

The new income support provisions for university students introduced by the Federal Labor Government in the recent budget discriminate against rural students.

Under the proposed changes rural families falling outside the parental income cut-out points will receive no financial support. While metropolitan families have a choice of their child living at home while attending tertiary studies, we don't have this luxury. I have given an outline of our situation below.

We are currently living in Busselton, two hundred and fifty kilometres from Perth. The eldest of our three children, all currently living at home, will finish school this year and hopes to attend university in Perth. Because of our distance from Perth she will have **no choice** but to **relocate** to Perth and as she will be unable to fund her university education, relocation and accommodation she will be dependent on our family income for financial support.

It has been estimated that relocation and accommodation costs are around \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year, per student. While our income falls outside the Parental Income Cut-out Point we will be unable to finance our daughter's university aspirations. If we lived closer to the tertiary institutions it would be very different, as she could live at home and commute to her place of study. This would pose no significant additional financial burden on our family budget. The Federal Government proposed changes however will effectively deny our daughter from pursuing a tertiary education within the foreseeable future.

Families in rural areas, whose children must leave home to attend uni, are affected very differently from city families, whose children can remain home while studying. Eligibility for rural students, to access youth allowance, should therefore be determined by different criteria

The Federal Government is overlooking rural families and failing to consider the added financial burden they experience should their children undertakes tertiary studies in Perth. To expect rural families to absorb additional costs not experienced by their city counter-parts is unfair, inequitable, discriminatory and contrary to Federal Labor Government stated aims of removing barriers to higher education.

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