

Inquiry into the Regional Access to Secondary and Tertiary Education Opportunities

I completed year 12 last year and made the big decision to defer my studies to join the work force to become eligible for youth allowance. I worked hard to find a job in this economic crisis that would give me the opportunity to earn the anticipated amount of money. But now I am finding myself ineligible for independence under the new proposed measures for youth allowance. These changes have the potential to shatter my dreams of further education as well as many other students who have put their trust in the government only to be utterly disappointed.

The changes to youth allowance have been made to prevent the minority of metropolitan students living at home receiving the full youth allowance. These changes have been made without the consideration of the impact on country students, who in most cases need to move out of home and relocate for further education.

The newly proposed changes to youth allowance state that to be eligible, an average of 30 hours of work a week for a minimum of 18 months in a two year period needs to be obtained in order to qualify. I would love to be in a full time job that would give me thirty hours a week, but in these economic conditions those jobs are scarce. How is any new school leaver supposed to find a full time job? Most employers will start you off as a casual and then if a position becomes available offering you full time work. These changes are unrealistic for any aspiring undergraduate.

Being accepted into a health science course at Latrobe Bundoora was a great achievement and deferring for a year was a decision that was vital for my family to meet the expense of relocating me. If I was to defer again for another year to make myself eligible for youth allowance I would lose my position at Latrobe defeating the purpose of completing year 12. Even if I started a full time job tomorrow of 30 hours a week and could defer my course for another year I still wouldn't meet the 18 month criteria.

My parents and I'm sure many other parents don't just have \$15000 dollars lying around to support me at university every year. What I don't understand if the government want to increase the number of people receiving a higher education particularly from the disadvantaged sector of the population why are they making it more difficult for people like myself to attend university.

It's unfair to change the rules to change the rules on the 2008 gap year students. I am absolutely devastated, I put my trust in the government and they failed to deliver. There will be a lot of hard earned talent lost through these changes.