

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

This petition of members from the Gippsland community recognises the importance of providing affordable access to university for students from rural and regional areas.

Members of the Gippsland community draw the attention of the House to changes announced in the Federal Budget on May 12, 2009 which states that students will no longer be able to achieve financial independence for Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY by meeting the 2nd and 3rd elements of the workforce criterion.

The petitioners believe that the Youth Allowance changes proposed in the Federal Budget place another barrier to university participation for students in regional areas; unfairly discriminate against students currently undertaking a 'gap' year; and contradict other efforts to increase university participation by students from rural and regional Australia.

We therefore ask the House to retain the 2nd and 3rd elements of the workforce criterion so that a tertiary education is accessible to regional students.