

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing about the Labor Govt decision to abolish Youth Allowance in it's current form. My husband and I have three children, all of whom are aiming for a tertiary education. Our eldest, Ben Rossiter, has received a position in Medicine at UWA. He deferred his enrolment until 2010 to work for a year. We live in Binningup, rural WA and studying most tertiary courses necessitates living in Perth.

There are three reasons for my request that this decision is reviewed.

1. Justice. The decision to study a course which is not provided

locally, means that Ben will live away from home. No matter what your criteria for independence is, the reality is that by needing to move away from home, he becomes independent.

2. Equity. I understand that during an Apprenticeship, should an apprentice need to travel to Perth to study, he is paid an allowance of \$32 per day. Apart from

the resounding inequity of being paid to work during an apprenticeship versus paying HECS to study at a tertiary level, the payment of an extra allowance (the amount of which is now seen as inadequate) to study compounds the inequity.

3. Unforeseen consequences. We have worked in the Southwest for 22 years. My

husband is the Principal of a Primary School and I am a Physiotherapist at Bunbury Hospital.

I have accessed a SARRAH (rural) scholarship in the past to update my skills in an area (treatment of stroke) which was recognised as being lacking at the hospital. The effect of this policy

is that we won't be able to afford to stay in rural WA, but will be forced to move to Perth so that our

children will be able to access tertiary education while living at home. There will be a shift of skilled

workers to centralised urban centres where they are not as needed in the workforce.

The Southwest will lose a respected and experienced Principal and Bunbury Hospital will lose the

skills which it has supported me in acquiring.

There will be a reluctance for skilled professionals to move to rural areas for their careers if these

areas cannot supply the same educational opportunities for their children, and there is not some

support for access to these opportunities.

Your program of supplying high speed internet access and updating education infrastructure

throughout Australia is meeting some of the needs for the Education Revolution. It seems ludicrous

that at the final step towards creating a clever country, you have erected a huge obstacle.

This policy discriminates so obviously against country students and has huge ramifications

for workplace issues that it begs to be reviewed or altered to reflect the justice and equity which were once at the heart of the Labor Party.

Yours sincerely,
Pat O'Leary