

Dear Senator,

I wish to express my concern regarding Austudy. We need to be encouraging kids to further their education. Australia needs more professionals, be they doctors, teachers, accountants or engineers. Australia should be the smart country. BUT there are smart people outside cities.

Government needs to realise that kids west of the blue mountains have real problems with distance to education facilities. They are expected to leave home, possibly for the first time, move to a new city, as well as find employment, because – let's face it, there this next to no-one who can afford to send their child to uni and all cover their living expenses too.

I signed a petition attempting to stop the changes to Austudy earlier this year, obviously this petition was not successful in swaying the governments' decision. Hopefully the government will listen to their public this time.

Of course regionality itself will be a hinderance in trying to express our level of discontent. Simply because regions are less populated than our city cousins.

I believe that Senator Nash's proposed **Social Security Amendment (Income Support for Regional Students) Bill 2010** can be a step in the right direction, and I wish to express my support and hope that you will be able to have the new bill passed.

yours faithfully

Vicki Maxwell