

24th July 2009

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

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Changes to Youth Allowance

I wish to bring to your attention the changes to the above allowance will bring to my daughter's University plans.


Late last year my husband and I visited our local Centrelink office to enquire on the procedure our daughter, Stefanie, had to follow to make her eligible for Youth Allowance during her years at University. Stefanie completed her HSC at Trinity Catholic College Lismore with a better than expected UAI, which after an enormous amount of study enabled her to be accepted at UNE, Armidale, which she then successfully deferred to allow her to work this year. She is currently juggling two jobs to qualify (under the then rules) to receive Youth Allowance next year.

Then I arrive home from work in May to be confronted with an extremely distressed daughter telling me that Kevin Rudd had "ruined her life". I of course, stupidly it now seems, said that they can't change the rules half way through the year and it must affect students completing their HSC in 2009. On further investigation I now understand that the Government in its wisdom actually means students who completed their HSC in 2008 and who have already put their plans in place. I note that the Opposition and Greens may not pass this in the Senate, so hopefully sanity will prevail

Obviously this change will affect my daughter this year but will also go on to affect every student from this year on wanting to defer their studies and access Youth Allowance.

Whilst we earn enough money to meet our day to day expenses unfortunately we do not have the excess funds to pay for our daughter's accommodation, university text books etc during her possible six years at University.

Yours faithfully


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Marion Darke

