To The Senate Committee
Parliament of Australia

Two years ago I gave up my career in Child Care due to back pain and decided to study Library/Information at . I received Distinction recognition for my Certificate lll and a Credit grade when I finished my Diploma last December.

Since then I have struggled to secure employment and the common theme to missing out on jobs is 'lack of experience'.
During my course I did a Work Experience Component at
Library one day per week in my last term of study.

But this is not considered enough experience according to most job positions.

I have become very frustrated that the gap between training and continued job applications is increasing. I know that many others of my class group are finding the same difficulties.

I cannot understand why the Government, Federal or State cannot secure work placements for those who have finished their training to increase their experience and pay Newstart Allowance for this placement. I currently receive this Allowance but would rather work in the area of my training 2 days per week for this money so I can gain the additional experience Jobs advertised require.

Most work places do not welcome volunteer workers due to insurance costs. If a Government body could cover these costs and my wage through my Newstart Allowance surely most work places would appreciate another set of hands to assist with workplace tasks.

I am additionally finding it impossible to live on the Newstart Allowance. I am trying to stay in my home as I have very little Superannuation due to working part time and maintaining family responsibilities as a single mother.

Before my last child turned 18 this year I relied on Child Support Payments to survive but even that was difficult when his father became more erratic with payments.

It is also difficult to apply for rental accommodation because I don't have a job, and also rent payments are pretty close to my mortgage repayments anyway. I cannot pay $377 per week for my home on the Newstart Allowance, and pay bills and buy food. I am a proud person and feel humiliated at age 49 having to approach my own children and parents for food. I cannot buy decent clothes for interviews, I cannot pay for petrol or travel, so have become quite housebound which leads to depression.

My dog is crucial as my companion to my emotional welfare but I cannot pay for any vet care to keep him in best health.

On Newstart Allowance I am not entitled (or have not been told I am entitled) to the reductions in rates, car registration and licence that I had before my son turned 16. I used to swim at my local pool 4/5 days per week to assist with my back pain but without any concessions I had to discontinue this and both my mental and physical health have suffered as a result.

It is difficult to maintain enthusiasm for job search with continued rejections and the limitations of transport costs. It is humiliating to search the house for 5c coins to try and buy just a bottle of milk.

Again I stress that I am a proud person and do not like anyone knowing about the way I live to survive but if my submission is useful to helping others in my plight I am compelled to speak up.

I understand completely why people in my situation become homeless.

Yours sincerely