

**The Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament house Canberra ACT 2600**

**Comments in regard to the Youth Allowance Senate Inquiry:**

My son lives 1400 kilometres from home earning enough money (\$18,000) to be able to attend university in 2010. Recently he received a letter asking him if he would like to defer a further 6 months before he starts uni. A deferment in total of 18 months before he starts uni. Is this some ploy by the government to put off young, bright Australians from going to university or seeking further education?

Do you remember what it was like to be a 17 year old - in a hurry with a mission. Not only is my son told to put off his studies but without warning. He has planned this year off (gap year) since 2007 when he was in year 11. It was encouraged to have a **gap year** - not 18 months.

You have changed the rules for a group of students who did not have the time to alter their life/career plans. You have basically upset the plans of the year 12 students of 2009.

I disagree with your **Independence Test for Youth Allowance** as found on the Centrelink website. To apply for a youth allowance you advocate such things as :

- getting married (age of 17)
- having a child (age of 17)
- shacking up with someone in a marriage-like relationship (age of 17)
- proving your parents are mad and threatening
- proving your parents are incapable of looking after you
- over 25 - what happens if you are 17?
- becoming an orphan

Where is the criteria a rather obvious one LIVES AWAY FROM HOME DUE TO DISTANCE? This is a true test of independence.

My son to attend university will live 1400 kilometres away from his home. He will move to Perth and rent a flat. In order to do this he will use his gap year to raise sufficient funds so that he can afford to move to Perth and find suitable accommodation in 2010.

I have three sons who will all move to Perth for further education. We do not have the luxury of living in Perth with an educational facility around the corner.

The Youth allowance is a joke, it discriminates against country people. My Perth friends children all live at home and have the immediate support of their family. My sons do it on their own and you seek to further discriminate against them by setting such ludicrous independence tests. They have little chance of meeting your criteria.

Working eighteen months, a 30 hour week and earning significant pay for a seventeen year old is difficult to achieve. How many well paid jobs are there in the country for 17 year olds?

The Youth Allowance makes not attempt to encourage country kids to leave home and seek further education. It all becomes an expensive exercise that kids and parents can't afford. Are we still the Lucky Country when the government sets such ludicrous obstacles and barriers for young people to seek an education.

Get real and change the rules.....if a student physically needs to move from his home to attend an educational institution he should be eligible for the youth allowance.

Yours sincerely,  
Sarah Liddiard