

2 December 2010

The Honourable Julia Gillard  
Prime Minister  
P.O. Box 6022  
House of Representatives Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Julia

I write to you as the Coordinator for Gifted and Talented Education in the Warren Blackwood Education District, Western Australia and Science teacher of 26 years, with serious concerns regarding your government's policy on Youth Allowance and its conditions for eligibility. As my title indicates, I work with the most able and talented youth in the south west region of Western Australia, in an attempt to enabling these students to reach their full potential. Basically I work with the Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Scientists and Researchers of tomorrow. I think you would agree that these are professions that our great country appears to be in extremely short supply of.

Your changes to the Youth Allowance criteria for inner and outer regions of the rural areas, has great implication for these students. Many of them come from medium income, dairy and agricultural families or families working within the tourism industries. Additionally, many are from families with 3 or more siblings. These are not families that can easily relocate to the city to support their children at university, nor are they placed financially to support their children living away from home while they study.

We as educators of these fine minds do our utmost to ensure that these children flourish within our schools and have the skills to succeed at whatever career they so choose. Your government however, is choosing to turn its back on them by taking away these opportunities, simply because they and their families live in the rural areas of Australia and may have done so for several generations. Most of these students live 3 hours from the Perth metropolitan area and have no family in Perth. Without access to the Youth Allowance they can not possibly afford to continue to study for another 4-6 years and as a result they are seeing their dreams of further study evaporate before their eyes.

Please in all good sense Prime Minister Gillard, rethink your government's decision to discriminate against our most able students of the great Australian rural regions, and remove the inner and outer boundaries in regards to the qualifying criteria for Youth Allowance eligibility.

Yours sincerely

Trish Kelly