

Dear Sir/Madam,

It was with utter disgust and disappointment that while watching the local news on WIN television May 18 2009, that I heard for the first time about the changes to youth allowance and the effect this will have on students wishing to study at the tertiary level.

I don't know whether politicians understand the impact this will have on families trying to do the right thing and encourage their children to become decent tax paying citizens by attending university. All students are now encouraged to attend school until year 12 as it is very difficult for them to gain employment unless they have. It has also been encouraged that they study at the tertiary level as well to improve their chances of employment.

At the present moment one of our three children is attending university in Sydney. This is six hours from our home town which in itself is quite difficult. The college fees alone are \$14,000 for the year. That is not including his HECS which he will have to pay on completion of his degree. Remembering university has two 13-15 week semesters this is a considerable amount of money. He is currently on youth allowance which of course assists with some of the accommodation but he also has to have money to live on. So he is left with \$200 a fortnight to live on. While you might think that is OK for a university student, I would really like some of the politicians to try living on this amount of money. The rest of the accommodation bill is paid for by us. And yes, one might say that it was our choice for him to go there, we also believe that these students should be supported and encouraged.

I am employed as a teacher's aide special and with all the cut backs to education in this area, I began studying at university. This is to improve my chances of employment in the future. To add to our financial woes I will begin my internship which lasts for 10 weeks and which I will not be receiving an income.

The main reason for this communication is that next year I will have another child embarking on a university degree. To hear on that news report that students will not be receiving any youth allowance for a further 12 months is diabolical! I cannot believe that governments would continue to punish hard working, taxpaying citizens.

It is with anticipation that you would see your way clear in doing something about this and maybe work on having this decision overturned.

Yours sincerely,

Sharron Walsh