

Attention: Senate Committee

4th Dec 2010

Re: Youth Allowance

We are writing in regards to the above Bill as we have a daughter who will be attending University in 2011. May we thank Nola Marino for her continued e-mails to keep us informed of what has been happening - she appears to be as frustrated as we are!!

Firstly we would like to state that it has been very difficult in obtaining information regarding the Youth allowance and when we have been able to find out something it appears to be in conflict with what other departments are saying.

It has been difficult for our daughter to obtain 30 hours a week - even trying to work at two jobs.

The retail and hospitality industry only seem to offer her to work a 5 or 6 hour shift , but without a roster, so that she is unable to organise her hours to accept more work. After discussing these issues with our insurance advisor it appears that the lack of hours being offered may be a way that the employer gets out of paying superannuation - so we do not agree that they can get away with treating the youth this way.

So... consequently she has not been able to meet the "work at least 30 hours per week on a fulltime basis" requirement, even though she has continually tried to find work.

And ... the "work part time for at least 15 hours per week over 2 years" requirement does not fit as the employer does not give her enough shifts and besides she will be starting university after a 12 month gap year.

And ... the other requirements of marriage and children do not apply to our daughter.

We live in the South West in the Capel Shire in Gelorup so we have had to apply for on Campus accommodation as we do not have family in Perth to help out and this has proven to be more expensive than we had bargained for - and with having another child at high school - we are having to make serious changes to our lifestyle to budget for this.

So... we will have difficulty sending our daughter to university and she will find living away from home on a meagre amount also very hard ...as well as trying to study for her degree. Unfortunately the course that our daughter wishes to study is not offered here in the South West and choosing the next best thing was certainly not an option if she has aspirations in other fields of study.

Our daughter is also very interested in sport and well on her way to represent Australia in her chosen field and will have the opportunity to compete internationally in 2011, but the pressure being put on her to work to have enough money to live and to have the time to study, to travel to training and train appears to be a very difficult juggling act.

We are a close family and we will not be able to afford to travel to Perth on a regular basis to see her - we feel that this will be an important part of her achieving, but this will be also quite disruptive if we are unable to do this.

All in all it seems as if the next few years are going to be difficult for all concerned and we feel that the Youth Allowance Bill needs to be changed so that so called "inner Regional areas' are considered just as remote as areas that are hours away from Perth that you have to live there - relocate - in order to further your education. It seems that we as an ordinary family in the country do not have the same 'rights' as ordinary people living in the city.

So we ask the committee to reconsider its decision with our Youth – our future leaders!! Take these reasons as relevant and evident to the plight of our daughter and the many thousands of others and their families who will find providing a decent, honest education not so free after all.

Thank you once again Nola for all you continued contact

Trevor and Bev Fortescue.