

Dear Senators

SUBMISSION TO SENATE ENQUIRY INTO YOUTH ALLOWANCE CHANGES

I am writing to register my distress, as a parent, to the changes and moving of the goal posts of the eligibility to obtain youth allowance.

My daughter finished grade 12 in 2008 and with a score of 97.1 gained direct entry into the combined degrees of Law/Business at the University of Tasmania in Hobart. As we live in Launceston, Northern Tasmania, two and a half hours drive from Hobart she also gained entry into a hall of residence in Hobart. At a youth allowance forum at Launceston College on July 22 the cost of a student relocating to another city to attend university was quoted at being approximately \$25000 per annum. We as parents work very hard in demanding jobs and have made many sacrifices already to privately educate our two children for their secondary years. We have never qualified for baby bonuses, paid maternity leave or any kind of assistance with our family. We have always paid our way. With the prospect of many years ahead of financial burden (I turn 50 this year and my husband 55) my daughter made the decision to defer her place for 2009 and work full time.

My daughter is only one of many young adults affected by the moving of the goal posts as has been done in the Budget. It is completely wrong to retrospectively change the criteria for eligibility for youth allowance during these young adults' gap year when such persons have quite obviously structured their future plans for tertiary education on advice from careers counsellors in schools, Centrelink and others.

Changes to youth allowance should commence in January 2011 so the current gap year students who have already made difficult decisions can see them through. I also have a son in grade 10 who has set his sights on a four year pharmacy degree in Hobart. With his current marks it is realistic that he will gain entry into this degree. My husband and I feel daunted and worried at the years of financial burden ahead of us for our two children to be educated away from our regional area. I also feel that it is unfair for them to compromise their career aspirations.

My main upsets are the shifting of the goal posts without warning to the students of Grade 12 2008 and the difficulties imposed on middle Australian REGIONAL families to access youth allowance.

Yours sincerely

J. C. Waterhouse

Mrs. Jane C. Waterhouse

