

Friday, July 03, 2009

The Committee Secretary,
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport,
PO Box 6100,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600.

Dear Sir

I am writing to inform you of the impact on rural and remote families in relation to the changes to the Youth allowance-

- My daughter finished year 12 the end of last year and started work as a Teacher Aide in December as soon as she finished school in the belief that she would be eligible for youth allowance in 2010 to do nursing at ACU in Brisbane. She works 28hrs a week just short of the recommended hours.
- She was lucky to be able to get this job as it is only 23klms from our home. The nearest town of Clermont is 75klms from our property.
- People in remote areas do not have the advantage of having their children live with them while they are studying. We have the added expense of accommodation where they are studying as well as supporting them in their everyday needs (food, clothing, electricity, phone etc).
- Education is a vital part of our lives today and young adults who live in rural Australia are greatly penalised because of where they live.
- Students doing apprentices have to travel to Mackay 270klms or Emerald 181klms away from our home and pay from their accommodation while they are there.
- All students have a right to a higher education and rural and remote families are the ones who feed this country supplying meat, milk, poultry, grain which people in the cities just think comes from a supermarket.
- Rural people cannot budget on a steady income because of uncertain commodity markets, unseasonal weather conditions which put added stress on trying to fund a higher education for our children.
- We just want our children to have the same opportunities as our city dwellers.

Yours Sincerely
Leanne Bourne