

To whom it may concern,

I would just like to give a personal aspect to the difficulty of putting children through high school and university when you are based on farm.

We are about 60 kms from our nearest town/high school and my children have travelled back and forth for many years to get to school. The school bus system is excellent and although the kids drive about 4 kms they are then picked up at the gate – much less walking than I had to do in the city as a child. Once they get to high school the pressures of more homework and a bigger social network make the three hours a day that they spend travelling seem a bit more difficult and then of course there is the sporting commitments to keep them fit and healthy. We made the painful decision to send our children to Perth boarding.

We run a fairly big farm but still have many a year with very little taxable income but we rarely attempt to access the government assistance as our years fluctuate too dramatically for the paperwork nightmare. Our farms are owned in family trusts which are quite common for the time. It has cost us about \$30000 a year for each of our boys to go and I look forward next year to two at boarding and one at uni followed the year after by three at boarding and one at uni, so looking at about \$110000 for the year, and on it goes. We are very grateful for the ICPA for the grant that we get for the kids and appreciate that there are probably lower cost options but this is the one that works for a lot of the families around here. We don't get the travel allowance as we are too close to Esperance so we wear the cost of airfares to see the kids for the long weekends.

My son needed to repeat TEE in Perth last year and was unable to access any accommodation for country kids as he was not at uni. He is unable to access youth allowance even though he has worked during his time off. The main reason for this was the family trusts that have not given him any money but have created a paper nightmare. With the extension of time you have to work now for youth allowance most of our country kids won't be bothering to go on to uni unless their families are flush. The point is that he and all my other children would have been able to access accommodation at home if I lived at home and they are severely handicapped by us not having accommodation available in the city. It is now going to be even more difficult for these students to be able to access the Youth Allowance leaving them high and dry or their property rich cash strapped family to sell the farm to put them thru uni.