

5<sup>th</sup> August 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: 2009 Federal Budget Independent Youth Allowance Changes**

Please accept my submission requesting a revision to the recent changes to qualifying criteria of the Centrelink Independent Youth Allowance. I am a public accountant, with my practice in the Riverland area of South Australia. Also I have two children who have relocated to Adelaide to attend university. Therefore I feel I have some knowledge of the subject within this submission.

Since the May budget I have had the opportunity to discuss the above matter with a number of my clients, as well as other community members, and its has been obvious the said changes are an additional burden on some families already dealing with the hardship of a drought effected area. With limited job opportunities the likelihood of a secondary school leaver gaining fulltime employment for 30 hours per week in 18 months of a 2 year period is extremely unlikely. And as it takes both parents working to help fund a second household this will rule them out of a full Dependant Youth Allowance and the part payment of Youth Allowance won't be enough. To put this in perspective and highlight the fact that rural folk aren't wanting a free ride (or just having a whinge) the current Youth Allowance, with shared Rent Assistance, for a family earning \$70,000 combined per annum, is less than \$200 per fortnight. My daughter's rent before food, power, books, transport, is \$250 p/f each.

Now I discover, from recent media articles (attached), we are dumbing down our secondary students while still allowing them uni spots only to then spend more taxpayers money importing 'very, very clever' students from overseas. Further to this the government is also paying incentives to secure professionals in rural areas.

Surely if we had a system that funded our rural children, when they are required to leave the family home for tertiary study, society would benefit from:

1. Getting the best people in uni not just those who live nearby
2. Qualifying rural student who are more likely to work in rural areas
3. Give more diverse professionals due to them coming from different backgrounds
4. Save the government from paying short term band-aid incentives

Could this matter please be addressed as soon as possible before the quality of our work force (and future work force) slips further behind the rest of the westernised world. The quick fix just isn't working, the answer will come from a committed vision, beyond a 4 year term.

A waiting you response



Lindsay Bauer

# School charges axed to lure the 'clever'

pg 14 27/5/01

**RUSSELL EMMERSON**  
STATE POLITICAL  
REPORTER

NEXT week's State Budget will cut school fees for the children of international students in an attempt to raise the state's education credentials.

Employment, Training and Further Education Minister Michael O'Brien said \$500,000 would be provided over the next four years to attract more "clever people".

"The international ranking of universities is in part measured by teaching outcomes but also by the research carried out within the university," he said.

"That research activity in large part is carried out by higher degree students and, if we are attracting a higher proportion of very, very clever students to our universities, it improves our international rankings for our universities."

The fee waiver, which formed part of Education Adelaide's submission to the Bradley Review, only will apply to international students studying toward a higher de-

gree by research who are receiving a scholarship from their home countries and are attending SA universities. There are 422 students who are eligible for the program, with 17 children.

The program will waive state school fees for those 17 children and will cover up to 72 children in its final year.

Mr O'Brien said the program, which matches similar programs in eastern states, would increase student numbers from Malaysia, Vietnam and the United Arab Emirates.

The announcement coincides with the release of first-quarter international student numbers, which jumped a record 24 per cent on the same quarter last year.

China and India remain our two biggest education markets, with Chinese students up 20.1 per cent from last March to 7835 students and Indian students our new growth market - up 81.9 per cent on last year to 4081 students.

# Students not ready for uni

**MARIA MOSCARITOLA**  
EDUCATIONNOW EDITOR

26/5/01 pg 27

SECONDARY schools are failing to prepare students adequately for university, with growing numbers requiring support or remedial study to succeed in their degrees.

The EducationNow survey showed a high number of both students and teaching staff - over 40 per cent - felt school did not prepare undergraduates adequately for tertiary study.

While just over 50 per cent of staff and students said secondary school had done a good job, 42.9 per cent of students and 42.5 per cent of university and TAFE teaching staff disagreed.

To compensate, many universities have introduced "bridging" courses and seminars to get students over the line.

The University of Adelaide, for instance, offers courses in foundation chemistry and physics for students who do not have enough basic science and maths to get through a science-heavy degree such as dental or veterinary studies.

Demand for the foundation physics course has tripled in as many years, according to senior physics lecturer Rod Crewther and enrolment stands at about 200 students.

He said he was "not at all surprised" by the survey findings.

"The problem is they keep dumbing down the syllabus," Dr Crewther said.

He said there was a range of reasons students needed the foundation courses, ranging from lack of opportunity to study at the desired level, to change of intention, to inadequate career advice in Years 11 and 12.

He said the issue was not necessarily that there weren't good teachers but that there weren't enough who specialised in maths and hard science.

Flinders University's Student Learning Centre offers extensive help, from maths and general literacy seminars at the beginning of each semester for commencing students, to ongoing sessions in academic writing. It also responds to faculty requests for classes in specific skills.

Associate Professor Salah Kutieleh, the head of the centre, said demand for services was growing but it was difficult to quantify why.

"We know the need is there... the demand is increasing," he said.

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# SCHOOL

# BONUS

## Extra points for university entry

LAUREN NOVAK  
EDUCATION REPORTER

STUDENTS will have to achieve only a pass mark in Year 12 subjects to gain bonus points for entry to any course at the University of South Australia.

The scheme - a state first - will allow some students to enter courses for which their marks would previously have been too low.

The bonus points scheme is designed to better prepare students for their chosen degree and will likely boost school retention rates by providing an

incentive for students at risk of dropping out.

Business leaders say the move is "a great marketing tool" likely to attract more applicants to UniSA. But they raised concerns it could lower graduate standards by giving applicants extra points they did not earn through Year 12 assessment.

The scheme will allow students to gain up to five bonus points towards their Tertiary Entrance Ranking (scored out of 100) if they study subjects which are "matched" to their chosen degree, such as Year 12 Business Studies for a commerce degree.

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# Extra points for university entry

From Page 1

All students who study English will receive two bonus points.

Adelaide's three universities have for some time offered bonus points for disadvantaged and rural students. This is the first time they will apply for all prospective students and to all degrees at one institution.

UniSA Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Lee said the new arrangements were introduced to attract students who were better suited to and prepared for their degrees. "There will be students who will now gain entry because of the relevance of their (Year 12) study (to their university course) that might have just missed out in the past," he said.

Professor Lee said the scheme "acknowledges a TER score alone is not a complete indication of a student's potential to succeed at

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university". "It also recognises some of the latest research which shows students who have studied content at school which they then go on to study at university will have a smoother transition to university and greater success..." he said.

UniSA previously awarded bonus points to students studying maths. The University of Adelaide offers bonus points to students who study specialist maths or languages. Flinders University offers bonus points to students who study science and maths and apply for science or engineering degrees.

Flinders will soon include languages in the scheme and is con-

sidering further expanding its bonus points offerings.

Business leaders hope the UniSA plan will encourage disengaged final year students to "stick it out" at school but are concerned those who may "just scrape in" to a degree program because of bonus points could lower the overall quality of graduates.

Business SA chief executive officer Peter Vaughan said the quality of tertiary graduates over the past 25 years had "significantly declined in terms of ability". "I would not want to see a further dilution of academic offering (because of this scheme)," he said.

Australian Institute of Manage-

ment chief executive officer John Stokes said the scheme may encourage Year 12 students to "hang in" and see if they "might just fall across the line" for entry to university with the help of bonus points. "(But) if people just manage to scrape through it means the quality of the (university) students could be questionable," he said.

Professor Lee disputed the scheme would lower the standard of graduates, saying the maximum five bonus points were unlikely to benefit students who scored little more than 10 out of 20 for the relevant subjects over others who achieved higher results.

"What we're trying to say is

"You've done the Year 12 stuff and passed it and we're acknowledging that as preparation (for university study)," he said.

"You still have to achieve a (minimum) TER to get into a course. You've still got to be competitive."

Flinders University Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Andrew Parkin said bonus schemes could "induce" students to make a decision about their preferred university course "too early".

University of Adelaide Deputy Vice-Chancellor (academic) McDougall agreed. "We certainly haven't considered it at all probably wouldn't," he said.



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# Support just fails to add up

CHANGES to student income support was the subject of a recent speech by National Union of Students national president David Barrow at an Adelaide University Union board meeting.

The changes were announced as part of the less than impressive Federal Budget and consisted of:

**AN INCREASE** in the parental income test for dependent students to become eligible for Youth Allowance as well as ABSTUDY;

**REDUCING** the age of independence for such allowances from 25 to 22;

**EXTENDING** income support to all masters by coursework programs;

**RELAXING** the personal income test to \$400 per fortnight a student can earn before income support is reduced;

**A NEW Student Start-up Scholarship** of \$254; and

**THE INTRODUCTION** of a Relocation Scholarship of \$4000 in the first year of study and an additional \$1000 for each subsequent year available to students unable to live in the family home.

On face value these changes appear great for students but closer inspection shows they are spin over substance.

The modest increase in the parental income test has the net effect of extending student support to only an insignificant number of domestic students.

This takes effect in 2010. The reduction in the age that arbitrarily determines if you are independent will only be implemented gradually, with the full reduction being 22 years of age only coming into effect in 2012.

Likewise for masters by coursework



**MARK JOYCE**  
VICE PRESIDENT  
ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY  
LIBERAL CLUB

students. If the course you are currently studying excludes you from accessing income support, the chances are you will never see it, as you will be long graduated by 2012 when the changes take effect.

The relaxing of the personal income test will only take effect in 2011. Until then students can only earn \$18 per week until their income support is docked.

Both the two new scholarships are anything but new.

The Start-up Scholarship replaces the Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship and the Relocation Scholarship replaces the Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship.

The major substantive difference in both is Centrelink will arbitrarily administer them to eligible students removing the discretion universities had to accommodate for unfortunate students who did not meet suggested guidelines with the former scholarships.

The detail now requires that to be eligible for a Start-up Scholarship a student must be receiving Youth Allowance, Austudy or ABSTUDY.

All students who meet this requirement will automatically receive the scholarship. To be eligible for a Relocation Scholarship a student must now be receiving Youth Allowance or

Austudy in addition to arbitrary criteria to do with location and whether a similar course is offered closer to home.

The biggest devil in the detail is the changes make it more difficult to become eligible for Youth Allowance by making it harder to be deemed independent.

The minister's media release provides:

"students who have worked full-time for a minimum of 30 hours a week on average for at least 18 months in a two-year period since leaving school will still be considered independent but students who have undertaken part-time work or earned over \$19,532 over 18 months will not".

The unnecessary implications of this change will be most severely felt by rural high school graduates with aspirations of commencing tertiary education.

The cost of moving to a capital city and residing near or on campus is approximately \$15,000 a year.

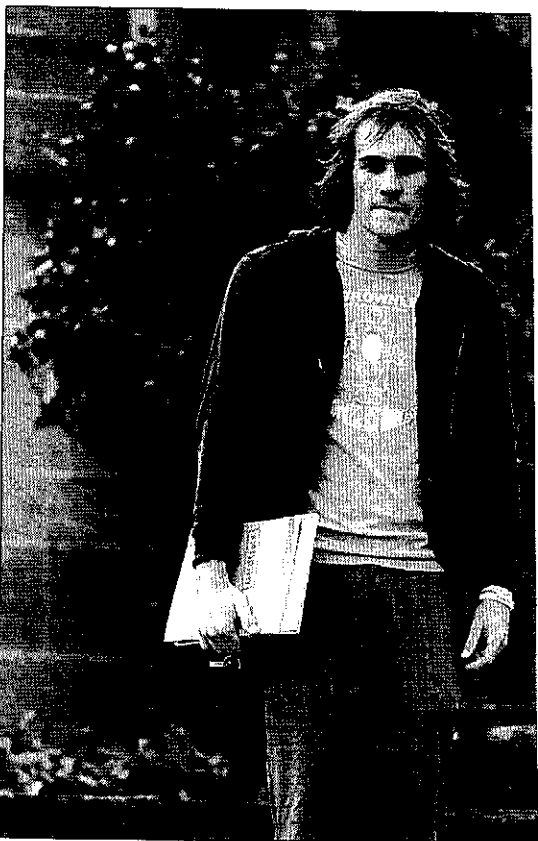
For this reason most rural students defer the commencement of their tertiary education for a year in which they work to meet the independent threshold, only becoming eligible for Youth Allowance in May of their first year at university.

The changes, as outlined above, will force most rural students, seeking to commence university to defer their dreams for not one year, but two years. Universities know students who have gap years are more likely to drop out than students who do not.

After two consecutive gap years many rural high school graduates may defer university indefinitely.

Some education revolution.

# Youth allowance f



**ASSISTANCE:** The revised youth allowance fails to live up to the promise of making a university education more accessible.

HIDDEN in the detail of the Budget, we have discovered that students who are undertaking work in a gap year before taking up their university places will now have to spend another year in the workforce prior to being eligible for youth allowance under the independence test.

This is unfair for students who have deferred starting their university courses until 2010, only to find out that they will now not get any government assistance.

This hits country students particularly hard given the extra costs they face in moving to the city to take up university places.

By effectively being forced to undertake a two-year gap to meet the new youth allowance criteria, they face the possibility of losing their university spot as they can only defer their place for the one year.

Despite the Budget night rhetoric of making university more accessible for all, the actual fine print in the Budget means that precisely the opposite effect is achieved.

So much for Mr Rudd's much-touted Education Revolution.  
**S.A. SMITH, Lucindale.**

# Health records to go online

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**BEN PACKHAM, STEVE LEWIS  
CANBERRA**

EVERY Australian will be able to see their medical records online and keep a personalised health diary in a key reform promising better care and big taxpayer savings.

Family GPs and other medicos will be forced to link patient records to a proposed national database or miss out on Medicare payments. *The Advertiser* can reveal.

But Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's health reform body has called for patients, and not doctors, to have the ultimate say over who sees their medical records.

Other recommendations of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission report include:

**A NEW Denticare** scheme, offering affordable dental treatment for all Australians.

**TRAINEE** doctors to have their university HECS fees slashed if they commit to work in rural practices.

**DOCTORS** and other medical specialists to be offered tax incentives and "top-up payments" to work in rural communities.

**A SPECIALIST** Aboriginal health authority would oversee all indigenous health services - part of the Government's efforts to close the gap with non-indigenous people.

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**Tragedy of Private**

**SAINTS MARCH ON TO 16**