

Veteran's Children Education Scheme (VCES), Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme It is up to you to apply!

All those in receipt of a Special Rate pension (T&PI), War Widows pension and Extreme Disablement Adjustment pension (EDA) who have children **under the age of 25**, who are attending school, TAFE or University are eligible for assistance from the VCES regardless of their income, assets or children's income. Veteran grandparents with custody or grandchildren students who are eligible should also make application for assistance under VCES.

We are aware that a lot of new TPI's / War Widows / EDA's may not be aware of these Education Schemes. You are reminded that the DVA have no details on family members for many that have been granted pensions since 1982. There are several important financial benefits that the VCES has over AUSTUDY and ABSTUDY.

VCES eligibility (from 1/1/2001) was extended to the children or former children of **veterans with Vietnam service**, where the child is diagnosed by an appropriately qualified professional as having a depressive disorder, or in the opinion of an appropriately qualified professional, is vulnerable. **See Page 2 for detailed information.**

The VCES provides support and counselling for parent and student as well as financial assistance for education and tutorial assistance if required.

Education allowance Payable from 1 January 2008 are;

Primary Students: The annual education allowance for primary students is \$214.10

Secondary / Tertiary Students (fortnightly rates in \$)

<u>Students</u>	<u>At Home</u>	<u>Living away from Home</u>	<u>Homeless</u>
Under 16 years	44.00	332.56	355.40
16 – 17 years	194.50	355.40	355.40
18 years and over	233.90	355.40	355.40

Double Orphans Secondary / Tertiary (fortnightly rates in \$)

Under 16 \$197.50 16 – 20 years \$355.40 21 years and over \$431.70

Note: Secondary/Tertiary Double Orphans (fortnightly rates, applies VVCS students only)

For NSW only, general enquires on the VCES should be directed to the State Secretary at the Sydney Office of the Department of Veterans Affairs on 02 9213 7078 or 02 9213 7616, or callers outside Sydney on 1800 555 254 ext 7078 or 7616. Alternatively, contact your local DVA VAN Office.

Sheldon Maher OAM is the Vietnam Veteran's Association of Australia, NSW Branch Inc., representative on the NSW V.C.E.S. Board. He can be contacted by phone on 02 6624 4486 or fax 02 6625 2895. Feel free to phone him should you need his assistance. We remind you that **you must** make application for these Education Allowances.

If you reside outside NSW phone the DVA National Line on **1300 131 945** select your state and ask for the VCES State Secretary or contact your local DVA VAN Office.

Veterans Children Education Scheme Eligibility

Did you know?

A Vietnam Veteran's dependents may be eligible for the Veterans Children Education Scheme (VCES), even if the Veteran is not receiving a disability pension at the Special Rate (TPI). A dependent is a student aged under 25 who is in the Veterans care. This includes grandchildren, step-children and foster children who are in the care of the Veteran.

The 1999-2000 Health Study of Australia's Vietnam veteran community found that the children of Vietnam veterans suffered from a rate of educational disadvantage that was higher than the Australian community standard. In the 2000 Budget, the Government announced a range of initiatives in response to this and other findings from the study.

One of these initiatives was the extension of VCES eligibility to Vietnam veterans' children who are diagnosed with a depressive disorder or who are regarded as vulnerable. With access to the VCES, and the support available through the guidance and counselling it provides, it was hoped to encourage these children to achieve their full educational potential.

A student child of a Vietnam veteran may be eligible to receive an Education Allowance, under ss.116(1)(e) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act*, if they are determined to have a diagnosed depressive disorder or, if an appropriately qualified professional has determined that they are vulnerable.

This involves having the child assessed by either the local family doctor, the VVCS or another appropriately qualified professional. The assessment is a one question form, asking whether the student meets the criteria.

Once eligibility is confirmed, the student is eligible for the Education Allowance until he or she finishes full-time study which includes tertiary study. VCES eligibility entails other benefits, such as funding for tutoring if needed.

If you would like more information, please contact the NSW/ACT Secretary of the VCES on 133 254 and asking for extension 7616, or directly on (02) 9213 7616.

If you reside outside NSW phone the DVA National Line on 1300 131 945 and ask for the VCES State Secretary or contact your local DVA VAN Office.