

## **SUBMISSION TO SENATE ON INDEPENDENT YOUTH ALLOWENCE**

Currently Regional students are being disadvantaged by current policy of eligibility for student youth allowance.

My daughter completed year twelve in 2009. As no clear decision had been made at that point in time on eligibility for youth allowance she elected to work a gap year in the hope she would qualify for youth allowance in 2011. (this matter had not passed the senate until March/April 2010 which was after the time period for lodging deferment applications.

In approximately March/April 2010 youth allowance for regional students attending university was denied unless those students were prepared to take two years off study and meet new eligibility criteria. At this point my daughter had already deferred her studies and was committed to work for the year 2010. Most universities do not offer two year deferments.

The university course (physiotherapy at ACU Brisbane) she has been offered is NOT offered by the only local university in the Wide Bay. Brisbane being the closest university where she could complete such a course.

As such if she wishes to undertake this course she cannot do so locally and is thereby immediately disadvantaged in comparison to Brisbane students who may still have the option to live at home.

The real issue in this debate is that regional students DONOT have the ability to live at home whilst completing their studies and thereby being greatly disadvantaged by the fact that they do not have the means to fully support themselves whilst undertaking full time studies.

Secondly current eligibility criteria make it almost impossible for many regional students to attend university as most who work for a two year period are not able to return to full time studies.

I would further submit the re-introduction of previous criteria whereby student who work for a period of 18 months and earn an amount (previously around \$18,000 in that 18 month period) be re-instated.

In addition I would submit that student who completed year twelve (12) in 2009 not be excluded from this eligibility should eligibility requirements change.