

6th July, 2009

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you with regard to the changes that are being made to the Independent Youth Allowance Criteria and how it severely disadvantages students from remote and rural areas.

The closest University that offers the course my daughter wishes to undertake, is 700 kms away, in Brisbane. She left school in 2008 and through an audition process was offered one of only 35 places to study 'Bachelor of Music' at the University of Queensland in 2009.

However, bearing in mind the cost involved for her to live away from home and undertake this course, she asked to defer for a year, so that she could take a job and earn enough money to become independent in 2010. Her deferral was accepted for these reasons and now it would seem impossible for her to qualify for the Independent Youth Allowance under the proposed changes, as she does not have 18 months in which to work 30 hours/week before her university course starts, and it is neither possible for her to defer any further, nor start mid-year, as this course only has only one in-take date.

It is an expectation of her course, that she commit to choral and musical co-curricular activities, which will make it difficult for her to work 30 hrs/week once her course starts. The situation therefore is that she may consider declining her offer of a position and the opportunity to excel in her chosen field of music – voice – OR, we, as her parents have to find the money to support her during her 4 years at University.

IF we lived in Brisbane, our daughter would be able to live at home and study at university – this is NOT possible for those that live in remote and rural areas. College accommodation is very expensive, as is rented accommodation.

It seems unfair and disadvantageous to students from remote and regional areas that they are restricted by the cost of living to fulfil their dreams and pursue their chosen career.

I ask that the Senate standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport lobby extremely hard on behalf of the families from remote and rural areas, to NOT allow the proposed changes to the Independent Youth Allowance criteria to be legislated by the Rudd Labor Government.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Hill", with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Anne Hill