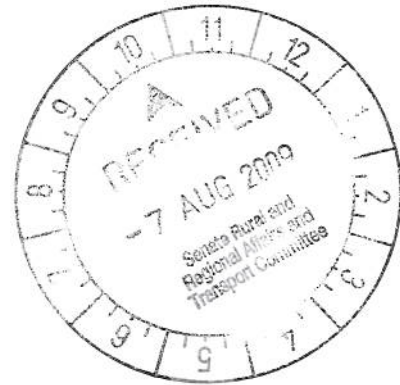


The Committee Secretary,  
Senate Standing Committee on  
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
P.O. Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra. ACT 2600



4<sup>th</sup> August 2009

Dear Sir/Madam.

I am writing this letter with regards to the impact that the proposed changes to Youth Allowance will have on rural students. These changes will impact significantly on our daughter who is completing year 12 in this current year.

I totally disagree with the statement made by Federal Education Minister in the Weekly times: Rural and regional students are the winners from new changes to student income support, says Julie Gillard.

The percentage of rural students taking up university places is much lower than their city counterparts. Why? You may ask.

Rural students have one distinct disadvantage over their city counterparts. They HAVE TO LEAVE HOME TO STUDY. They do not have a choice. There is no university close enough to commute on a daily basis and even if there was, in many cases no public transport to get them there.

If they have to leave home they need somewhere to live. Is the government really suggesting that the full burden be placed back on the parents yet again. Just where are we supposed to come up with the extra money. If our child cannot get the Youth allowance then she will not be eligible for the proposed start-up scholarship, or rental assistance or any other benefit that may help take some of the burden from this family.

Then to suggest that she get a job of 30 hours or more for 18 months so that she could qualify in today economic downturn is absolutely ludicrous. There are no jobs. People are out there having lost their jobs and the government is suggesting that our young people compete with them when they have no experience. We live in a rural country town that has been impacted by the worst drought for many years. It's tough out here for us.

Please do not allow this current government to further disadvantage our rural students with this haphazard solution for urban people, living at home and taking advantage of the Youth Allowance. Change the rules so that they are not eligible.

Why should Rural Students be disadvantaged because of this loophole.

Yours Sincerely,

*Alison*