

The Committee Secretary,
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport,
PO Box 6100,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Independent Youth Allowance

My son completed his HSC at a regional NSW secondary school in 2008. He achieved a UAI of 94.6 and was subsequently accepted into Arts at the University of Melbourne but chose to defer his course until 2010.

He opted instead to take a gap year where he accepted a paid position in the workforce in order to satisfy the current requirements for the Independent Youth Allowance of earning the minimum amount in an 18 month period so that he can commence his tertiary studies in 2010 as an independent student.

The proposed changes have thrown his plans into disarray. We currently have a daughter studying in Melbourne. Whilst she has satisfied the eligibility criteria for the Independent Youth Allowance we still provide substantial financial support to her. We would not be in a position to support our son living in Melbourne should he not satisfy the requirements for the Independent Youth Allowance for 2010. In order to satisfy the proposed requirements he would need to defer for an additional year. A rather unfair situation for him to be placed.

My main objection to the proposed changes is that the rules are being changed mid-stream. His decision was made on the requirements as they currently are. Therefore, it is unfair in the extreme to alter them now.

I urge your committee to reconsider this unfair proposal as a matter of urgency.

Stuart Lingham