

MP Mrs Kay Hull
Suite 2
11-15 Fitzmaurice St
Wagga Wagga N.S.W. 2650

Marita Coote

4/8/09

Dear Mrs Kay Hull,

My name is Mrs Marita Coote, I am writing to you in reference and concern to the new changes to Youth Allowance coming into force on the 1st January 2010.

My daughter Alyssa Coote has applied at University of Wollongong to do a Bachelor of Communication and Media studies. As this course is not offered at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, it requires her to move away from home to pursue tertiary study. Knowing that moving away from home will require extra support of finance, Alyssa decided to take a Gap year and defer her course for 12 months to earn enough to qualify for Youth Allowance and have save some money.

The new legislation before Parliament to change Youth Allowance means Alyssa must work for 30 hours a week for 18 months. Alyssa has taken a Gap year on the previous legislation and as Universities only accepts deferrals for 12 months, I feel that these recommendations are unrealistic for students of regional and rural areas who have no choice but to move away from home to pursue their choice of tertiary study. The Youth Allowance policy developed by the current Federal Government violates Australia's human rights obligation to ensure that tertiary education is financially accessible for all young people. It is not fair for rural students who have to move away to pursue a career in their chosen course at uni.

These changes will affect us as a small business owner to be able to support our daughter while she attends the University of her choice for her chosen career, as we have 2 younger daughters still at home. I also believe these changes will impact whether rural students do decide to pursue tertiary study as it is a struggle to move away from home, manage finances and study. I feel that changing the laws half way through the year for students like my daughter, who have already taken a Gap year in accordance to the previous law, is very wrong and unjustified. This new law will affect Alyssa and us as a family whether she will be able to mange to study and live away from home to pursue her course at Wollongong University.

Thank you for your time and support.

Regards,

