

Hi

I am writing to comment on the assessment of the adequacy of Government measures to provide equitable access to secondary and post-secondary education opportunities to students from rural and regional communities attending metropolitan institutions, or technical and further education (TAFE) colleges, with particular reference to:
the financial impact on rural and regional students who are attending metropolitan secondary schools, universities or TAFE;

I am a single mother of two children working full time. My 18 year old son completed year 12 at the end of 2008 and immediately commenced full time employment to establish his financial independence so he could attend university in 2010.

In January of 2009 we found out he had been accepted into Newcastle University to complete a double degree in business and commerce.

Very excited about his future prospects he continued to work part time at the local butchers earning between \$250 and \$450 per week depending on the month. Based on this income and the previous casual job he had held with Coles he was on track to display financial independence and be eligible for Youth Allowance soon after moving away and commencing university in 2010.

I also began saving to support him for the few months before his youth allowance eligibility was complete.

In June of 2009 we were presented with the possibility that Youth allowance may no longer be an option. Whilst I am not a wealthy person I earn above the threshold so therefore my son is no longer eligible for assistance.

For us this simply means that university is no longer an option. The cost of moving and living out of home and paying for study requirements is not something I can manage while paying a mortgage and supporting a child still living at home.

I am not sure what message this sends my children - You either need to be Rich or poor to attend university - there seems to be nothing for the in between, and as for that bright future - well at the moment we are unsure just like the 100's and 100's of other families out there in the same situation we are waiting on senate decision to see what direction our children's future will now take..

Thanks

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Linda Elbourne