

To Whom It May Concern

I write in relation to the Senate Inquiry into Rural and Regional Access to Secondary and Tertiary Education Opportunities.

The proposed changes to the Youth Allowance will increase the barriers to regional young people attending University. The personal cost for a young rural person to attend University is around \$20,000.00 per year. Rural students were supported in finding this money by qualifying for the Youth Allowance under the previous Governments rules.

The changes made to the Youth Allowance do not align to government reforms that aim to create a quality education platform. For rural people access to university is a challenge. The changes to the Youth Allowance increase barriers to University significantly. We are certain that the current Government will recognise the consequences of these decisions. Sadly, for individuals and the economy, this will be once a reduction in the number of rural students attending University is captured through numerical evidence. Therefore a large proportion of rural students will fall through the gap while evidence is being collated.

For current students in the middle of a gap year, it is critical that we as a society support them in their goals and refuse to create barriers that will prevent them participating in further education.

Education that will equip us to be a knowledge based society is critical. The recent proposal will risk cohorts of our society not being provided with opportunities to participate in tertiary study. This issue has not been considered broadly by the Government. As a member of the Australian community I ask the current Government to look and listen to the concerns that are being tabled from sectors of our community.

Yours Sincerely,



Kim McAlister

