

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to voice my concern over the current situation with eligibility for Youth Allowance. I have a son who has just completed his TEE and is hoping to study at university (University of WA) after a gap year in 2011. As we live in Bunbury he will need to leave home to live and study. Without the assistance of the Youth Allowance he will be unable to support himself and study effectively and I have serious concerns about the impact this will have on his intentions for the future. I have always instilled in my children the value of education and ensured that all my children worked hard at school. My older children are currently studying or have completed studying and are all working and contributing members of society.

My son is becoming increasingly despondent about his future as he will be eligible for more money if he leaves home to live on the streets as a drug addict than if he were to go on and complete his studies. I am struggling to convince him to try his best to earn enough money to support himself through university as three of our other children are either studying, or completing studies now. These children are living independently and working part time to supplement their income and are successful students. I would like my son to have the same opportunity as they have so that he can also go on to a meaningful and skilled career rather than just drifting from job to job because he needs to make ends meet.

The requirement to work for 30 hours a week for 18 months is unrealistic as even in a regional centre such as Bunbury full time work is very hard to find. My older daughter had to work three part time jobs to get enough just to qualify on the previous system of \$19000 earned.

All my children are reliable, trustworthy and hardworking and even with these qualities work was, and is, hard to find. If the situation is not changed back to the original qualification criteria I believe my son will drop out and not fulfil his potential. He will lose his position at University as there is no allowance for deferring for two years and I will hold this government responsible for his decision. He is a bright student, (Dux in Economics and Head Boy) with a great future if only he can get the appropriate and timely support he needs. This will not happen unless the criteria is changed back to the \$19000 in 18 months requirement.

Sincerely

Anne Williams