

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



August 2 2009

Dear Sir or Madam:

I wish to record my strongest opposition to the proposed changes for students to qualify for youth allowance.

As a rural parent with children studying at university, I would have found it very difficult to educate our children without youth allowance.

I urge you to consider allowing youth allowance under the current form to continue for country/rural students, perhaps those that live more than 100km from a university. We live approximately 650km from the capital city and therefore our children have had to relocate. They have been able to have a 'gap year' and earn some money in this time. This then enables them to live away, paying commercial rent, paying for transport, and food by using youth allowance and their saved money from working. It is still a very simple existence with no money for frills but at least it is possible.

It is not fair for country students, as it costs at least \$12,000 a year to live away from the family home. If we had to pay all of these costs from our after tax income, we would not have sufficient funds. City students can choose to stay living at the family home with all the support this offers.

It is so important that country kids are given the opportunity to study at a higher level, many of them return to the country to enrich our communities.

Thank you for reading my letter and I urge you to take a stand against the proposed changes to youth allowance.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Harders
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