

The Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

Re : Youth Allowance Changes

I am writing to you to register my objections to the proposed new changes to the Youth Allowance scheme.

We are a rural based family with a daughter who completed year 12 in 2008 and is presently working to achieve independence status to satisfy the existing Youth Allowance – Workforce Participation Criteria - to commence her planned university studies in 2010.

The new changes will disadvantage us, her and all rural students – financially, educationally and emotionally. This proposal will create a less educated rural population and further decrease the health of rural Australia and rural Australians.

If we compare our daughter's situation to her cousin who lives in Perth and comes from a similar socio-economic base we find a great disadvantage to the rural based student and their family.

Our daughter will have to:-

- relocate to the city (400km away),
- set up house,
- pay rent,
- pay power bills,
- pay phone/internet connections
- commute to University,
- run a separate household budget system,
- work for 18months (at present)
- be independent yet not be classified as independent!!!**

Her cousin will:-

- be able to live at home
- and commute to University.
- the cousin's household will have no changes to their existing household expenses and structure.

An advantage to supporting rural students is that rural kids do tend to gravitate back to rural areas as opposed to city kids who stay in the city. Hence it pays to invest in rural youth – **they are the future of the rural regions.**

So please re consider the changes to the Workplace Participation Criteria for independence classification. Make it easier, not harder for rural students to pursue further education.

Yours



Andy Russell

