

Senate Committee Submission.

We the undersigned are writing to you to express extreme disappointment and great concern about the proposed changes to the Youth Allowance eligibility criteria.

Our daughter completed VCE in 2008 and successfully gained a place in her chosen course of Physiotherapy. She decided to defer for one year and work (during the Gap year) to enable her to be independent and qualify for the youth allowance. She chose to complete her course at Monash University and this will mean that she will need to live away from home.

As parents we asked her to complete a budget to highlight the amount of money she will need for at least the first year. She has predicted that it will cost her approximately \$20 500 per year to live away, buy books, food and other necessary items.

In order for her to earn the \$19 500 (under the old criteria) she is working 3 part time jobs as employment in a full time position in regional Victoria is difficult for a school leaver to find. She made this decision based on the criteria and because she wants to be a responsible citizen and learn some work ethics, learn how to manage her money and have some life experience in order to live out her dream.

She can't unmake that decision and accept the place, nor can she meet the proposed new criteria planned for introduction in January 2010. The result is giving up her university place. She is just devastated at that possibility and so are we as a family. Life on the land is stressful enough without adding to it.

Those who left school in 2008 entered the labour market to find the economy in crisis, now they find they have been singled out with retrospective changes. There is nothing fair about that.

We live on a rural property (with a mortgage) and both decided to work off the farm to support the development/sustainability of the farm and our family. Personally we will find it very difficult to wholly support our daughter whilst she completes her Degree and at the same time manage our farm and mortgage.

Please consider the idea to delay the implementation until January 2011 so these young people can take up their deferred offers if they have managed to earn the \$19,500 required. To do so in the midst of an economic crisis deserves to be rewarded.

Many students like our daughter looked at their budgets and the Youth Allowance eligibility criteria in January and made the decision to defer their university place until 2010 so they could attempt to earn the income needed to meet the eligibility test. Now

they find the goal posts have been moved.

We are writing to you to object to this budget proposal. We need to support our rural students in their quest for further education, not make it more difficult.

Yours sincerely

Wendy and Trevor Renshaw.