

The Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committee on Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport

PO Box 6100

Parliament House

Canberra

ACT 2600



RE : THE SENATE ENQUIRY INTO YOUTH ALLOWANCE

Dear Sir,

I wish to express my opposition to government changes to Youth Allowance eligibility.

My daughter is a current year 12 student and had planned to enter university in 2011, as an independent student. She had hoped to complete her course with the support of Youth Allowance supplemented by income from some form of part time work.

The changes are discriminatory to those students who must leave home to continue their education and attend university in city or regional centres. It is estimated that a country student will need upwards of 20,000 a year to live away from home. Such costs would be a severe burden on family finances. This is even more concerning given the negative economic impact of prolonged drought on our rural communities. This, in combination with the current economic recession will mean tertiary education will become unattainable for many students.

The same economic climate also makes the 30 hours a week employment for 18 months component an unrealistic expectation. How will our young people secure such jobs in the current employment market? Again, this will be especially difficult in struggling drought stricken rural communities.

Do all courses allow a 2 year deferral? Students certainly could not fulfil the work hours required while studying full time.

Our young people must be given every opportunity to access tertiary education.  
These changes will mean many will no longer have that option.

Yours Sincerely

Kenia J King-Jones