

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a rural gap year student, about to start Tertiary studies in the year 2010. This new proposal to change the restrictions as to who may receive Youth Allowance is unfair and uncalled for. It is entirely unfair to change the rules and restrictions mid-way through thousands of students gap years, after having been promised the ability to receive Youth Allowance after earning a certain amount of money within an 18 month period.

This disadvantages me and my fellow gap year students, who took up a gap year so as to receive vital support during University, as we do not have the same opportunities as some of our metropolitan students. Our costs involve more than just simply moving away from home. University fees on their own are not cheap, and neither is rent, food and general living expenses. Youth Allowance and a gap year allow us the ability to save up enough money to support ourselves throughout the years of university study.

Asking us to work for 18 months does not give us any chance to defer our studies, as the majority of universities allow only 12 months deferral for courses. Because of this, many Secondary students will suffer financially and educationally because they do not have enough money to support themselves. This will result in a huge loss of students who wish to take up tertiary studies and ruin the chances of Australia having better trained professionals in the working environment, both here in the country, and overseas.

I personally am upset and feel embarrassed that *our* government should so decide to take away opportunities from students who are already disadvantaged both financially and educationally because they come from rural or regional areas. This new proposed restrictions hamper the ability of Australians to move forward in their education. I am disgusted by this.