



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Main Committee**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Youth Allowance**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 18 March 2010**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Thursday, 18 March 2010	<b>Source</b> House
<b>Page</b> 9	<b>Proof</b> Yes
<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> Sidebottom, Sid, MP	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Mr SIDEBOTTOM** (Braddon) (9.51 am)—After needless months of obstruction by those opposite there was good news yesterday in the House that the youth allowance and student support system will now go through. I know that thousands of extra families throughout Australia will benefit from this, particularly in rural and regional Australia.

I reiterate for the record that all students who receive youth allowance will receive a \$2,128 start-up scholarship every year, indexed for inflation, beginning at \$1,300 in 2010. Students who live in very remote, remote and outer regional areas who have to move away from home to study and whose parents earn less than \$150,000 a year will be eligible for the existing independence test criteria. The parental income test will be raised so that families with two children studying away from home can earn more than \$140,000 before their allowance completely cuts out. Students who choose to move to study may be eligible for an additional relocation scholarship worth \$4,000 in the first year of study and \$1,000 in each subsequent year. From 1 July 2012, students will be able to earn \$400 a fortnight, up from \$236, without having their payments reduced. Finally, the age of independence will be reduced progressively from 25 years to 22 years by 2012, which will see an estimated 7,600 new recipients of the independent rate of allowance.

This is very good news, in particular for my region, with so many more families being eligible for youth allowance and the independence allowance. However, I am disappointed, along with other members in this House, that two places in my electorate, Devonport and Latrobe, are not eligible for the independence allowance because of the agreement struck with those opposite on the AGSC criteria.

**Mr Baldwin**—You back Julia, don't you?

**Mr SIDEBOTTOM**—Yes, indeed, I will be working with my minister, as I know many on my side and others will be, to see how this anomaly can be overcome. What I do not think we ought to lose sight of in all this is that this system will benefit so many students whom the other mob were quite happy to deprive of the opportunity to go to university and have financial support. When it really comes down to it, those on the other side are all talk, plenty of obstruction and no action. I will be working with my communities to get those two centres under the eligibility rules and to look at a different matrix than the one agreed to by those opposite, which has now put us in a relative straitjacket.