

MEDIA RELEASE



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



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GILLARD YOUTH ALLOWANCE ROUNDTABLE ONLY FOR CITY KIDS

The Rudd Government will tomorrow hold a 'Youth Roundtable' face saver on the retrospective changes to youth allowance that have caused local students so much angst over past months.

However, the Government is arrogantly continuing to play politics by only inviting hand-picked students from Labor electorates, Federal Member for Wannon, David Hawker, said today.

"Students within Coalition electorates, which cover the vast majority of rural and regional areas, are being excluded from tomorrow's taxpayer funded Youth Roundtable," Mr Hawker said.

"According to the Minister's press release she only wants to speak to young people and Members of Parliament from Labor electorates and from one Independent electorate.

"By only selecting youth from Labor electorates Ms Gillard has exposed this face saving exercise as a partisan farce. Without representation from all Australian youth from both Labor and Coalition electorates, how can the Minister really claim she is ready to listen to the truth? It's the students from rural and regional areas that will be worst hit by these changes.

"For months I, along with my Coalition colleagues, have been campaigning for the Government to overturn the retrospective changes to youth allowance which will withdraw eligibility from local rural students currently on their gap year. For months Julia Gillard has refused to budge.

"Now, in the face of enormous protest not only from the Coalition but from the minor parties and independents, the Minister announces she is holding a youth roundtable, but only for youth in Labor electorates.

"This is further evidence that Ms Gillard is a part-time Minister for Education who doesn't have time to consider the consequences of her policy positions," Mr Hawker said.

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Media contact: Jane Templeton (02) 5572 1100

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

Hamilton Office 190 Gray St, HAMILTON VIC 3300 **Warrnambool Office** 73 Kepler St WARRNAMBOOL VIC 3280

Freecall 1300 131 692 **E** David.Hawker.MP@aph.gov.au **W** www.davidhawker.com.au