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I feel compelled to highlight the strength of the existing Youth Allowance scheme as opposed to the proposed changed scheme.

Youth Allowance has not only provided me with the opportunity to pursue further education in my particular field, it has been the sole support in my ability to live in Melbourne more than 2 hours away from my family. The proposed changes to the Youth Allowance scheme is extremely detrimental to numerous students who, if not have already, taken the year off to qualify for Youth Allowance, as well as the future generations of students from rural areas.

To think that the many students who wish to study away from their family may be denied an opportunity will effectively refuse those who reside away from metropolitan areas the chance to attend university. I myself did not choose to leave my family, and this choice was not an easy one to make. Studying in a very specific course required me to relocate, and Youth Allowance was the one deciding factor in whether I could attend or not. Like myself, a number of my peers also determined Youth Allowance to be the supporting role in their relocation.

The proposed changes can be simply summarized as denying many rural students the support they deserve to pursue further education. As students cannot defer for more than a year, the choice is to be an extreme financial burden to their families or to decline an offer. Surely, considering the obstacles rural students face such as drought and isolation, they do not need to face yet another obscurity. The existing method works, and without it, I would not be preparing for graduation as I am now.