



The Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Reference Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir

As a mother of student age children in regional NSW, I write to express my concerns about the inadequacy of the Government's proposed changes to Youth Allowance. On the basis that Government is encouraging a "clever country" and providing equitable access to secondary and post-secondary educational opportunities for rural and regional students, the changes are working in the wrong direction.

The proposed new legislation further discriminates against country students being able to access university courses in capital cities.

If country students have to leave home to further their education in capital cities, invariably they can not meet the cost of accommodation. If they delay going on to tertiary education so they can work a 30 hour week for 2 years they will have lost touch with their peers and lose currency of their education. Thus their incentive to go onto tertiary education is greatly reduced. The current requirements to be eligible for Youth Allowance are already quite onerous.

I can understand that you may want to make it harder for city based students, living at home, to access Youth Allowance, but there should be some better consideration for country students.

All country students have huge obstacles to overcome if they decide to go to University in the major cities. They automatically have the expense of relocation, food, rent and transport which their city counterparts can largely avoid by living at home. I feel they should immediately qualify for some living away from home assistance without pre-qualifying with work and income requirements.

Please rethink this legislation and encourage our children to go onto higher education.

Yours sincerely
Sally Short