

23/07/09

MP Mrs Kay Hull  
Suite 2  
11-15 Fitzmaurice Street  
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Dear Mrs Kay Hull,

My name is Alyssa Coote, I am writing to you in reference and concern to the new change to Youth allowance coming into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January. I completed my Higher School Certificate in 2008 and applied for University, I just got enough marks for my first preference at the University of Wollongong, A Bachelor of Communication and media Studies. As this course is not offered at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, it requires me to move away from home to pursue my tertiary study. Knowing that moving away from home will require the extra support of money, I decided to take a Gap year and defer my course for 12 months to earn enough to qualify for Youth allowance.

The new changes to Youth Allowance means I must work for 30 hours a week for 18 months, this heavily concerns me as this will not qualify me. As I have based my Gap year on the previous laws and as the University only accepts deferring for 12 months I feel disadvantaged as there is not enough time between finishing school, taking 12 months off and university starting, to work for 18 months in a 30 hour job. The Changes to Youth allowance coming into force in January disturbs me as it will disadvantage not only me but a lot of other rural students who were planning to pursue tertiary study away from home. I believe these changes will impact whether rural students do decide to pursue tertiary study as it is a struggle to move away from home to a new place and manage finances, study, and still have social time. As Youth allowance also has access to a higher living away from home rates as well as rent assistance it worries me that I will not be able to survive away from home without these assistances.

As my University only allows a deferment for 12 months I feel that the new changes almost make getting any government subsidies for studying students impossible as most university courses take up on average 15-20 hours a week, then working for 30 hours in a part-time job on top of study, sounds like a enormous sacrifice in a first year on study. I feel that changing the law half way through the year for students like myself, who have taken a Gap year in accordance to the previous laws, is very wrong. If I could not qualify for Youth Allowance or any subsidies for living away from home expenses in my first year of Uni I believe it will heavily jeopardise my study. Thanking you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

