

To: Committee Secretary

Senate standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

Regarding: Proposed changes to Youth Allowance

I would like to make my concerns about the proposed changes to the current Youth Allowance heard. As a parent of two children of secondary school age these new changes will adversely affect our family.

Following are some of the key points of concern to me.

- Rural students need different criteria than city students as their needs are very different, they do not have family support in the city, they need to relocate from the country adding costs of transport accommodation and other expenses incurred as independent students.

- Work in the country towns is varied and seasonal, (tourist destination or agricultural towns have seasonal work) most small towns can not support 30 hours a week jobs for 18 months for the young potential university students.

- Potential students will need to relocate to bigger cities even before they have started studying.

- Young kids have had twelve years of studying and need some time to experience life and meet new opportunities not get locked into a strict schedule that allows no flexibility whatever. They have no opportunity to get a new job, travel to a new place or do some volunteering work if they are to fill the 30 hours a week criteria.

- Parental means testing is of no real value to farmers and rural property owners who may not be earning a large sum per year but whose property is "worth" above the allocated sum. What are they to do sell up. How impractical.

We have a government that was elected by people like me who believe in education and a future that will enable more young people to achieve their full potential which will feed back into the Australian economy.

This proposal cripples rural students opportunities, the rural communities need their young to afford to study in the cities not hinder them. They have enough challenges as it is with relocating to the cities.

Tova Hoffman