

Parents powerless with 16-year-olds

I WOULD like to reply to Cory Pignatelli's letter (October 30) regarding parents' rights.

I would like to acknowledge the steps Centrelink take to reject independent (unreasonable to live at home) rate.

I am the parent of a 16-year-old runaway. My daughter has applied for the independent rate and been rejected.

Thank goodness for that. Who knows what would have happened to her if she had received the extra money.

She may have used it to buy harder drugs and more alcohol and could be dead now.

I've approached the Centrelink social workers myself and have found them to be very helpful and sympathetic.

Because of the Privacy Act, they cannot discuss my daughter's case.

In normal circumstances this would be fine, but if your 16-year-old is a missing person surely there could be some legislation in place to let these parents know where their children are.

If someone wants to find me, they look up a phone book or the electoral roll.

These kids lie and manipulate the system with the help of more experienced kids "who've been there done that".

Why should these kids be given any financial assistance when they don't need it?

Their parents can provide them with a home and are willing to support them financially.

Why give them the money in the first place?

You might say it is to teach them responsibility, but the problem is they are

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not being responsible with it.

Before they turned 16, parents had financial control.

These kids turn 16, receive the money and have no idea how to use it correctly.

They don't hang around long enough for their parents to try to teach them responsibility for their money.

As soon as you charge them board and make them pay their way, they rebel and leave.

Their excuse is they can't live at home any more.

Why? Because they'd prefer to live in a house with several runaway teenagers, party all night, drink, smoke, use drugs and have sex.

They sleep all day, party all night. How will they find a job?

They don't want to follow any rules.

Parents have no rights in many government organisations.

When our teenagers run away, they keep in touch with Centrelink so they can receive their "party allowance" (apologies to the youth who do not abuse the privilege of receiving financial support from the government. It's a shame these runaways make it hard for you).

Centrelink cannot tell parents their new address, even when they are listed as a missing person with the police.

Police are unable to give out their address once they find them because they are 16 and they don't want their parents

to know where they are.

Some youth support workers tell us "family is where you are happy". Of course they are happy.

Every door you open is quickly slammed in your face as soon as you mention 16.

No-one can do anything to stop what is happening to these kids.

If my daughter had a job and was living in an environment which was safe from drugs and alcohol etc, I would be quite happy for her to leave home.

She has no job and is a danger to herself.

If a parent treated their child the way these kids are treating themselves the parent would be in jail for child abuse.

These teenagers need to be made more responsible for their actions. Life isn't one big party.

People are quick to blame the parents when their kids become uncontrollable.

These kids have rights, they choose to self-destruct, we (the parents) don't force them to act this way.

I am not blaming any government department. They have their rules they must follow.

I just need them to understand how helpless parents of runaways are.

I love my daughter dearly. I cannot stand by and watch her destroy her life without trying to stop her.

If I can speak out and let people know it is happening, someone, somewhere, may listen and changes to the laws may start to happen.

It is about time parents got together and supported each other to try to make changes to the system.

Parents with young children at the moment should take notice, this could be affecting them in a few short years.

Don't take the attitude, "This won't

happen to me". You don't know. I thought the same thing.

NAME SUPPLIED
Bundaberg

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