

CRITERIA FOR ALISON WATSON SCHOLARSHIPS

October 2009

Background

The Alison Watson Memorial Award is named in memory of Alison Watson who died at age fifty, having lived with severe crippling rheumatoid arthritis for most of her life. Alison had a great passion for life and despite her physical disability, was determined to be in control of her life and not let the disease rule her.

Her contribution to Arthritis NSW was significant and within the branches she held the positions of Director, Chair of the Branches Advisory Committee and President of both Ryde and Parramatta branches at different times. She was also the Branch Coordinator on the Board.

Alison's attitude was an inspiration to all who knew her and she encouraged others living with arthritis to also take control of their lives. Unfortunately because of her arthritis, Alison's formal education came to an abrupt halt within weeks of starting secondary school. The purpose of the Alison Watson Scholarship therefore is to assist students similarly affected by their arthritis to continue or resume their education and thus give them a better opportunity to achieve their life goals.

Award Details

The Alison Watson Scholarships are provided annually. There is \$3 000 allocated in the annual budget for the program by Arthritis NSW.

Applications are awarded each calendar year within that total allocation for applicants with a demonstrated need. The Board of Arthritis NSW can determine to provide a recurrent grant over a period of 3 years to an approved applicant, based on an annual application.

Where no suitable candidates are identified in any calendar year, the Awards may be held over to the following year, at the discretion of the Board.

Award Criteria

To be eligible to receive an Alison Watson Scholarship, applicants must:

- Be a resident in NSW
- Have a medical diagnosis of arthritis
- Be attending a school, TAFE, university or other approved educational institution
- Be aged under 25 years
- Be able to demonstrate the Scholarship will significantly enhance their capacity to complete their education
- Agree to provide an annual report to Arthritis NSW on how the funds have been used.

Funds may be used for:

- Payment of school, TAFE, university or other approved educational institution's fees
- Purchase of computer or adaptive computer equipment
- Purchase of appropriate resources
- Payment of a scribe used for an examination
- Recording or other equipment to eliminate the need to take notes

Exclusions

The Alison Watson Scholarship is not to be used to cover travel or petrol costs.

Selection Process

The deadline for receipt of applications is 31 March each year. Applications will be reviewed by the Education Sub Committee of the Arthritis NSW Board each year in June, for an award to be offered for the new financial year.

The Education Sub Committee will evaluate all applications and make a recommendation to the Board. Decisions will be made using the following process:

1. Applications are to be forwarded to the Chief Executive, Arthritis NSW using the approved application form
2. Where the applicant is aged over 18 years, the Chief Executive or Manager Education and Member Services will arrange for a visit to the applicant. For young people aged under 18 years, the Arthritis & Youth Educator will meet with the applicant and their parents.
3. Where appropriate, the Chief Executive and/or the Manager, Education & Member Services will also talk to the health professional involved with the applicant to determine the appropriateness of the support. This is particularly important in situations where equipment or a computer is requested.
4. Following the meeting with the applicant, the Chief Executive will present the application to the next meeting of the Education Sub Committee and they will make a recommendation to the Board.
5. The Chief Executive will write to the applicant advising them of the decision of the Education Sub Committee and the Board.

Successful Applications

Where an applicant is successful in being granted an Alison Watson Scholarship they will be required to meet the following requirements:

- Provide a copy of the invoice for fee payment OR
- Provide two quotes for purchase of the requested equipment, including computers
- Provide a progress report by 31 December each year regarding how funds were expended and the benefits resulting to the applicant.

- Provide a copy of their annual academic achievement record.
- Agree to their story and photo appearing in the quarterly magazine of Arthritis NSW, unless there is a valid reason for not doing so.