

EEWR Legislation Committee

02 December 2010

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Barry Direen and our family live in Claremont, Tasmania which is about 16Km drive north from Hobart. We are in your electorate of Denison.

We have 3 Children aged 21, 18 & 15. My Eldest son Adam is currently studying performing arts full time at Monash University Clayton VIC, in his 2nd year. After finishing Grade 12 in 2007, he was able to do a gap year in 2008, and qualify for Youth Allowance in June 2009 under the old independence test.

My daughter Lillian finished Grade 12 in 2009 and is doing a gap year this year (2010) and is enrolled at Deakin University for 2011 to do a Bachelor in Creative Arts (Dance) followed by a teaching qualification.

The problem with Lillian is that under the current YA rules, she will not be able to qualify for the YA independence test due to Claremont now being classified as "**Inner Regional**". Under the current rules to qualify for the YA Independence test for regional students, you need to live in a "**Outer Regional or Remote Area**"

All of Hobart and the main surrounding suburbs along the Derwent River where the bulk of the population resides are classed as "**Inner Regional.**" But if we live 10mins drive north of us at Pontville, this is classified as "**Outer Regional**".

We are now being discriminated against because of our geographical location.

It should not matter where you live, if you are from a regional area like Tasmania with a 200Km stretch of water between Victoria and us. The Liberal party figures state that there are approximately **20,000 Regional students** nationally in a similar situation to my daughter.

Under the current changes there are \$4000 and \$2128 Scholarships available in 2011 as a "dependant" student. But the actual rate of YA is only **\$24 a week & \$57.00 a week Rent assistance** (based on a combined parental income of **\$114,000** and my youngest son, Joshua who will be 16 next year, being a second dependant child).

Over all, Lillian will be better off financially in her first year at Uni, mainly due to the \$6128 from Scholarships, and because she will get YA straight away when she starts Uni in late Feb 2011, and not having to wait until June 2011 to qualify for YA under the old independence test.

The problem is that in Lillian's 2nd & 3rd years at Uni (2012 & 2013) she will be **approximately \$6000 financially worse off, than an independent student** under the current YA rules, until she is 22 in 2014 when she can be classed as independent.

This is going to put severe financial strain and emotional stress on our family, as we will have to some how make up the difference. We are under financial stress already, as we are having to give some financial support to my older son even though he is an independent student.

I only want the same YA opportunities for my daughter, that my older son has had .

Another problem will be if my daughter applies for YA in January 2011, as a "dependant student", that any proposed new changes to YA will need to allow her to **re-apply for YA as a "independent student"**. Any new changes to the YA independence test will be of no benefit to my daughter if she is **"locked in"** as a dependent student.

Regards

Barry Direen