

22-Nov-10

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

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re: Issues caused by the changes to the youth allowance qualifying criteria.

The changes are really having a big impact on country students attending university in the City (Perth). If the regional areas had universities offering the same courses as in the City it really would not be a problem, but the reality is that university facilities are extremely poor and virtually nonexistent in many regional areas.

The issues are as follows;

1. To qualify the students need to support themselves through full-time paid employment for at least 18 months within a period of two years. They have to work an average of 30 hours per week throughout the 18 months and earn \$19,532. The hours worked each week can only be averaged over periods of no more than 13 weeks. (ie they must average 390 hours in each of six periods of 13 weeks).
2. You cannot meet this requirement within a period of 12 months. (Why is this if they can prove that they can earn the money & work the hours in a shorter period why penalise them.)
3. All these barriers in a time of economic down turn when jobs for young people are in short supply especially in the regional areas.
4. The government is encouraging country people to move to the city to support their children's education. The government should in fact be helping retain people in the country instead of forcing them to move. I know many that will have to leave because it is too difficult for the students to qualify for youth allowance.
5. Why are people in Busselton & Dunsborough not treated the same for youth allowance as people in Yallingup & Margaret River. It isn't any

easier to attend university in Perth from Busselton as it is in Margaret River, so why the inequality. They both have to move to Perth you cannot commute from Busselton.

6. If this is not changed back how it was previously we will have to move to Perth as we cannot pay \$13500 of accommodation in a college and provide support to our child to live in Perth and attend university by us staying here Busselton. We really don't want to shift but we may have no choice but to move.
7. Currently jobs are in short supply and even if they try to gain independence it really will be difficult to meet all the criteria.
8. Can the criteria be changed so inner regional students are treated the same as outer regional as it really isn't any advantage in attending university from an inner regional area compared to an outer regional area.

Please make the necessary changes ASAP as this is really disadvantaging country students. Education should be for all and these changes are discriminating against regional country students. Why should it be more difficult to attend university from the country? Not only do we have higher fuel costs, higher food costs, need to travel longer distances and have less employment opportunities but now it is extremely difficult to have a quality education. Give regional students a fair go instead of penalising them for living in the country we also pay our taxes and they have a right to quality education.

Yours faithfully

Rocco & Mirella Guzzomi
Concerned Parents