

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of certain citizens of Australia draws to the attention of the House to the Rudd Government's changes to the workforce participation criteria for establishing independence under Youth Allowance by removing the following two eligibility criteria: that the recipient worked part-time for 15+ hours per week for two years or more since leaving school; and the recipient earned, in an 18-month period since leaving school, an amount equivalent to 75% of the maximum rate of pay (in 2009 this requires earnings of \$19,532). The effect of this change is that eligibility criteria for the Independent Youth Allowance will retrospectively require participants to complete 30 hours work per week over a 18/24 month period compared to earning \$19,532 over 18 months.

This means a student who has complied with the previous rules but not worked 30 hours per week will have lost the credit for their effort and must start again thus losing 2 years before commencing a University Course.

These proposal further disadvantages young people whose place of residence is beyond daily commuting distance from a University and thus must fund their total accommodation costs over and above the other direct costs of such an education. That working 30 hours per week while attending University is virtually impossible in more intensive courses.

We therefore ask the House to change the criteria so that rural and regional students are not disadvantaged.