

To Whom it may concern

I am writing to express my frustration with the proposed changes to Youth Allowance. As the mother of a student who obtained her HSC in 2008 and began a gap year to gain qualification for Independent Youth Allowance, I am very concerned at the Government's unfair and prompt changes to the rules of eligibility. How can the criteria for qualification be changed without adequate notice? Students that graduated in 2008 have been stripped of the chance to make an accurate decision regarding their immediate future. These frustrated future students must be building the foundations of the perception that well laid plans can be thwarted by the current government without warning, without thought and without concern for the individual involved. What message does this give our young kids about the ability in this country to make well planned and accurate decisions and strategies toward the future.

How will Australia increase its percentage of educated Australians by making it less affordable to leave home to study? Once young Australians take two years off to join the workforce full time (if that is at all possible), get a taste of independence, and abandon- if only supposedly short term, the discipline of study I am sure a percentage of them will not return to obtain their vision of a university education. Australia should be developing means of encouraging all capable young people to develop their education, not stifling their ambitions by implementing obstacles.

My husband and I work 95 hours combined each week to support our family of four children. Because I have an 8 year gap between my first and last child the burden of university will be with us for 12 years and as not all will be studying simultaneously we will not be eligible for government assistance. I am proud of the fact that we are not a burden to the social security system having never claimed any form of government assistance. However, we will struggle to fully support adult children who need to relocate to study. As we live in regional Australia my children may have no option but to leave home to study. I think that students faced with this dilemma should not be slotted into the same niche as a student who has access to study in their home town thus being able to live in the family home. The costs of transition on families is great financially and otherwise, please don't make the burden any worse or it will surely guarantee detrimental consequences on the number of country students taking up tertiary education.

Yours sincerely

Anne Maree & Nick Nagy