along with their families/friends in early February to celebrate this next stage in their education journey. Award funds are paid to students after this evening.

Q: This all sounds great, what now?

A: To apply for an Education Support Award, visit our [website](https://www.mirboodistrictfoundation.org.au) and start your application. If you have any questions or experience any difficulties with your application, please contact Dani Calafiore admin@mirboodistrictfoundation.org.au or 0409 193 464. Applications close **19th November 2023**.