

I would like to strongly object to the Governments changes to the Youth Allowance. In changing the qualifications necessary for students to be able to obtain Youth Allowance mid term is unjust and unfair to those many students who have taken the opportunity for their 'gap' year to earn the right to qualify.

Many of these students come from the rural areas that have parents and family already burdened by the current water allocations, economic downturn and general hardships of current times. The children do not want to place further burden on their parents so in turn they are working for their allowance.

By changing the rulings mid-year you are placing additional stress and further pressure on these young adults and their already burdened families. You are also discriminating against metropolitan and rural youths by changing the qualifications of Youth Allowance. The cost to a metropolitan family to educate their child is cheaper than the rural child as they can live at home. This is discrimination.

We are trying to build our work force, to encourage our youth to learn skills, to keep our qualified work force in the state, to help all people adjust to current economic times. I believe in changing the 'rules' you are disadvantaging the youth of today.

The youth allowance allows the student the flexibility to work part-time and study as the allowance generally covers the cost of rental, living expenses and general spending. This in turn allows them the time to study and focus on their studies and not have to go and find work to support themselves.

The Relocation Allowance of \$7000 does not come close to being able to cover these expenses. Going from on average \$33000 for the average uni course (including Youth Allowance and Rent Assistance) to the \$7000 is a joke.

Having had to move from my home to Adelaide to study myself, living off of Austudy and Rent Assistance I know how hard and frustrating it is to not have money to be able to cover living expenses and food. I know what it is like to live on 2-minute noodles and yoghurt for a week because you are studying full-time. Taking away the assistance that the Government is currently providing them and replacing it with an inferior offer is a joke.

It is hard enough to see those people receiving unemployment benefits receiving more money than those people studying but to make it even more impossible for people to study is grossly unfair. I can understand the Governments position that the people studying will in turn earn more money than those on unemployment benefits but why punish them whilst they are trying to improve themselves and in the long term stay off government assistance through unemployment benefits.

When we are in an era where rural towns are finding it difficult to retain the youth in the towns either as qualified workers or unqualified why are we making it harder for them to become qualified in the first instance. In allowing rural students the opportunity to come and study, taking the expense factor away from already burdened parents aren't we in fact protecting our rural towns.

I have 3 children who are yet to reach university age; we will always be living in country SA and on my husbands and my wages there is no possible way for us to set aside \$70,000 for our children to study and be in a position that they do not have to work whilst studying. The Government assistance is the only way they will reach university.

I am disappointed that my children will not have the opportunity to study and as a government you are condemning them to low level labour and unemployment benefits.

Please re-think your current proposed changes and make it fair to all children – perhaps subsidising rural children would make it easier and not harder to gain skills that we are lacking.

Regards,

Naomi Campbell