



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

Dear Committee

I am writing you because I am very concerned about the changes to students accessing Youth Allowance. My daughter completed year 12 last year and is currently taking a gap year with the expectations of becoming independent and qualifying for Youth Allowance to enable her to go to University in Adelaide next year. She worked really hard in year 12 and got into Occupational Therapy.

She has so far this year had a variety of jobs, teaching swimming, working at the silos, waitressing, working in a bakery and cleaning schools. She has also applied for many other jobs but the current economic climate has not been in her favour and she has found permanent employment difficult to obtain.

The proposed changes to accessing Youth Allowance are SO UNFAIR for country students. She will have to rent a home in Adelaide, pay for food, electricity, water, the running of her car, visits home, as well as university costs, clothes and socialising. How can she possibly do this without Youth Allowance? We can not afford to cover these costs so her option is to pull out of Uni as she can't afford to go. How can this be fair? Students living at home in the city do not have to meet the same costs as country students. This makes me so sad and disappointed that country students are not encouraged to attend Uni, they are actively discouraged!

The universities only have courses that are deferrable by 1 year not 2. I also believe that if students have more than one year away from study they may not go back at all. What of the Education of our nation? How can we expect city professionals to go and live in the country? Country students are ideal for these positions because they know what to expect from country lifestyle. Please don't exclude country students from attending university – we need them.

I am so distressed by this change to Youth Allowance I feel physically sick. How can I help my daughter obtain her dreams?

Regards
Therese Francis

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