

Dear Sirs,

My name is Jessica Muir. I live in Young NSW. In 2008 I attended Young High School and attained a UAI of 96.25 for the HSC. I am currently taking a gap year in Young, where I am working at a local law firm.

Next year I will be undertaking a Bachelor of Pharmacy at the University of Sydney. After I completed the HSC last year I weighed up my numerous options. When I was offered my place at Sydney University I was able to enrol for 2009 or defer and begin university in 2010. I chose to defer as I saw advantages in having a break from study, earning money through the year and becoming eligible for Youth Allowance. I planned my gap year so that when I go to University in 2010 I would be able to focus on study and not have to work at the same time.

It is unfair for the government to cancel the previous youth allowance criteria as people planned their next couple of years on options they were given at the time. My plans have been disrupted. I have worked hard this year so that I could earn enough money to be classed as independent and become eligible for youth allowance. Now I find out that I won't have the government's financial support to study at university. This will mean that it will be much harder for me to succeed in my course as much of my time will be spent working.

Jessica Muir