

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

To whom it may concern,

I refer to the proposed changes within the Federal Government Budget in relation to Youth Allowance, and wish to appeal against these adjustments. As a Year 12 student in 2008, I decided to defer from university for a year in order to become eligible for the government's youth allowance in 2010. However, if the changes to youth allowance are implemented at the beginning of 2010, it will not be possible for me, and many of my classmates, to receive this assistance from the government when we made the decision to defer based on the idea that we would. This leaves many of us wondering whether working full time in 2009 has been a total waste of time, and others asking whether they will even be able to attend university.

The decision to change the requirements for youth allowance to a compulsory 18 months will be particularly harsh on regional students because unlike city kids, we cannot live at home while going to university, hence will need to pay for our own food, accommodation, transport and the list goes on. This is not even taking into consideration the debt that will already be building up for our university courses.

It is unrealistic and simply unreasonable to suggest that if a student like me still wants to be eligible for youth allowance, then I should work for 30 hours a week for the first 6 months of my university course. When would I find the time to study? In addition to that, it is not as if I am able to defer from university for another six months, I would lose my position.

I believe that the government needs to seriously consider how these adjustments to the youth allowance criteria are going to affect future university students, and if they do decide to make the changes, then the new rules should not be implemented until halfway through 2010. This is to ensure that it will not affect students like me who have taken a Gap year from university merely to get this youth allowance, which has been previously promised by the government.

Please reconsider these changes to the Youth Allowance criteria. I anticipate that the right decision will be made.

Regards

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