

I am a year 12 student in the rural town of Cowra. I had previously considered having a GAP year next year before heading to university but after the emergence of this new law i decided it was impossible. I live half an hour drive from Cowra and drive to Cowra each day for school and work on the weekend. This is something done by many students of Cowra High School as they live on farms or in very small villages. For a rural young adult it is very difficult to get the amount of work required in the new law and particularly so if 18-20 year olds will be required to do so if there are so many fighting for limited jobs at home before going to university. It is beyond the question of moving out of home to work throughout one's GAP year as it only adds to the living costs. Students in my year had previously planned to complete a year of work simply to gain access to Austudy so they would be able to afford the costs of university and living out of home. Now these plans have been shattered and many are questioning what they will do. To find this amount of work full time for two years and still have the motivation to attend uni will be difficult. We should be making it easier for students to gain further qualifications not making it almost impossible for some. The youth are the future of Australia and the world. we need to nurture their growth and knowledge so that they can take the world forward and into a continually improving world. At this time in a teenager's life we are already doubting if we have the ability to make it to our dreams and aspirations and with this stopping so many from achieving these things university and further education may significantly decrease until later in life when we can afford it for ourself. I am certainly glad my parents are willing to help me otherwise i do not know what i would do. When creating new laws and regulations the government must remember that it must be equal to everyone not just those in the densely populated metropolitan areas. this is significantly disadvantaging rural students and increasing the gap between city and country. I severely urge you to reconsider this decision.

Erin Watt