

To: Senate Inquiry committee

WHY ARE REGIONAL STUDENTS NOT GIVEN THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES AS METROPOLITAN STUDENTS?

Hervey Bay is classed as an **Inner Regional** location in the seat of Hinkler, hence my daughter who completed her year 12 studies in 2009 will be forced to have a 2 years 'gap' or forced to take out loans and/or funded by us, as the local university does not offer the course she is seeking.

For her to do her desired course she has to go to Brisbane or other major metropolitan locations, a distance that can NOT be commuted to and from our/her home.

The inequity with the current arbitrary lines that delineate inner regional and rural places is extremely inequitable for non Metropolitan students. Metropolitan students are greatly advantaged as now many of the tertiary places will not be available to regional students due to monetary issues, thus giving greater proportion of courses to these students who reside in the cities, **is this fair just because we reside in regional areas?**

She has already taken one (1) year gap as the current rules regarding inner regional / rural etc for Independence were not in place until after she had deferred and made her decision to take a gap year. The course that she wants to do does not have a mid-year intake to account for the 18months at 30 hours per week time requirement attached to the current youth allowance conditions.

THIS IS EXTREMELY UNJUST AND INEQUITABLE FOR NON METROPOLITAN STUDENTS.

She is not the only one in this predicament, many of her fellow students in both government and non-government schools have been given the same unfair treatment.

A Metropolitan student does not have to leave home to do their course and can enrol in their desired course and live at home, commuting daily to their educational institution with minimum cost to them and their families. Non Metropolitan students have to relocate to major centres rent houses, run the budget and pay all the associated bills incurred with the household, not to mention moving in with unknown house mates and the myriad of issues that come with that.

Rental alone in Brisbane is currently costing two (2) of my boys who are still studying at uni \$165 and \$180 per week respectfully, this does not include food or electricity and other utilities or internet (a necessity in current learning for uni). All this on top of HECS!! My 2 boys have received Youth Allowance whilst at uni and this has allowed them to study (one Town Planning and the other Pharmacy) in Brisbane as the courses are not offered in the regional universities. Next year our family will have 3 students at university at great financial burden to us, we have a substantial mortgage in addition to the normal living expenses and should not be disadvantaged just because we live in a regional location.

Please reconsider the current format for determining Independence of students, the previous requirements to qualify for independence were just and equitable and gave

regional students and parents a choice to receive assistance to follow their chosen study path.