



**Media Release**  
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## **MARINO CONTINUES TO PRESSURE MINISTER ON YOUTH ALLOWANCE**

Nola Marino, Federal Member for Forrest, has written to the Minister for Education urging serious reconsideration of the Rudd Labor Government's proposed changes to independent youth allowance criteria. "This has been in response to the continuing stream of phone calls and emails that have inundated my office," said Nola.

Nola has requested information on the actual numbers of current gap year students in the South West who will be directly affected by the proposed changes.

Nola also raised concerns that the changes to the criteria for current gap year students could preclude many students from the South West from attending university at all. It may also add a significant financial and emotional burden to those students and their families, which may compromise the tertiary opportunities for other children in the same family.

Nola also questioned the Government's analysis on how many students in regional and rural areas would be able to find 30 hours per week employment as required by the proposed new criteria. Employment opportunities for young, inexperienced people in country areas are extremely difficult at any time, but particularly in the current economic circumstances.

Many regional families rely on their children meeting the independent criteria to afford the significant additional costs of educating and accommodating their children at a metropolitan university. There is often no choice for these families as the relevant course of study is not available at a regional campus, and the family cannot afford the costs otherwise.

"Equity of access to education is one of the most important issues to parents, students and families in Forrest," said Nola Marino.

Ends

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