



Media Release

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Coalition will stand up for regional students

When the Labor Government finally reintroduces their Youth Allowance Bill in the Senate next week, the Coalition will stand up for regional and rural students higher education dreams.

“The Labor Government is proposing to remove the gap year provision available currently which many South West students by necessity, have had to rely on to qualify for the Independent Rate of Youth Allowance. For many students who have contacted me, this has been the only way they have been able to afford to attend university” said Nola Marino MP, Federal Member for Forrest.

“Under the Government’s legislation, the only available pathway for South West students to be eligible for Independent Youth Allowance, will be by having to work an average of 30 hours a week for a minimum of 18 months out of two years” said Nola Marino MP.

“The Coalition recognises that regional students, under Labor’s changes, will find it extremely difficult and in some instances impossible to find the required 30 hours of work a week, particularly in smaller regional and rural communities.”

“We will not support legislation that cuts out the ‘gap year’ pathway for students who must leave home to attend university, unless a realistic alternative is put in place” said Ms Marino.

“The Coalition will also not support legislation that is retrospective, effectively making the 2009 gap year students, who worked last year to meet the current criteria, ineligible for Independent Youth Allowance in 2010”.

“So far, the government has refused to negotiate” said Nola Marino.

As a final statement Nola says she will continue to represent South West students in Federal Parliament on this issue and encourages students, parents and families to keep to pressuring the Labor Government to provide certainty for regional and rural students.

Federal Parliament resumes again on 22 February 2010.

Ends

Media enquires: Cassie Riggio (08) 9725 2300