



Dear Sir / Madam,

We are the concerned parents of two teenage sons. We are concerned about the lack of educational equity that will exist between regional / rural students and their metropolitan cousins if the proposed government changes to the youth allowance go ahead.

We are of modest means, but because we both work the new changes will mean that they will get very little assistance in their studies. The costs of relocation, housing, living expenses and transport seem an insurmountable burden. What seems so unfair is that these costs will be so much greater for those coming from rural and regional areas than for those from metropolitan areas. Our children have no choice but to relocate if they want to further their education.

Both of our sons have done well in Secondary school but their educational horizons have been dramatically foreshortened by these changes. How can we afford to send both our sons to tertiary institutions with little financial help, I don't know.

What is especially galling is that our eldest son has gone to work in Darwin for a "gap year" in the hope of gaining eligibility for the youth allowance so that he could further his education in 2010. As the new rules come into effect in January and he will now no longer qualify he is stuck between a rock and a hard place! He took his gap year on advice of his careers advisor and other teachers. If the rules have to be changed, provision should be made for those students in this "in between" position. They should not be punished so harshly for simply following the previous rules.

It seems that for parents and students in regional and rural areas the "education revolution" is a mirage and is only for those families coming from metropolitan areas.

Regards

David Pink

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Pink", written in a cursive style.

Judy Pink

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judy Pink", written in a cursive style.