

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of WA

Submission
to

THE SENATE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

Inquiry into the

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

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We know that the professionals and trades people that grew up in the country are most likely to return to the country to live and work. We know that rural students are grossly underrepresented at higher education. And we know that access to higher education is one of the key factors inhibiting rural students participating in higher education. Governments should be doing everything in their power to make higher education accessible to rural students if we are to have sustainable rural communities into the future.

In Western Australia the 'Inner Regional' zones, as defined for the purpose of eligibility to independent Youth Allowance, are disturbing. Perhaps these regions were developed in light of what services are or are not available as they seem to be in the proximity major centres? Unfortunately in Western Australia we do not have the population to sustain large regional universities so if this was the thinking around the regions it is misplaced in WA.¹ By the same token WA does not have adequate public transport to ferry students from the regions to the universities on a daily basis. Students from these areas must very often live away from home to access their university of choice.

The inner regional zone (for the purpose of accessing independent Youth Allowance) includes areas which are far in excess of 100km from a university.

The table below illustrates the distance to the nearest university from just some of the towns considered 'inner regional' in WA for the purpose of eligibility criteria to independent Youth Allowance.

Town	Distance to University in Km
Northam	80
Collie	190
York	105
Busselton	230
Harvey	150
Dardanup	190
Toodyay	85
Capel	220

¹ We do have some regional campuses but the courses offered are limited