



Submission

I am a mature aged full time student. I have chosen to study externally this year as I found it impossible to coordinate work with lecture and tutorial times last year. Subsequently, I miss out on important student teacher relationship just so that I can earn enough to stay out of poverty.

My weekly income from Austudy and casual work is \$250 per week. My rent is \$100 per week. I am lucky enough to have a kind friend who has lent me her car to get to work – I had to sell mine for extra money, and helps me kindly with groceries etc. If I didn't have that help, I don't know where I would be. I have been a full time student for the past two years, I have sold nearly all of my jewellery, declared bankruptcy, had my phone disconnected by telstra and have withdrawn money from my superannuation fund because my finances are so limited. I never go out to dinner, rent movies or go to see the movies. I cannot afford it, some weeks I can't even get my weekly shopping. Last weekend I had food poisoning, I would not go to hospital because of the expense, my only form of exercise is walking as I cannot afford a \$15 per week gym membership. I am already concerned with how I am going to pay for next semesters books and hope that I get the book list before June 30th, otherwise I will pay an extra 8% on them as the subsidy is being removed.

I left my employment two years ago to better my life, naive to the fact that there would be little financial support available. As I had savings in my bank account, I was not entitled to Austudy for 8 months, therefore I now have no savings and live a very poor life, all in the pursuit of being a better Australian citizen, although the Australian leadership does very little to assist.

I ask that you reconsider the 8% surcharge withdrawal from books and allow rent assistance to low income students, even allow them to keep their savings in tact.

It is the Australian Governments obligation to assist it citizens, in most students and their families situation, it hinders them.

Please consider my request for more funding to be allocated to the individual student.

Sincerely –

Tracey Sleet