

I have 4 sons who have chosen various paths towards their careers. I currently have one son living in Perth and studying at UWA, another who wishes to go to Uni in either in 2011 or 2012 and another son who will go on to Uni in 2013. Fortunately the Govt. changed its mind about taking Youth Allowance off the group who started Uni last year, so I have one son who receives Youth Allowance and Rental Assistance and has a part time job as well as studying. However this does not cover his accommodation costs and we are having to co contribute towards his rent.

If my next son has to work 30 hours a week for 18 months he will have to defer for 2 years. He has been looking for work since he finished his TEE exams last month without success. He will continue to look for work. From past experience with my other son, he worked 3 jobs in his gap year but would not have had regular 30 hours a week. After 2 years away from the study life it will be tough to go back to studying again and with a cry out for rural students to go on to Uni, making them take 2 years off is a huge deterrent for going back to a life of study!

We could have 3 of our children attending University at the same time and having to live away from home as Bunbury does not offer what they want. We will be unable to afford this as it will be around \$35 000 a year for the 3 of them. Over 4 years we could be looking at over \$100 000. So do we have to pick and choose which child we will let go on to Uni?

What I don't understand is why a student who can live at home in Perth and not have to pay rent, food etc is looked at the same as a student who lives 200km from their nearest University, with no option of living at home. Are my children expected to travel 2 hrs each way every day to go to Uni, as we can't afford for them to live in Perth?

The Labor Govt is now making University education for the rich, forcing rural families to either sell up and move to the city or just say "No, sorry we can't afford for you to go on to University studies". What a great shame.

Jennifer Cumming