



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

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed changes to the Youth Allowance scheme.

I am the third child in my family to attend university whilst living away from home. We have all been forced to move away to study as the local university did not provide the course we wished to undertake. My older brothers were both able to work during their holidays in order to earn the \$18 000 required to gain the Youth Allowance from the government. I have already started earning to try and do the same, but with the changes to the Youth Allowance scheme it will make it impossible for me to gain this assistance.

My family lives on a farm that has suffered drought for the past five years, with no sure end in sight. This meant that my brothers both relied on the Youth Allowance to support them through university and I was planning to do the same. I live near a small country town, where there are very few job opportunities, so I, like other rural students, need to travel to a larger centre to find work. This requires a car and incurs fuel costs, which I cannot afford. The proposed changes to the Youth Allowance scheme would certainly discriminate against students from struggling families, especially rural students, and make tertiary education a privilege for only the wealthy.

It is not only very unreasonable but also very difficult for a student to work 30 hours a week whilst studying at university. Courses have around 15 to 20 hours of classes and then study time is required on top of this. If a student is required to work 30 hours a week as well as this, it would be impossible to pursue any other interests such as cultural and sporting, or establish a necessary social life in a new environment.

If you do the calculations, the 18 month period after a student finishes school will end in the month of April. Nearly all universities start the year in late February or early March. This means there will be a period of two months where students are expected to work 30 hours a week as well studying and learning to adjust to their new lifestyle.

I hope you will take into consideration these points and decide it would not be for the best to alter the Youth Allowance design, and thus give struggling students like me a fair go.

AAH Hoffmann
Andrew Hoffmann