

5th December 2010

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

Dear Sir or Madam,

The legislation should be changed so that students living in 'inner regional' zones are treated the same way as all other regional students. It is simply unacceptable that the Government continue to have a different set of eligibility criteria to access Independent youth allowance apply to the 'inner regional zone', compared to the 'outer regional', 'remote' and 'very remote' zones.

To illustrate how ridiculous this is in practice take for example my grand daughter's case. As she lives in Dubbo her eligibility criteria is different for independent youth allowance, to other school leavers in the villages of Brockelhurst, 8 km from Dubbo, and also Geurie, 23 kms away. Yet these villages have exactly the same access for work and studying opportunities as Dubbo's students do. How irrational is this!

The reason for this being Dubbo, falls into a different Australian Standard Geographical Classification than these villages do. Why are these school leavers treated differently, it seem totaling discriminating against them. It wouldn't be a problem if the tertiary course they wished to pursue was at the local university but the choice is limited here.

This injustice need to be corrected to ensure all inner Regional students are treated equally by allowing Inner Regional students access to the monetary based Workforce Participation Criteria where they 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 will allow Inner Regional students access to the original three Independent Youth Allowance criteria, the same way Outer Regional students can.

Yours truly

Jean Martin