



EAST MANJIMUP PRIMARY SCHOOL

'9771 1146 7 9771 2450
PMB 5
O'Connor Street
MANJIMUP WA 6258
Email: Jeremy.Hadlow@det.wa.edu.au



To Whom it May Concern.

This is a submission to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Group in relation to proposed changes to Youth Allowance. I write on behalf of the school and request that you review the proposed changes in light of inequities of opportunity for students from rural areas.

East Manjimup Primary School is in Manjimup, which is 300km south of Perth. We provide a high quality primary education for our 317 students and they then move on to Manjimup Senior High School where they continue to receive a very high standard of education. MSHS has a long history of students achieving exceptionally high TER results and subsequent entry to University courses of their choice. Historically, our students were then able to work for a "Gap Year" and earn enough money to receive Youth Allowance which, along with the funds they have saved and earned during semester breaks, has enabled them to finance their 4-6 years of study, leaving them only with a \$30 – 40,000 HECS bill to repay after graduation.

By changing the conditions of eligibility many of our students will be unable to take this tertiary education course due to financial difficulties. Some may qualify under the parent means test criteria, however most of the students in our groups belong to families who would not qualify and yet would be unable to afford to support their children for the four years until they turn 22 years of age. The expense of finding transport, accommodation and living expenses on top of the already expensive textbooks and other fees associated with university and city living would be unattainable and these students would need to find another pathway in life. This is clearly an inequitable situation for rural students.

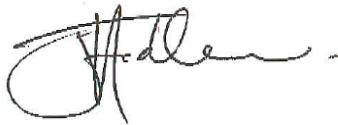
As a school, we have concerns that the lack of access to Youth Allowance will remove a large motivator for our students to continue their education and move into the professions. Country areas already find it exceptionally difficult to attract enough professional staff to service their communities. Reducing the number of tertiary educated country people will only exacerbate this situation, as a very high proportion of these professions originally hail from rural areas. These are the people who know and understand rural life and therefore are able to provide for the specific needs of country people.

Moving to the city away from their family and friends is already an extremely stressful situation our students face. To add additional financial worries to this

seems extremely unwise. Our families work hard to maintain their child's mental health and well-being so that they are successful in completing their course, however the proposed changes to the Youth Allowance will add an enormous burden both to the family and the student, calling into question their ability to successfully complete their studies.

We strongly urge you to review the proposed new eligibility requirements for Youth Allowance to enable equitable participation of rural students.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Hadlow', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jeremy Hadlow
Principal
East Manjimup PS
Manjimup
WA 6258

7 August 2009