



Your full name: Kai Hodgkin

This submission is from: a university student

Why are you submitting to the enquiry?: Because I feel strongly about how unfairly students are treated by the government. Like many others I study full time and am eligible for youth allowance. However, i also work twenty hours a week because I cannot afford to pay rent, bills, uni fees buy food and uni supplies on the amounT I receive from the government. My work load definitely affects what I stufy and how good my marks are and I feel that this is not fair.

How much are your average weekly living costs (or those of a student you know)? How much of this is for accommodation?: \$125 rent \$50 food \$40 uni supplies \$30 entertainment/clothes \$10 medications \$20 travel

Are the current student income benefits (Austudy, Abstudy and Youth Allowance) adequate?: What I receive from youth allowance (including rent assistance) does not even cover rent, food and uni supplies.

How does the 'age of independence' impact on the adequacy of student income benefits?: I received independence when I moved out of home a few years ago by reason of it being unreasonable for me to live with my parents. The fact that I was younger than the 'age of independence' meant that this was quite difficult to do. I had provide reasons for the necessity for this and my parents had to agree, this was the hardest bit as they did not necessarily agree with my ideas of unreasonable. It took me months with lots of forms to fill out for this to happen, in the meantime I was borrowing money off my friends to cover my rent.

Is the adequacy of student income benefits connected with the increasing cost of higher education? : The inadequacy of student income benefits is combined with the increasing cost of higher education to make it harder and harder to study and hence creating a poorer, less educated society.

How much do students you know work to supplement their study benefits? How does this impact on them, their family and their studies?: Every University student I know works ontop of study. We are all incredibly stressed and alwasy end up making concessions and not studying as much as we would like to be able to. As you can imagine, families will always come second place to the more immediate importances and my mother for one is always telling me how she wishes she saw me more.

Are student income benefits an important way to ensure access to education?: Definitely. I don't know what to say except that it is clear that they are important, how else will we afford to live while we study? My parents definitely can't afford to pay for me and as a young student, steady and permanent employment is almost impossible to find.

Are student income benefits an important way of achieving fairer access to education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds?: Most definitely. Equal student income for all is the only way of achieving fair quality of life for people studying, no matter what their background.

Any alternative student income support measures that the Australian Government should consider?: There are definitely other things that would help such as free bus tickets or meal vouchers, or discounting text books and uni fees. If the things we needed were cheaper then students wouldn't need as much money.

Any other comments?: Why is it that Job Seeker allowance is greater than Student allowance? I cannot think of any possible reason for this to be the case but plenty against it. Education should be a good, encouraged thing but if money is tight and you receive a greater income while not studying, where's the incentive to stay at uni? Shouldn't those that are working hard to further our society receive more than those that are not? I want to make it clear however, that I do not believe that the Job Seeker allowance should be lowered in order to raise the student benefits, because that payment is also barely enough to live on let alone sort out your life and search for a job.