

To Whom it may Concern

I wish to make a submission on behalf of the current unfair rules relating to students who live in rural & regional areas.

My family (incl husband and 3 children ages 19, 16 and 14) live at Wauchope on the Mid North Coast of NSW (near Port Macquarie).

My husband and I are wage earners both working full time jobs in the local area.

There is no local university in this area that offers the course chosen by our eldest son. He needs to leave the area to persue this course.

My son completed is HSC locally in 2009 and has been accepted for next year at Wagga Wagga (12hrs away) to do a Bachelor of Radiography through Charles Sturt Uni. He undertook a gap year this year in order to try and meet the current criteria of 30hrs work per week employment for 18 months from the date he finishes school.

This criteria is most certainly unreasonable due to the fact that in this area both full time/part jobs are very hard to come by. The only work he has been able to attain in both (building/hospitality/labouring) has been of a casual nature due to the seasonal nature of work in this holiday area that we live in. Let alone the changes to area boundaries which now mean we do not qualify for assistance.

The costs to us to send him away next year are exterordinary. His accomocation alone will be \$8000 then his living expenses and course costs are estimated to be another \$9000 and whilst we are both wage earners the fact that we are also supporting two other children through their secondary education and paying for a mortgage and increased living costs and these additional university costs for our son to attend his course in Wagga will put immense pressure on our financial position and indeed the whole family.

My son is currently seeking employment opportunities in the Wagga area so as he can contribute to his education costs. However we feel that this will place undue pressure as the course he has chosen will require a great deal of study outside normal lecture times. This study combined with work pressures to earn enough money could have serious mental and health consequences which could result in him dropping out.

We encourage our children to do well in their choosen field so as they can one day bring their skills back into rural areas where these skills are lacking greatly.

We feel that we are bing discriminated against due to the lack of sufficianet University options within the area that we live.

Surely the fact tha our son has been accepted in a University a great distance from us is proof that he needs support as he can in no way live at home and undertake his studies locally.

We therefore urge to government to review the current criteria of the Youth Allowance to treat students living in "inner regional" zones the same way as

other regional students thus giving these country students the same opportunity as others in other regional areas and those living in the cities to attend university.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further assistance that you may require in implementing changes to this unfair legislation.

Yours sincerely

Liz Hinton