

The Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee
on Regional and Rural Affairs and Transport
P.O. Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

July 5, 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my alarm at recent changes to the Youth Allowance eligibility criteria which will affect our ability to provide tertiary education for our children. We have one child completing her final year of tertiary study in Adelaide and two younger children who hope to have the same opportunity. However, the changes to the scheme recently announced by the Federal Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, have removed any opportunity our children had of obtaining the necessary support they need as they live away from home while they study.

As a result, my husband and I are looking at costs of over \$10,000 per year for each of our children to be accommodated appropriately in a capital city while they study. Living expenses will be on top of this. We are primary producers who have been affected by drought, the wine industry downturn and the global financial crisis. Our off-farm income enabled our eldest daughter to move to Adelaide and attend University, although this severely stretched our family's resources. Her need to work part-time to help support herself meant she was frequently unable to return home to the family during holiday periods. The kinds of sacrifices made by rural students are clearly not understood by those making these decisions and bringing the recommendations to government.

I understand the current changes have been initiated in an effort to reduce roorting. I can only presume this has been a problem where families are not burdened with the need to re-house their children in a distant metropolitan centre. How tragic that in an effort to assist more students studying at tertiary level the government has disregarded those in rural areas most in need of the support.

I hope your committee, which represents the views of rural people, is able to make representations to those in the government who have made such a short-sighted decision,

Yours faithfully,



Linda Phillips