

To Whom it may concern,

I'm writing this letter to express my disappointment and anger at yet another obstacle placed in front of our children. I am naturally referring to the Government's recent decision to change the current youth allowance criteria.

We have a child in his first year of University who, after a gap year, went to Uni. We have three children still at home, one of whom is sitting the HSC this year and will also be taking a gap year to try and earn some money before attending University herself.

Our son was told by a University Professor that they were full-time students and needed to devote as much of their time as possible to their studies. Our response to this was that in a perfect world that would be great, but it wasn't, and he needed to work as well as attend full-time Uni to pay for his rent, food, rego, textbooks etc. Having just left school 18mths ago he can now apply for Youth Allowance and he was hoping that this money, combined with his part-time job, would help him to live a little easier so that he can concentrate on his studies and pass his courses. We are not in a position to pay our son's expenses. I have heard from people who have attended University over the years, the amount of parents who are able to pay their children's fees upfront. Why should our children, who live away from home, and are not fortunate enough to come from an affluent family, and in these uncertain times, with a recession, rising unemployment, miss out on an education and the chance to make something of their lives and give back something to their community...isn't now the time that the govt assist those that need it? Isn't now the time to encourage our youth?

Why can't it come down to a couple of simple questions on the forms to apply for youth allowance....Do you still live at home with your parents while you attend University studies? And will your parents be supporting you and paying your fees each year while you attend Uni? The answer will then be quite straight forward...the ones that live away from home and are supporting themselves get Youth Allowance ...the others don't ...or they get a much smaller amount.

I have a suggestion for Mr Rudd and fellow politicians, that maybe now that we are officially in a recession they could make an effort to cut those unnecessary trips overseas, do away with the chauffeur, do away with the hire of plants for offices etc and all those other unnecessary expenses ...and not to mention the incredible large pay increases and now an \$80

lunch allowance A DAY , not a week, for country politicians!! I work in the age care industry and I don't think we have a pay increase since the 1970's!!!!

I read an article the other day about how the “community benefits from more people gaining higher qualification's through greater productivity, higher participation, and skilling of young people when they enter the workforce, resulting in more prosperity within the community”. This statement sums it up really. The government should be doing everything it can to encourage our young adults that want to go on to tertiary education that it is attainable and not something that will soon only be available to the wealthy . We are very proud of our children , and there are so many great kid's out there who could one day help this country to get back on it's feet...with more teachers, doctors, nurses , engineers ...all of those profession's which are currently suffering ...to the point where we are getting in people from overseas...so sad when we have all this wealth on our home soil...untapped...why....because a lot of the good ones just won't be able to afford it!!

Yours sincerely,

Nikki Asara