

The Committee Secretary,  
Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra  
ACT  
2600

Dear Sir/Madam

I write with concern about the changes to the Independent Youth Allowance for students in their 'gap year' and the impact this will have on the ability of country students to successfully study in the short term and the well being of country communities in the long term.

In the past students have been able to take a 'gap' year between completing year 12 and commencing tertiary study and if they were able to earn about \$20,000 over an 18 month period they could become eligible for the independent youth allowance, which made living away from home to study more accessible for country students (and their families).

With the recent federal budget this has changed considerably with the result being many country students will be deterred from studying.

This is likely to impact long term on the provision of services for country communities. Research has shown that country students are more likely to return after study to be employed in country areas (locally many of the police, teachers, nurses, para-medical staff etc have close links to the country). Having lived in more remote communities where there was constant staff turnover I have seen the negative impact on long term police, health and education options.

I urge you to reconsider this decision to avoid significant long term negative impact on country communities.

*Debbie Terrett*

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