

6 December 2010

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Eewr.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Youth Allowance – Senator Nash’s Social Security Amendment Bill

In relation to the above, I am writing about the ASGC.

We live in Young, NSW and our daughter has been accepted at CSU, Bathurst to study in 2011. We have a combined income of just over \$100,000. We have another child at home going in to Year 8 in 2011. As a matter of circumstance we are hard working, honest Australians who are not financially secure. It is our dream that our daughter have the same opportunities as others.

Leading up to her final year of school over the years we have accepted that it is going to be a struggle when she finally goes to university. We have recently heard that from January 2011 outer regional students are going to be helped with Youth Allowance. I feel I now need to stand up and be heard because looking at Young’s classification on the ASGC map it seems that students who live about 5 minutes out of town (west) will benefit from this new scheme. In my opinion a lot of those (not all) students are possibly a lot better off than us. We live in town because we simply can’t afford to live out of town even though my husband is originally from a farming family.

We have the exact same distances to travel to the universities, whether it be Bathurst, Canberra, Sydney, Wagga Wagga etc. We have the same dilemmas as those in the “Outer Regional” areas of finding accommodation for our children. We are looking at doing this as cost effectively as we can with the cheapest self catered accommodation and this will still be a struggle.

Inner regional students from struggling families have the worry of finding work as well as juggling their study knowing this is what they are going to have to do to achieve their dreams. Outer regional students, on the other hand can go a little more relaxed and settle in to uni life knowing there is some support there for them. These students are from the same background and in most cases they have completed primary and secondary school

together but a few kilometres in and out of town separates them from being advantaged and disadvantaged for tertiary education.

In conclusion I just want to say that at the moment we are feeling dejected and let down. We have a very capable child who will give back to the rural sector when she finishes her degrees as a nurse practitioner and paramedic and she isn't being treated as equally as her "outer rural" counterparts. They are benefiting from Youth Allowance and she isn't. We pay our taxes honestly and are feeling not as proud to be Australian at the moment. We hope that our plea may have some impact in rectifying this situation and highlighting the glitches that may have been overlooked when introducing this new system.

Yours sincerely

Jane Caldwell