

The current criteria for inner regional students eligibility for Youth allowance is putting an unfair financial strain on country families. I have watched and listened with great interest the changes that have happened over the last few years. Why? Because we are a family affected by them. We currently have a son at University. He has had to move away to Newcastle to attend but he was able to work last year which qualified him for Independant Youth allowance. This has helped him and us with the costs involved in relocating from Port Macquarie to Newcastle. But it seems our daughters who have just completed Year 12 and who both wish to attend Newcastle University will not have this option. They will defer for 12 months in order to work for a year but will still not qualify for Independancy unless they find an employer willing to employ them for 30 hours per week over a period of 18 months in 2 years. Difficult in any regional area plus it means defering for another 6 months. It is logical to undo the ridiculous criteria set for inner regional kids and give them the same opportunity as the other regional/rural areas.

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