

PEF National Secondary Scholarships

The Public Education Foundation's National Secondary Scholarships support two Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students, two refugee students and two students currently experiencing financial hardship that may prevent them from continuing their senior years of education in a public school. (**Note - a student may only apply for one PEF National Secondary scholarship**).

Six scholarships are available in 2026. The scholarship will provide financial support of \$1,500 per year in year 10, 11 and 12 for each students (total scholarship value is \$4,500 per student).

The scholarship is to cover educational expenses such as:

- Incidental fees (eg. Text book hiring, costs associated with a specialised subject etc)
- Uniforms and school shoes (including school sports clothing)
- Stationery and general office items and equipment
- Text books
- Laptop or iPad or other similar device
- Subject or study related software
- Printer
- Internet connection for study at home
- School excursions and school camps
- Costs associated with work experience linked to VET subjects
- Furniture for study such as desk, chair, lamp etc
- Face to face or online tutoring

If a student leaves public school before the end of Year 12, the scholarship will lapse. **Please note - if a student's attendance rate falls below an acceptable level at any time during the duration of the scholarship, the scholarship may be withdrawn.** Any unspent monies at the end of the scholarship period must be refunded to the Public Education Foundation scholarship fund.

Before applying for this scholarship, please ensure that you read the [scholarship terms and conditions available on our website](#).

BASIC ELIGIBILITY

- Enrolled in an Australian public high school
- Currently in Year 9 (2025)
- **One of either:**
 - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
 - A Refugee
 - Experiencing financial hardship
- Australian citizen or permanent resident

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Potential to do well at school
- Positive attitude towards school and high attendance rates
- Intention to complete their HSC/NTCE/QCE/SACE/TCE/VCE/WACE and continue to tertiary/vocational education
- Disadvantage currently preventing the student from realising potential and/or successfully completing their studies
- Demonstrate they participate in school life
- Demonstrate they contribute in the community and/or in extracurricular activities

SELECTION PROCESS

A selection panel will review all scholarship applications and assess them against the selection criteria. The selection panel will include representatives of the Public Education Foundation, the AEC and independent experts. After considering all applications, the selection panel will recommend the selected applicant for the approval of the Public Education Foundation's Board. Successful applicants will be advised in December 2025.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome via email. If successful, the scholarship recipient's school will receive notification.

HOW TO APPLY

All applications for the PEF National Secondary Scholarships must be submitted via the Foundation's online portal. You will need to sign up for a [PEF-Apply](#) account to access the form. **Note – ALL sections of the application, INCLUDING the Principals Supporting Statement must be completed before the application can be submitted.**

Please select either the FINANCIAL NEED, INDIGENOUS or REFUGEE scholarship when applying

Prior to starting your application, you should compile the following information ready to submit:

- Applicant details including:
 - full name
 - gender
 - date of birth
 - phone number
 - address
 - email (***please ensure you nominate an email account you regularly access***)
- Residence status
- Parent/guardian details (at least one but up to two)
 - name
 - phone number
 - relationship to student
 - email (***please ensure you nominate an email account you regularly access***)
- School details:
 - name of school
 - address
 - principal name
 - email

- School Point of Contact – the person at the school who you would like correspondence sent to – name, phone number and email
- Basic information about you / your family:
 - whether you are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or Pacific or South Sea Islander
 - your mob/family/traditional owner/language group
 - if you are from a Non-English-Speaking Background
 - country of origin of your parents and yourself
 - which languages you speak and are spoken at home
 - how many adults live on your home
 - how many of those adults are working
 - who is the primary caregiver at home
 - how many other school aged (or younger) children live in your house
 - highest education qualification of your immediate family
 - if you have a diagnosed disability or learning difficulty
 - whether you have been in out-of-home care
 - socio-economic background
 - how you found out about the scholarship
- A statement outlining why you are a suitable candidate for this scholarship and how you meet each of the selection criteria. (Maximum 400 words)
- A brief outline of your plans after you have completed your HSC/NTCE/QCE/SACE/TCE/VCE/WACE (maximum 150 words)
- A brief statement on how the scholarship funds would be used (maximum 150 words)
- A copy of your most recent school report ready to upload (PDF or word format)
- A personal reference from a teacher/counsellor/wellbeing officer from your school.
For Indigenous applicants, please provide a reference from an Aboriginal Community Member. (PDF or Word format, maximum 400 words) Please advise your referee that our Panels are not in a position to contact them for additional information. The reference should provide all information they feel is relevant.
- A supporting statement from your Principal which addresses the selection criteria (the applicant must initiate a request ***via the online application*** to the Principal. This will result in an email being sent to the Principal asking them to ***complete a statement of support online***). ***This statement must be completed by your Principal before the application can be submitted.***

Note for Community Member references: It is critical that the Aboriginal community member reference is specific and supportive of the student. Generic references WILL disadvantage an applicant.

Note for Principals: Please be aware that your statement is a critical component of the application form and your feedback is given considerable weight in the process of panel deliberations. The panels are looking for feedback that goes well beyond simple confirmation that the student is enrolled in your school, or that you endorse the application. Generic responses, or copy/paste responses from the applicants or referees statements WILL disadvantage the applicant.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Once you have finalised your application and all elements are complete (including references and supporting statements as required) you can submit it for review.

Applications must be submitted by **5pm on Friday 19th September 2025**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Call the Public Education Foundation on 02 7814 2806 or email us at scholarships@publiceducationfoundation.org.au.

We also encourage you to visit our website to learn more about the Foundation and the work that we do - www.publiceducationfoundation.org.au