

Media release

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Don't leave students out of benefits increase: IRU

Students claiming Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY and Austudy must be included in Government plans to permanently raise the value of welfare payments, the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) group has said.

According to [media reports](#) today (19 February 2021), the Government is considering a permanent rise in the rate of JobSeeker payments once the fortnightly \$150 coronavirus supplement ends on 31 March 2021, streamlining the income support payment system into a single, increased payment for unemployed Australians.

It is unclear what benefits may be affected by the changes, and if student benefits will also be considered for a permanent rise.

The IRU, which represents seven comprehensive universities across Australia, is urging the Government to ensure Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY and Austudy students are included in any uplift. Without a permanent rise, eligible students will face an income cut from April when the coronavirus supplements come to an end.

The IRU [previously lobbied](#) the Government to include university students in the coronavirus supplement scheme, which was initially only available to jobseekers but not to students.

Commenting, IRU Executive Director Conor King said:

“A drop in study benefits would be a perverse incentive for young people to stop studying. That is never a good outcome, and particularly so during these challenging times.”

“The IRU urges the Government to ensure students are not left behind when other benefit payments rise. If JobSeeker is heading for a permanent increase, then student benefits should be lifted by the same proportion.”

Types of student benefits

- [Youth Allowance](#) is available to eligible Australian students and apprentices aged 16-24 who meet Services Australia's assets and income test. Payments currently vary between \$403.20 and \$756 per fortnight, depending on the recipient's circumstances.
- [ABSTUDY](#) is available to eligible Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students or apprentices who are not getting another payment to study or train. ABSTUDY for tertiary students is broken up into five separate payments, depending on individual circumstances: Living Allowance; Incidentals Allowance; Additional Incidentals Allowance; Additional Assistance; Fares Allowance.

iru.edu.au

- [Austudy](#) is available to full-time Australian students and apprentices aged over 25. Payments currently vary between \$612.50 and \$756 per fortnight, depending on the recipient's circumstances.

IRU contacts

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About the IRU

The IRU is a network of seven comprehensive universities committed to inclusive excellence in teaching and research in Australia. Its members are Charles Darwin University, Flinders University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Murdoch University and Western Sydney University.