

6 December 2010

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Ewr.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Youth Allowance – Senator Nash’s Social Security Amendment Bill

In relation to the above, I am writing about the ASGC.

We live in Young which is considered as an inner regional area NSW. Our second daughter has been accepted at ANU, Canberra to study medicine in 2011. We have another daughter completing her last year in a double degree in nursing and paramedics at CSU Bathurst in 2011. We have another two children at home going in to Year 9 and 12 in 2011. It is our dream that all our daughters have the same opportunities as others.

To support our eldest has been a challenge. We have had to support the cost of accommodation at Bathurst two hours away from home for the last three years as well as transport costs to and from, and living costs. Even though my daughter has held three part time jobs over the last three years its very frustrating that she can not get any youth allowance. Not even rental assistance or a transport system has been available to her.

We have recently heard that from January 2011 outer regional students are going to be helped with Youth Allowance. Looking at Young’s classification on the ASGC map it seems that some students who live about 5 minutes out of town west will benefit from this new scheme and those students who live 5 minutes south will not. We have the exact same distances to travel to the universities, whether it be Bathurst, Canberra, Sydney, Wagga Wagga etc. We have the same dilemmas as those in the “Outer Regional” areas of finding accommodation for our children.

My second daughter had taken a gap year due to the extreme costs we have faced over the last three years. She has worked fulltime at Target since leaving school and because she will not have made the required amount of working hours or money per week and because of where we choose to live south of Young does not qualify for any youth allowance either.

Inner regional students from struggling families have the worry of finding work as well as juggling their study knowing this is what they are going to have to do to achieve their

dreams. Outer regional students, on the other hand can go a little more relaxed and settle in to uni life knowing there is some support there for them. These students are from the same background and in most cases they have completed primary and secondary school together but a few kilometres in and out of town separates them from being advantaged and disadvantaged for tertiary education.

The new system needs to be reviewed! How can rural students be treated fairly? Certainly not by this inner/outer regional proposal nor by the amount of money or hours that is needed to be considered as an independent as it is a ridiculous amount. If the system can't be fair and pay everyone, why not give the inner regional students rental assistance and a start up payment to help with the moving from home.

I hope my concerns will be considered

Yours sincerely

Katrina Green