



The Committee Secretary,
Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write with concern about the changes to the Independent Youth Allowance for students in their 'gap year' and the impact this will have on the ability of country students to successfully study in the short term and the well being of country communities in the long term.

In the past students have been able to take a 'gap' year between completing year 12 and commencing tertiary study and if they were able to earn about \$20,000 over an 18 month period they could become eligible for the independent youth allowance, which made living away from home to study more achievable for country students (and their families).

With the recent federal budget changes – the replacement of the earnings value threshold with a minimum employment time requirement – it is likely that many country students will be deterred from studying. A minimum work period of 18 months will effectively require a 2 year deferral of studies.

This is likely to impact long term on the provision of services for country communities. Research has shown that country students are more likely to return after study to be employed in country areas. Locally many of the police, teachers, nurses, para-medical staff etc have close links to the country.

I urge you to reconsider this decision to avoid significant long term negative impact on country communities.

Yours sincerely,

Martin V Terrett