

Dear Sir,

I am writing to protest the changes being made to the Youth Allowance and to try and bring your attention to the plight of country students. I have heard however, that the representatives from the Country Women's Association who attempted to raise this issue with a member of Julia Gillard's staff were very rudely treated and that as there are no votes in the country it is hardly worth our effort to protest.

Country students are disadvantaged when it comes to going to University as most will have to leave home. I can understand the system of youth allowance has been open to being misused but could the government at least consider allowing for a system of 12 months work with a qualification that if a student needs to travel more than 60 kms in one direction to undertake a course and they will have to live away from home, then they can apply for the allowance having earned the required \$18,500. The other option might be to package up not only the fees for university but also the cost of living away from home and pay them an allowance to live away and study that they repay when qualified.

We are definitely NOT going to be a smart country if a huge proportion of our students are unable to attend university because of the cost of living away from home. No wonder country people feel our government only extends to the boundaries of all the major cities.

Yours faithfully,
Julianne Hand