

BILL SYKES MP

Member for Benalla District

"Working for you"



5 March 2010

Letter to the Editor
as addressed

Re: Youth Allowance

The Labor candidate for Indi has continued the Labor tradition of spin and misrepresentation of the truth – this time in relation to the Youth Allowance.

Several independent studies have concluded that the uptake of university education by country students is way below that of metropolitan students and this is mainly due to it costing country students an extra \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year to live away from home.

Many country students have no option but to take a gap year, earn money and largely self fund themselves through university with the assistance of independent Youth Allowance.

Labor's own *Student Assistance Estimator* has confirmed that the overwhelming majority of students who have contacted me will be worse off under Labor's new model of more smaller scholarships but tougher requirements for independent Youth Allowance.

Interestingly the calculator has been taken off the Centrelink website recently – is this because the facts are embarrassing Ms Gillard?

I, along with my State Liberal-National Coalition colleagues, strongly endorse the action of our Federal colleagues to have the Bill split, that is, immediately pass the increase in and extension of scholarships but review the toughening of eligibility requirements for independent Youth Allowance so that rorting may be stopped without hurting the thousands of country kids who rely on the independent Youth Allowance to attend university away from home.

Finally, in relation to commentary about the effectiveness of my servicing of constituents in the Benalla Electorate, I am looking forward to the constituents' judgement at the State Election on 27 November 2010.

Bill Sykes

Bill Sykes MP
Member for Benalla
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary
For Agriculture & Water