

Dear Madam/Sir,

I write to express my concerns that the proposed changes to the Independent Youth Allowance Scheme will take the opportunity for a university education away from many rural and regional students.

My first concern is that if the proposed legislation is to apply then surely it can't be made retrospective and applied to students who finished year 12 in 2008. Our daughter is currently on a gap year and is certainly clocking up the hours that would make her eligible, but when she returns how is she going to get enough hours work in a severely drought affected rural community or fit in the necessary work hours when she starts university. A city student may be able to find work close to home but there is little chance of that for a rural student. Rural students have the added burden of being away from home and paying for accommodation at university.

If these changes are being made to prevent "live at home" students from high income city families from accessing Independent Youth Allowance benefits then I suggest some other way, such as basing it on postcodes, be looked at.

Please take another look at this legislation and ensure that country students aren't further disadvantaged in their education opportunities.

Yours Sincerely

Mike O'Hare