

Mount Gambier High School Governing Council  
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The Mount Gambier High School Governing Council submits the following feedback on the impact of the proposed changes.

The requirement to work for 2 years (at 30 hours a week) will be almost impossible to achieve in view of reduced employment opportunities in rural and regional Australia. In a town like Mount Gambier a limited number of employers offer 15 hours a week for one year to gap year students.

The majority of universities will not allow a student to defer for 2 years, which means the students then have to compete again for a place with a new cohort of entrants.

Significant numbers of students do not take up the study option after one year, this will further exacerbate the loss of potential country graduates.

There is a significant cost in sending a student to university in Adelaide/Melbourne or other Cities or locations and this is estimated to be \$15,000 to \$18,000 per year. This is most prohibitive for parents where the child does not receive any youth allowances.

Regional students whilst at secondary school have faced the ongoing disadvantages of distance and unreliable internet connections, yet have achieved great success in gaining TER ranks that have enabled them to be offered places at Universities in Adelaide and Melbourne and other cities.

Regional students suffer cultural and family displacement in travelling hundreds of kms to attend uni and that removing a source of financial support is a major disincentive.

Few families in Mount Gambier would be earning incomes at the level which the changes are seeking to exclude students from gaining any youth allowances.

Independent students will further be disadvantaged by the limiting of their ability to claim Relocation Scholarship to assist them with costs of moving for study as they will not qualify for it. Mount Gambier is suffering significant shortages in the professional areas of medicine and other allied health fields and law to name two main areas.

These changes will make it less likely that there will be professional graduates from amongst our communities.

The retrospective nature of these changes has shattered the plans of students of the secondary cohort of 2008 who prepared their lives to go to Higher Education in 2010 based upon a set of rules now simply torn up without regard to the impact this decision causes

In conclusion this organisation submits that if these changes must be introduced (to exclude the city-based wealthy families), then rural and regional students who must leave home in order to attend university should automatically be considered independent and qualify for youth allowance in their own right.

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Secretary  
Mount Gambier High School Governing Council