

Dear Senate Committee,

Please consider some of our concerns before senate resumes!

- My daughter had made a decision to defer her studies for a year in good faith, relying on advice from her schools' course advisers, Centrelink officials, and government information.
- Our daughter has been getting up at 5.30am every morning since January to work at the local duck farm. She has worked 32 hours each week and intended to do this until her university course begins 400 kilometres away in Adelaide. How can she be expected to settle into her new course, plus find a new job and work 30 hours each week until July 2010?
- It's also 400 kilometres to Melbourne from where we live. My wife wants to be home for our third daughter while she completes year 12, but would need to consider working full time because of the changes you propose. If you were in my daughter's situation I'm sure the retrospective changes would appear unfair!
- The rural disadvantage widens. Many good kids from the country will now need to reconsider their university aspirations. Is it now worth the financial struggle or the thought of using family savings really worth the stress?
- We have three daughters separated by only three years - one at uni, one on a gap year (she's now wondering why?) and one in 'limbo' doing year eleven!
- Our intention of being self funded in retirement may now be out of reach – will this ultimately force families to rely on government handouts later on? – maybe false economy!
- I guess we could live with your proposed changes for our third daughter, but shouldn't we place our youth in front of some other projects costing a great deal more.
- Many 'GAP' students, especially from the country, will possibly not bother with Uni and the associated financial stress.
- The proposed changes don't really give some families an incentive to work – they may well be in front if not working.
- The 'GAP' year was never really rorted by the underrepresented country students.
- As a parent I know it's never a good idea to promise something and then decide to change the rules!

I believe the cost to right this obvious injustice to current gap students would be \$573 million. The extra cost should be met by reducing the Government's proposed start-up payments of \$2254 to \$1000 for most students, saving about \$696 million over four years. A sensible cost neutral solution!

Or better still, fix the 'gap gaff', leave the start up payments and give the kids a go!

Peter Wallis concerned country parent.

Thanks!

