

Dear Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard, & Labour Colleagues

My Son chose to defer for the "gap year" and started working full-time 4 days after he finished the HSC (& continues to do so) as this is what he thought was the best way to be able to afford to study Law at Melbourne, VIC. This was a choice you gave students last year. Big decisions in their lives!

How do we now as parents explain to our 19 year son that we can't afford for him to go away to study at Melbourne if these proposed changes take effect? He was a Wagga Wagga (NSW "Country") HSC school leaver of 2008. He worked really hard to achieve a UAI so he could study and make something of his life. He has deferred to Victoria University, Melbourne.

The changes you are proposing greatly REDUCE the rate of Youth Allowance (or any other offer) that we thought was going to be available by taking a gap year in 2009! These decisions were made during 2008 and now all the goals have changed! It is prejudicial to 'normal' average income earners who thought the advice of taking a gap year would economically make studying by moving away possible - to survive. Now we are not so sure.

You can't change things half way through. Its not fair on the 2008 school leavers. He also has many friends who are in the same predicament.

SO if you continue to stay employed for another year how do you keep your deferred placement at uni - do they just lose their spot?? Did you think about that? Have you spoken to the Universities?

Think very carefully about the **2008 leavers** who are presently in a gap year and have **deferred their university placements** and especially those in the **RURAL environment**.

Have you thought of the social ramifications you are having on country people? You say we are not in a depression BUT its similar to 'depressed' people?

Yours faithfully
Wendy Powell