

Dear Sir/Madam,

On examination of the new proposed criteria for Youth Allowance, we realise that our son will be ineligible. He has met all the existing specified criteria and has raised over the required \$19,000 before heading overseas in May this year to do volunteer work for nine months. A week before he was to fly out, we became aware of the new proposed youth allowance criteria to be implemented in 2010. It was too late for him to change his plans as flights were booked and the voluntary organisations awaiting his assistance. Our son will now find it impossible to meet the new requirements if legislated and thus will not be able to start his law degree in 2010. He will have to try and find employment on his return and work for a further 18 months in order to qualify for Youth Allowance. As his degree can not be started mid year, it will result in him taking a further two years before University entry. In fact if legislation is passed, then he is considering not entering University until he is a mature age student in four years time as he is concerned about the possibility of even finding 30 hours a week of employment in a struggling economy when he returns to Australia in February.

We live in a regional area so our son will have to relocate to attend University. We are not in a position to support him financially while he is at University. My wife is no longer able to work due to medical reasons and I have had my full time employment reduced to 2.5 days a week this year and possibly for future years. Even though we are over the financial cut off suggested, finding an extra \$250+ a week to support our son in his everyday living, rent, food and University expenses will be extremely difficult for us.

Regional and rural communities find it hard to attract qualified professionals to their areas and if this new legislation is implemented, then our future prospective University graduates who have originated from such areas and are interested in returning, will be greatly reduced in number. The impact of this legislation if passed will be felt in a negative way for years to come in regional and rural Australia.

Such retrospective legislation will disadvantage so many of our young achievers who have worked hard academically in order to gain University entrance in 2010. These students who are at present on their gap year are disillusioned and discouraged as they see the 'goal posts' being moved mid year and realise that the likelihood of obtaining employment for 30 hours a week over an 18 month period will be very difficult in an already 'ailing' job market. Many will have to postpone or even forgo University resulting in a shortage of young professionals in future years. If this legislation is passed, it may well be an 'educational disaster' for many students and their families and ultimately Australia.

Yours Sincerely,
Ken and Sally Davidson