

3 December 2010

Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you in the hope that the Independent Youth Allowance rules can be modified to help families such as ours.

My husband and I have three children. Our eldest daughter Karina is hoping to attend university in 2012 after completing her HSC next year. My husband earns just over the income threshold so Karina cannot apply for Youth Allowance at this point in time. Our youngest daughter Tara has severe Cerebral Palsy and Epilepsy and because of her unstable medical condition I am unable to work. Tara's medical and therapy needs are extremely expensive and many thousands of dollars are spent each year on equipment and services for her.

Our dilemma is this. Do we stop buying and paying for Tara's essential equipment and services that are not funded so that Karina can go to University? We cannot afford to pay for her to attend university and look after Tara's needs at the same time. We also have another daughter who if she would like to go to university would be starting in 2014. What happens then?

We need our children to go to university and get a good income. After all they will be helping to support Tara long after my husband and I are no longer able to look after her.

This is just another financial and emotional responsibility that my husband and I are facing in the future and one which we can ill afford to undertake. Today is the International Day of People with a Disability and today we feel more isolated and more despondent than ever about our situation. Our children live with our financial, physical and emotional responsibilities every day of our lives. Now it looks as if it will be affecting their employment prospects as well.

Please do something to help rectify our situation.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully

Dianne Evans