

Saturday 4th July 2009

To the Committee Secretary

I am writing to voice my concerns about proposed changes to the Independent Youth Allowance for 2010.

I live in Broken Hill, New South Wales and have two children who are planning to attend university in Adelaide. My daughter completed her final year at school last year and has deferred her studies for 12 months in order to earn the required \$19,532. to qualify for Independent status.

My son is currently completing his final year at school and is planning to defer his university studies for 12 months for the same reason.

As my children will have to reside in Adelaide to complete their courses of study, I am extremely concerned about how we can do this financially.

My daughter has been accepted into a University Residential college in Adelaide, at a cost of \$10,200 per year. My son intends to also reside at this facility when his studies begin the following year. Multiply this by 3 years and the figure is around \$60,000. Add to this, general day to day expenses and the figure becomes ridiculous.

Eventhough my wife and I both work on moderate salaries, we have serious concerns about our ability to support our children in their quest to attain their qualifications. Even if they are able to find part time work in Adelaide, this in no way compensates for the huge costs that we are going to have to meet.

My son and daughter both have part time jobs at the moment. My daughter averages about 20 hours per week. She has asked for this to be increased to 30, however this has not been possible as younger employees are being given more shifts as they are 'cheaper' to employ. The opportunities for finding extra work are extremely difficult in a town of this size, whether casual, part time or full time. If an employer knows that you are going to university, there is no chance that they will employ someone on a full time basis, as any training goes out the window in 12 months when the employee goes to university.

We feel that the proposed changes to the Independent Youth Allowance is an extremely unfair proposition, which greatly disadvantages any country family and young adult who wishes to go on to further education. If the government is serious in trying to make the availability of further education equal to all Australians, they really need to think carefully about their policies and how country kids and families are being affected, especially with the large cost of accommodation. These costs are not incurred by those living in the city of study.

Yours faithfully


Jeff Hywood

