

The proposed changes to the independent pathway of the current Youth Allowance Scheme will adversely affect my son next year. Josh was accepted at Newcastle University in his chosen course (the course not being available at our local university) and he deferred for 12 months in order to work and gain independent status. He secured a 15- hour a week job and a second job offering a few more hours.

In a regional centre, even one as large as Wagga, the possibility of 30 hours a week for an 18 year old isn't easy as they compete with the adults, youth who have left school, uni students from CSU who seek casual work and young people from surrounding rural areas.

When my daughter studied in Bathurst she transferred in her job. The reality was that she received very few hours and quite spasmodic work because of all the above mentioned competition. I fear that even though Josh can transfer in his job that the same will happen. Acquiring 30 hours each week may not be a possibility.

Universities only allow you to defer for 12 months. I feel it is unreasonable for a young person to move several hundred kilometres from home and family support, hold down a 30 hour a week job, go to full time classes, complete assignments, study, complete pracs, cook, wash,etc. I am concerned that Josh's university results will suffer just trying to survive and earn. We will be too far away to give him moral support if everything crashes.

It is grossly unfair to allow these young people like Josh to begin following the rules and then midway in the game suddenly change the rules.

Our local member, Mrs Kay Hull, presented a speech in Parliament on this matter and I fully support her comments.

My son has a bright future ahead of him and will be a valuable, contributing member of society. He, like many of his friends, deserves the opportunity to achieve his dreams. I urge you to reconsider the implications of these proposed changes.

Jan McKenzie