

My name is Danika Grey. I have lived in a mining town called Karratha in the Pilbara since I was in year one. So I think it's safe to call Karratha home. My Parents live here; my mother is a teacher at a local primary school, and my dad is a shipping agent. My brother lives in Perth, but still calls Karratha his home town and returns at every possible chance.

I went through my entire Primary School life at St. Paul's, and then later followed through and attended St Luke's for high school. When entering year 11, I was faced with having to choose my school subjects which would help decide my career path, I knew I wanted to go to uni, and in the end I decided I wanted to be a teacher. So I battled through TEE, and with the help of teacher, parents and some serious studying, I got accepted into Curtin University.

I knew that to attend uni, I'd have to make the 16000km move down to Perth in order to get fill out my 4 years at uni, but also knew it would be expensive to study, and try to stay afloat financially. So with some guidance from past uni students, I decided to take opportunity of the available gap year and remained in Karratha to earn money and move down to Perth in 2010. But even though I have saved as much as possible, it is just impossible to expect someone to save enough money to last four years! Now I know that parents are there to help with that, but I don't want to be a burdon to my parents. And it is wrong for me to just expect them to help when times get tough.

When I decided on a gap year, I was told by centre link that if I earned a certain amount in 18 months then I would be eligible for assistance from centre link when the time came for me to move. This information was a relief to me, and many of my fellow students who deferred there study in order to earn money and be eligible for youth allowance.

Now with the changes, it means that in order for me to qualify, I need to be working 30 hours for 18 months. This is so out of touch and does not even make sense. Curtin University offers a one year deferral period which once accepted, you can either decline or defer your position at the university. Therefore if I was to stay in Karratha and work 30 hours for 18 months, I am therefore giving up my position at university. There is no way that I would be able to work thirty hours once I make the move down to Perth on top of doing full time uni course.

All In all, I think it is wrong and unfair that we were told one thing at the beginning of the year when we were making this choice, and now the are trying to make us either give up our opportunity of going to university, which we worked hard to get into, or we can move down to Perth and either struggle trying to work full time and study full or be stone broke and burden our parents. Its stressful, and I think that people who are deciding whether this is for a best should put themselves in my position, because at the moment I am really not feeling too confident in my future, as does many other youth.

**Kind regards**

**Danika Grey**