

Dear Sir,

I am writing to oppose the proposed changes to Youth allowance.

My son completed Year 12 last year, and was accepted into an Engineering Course at Adelaide University, which he deferred until 2010.

We are located 130 kilometres from Adelaide, on the River Murray, and our tourism business, like most small businesses, has been affected by the drought and perceived low water levels.

My son chose to take a gap year, believing he could fulfill the requirements to receive youth allowance, to make the transition from country to city less onerous.

These new changes mean he will be ineligible for youth allowance next year, which will have a negative impact on the decision to further his education.

Only one student from Waikerie High last year was in a position to attend tertiary education this year, with all other students taking a gap year.

It is extremely upsetting to see that many of these students who worked so hard, will now have their dreams ruined by changes to a scheme that once gave valuable assistance to our rural students.

Our community is already suffering, and to see our youth being disadvantaged, especially by a government that was elected to give a fair go to all Australians, is morally wrong.

Most rural parents simply cannot afford to pay living away from home costs, and university fees for our children, and to see the impact this will have in the future on professions such as nursing, teaching and engineering to name a few, needs to be urgently addressed.

Yours sincerely,
Miriam Griffen