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To Whom It May Concern:

YOUTH ALLOWANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR INNER REGIONAL STUDENTS

The proposed changes to the eligibility criteria for the access of Youth Allowance for young people living in the South West of Western Australia are of great concern to the Youth Development Office at the City of Bunbury. The proposal will severely disadvantage a great number of young people and their families residing in Bunbury and surrounding areas. While the proposal will affect all local families with children considering further study in Perth or outside the region it will particularly impact low income and marginalised families.

The foreseeable results of such changes include a significant reduction in the numbers of Bunbury youth pursuing further education in Perth, the possibility of families leaving the region to make study more accessible or to enable children to access youth allowance without the proposed restrictions or, due to the extension of the "gap year" requirement from one year to two years, missing out on a place in the university and course of their choice. It will also increase the already heavy financial burden on regional families with children wishing to pursue further education in Perth.

The proposed changes severely and unnecessarily disadvantage young people and their families living in Bunbury and the South West region and indicate a lack of understanding by the Federal Government of the issues facing regional youth.

I trust the issues raised by this and other respondents will be treated with due consideration and that a proposal that presents equitable access to Youth Allowance and further education for young people in the South West of Western Australia will be adopted.

Kind Regards

Andrew Rigg
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OFFICER