

## **Social Security Amendment (Income Support for Regional Students) Bill 2010**

Last time there was a Senate enquiry on Equity of Access to Tertiary Study for Regional Students I sent in a submission. I must say I was disappointed at the outcome of this enquiry which led me to send a letter to The Hon. Julia Gillard who was then Education Minister (copy attached). I am not bothering to send the map that went with that letter at that time as it was merely to point out the stupidity of the "Inner" and "Outer" regional classifications allocated.

I did receive a reply to this letter from one of Ms Gillard's staff but it was the usual standard reply referring to policies etc. but did not move to specifically address any of the points I had raised in my letter.

The problem for regional students runs much deeper than just whether they are classed as "Inner" or "Outer" regional students. As I pointed out in my previous correspondence, regional students are just that, regional students. Whether the government chooses to class them as 'inner' or 'outer' seems totally irrelevant.

**ALL STUDENTS FROM REGIONAL AREAS**, regardless of parental income, deserve some sort of assistance to attend tertiary study. I would go so far as to say that all students from regional areas, who have to relocate to study, should automatically qualify for Youth Allowance. Parents would still be contributing significantly as Youth Allowance does not come close to covering the costs of accommodating a student on campus in a capital city. I cannot see how the government cannot see that it is **"discriminatory"** to expect that families from regional areas should have to fund approx. \$15,000-\$20,000 every year to give their child the opportunity to obtain a university degree. Families in capital cities may well earn just as much if not more than some families from regional areas, but they don't have to find that sort of money every year to make their child's dream a reality.

Government policy always seems to focus on the south-east corner of Queensland or Sydney & Melbourne. I am sorry but we all don't live there!

I believe my attached letter raised the major the points I wish to put forward. I am just sorry that the current Government does not believe that all students deserve the opportunity for tertiary study, not just the ones that happen to live in the areas that give them the most votes. Regional Australia does exist – it is about time that Government policy worked for all Australians and gave regional students (& families) a fair go.

Fiona Ezzy  
6/12/10