

**The Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional
Affairs and Transport
References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600**

Kerri Dunn

To The Secretary

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

Will you please accept the submission for comment on the following enquiry; Rural and regional access to Secondary and tertiary Education opportunities.

Members of the committee, I am writing this submission on behalf of my family. We live on a rural property and have endured six years of drought; we would consider that we are involved in a successful family farming business. We have three children (17, 15, and 12) our eldest son is now considering his options for further education. We have saved for our children's education but this has slowly been eroded over the past six years. Our son had planned a gap year in order to qualify for youth allowance. This allowance would greatly assist with the accommodation costs. In reality it would be the only option unless he received a scholarship or studied through the defense force.

So if rules governing the qualification for this allowance are changed it would be two years from school leaving, until our son could further his education at any tertiary institute, and entry would be on mature age format. He would not have the same opportunity as his metropolitan counterparts, and there would be little significance on the entry requirements and scores that he is trying to achieve now.

I consider that this promotes inequity, as he has limited opportunity on financial grounds, on the basis on where he lives. Utilising the gap year in order to qualify for youth allowance has been an integral part of educating our youth in rural areas. It in most cases has been the only way that families have afforded to send their children to metropolitan areas for tertiary education.

Thank you for considering my submission

Kerri Dunn