

To the Committee on
Education, Employment &
Workplace Relations

To Whom it may Concern,

For many years now I have been so frustrated at the minimal allowance my son has received since becoming a full time student at university. I have been told that it was particularly designed to be a support payment. It seems that when a student lives with a parent, this is referred to as, 'living at home'.

I have even explained that I don't in fact have a home of my own and that I have to rent one at enormous market rates. It just doesn't seem to register.

My main income is a Disability allowance and I simply do not have the income to also pick up the slack for my beautiful son who I would do anything for, but it just doesn't exist.

I know that they means test higher income earners to see if their kids are entitled to the youth allowance but for some reason they don't means test lower income earners to see if they can in fact support their kids while they study full time.

I spoke to somebody recently in Canberra who was quick to ask why he was not working. I told them that he has worked on and off over the past years he's been studding but is at present out of work and is finding it impossible to find a job where the hours fit in with his Uni load and hours.

Not only is it hard to find the perfect job but it's really hard to fit it all in to his extremely stressful life as he doesn't find Uni easy and has to work really hard to overcome the ADD and anxiety and depression he suffers from.

He receives a meagre \$227.90 per fortnight to live on and I guess that means that I am supposed to support him for the rest. He needs food, transport, phone, internet, clothing and shoes. This certainly does not cover toilet paper, toothpaste, gas, electricity, rent, socializing or the rest of life's needs.

The last scholarship he received, he went and finally got his glasses and some shoes as the sole on his old ones was flopping about when he walked. A bought few groceries including razor blades and that was it.

There is no room for pride when studying to better yourself in life. I know for a fact that if he were sitting in his room all day smoking drugs and pretending to go for jobs he would get almost \$200 more a fortnight to live on. And I think though don't quote me, might also be entitled to some rent assistance to help me pay this enormous rent.

I just don't know how Centrelink expects me to financially support my son on a Disability Pension.

He can't even afford to go out and have a meal with friends. I have been told over the years of my plight to Centrelink that his pay will increase when he turns 25 but now they tell me, 'not if he is continuing a course which started before his Birthday'.

He is 25 in 2013 and I am beating my head up against the wall to think we now have yet another year of this financial hell. How can a 25 year old MAN be even considered to be receiving a YOUTH Allowance.

Now Uni has just wacked everybody with an extra \$150 fee. We don't have it and there for has lost his access to the uni resources even though he owes more than \$20,000 already in HECS fees.

friends whose parents are wealthy are having an easy and wonderful uni life and therefore leaves me to think that still in Australian society only the wealthy get educated. He's becoming very down about the whole thing and has even considered quitting. Then Centrelink can get used to paying him for the rest of his life I guess. And there's one less particularly gifted in the system.

It's just such a struggle for us. There is never enough to pay the bills.

Thank you for your time

Yours Sincerely