

4<sup>th</sup> December 2010

The Committee Secretary  
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**RE: SOCIAL SECURITY AMENDMENT (INCOME SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL STUDENTS) BILL 2010**

To Whom It May Concern

As a parent of a university student, with a deferred placement commencing 2011, I present this submission to request the Federal Government support rural and regional families by reinstating the former workplace criteria for inner regional students.

Country people have been let down yet again. We are very angry and frustrated about the changes to the criteria and feel it is further evidence the federal government does not care about those living in regional areas. Forcing students into a two year deferment to qualify for independent youth allowance will only reduce the numbers of regional students attending university.

We feel cheated that the country town we live in was given the same Independent Youth Allowance eligibility criteria as metropolitan areas. It still costs x dollars to have your child relocate and live away from home to attend university whether you live in an Inner Regional, Outer Rural or Remote Area.

Excluding Inner Regional areas from the same rules that exist for Outer Rural and Remote students is disadvantaging and discriminating against students from Inner Regional areas that need to relocate to continue their studies.

Access to affordable tertiary education is a real issue for regional students and their families and must be made fairer. Julia Gillard has on numerous occasions publically stated the importance of education to Australia's future. Regional students are not given the same opportunities as their city peers to access higher education.

My son has been working three jobs since he left school in November, is totally independent from us at the moment. He was not ready to go to university in 2010 but is now very keen to commence in March 2011. He will not, however, have any chance of qualifying under the inner regional rules for independent youth allowance, unless he defers

for a further 12 months.

I would have thought that children like this are the way forward for Australia and the government would be supporting them in further educating themselves to become tax paying citizens. All regional students need access to independent youth allowance by the same criteria.

More regional students will be encouraged to undertake tertiary studies which will provide benefits back to their local communities. Regional communities are continually crying out for further help in relation to health and education services. A significant number of these students eventually return to their region.

I request that you reinstate the former workplace criteria for inner regional students.

Yours Sincerely

Concerned Parent