

29 June 2009

The Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA, ACT, 2060



re: Changes to Independence Criteria for Youth Allowance

Dear Sir/Madam

I strongly object to the retrospective nature of the intended new legislation. Students who had already made the decision to take a gap year when they left school in 2008, may have decided on a different future and consequently not deferred their university entrance. Now their plans are in disarray. It is a case of "moving the goal posts" after plans have already been made.

Students in regional areas are very much disadvantaged in meeting the costs of relocating to metropolitan areas and no amount of start-up scholarships or relocation allowances will make up for Independence status being reached and the full YA being claimed. The parental income means test reducing YA payments from \$42,000 onwards is based on poverty line income. A more realistic level would be \$80,000, in line with the figure used when paying the Household Stimulus Package.

I would urge the committee to uphold the independence criteria for those already in their gap year by at least moving the date of implementation of any changes to July 2010 or January 2011.

Yours sincerely

D. TREZISE (Mrs)