

**Committee Secretary of the Senate Standing Committee on Education,  
Employment and Workplace Relations,  
PO Box 6100,  
Parliament House, ACT 2600.**

**Dear sir or Madam,**

**I am a 2010 inner regional gap year student who has been recently excluded from the new criteria for Youth Allowance. As a result of this decision I feel disgusted, firstly due to the unreasonable expectations the government has placed on gap year students and secondly due to the lack of financial support they are giving to those wishing to proceed with Tertiary studies.**

**I live in Dubbo and wish to study in Canberra at the Australian National University about 400 kms away. The changes made to Youth Allowance will drastically affect my family and I, in 2011 and will greatly disadvantage all school leaving students.**

**Already many of my friends have reconsidered tertiary studies based purely on this decision, due the prospect of having to face financial hardship. The financial burden to live such a distance from home, with exorbitant accommodation expenses to bear(\$300 a week in Canberra). The prospect for this for me as student, in my position is very off putting. It seems a waste to have spent all of 2009 during my HSC studying so that I could attend a decent university, when the government is now preventing me from doing so.**

**Instead of being supported to further educate myself, I feel, me, and my fellow school leavers are being discouraged, discriminated and disadvantaged by this new Inner Regional student criteria. We are being punished for wanting a tertiary education that major city students would take for granted as their right. If I went on the dole I would be supported but apparently not to better myself with tertiary education.**

**There is a limited amount of jobs available in Dubbo due to the downturn in the economy, the drought and now the flood. It was already challenging to find employment for gap year students with the original criteria changed earlier this year by the Labor Government.**

**To demonstrate the absurdity of the situation a school leaver who lives in Brocklehurst 8 kms away and Geurie 23kms are classified as Outer Regional students. Yet these students have exactly the same access to jobs and studying opportunities as myself in Dubbo. This is what I believe to be unfair.**

**I urge you to reinstate the original criteria for Inner Regional students. So that we are able to access the monetary based Workforce Participation Criteria and will only have to take 12 months gap, rather than 18 months to two years. This shorter timeframe encourages more students to return to study. Also it to allow Inner Regional students access to the original three Independent Youth Allowance criteria, the same way Outer Regional students can.**

**Yours truly**

**Katherine Young**