

Dear Senator,

I have written to you before regarding youth allowance, but I would just like to bring to your attention once again the issues that face all students especially rural students who have to leave home to attend university and depend on the youth allowance to be able to 'survive'.

My son David did his HSC in 2009. He was accepted at Wollongong University and was able to defer until 2010. He deferred as he wanted to gain some work experience and save some money to help with accommodation bonds, books etc.

The planned Government changes will greatly affect my son, his friends and many other students.

The government has stated that to be eligible for the allowance as from 2010 a student is to have worked for a minimum of 18 months and to have worked for a minimum of 30 hours per week. It is difficult for people, especially with the high unemployment problems affecting Australia at this time, to find work, let alone 30 hours per week. My son works 2 jobs and averages 28 – 30 hours a week. Sometimes he is able to gain more hours, however, this would still not make him eligible for the allowance as times he is unable to work consistently 30 hours per week.

Under the 'old' system, students were able to work for 18 months and during that 18 months make \$19,000, and be eligible for youth allowance. My son left school believing that this is what he was working towards.

David deferred for 12 months and is unable to defer for another 12 months. As parents of 3 university students, we feel that we would not be able to offer much financial support to our third son, thus the reason for deferring his studies and working towards his eligibility for youth allowance.

I plead with you that you do not support the changes to youth allowance or to defer the changes until 2011 so that those students who made their plans in 2009 will not be penalised.

Yours Faithfully
Penny and Peter Bolst