

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

Dear Sir/Madam

My wife and I live in Dunsborough, Western Australia, a three hour drive south of Perth. We have four children – all bright with one already at university studying Law and Communications, the younger three are not too far away and are all thinking about the higher professions for their careers.

Our eldest child qualified for the youth allowance under the old system. She had a gap year, worked hard and earned the \$\$ required to qualify. Once the youth allowance kicked in it made a huge difference. Having the regular youth allowance payment has meant that we have been able to afford to provide her with a little extra support to live in Perth – accommodation, fuel, food etc. She is a good student and doing well.

Under the proposed new system, our other children will not be treated the same. They will now have to take a two year gap and maintain virtually full time work during that time. This is a definite disincentive for rural children to go onto study. Without the youth allowance payment, we will really struggle to provide them with the same level of education that our eldest child has been fortunate to have. It basically seems unfair.

Even more unfair is that our friend's children, who currently catch the same bus to school, but live 5kms further out of town, will qualify under the old scheme.

We just want one rule for all that does not disadvantage any sections of the rural community. The percentage of children from rural areas going onto study is already low, why discriminate even more?

Rural students are more likely to return to rural settings to practice their craft/profession when they complete studies.

We will need to save many tens of thousands of \$\$ to provide the extra financial support that our younger children will need. These are \$\$ we would otherwise have been able to spend in the local community or even better pay off the mortgage and reduce our debt levels in these challenging international economic times.

The current new system is unfair and creates a tiered system – it blatantly discriminates against country children who must leave home to study.

Please support the changes being proposed to return back to one standard system for all, with one gap year only for students to qualify for your allowance required.

Many thanks for considering this matter.

David and Kerrie Naughton

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010