

The Chairperson,
Independent Youth Allowance Inquiry

I write to register my deep concern about the recent changes made to the Independent Youth Allowance eligibility criteria. While the changes have some good points, they do have several bad points that seriously affect the students who are currently in the middle of their “gap” year.

I am one of the many students who completed VCE in 2008 and was accepted into a science degree at The University of Melbourne. I live 150Km from Melbourne and there is no closer campus that offers the course that I am interested in. Considering it will cost \$15K to \$20K per year to live and study in Melbourne, I decided to defer this year to work and earn the amount that qualifies me for the Independent Youth Allowance.

At the time I chose to defer, this was a legitimate and accepted method of gaining some income support while at university. Now the government is proposing to radically change the requirements as I am in the middle of this deferment period. It is extremely unfair to existing students to apply this change with no warning, specifically after 6 months has passed from the beginning of the deferment period. Had there been some warning of this change, I would probably have made a different decision.

Sincerely,

Michael Atkinson