



AEU SA PRIMARY SCHOLARSHIP

Assists students regional, rural and remote communities with educational expenses to help them engage, learn, and excel in their primary years



Overview of Scholarship

The Australian Education Union (AEU) is the union representing teachers and education staff across Australia's public schools. Its South Australian Branch represents educators in public preschools, primary and secondary schools and TAFE across the state, including the country schools this scholarship serves.

The AEU has long argued that a child's postcode should never determine the quality of their education. In regional, rural and remote communities, families meet costs that city families often don't – longer trips to school, dearer uniforms and supplies, patchy and expensive internet, and fewer local tutoring programs. Those costs arrive in the very years when habits of attendance, reading and confidence are formed.

This scholarship helps students meet everyday educational expenses so that cost is not the reason an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child in a country school misses out. It is administered on the AEU's behalf by the Public Education Foundation.

Is this scholarship for your child? It's open to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 or Year 3 in 2027 at a South Australian public primary school in a regional, rural or remote community. If that doesn't sound like your child, PEF's [Eligibility Quiz](#) can help you find a scholarship that does.

Eligibility Criteria

This scholarship is for primary school students. Applications are made by a parent, carer or guardian on the student's behalf.

The student must:

- identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- be enrolled in a South Australian government (public) primary school located in a regional, rural or remote community
- be in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 or Year 3 in 2027
- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- not currently hold another Public Education Foundation scholarship – a student may hold only one PEF scholarship at a time

A complete application must also include:

- a parent/carers statement addressing the selection criteria (25-400 words)
- a parent/carers statement on how the scholarship would be used (20-150 words)
- a digital copy of the student's most recent school report
- a reference from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community member (PDF or Word, maximum 400 words)
- a supporting statement from the student's principal, completed online – the principal is sent the request automatically once you enter their email address in the application

An application cannot be submitted until every section, including the Principal's Supporting Statement, is complete. Applications that are incomplete at the closing time cannot be assessed.



Continued eligibility

- Once the scholarship is offered, confirmed evidence of the student's enrolment at a South Australian public primary school must be provided before any payment is made
- If the student leaves a South Australian public school before completing primary school, the scholarship will lapse
- If attendance drops below an acceptable level, the scholarship may be reviewed or withdrawn
- Each payment after the first is subject to the student remaining eligible and to a short annual confirmation from the family and school

Selection Process

Applications are assessed against the selection criteria below. Financial need alone does not decide the outcome, and neither does academic ranking – the panel is looking for students for whom this support would make a real difference.

Selection criteria

- successful engagement with the school environment and capacity to succeed
- a positive attitude towards learning and high attendance
- disadvantage affecting the student's participation or success at school
- active participation in school and community life
- strong Indigenous community and cultural links

How applications are assessed

- The Public Education Foundation first checks each application for eligibility and completeness
- A selection panel including representatives of the AEU and independent experts assesses all eligible applications against the criteria above
- The panel weighs the parent/carer statements, the school report, the community reference and the principal's statement together – no single document decides an application
- The panel's recommendations are put to the PEF's Board for approval



Funding/Assistance

- Funding may be awarded over four consecutive years at \$1,000 per year – a total of \$4,000 (depending on the student's year level at the time of application). For example, in 2027:
 - Reception student – assistance provided for four years (Reception to Year 3, 2027–2030)
 - Year 1 student – Years 1 to 4 (2027-2030)
 - Year 2 student – Years 2 to 5 (2027-2030)
 - Year 3 student – Years 3 to 6 (2027-2030)
- Payments are made annually by electronic funds transfer to the school and are subject to the student's continued eligibility
- The first payment is made only after confirmed evidence of the student's enrolment has been provided
- Receiving this scholarship does not affect Centrelink payments, ABSTUDY or any school-based assistance the family already receives
- The scholarship cannot be transferred to another student or family member

Acceptable Use of Scholarship Funds

Funds may be used to support the student's educational needs, such as:

- uniforms and school shoes (including sports uniforms)
- literacy and numeracy support programs
- stationery and classroom learning materials
- a laptop, iPad or similar device
- subject-related or study software
- a home printer and/or internet access
- educational excursions, camps, or sports programs
- furniture for home study (desk, chair, lamp)
- face-to-face or online tutoring
- transport costs directly related to schooling

The scholarship is not intended for:

- general household or family expenses not connected to the student's education
- school fees or contributions that the family is not required to pay
- items for another child in the family

Record keeping

- Families should keep receipts for items bought with scholarship funds
- Unspent funds at the end of the scholarship period must be returned to the Public Education Foundation
- Before applying, please read the full scholarship [terms and conditions](#)

Application Form

The online application form asks for the following. It can be saved and returned to at any time before the closing date.

- Full name, date of birth, contact details, address, citizenship
- Parent/guardian information (name, contact, relationship)
- School information (school name, address, principal email)
- School point of contact (name, phone, email)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status
- Mob/family/traditional owner/language group
- Languages spoken at home
- Family composition and household structure
- Primary caregiver information
- Adult employment status
- Education levels of immediate family
- Disability, learning difficulty or additional needs (if applicable)
- Socio-economic context
- How the applicant heard about the scholarship

Written components

- Parent/carer statement addressing the selection criteria (25-400 words)
- Parent/carer statement on intended scholarship use (20-150 words)
- Latest school report (digital copy)
- Reference from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community member (PDF/Word, max. 400 words)
- Principal's supporting statement (submitted online via system-generated email)

Notes for references

- Community references must be specific and supportive. Generic references may disadvantage applicants
- Principal statements must provide individualised commentary; generic responses may disadvantage applicants
- Give your referees as much notice as you can, and let them know the application closes on Friday 9 October 2026

Writing the statements

- Write in your own words about your own child – the panel is not looking for polished writing, it is looking for a clear picture of the student
- Address each selection criterion in turn, with a short example for each
- Be specific about what the money would be spent on and what difference it would make
- Scanned or photographed documents are accepted provided they are clearly legible



How to Apply

- Applications must be submitted online via [PEF-Apply](#), the Public Education Foundation's application portal. Create an account to access the form
- Complete every section of the application form
- Upload the student's latest school report and the community reference
- Provide the principal's email address so the system can issue the request for the Principal's Supporting Statement. Do this early – the principal needs time to respond, and your application cannot be submitted without it
- Check that your own contact details are correct, as all correspondence about the application is sent by email

If you need help with the form, or would prefer to complete it with support, contact the Public Education Foundation on the details at the end of this kit. Your child's school, an Aboriginal Education Teacher or an Aboriginal Community Education Officer can also help you put the application together.

Submitting Your Application

- Applications open: August 2026
- Applications close: October 2026

You can save your application in progress and return to it at any time before the closing date. Once you click Submit, your application is sent to the Public Education Foundation and will be reviewed during the Panel assessment period. **Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in December.**

Important information

- Late applications cannot be accepted, and the portal closes automatically at the advertised time
- All sections of the application, including the Principal's Supporting Statement, must be completed before the application can be submitted
- Submit as early as you can – the portal is busiest in the final days before closing
- You will receive an automatic email confirming your submission. If it does not arrive, check your junk folder and then contact the Public Education Foundation
- Applications cannot be edited after submission



Further Information and Contact Details

For further information, please contact the Public Education Foundation Scholarships team:

- Email: scholarships@publiceducationfoundation.org.au
- Phone: 02 7814 2806