

Hello from Busselton, 2.5 hours South of Perth in WA, where our daughter Olivia completed her year 12 at the end of last year, 2009, and had been planning to follow her 2 older siblings to study at University in Perth. Unlike when I studied at University, and was able to stay at home for the 6 years studying Medicine..... to study courses that would take them on their pathways, our children needed to leave home to relocate to the city.

Of course this is all to the disadvantage of the country communities as it encourages the parents to consider relocating in Perth to reduce the budget costs.

Our first 2 children took a gap year and worked hard, doing on occasions 3 jobs at a time, to earn enough money in the time period to reach the required target. With the seasonal work here I honestly don't know how they would have managed 18 months of continuous 30 hours or more of work. It would also have meant that instead of taking 1 year off study they would have needed to take 2 years off study. We also know many children that once they have been earning money for 2 years, have struggled to get back to being motivated to then do a 3 year plus degree. Our son who is doing a 4 year Health science degree before then trying again to get into a post graduate 4 year medical degree would need 10 years to complete the course.

With three children doing extensive and expensive university courses, if we hadn't had assistance from the governments youth allowance and living away from home allowance, it would have made financial common sense to have shifted to Perth, thereby weakening the internal infrastructure of our present rural community, where I have worked on an average of around 60 hrs/ wk with 100 hrs on call!!!! My wife works part time for Relationships Australia, as well as countless hours in voluntary work for rural Women, mainly in relationship support and health promotion! We still have a mortgage on our home and are definitely not 'millionaires' as Ms Gillard referred to various country people, that she would NOT pay educate!!

The governments incentives to keep experienced Doctors in the country wouldn't be equal to the costs of having our children in Perth, where we extensively support them!

Really this just highlights how difficult this is for country students compared to city students to succeed at university!!

The main issue here is that the new proposed legislation, VERY CLEARLY DISCRIMINATES AGAINST COUNTRY/RURAL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES!!

On reading through the information provided by the present government outlining their reasons for these changes, it was listed that statistical research had shown that 49% of students who received the current Youth Allowance still LIVED AT HOME!! Well quite clearly that only includes the CITY STUDENTS!!

Our children who receive the Youth Allowance in Perth, at present, live very frugally, while maintaining small weekend jobs as they study!! We also financially support them as they could not manage to do so on totally on their own!!

Our youngest daughter has worked continually all year without a break, only managing to find 4 days a week work, as Busselton is so linked with tourism and the fluctuations that this seasonal industry experiences. She would deary love to commence her gained university course with her city

counterparts next February, but with the present changes, she will have to continue working until the middle of next year to have any hope of gaining the Youth Allowance!

Clearly, this government is "ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL", using incentive packages in other areas to stimulate the economy, but in this instance they are only robbing the rural students!!

If they want to reduce costs of the Youth Allowance they need to address the issue of the CITY students who still live at home and receive the INDEPENDENT YOUTH ALLOWANCE AS CLEARLY THEY ARE NOT INDEPENDENT!!

Our rural students desperately need this allowance as do their families, who may well consider relocating back to the city, thereby further diminishing the strengths of the rural communities, who are in fact the BACKBONE OF THIS COUNTRY!!!! Perhaps they could consider instead a rural Youth Allowance based purely on a kilometre distance from the city basis, ie being further than 100kms from the city!

Please understand that this government is targeting the wrong group here to save money!! And it is definitely not a fairer system!!

We look forward to your reply and your assistance with this issue!!

Yours sincerely,

Andrew and Lesley Taylor