



My submission relates to my return to study after approximately 8 years away from study. I am 27 years old, and in receipt of austudy payments, which are a great help. But my main concerns on my return to study related to the discriminations between austudy/youth allowance notably rent assistance and a fares allowance.

- Rent Assistance

I cannot comprehend why rent assistance is not available to people who receive austudy – no one has given me a reasonable answer to why this happens except that it is in the legislation. My own reasoning behind this discrimination is that by age 25 we are all meant to be educated, have our own home, and be financially viable – where youth allowance ‘independent’ rates are up to age 25, what is the difference of a few months say between someone who just qualifies for youth allowance compared to someone who qualifies for austudy. I had sort of been depending on receiving rent assistance in addition to austudy, but as I wasn’t eligible, I’ve had to work more part-time hours to have enough money to pay the bills. I do not mind working and would do so to continue gaining experience in my field (Pharmacy – where there is a dire need of rural pharmacists!), its just that it seems completely unfair that austudy recipients as a whole group are discriminated against with a view to rent assistance.

- Fares Allowance

Why is it that someone under age 25 can get financial assistance for travel to see their immediate family? Again, what difference does it make on your age whether or not you want to visit your immediate family? I have no children, so am not claiming any further assistance from the government except for austudy.

I have worked from when I was 16 on a casual basis to last year on a full time basis, and this is where I am now, up until having to receive a sickness benefit last December, I had never had any dealings with Centrelink nor had to ask for any financial assistance. So I have paid my taxes, and will be paying them for a long time to come, so feel I have a right to be able to claim benefit whilst I am looking at bettering myself for the future, and helping in an industry where there is a shortage. My issues surrounding these discriminations stem from the fact that someone who is my age, and on say newstart, is eligible for more financial assistance than me, who is intent on bettering themselves.