

26th July 2009

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport
P O Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

I provide this submission to Senate Committee to outline my situation and how the proposed changes to the Youth Allowance have put in jeopardy my University Studies.

In 2008 I completed Year 12 at a small Country School and received a sufficient TER to gain my first choice subject of Pharmacy at UNI SA.

Given the large costs associated with transferring to Adelaide from the Country after consultation with my Parents and Centre link I deferred taking up my University place for one year. I obtained a job in a bakery located 44 kilometers from home. I undertook the GAP year in 2009 in order to qualify for Youth Allowance under the independence test. My Parents are farmers and their income varies greatly from year to year. My 17 year old brother is currently doing Year 12 and is likely to commence his University studies next year. With this in mind my Mother has taken up a full time position. The ability now for my Parents to support us both would be severely tested (Residential College cost \$370 per week per person). It is highly unlikely that we will both be able to be fully supported by our Parents.

I am 19 and willing to work part time to support my studies and have worked full time for the last 10 months so consider myself independent.

My major concern with the proposed changes to Youth Allowance is the retrospective nature of the change. I made my decision to undertake a GAP year based upon the rules at that time. Given my 2009 GAP year would not count in the new 2 year GAP requirement I am unsure of what to do. This problem is further compounded in that my Pharmacy placement is only available in 2010. How can the proposed Government changes to the Youth Allowance independence test not marry up to the University course deferrals which are only guaranteed for 1 year. This situation is ludicrous. At the very least the new changes to Youth Allowance should not affect those that are already in a GAP year.

Yours faithfully,



Narelle E Smith

