

**The Secretary,
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References
Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600**

**Chair: Senator George Campbell, and Senators John Tierney,
Natasha Stott Despoja, Guy Barnett, Kim Carr, Senator Trish Crossin.**

Dear Senators,

As a result of an item in today's Age (21/05/04) I am submitting the following short submission to your committee for consideration.

My daughter is currently studying third year medicine at Monash University, Victoria.

Following a successful education in the state school system, my daughter moved to Melbourne to undertake her tertiary education, at that moment our family immediately confronted what I see as a rural education tax of around \$15,000 per year, commonly known as accommodation expenses.

My daughter held numerous jobs, after leaving secondary school and during her first three semesters at Monash, to become independent and achieve Youth Allowance with rent assistance. She was also eligible for a Health Care Card which assisted her cost of living significantly.

Mid way through her third semester she was awarded a RAMUS scholarship to assist her studies. Her Youth Allowance was immediately reduced and her Health Care Card withdrawn because her "income" now exceeded the threshold by a few dollars a week, even though she is still on a very low income.

As a consequence numerous costs associated with her study: rent, car/travel and medical costs, have all risen significantly. For example her asthma medication has gone from \$3 to \$24 per month.

The government's own RAMUS Scholarship (non taxable) has reduced the benefits of the Youth Allowance income, giving with one hand and removing with the other.

The RAMUS Scholarship is an excellent incentive however its non taxable status should be recognized and removed from calculations for Youth Allowance for independent students

Yours sincerely,
Ron Quick.