

Dear Senator,

My name is Sarah Smith, I live in Young in South West NSW and I completed the HSC in 2009 and have completed a gap year this year. I have been accepted to attend the Australian National University next year to study a Bachelor of Science Psychology, and as that requires me to move away from home and live in Canberra- it will be financially difficult for both myself and my family.

We were relying on the Youth Allowance to assist my higher education, especially as my parents have two younger children who are financially dependent on them. However, as we live in Young which is classified as 'inner regional' I am no longer eligible. The map which the Youth Allowance relies on classifies many families who live just on the outskirts of town as 'outer regional', however they are still a part of the community of Young, attend the same schools and are still the same distance from the closest major city. I don't seem to understand how these classifications make it fair when inner regional students still have to relocate to access any type of tertiary education.

At the moment I am in a situation where if the change proposed by Senator Fiona Nash does not make it through parliament, I may have to consider taking a further year off university to continue working, just to be classified independent.

It makes sense to me that the government would do everything they could to encourage students to further their education. However, many of the students in my area are struggling with the decision- if they cannot receive youth allowance to support them while they are living out of home- university may not be an option for them at all.

Please consider my situation when you make your decision on this proposal

My future is in your hands