

August 7 2009

Youth Allowance Submission

We write in response to the proposed change in the Independence Test for the Youth allowance and its potential adverse affect on students who graduated from Secondary education with a University entrance pass in 2008.

The previous regulation allowed such students opting to take a “gap” year in 2009 and commence University studies in 2010, to be eligible for the Youth Allowance by satisfying a requirement to earn \$18,000.00 prior to the first semester in 2010.

Under the test of Independence now proposed we understand that any students who deferred their studies for a year after qualifying for University in 2008 will now be required to have a work history of 30 hours per week for 18 months prior to commencing a University Course in 2011 to be eligible for the Youth Allowance.

Such a requirement would not be compatible with such students necessarily being able to obtain a deferment for an extra year who would face the strong possibility of losing their places at the University of their choice by being unable to take up their place at the beginning of 2010 without financial assistance

Those students who are intending to study at a university within reasonable commuting distance from home could obtain parental help with accommodation etc. but students who cannot do this, mainly in rural and regional areas would be discriminated against.

As grandparents of two students who are taking a gap year in 2009, one who intends to study 500 kms. from home at Monash University Melbourne, and the other who intends to study 1500 kms from home at James Cook University Townsville, we wish to register a strong protest against the proposed changes which we believe will discriminate against a segment of our youth which has demonstrated a capacity for work and achievement, and who through no fault of their own will be heavily disadvantaged.

It is fair to add that during 2008 each of our grandchildren has been working up to three part time jobs concurrently in anticipation that the system in force in 2008 would still apply, and one traveled as far as Kalgoorlie to get work because of the difficulty of finding it in NSW.

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