

I would like to state a case that changes should be made to the act so that 'inner regional students' can access youth allowance in the same way as rural and regional students..

Our 19yr old son left school from Trinity Catholic College, Lismore NSW in 2009 and has spent his gap year working. The changes to the test for eligibility for Youth Allowance mean that students from Northern Rivers (inner regional) must work 30hrs a week for at least 18months. They do not have the other eligibility options that rural and regional students have. Northern Rivers has 34% unemployment amongst teenagers. He has been living away from home to work and been independent and now wishes to start university in Brisbane in February. He is ineligible to gain youth allowance under the new scheme for 'inner regional' students. He wants to study a particular course that is particular to Griffith and so will have to pay for rent and all living expenses away from home as well as study or defer for another year.

We call that this bill be rectified to allow equal chances for students living in 'inner regional areas' who need to move away to study in their chosen fields, that they should be given the same financial incentive as their regional counterparts. As it is at the moment, it is impossible for students to meet the criteria set, in one year between school and university. For the most part this is the preferred choice for students who can take a break and earn some money as well as gaining maturity to study at university. It seems that there is a discrepancy for the students wishing to gain employment and work experience for just one year who come from 'inner regional' area.

Thank you for reading this

Regards

Duncan and Caroline