

MEDIA RELEASE



The Hon **David Hawker** MP
Federal Member for Wannon



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LABOR BACKFLIP ON YOUTH ALLOWANCE JUST A SHORT TERM FIX

Federal Member for Wannon David Hawker has welcomed the Rudd Government's backflip on Youth Allowance for current gap year students, but says it won't make it any easier for local students in coming years to access this vital support.

"There's something not quite right about this backflip. The Budget estimated over 30,000 young people would miss out on the youth allowance, yet Julia Gillard says her change of mind yesterday will help just 5,000 students. What about the other 25,000?" Mr Hawker said today.

"The Coalition has estimated the cost of fixing the problem for gap year students is \$585m, yet Julia Gillard estimates it at just \$150m. Labor's numbers don't appear to stack up."

Mr Hawker said while the Minister's announcement is a huge relief for local students currently undertaking a gap year, Labor's ruthless changes have only been postponed, meaning thousands of local university hopefuls in coming years will still miss out on tertiary study.

"This backflip is only assisting local students who plan to study next year. The Labor Government is still not offering enough assistance for rural students in future years to gain access to tertiary education," he said.

"This issue is far from fixed and I will continue to campaign for the interests of students and their families in Western Victoria."

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