

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my disappointment in the proposed changes to the youth allowance system. Currently I am working full time to earn enough money to gain independence in order to receive the youth allowance next year as I am planning to go to university. Under the new scheme I will not be at all eligible to receive this allowance and the cut off date of Jan 2010 is just a few months before I would qualify. The changes have not taken into account people like me who have chosen to take a gap year in 2009. I made this choice in late 2008 and did so whilst looking at the information on the centrelink website. Had I known then that I would not be eligible for the allowance I would have most surely made other plans.

I have planned to go to uni in 2010 and the course I wanted to do is in Melbourne. I am from South Australia and I was relying on this allowance for my living expenses and rent when I move. The course I planned to study is a drama course, which is full time, 8:00 till 5:00 five days a week with extra rehearsals and performances on nights and weekends. This leaves little to no time for a part-time job with which to support myself. Many people like me will not be able to support themselves if they are required to move to attend university.

The current system states that one has to earn approximately \$19,500 over an 18 month period after finishing school in order to receive the allowance. *Logically* it makes sense to implement the changes at least 18 months after the system is proposed. This means that the people who made decisions based on the information available to them at the time can complete their gap year and fairly earn their allowance.

When entering an exam one knows how much you are required to write in the time you are given. The teachers don't stop the exam half way through and tell the students they need to write twice as much and have less time to so. Essentially the rules are being changed half way through and this is clearly unfair. I suggest that these changes should be implemented later in 2010 so that people taking a gap year in 2009 have the opportunity to earn their allowance under the rules that were given to them at the time they made their choice.

Yours sincerely,

Lily Chester