

My family lives in a regional area of Tasmania and our son needs to leave home to be able to attend university and study his chosen course. This will involve accommodation and other costs of approximately \$15000 per year for each of the 4 years of the course. Our son has taken this year as a gap year to earn the required amount of money (around \$19500) to qualify for the independent rate of youth allowance (under the rules up to May 2009) when he goes to uni in Hobart in 2010. The rules have now changed 'mid stream' and indeed will effect retrospectively those students in regional areas who embarked on a course of action this year to enable them to leave home and attend uni. Under the proposed new rules our son cannot now qualify for YA for 2010. Rather leaves him and several friends 'high and dry' with little prospect of attending uni. He needs to confirm or cancel his uni acceptance very soon.

At the very least the relevant legislation needs to be modified to come into effect in 2011 rather than 2010 so that at least this years 'gap' students are not unfairly treated for decisions they made in good faith in 2009 to defer entry to university for a year.

I understand the desire to wind back perceived 'middle class welfare'. However the retrospective nature of the legislation is very unjust on this years gap students.

Also the impact on regional students into the future surely needs more consideration. Every effort needs to be made to realise the potential of the greatest resource that this country has, namely its young people. This involves getting more of our young people to university and many of these people live in regional areas of Australia. The financial burden of this needs to be more equitably shared rather than being an often impossible burden on parents of students from regional areas.

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