

I wish to add my weight to the argument and my absolute disappointment in the Rudd Government for what it is planning to do to the Youth Allowance Scheme.

These children have grown up without the benefits and social infrastructure that is so prevalent in the city and additionally country kids are doing it tough enough to leave their family to go to University. In most cases they have to take a gap year to qualify for the support from the government without being a burden on their parents.

The Rudd Government shows that it does not care at all about country people. Yes Kevin there are people living in the country. That the Rudd Government plans to make these changes retrospective, which is just so unfair for the kids that left school last year and decided to have a year off to work, under the belief that they would qualify for youth allowance.

My daughter is one of these kids who decided to take a gap year and has worked damned hard since leaving school last year to try and earn the \$18,000 to \$19,000 and now it seems under the retrospective qualifications introduced by the treacherous Rudd government it seems she won't be eligible for it. She will have defer uni yet again and probably lose her place, which most educational institutions won't allow them to defer for more than 12 months.

I believe that country kids wishing to go to university should automatically qualify for youth allowance because they have no option but to move to the city to realise their dreams. The Government should be doing everything in their power to encourage kids to better themselves and not make it harder for them, which is exactly what the Rudd Government will do with this new legislation. If the Government is looking to save money, there are other areas that it can be shaved from rather than victimising the dreams of country students.

Will country kids still go to university if they don't receive Youth Allowance? Probably yes, but not without being a financial burden on the parents trying to support them to realise their dreams.

I have already had one son go away to University, he didn't take a gap year and we struggled to support him. He worked long hours and every holiday he worked, he couldn't relax from the stress of his studies, he didn't get to spend time with his distant family. And when he finally did qualify for independent living allowance it still wasn't enough to live comfortably.

These changes to the Youth Allowance Scheme are fundamentally wrong and will destroy the dreams of many young country kids wishing to go to university.