

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I would like to express my opposition to the Federal Government's new Youth Allowance reform package, as I strongly feel this reform will add further **disadvantages to all students from country and regional** areas. I am **not** just concerned about **current gap year students**. The reasons for my opposition are:

1. Further **disadvantages country students** - adding further obstacles and vulnerabilities for our rural students. This reform will now make higher education out of reach for the majority of regional students, adding further burdens already experienced such as relocating, isolation and other living away from home responsibilities that their city counterparts do not experience.
2. **Unfair package is retrospective**. This has not been budgeted for by families for at *least* the past five years.
3. **Is the government looking to parents to fund their 'independent' adult children?** They are old enough to vote, have their driver's licence, drink alcohol and be accountable to the law! Next the government will be wanting parents to fund their adult children's retirement fund.
4. If students are now required to work for 18 months/2years before qualifying for Youth Allowance, this will surely **add more pressure on government funding** in the long run, for IVF programmes and housing. This late start will ultimately further increase the age when young adults begin a family, thus declining fertility rates further. This will also push out the date when young people can begin earning a living in their professions, coupled with a HECS debt and possibly now with the addition of a family, it would seem likely that housing will now be unaffordable for our young professionals too.
5. It will be next to **impossible for regional students to work full-time and attend full-time university** as the government suggests.
6. Australia is already short on professionals and this coupled with the existing burden of HECS debt, will only **discourage our youth from taking up a profession**.

Please oppose this reform on behalf of all regional students.