

Dear Senators,

Firstly I think it is important to point out that I will not be directly impacted by this disgraceful card. I have a job that I love and am over the age of 35.

I work in education and see first hand what happens in schools. The claims about children of people who receive government support coming to school hungry are at the very least, exaggerated. There is no doubt that some students come to school hungry and this is for many reasons including; wanting to get to school to see their mates, not wanting to eat what is on offer at home, parents at work/in bed from working late and for some there is not enough food in the house.

From my experience many of the students coming to school hungry are from 'the working poor' i.e. families that are working a job (or jobs) and living pay to pay trying to make ends meet.

This current proposition for this card wrongly portrays recipients as one or more of the following:

- Alcoholics
- drug addicts
- child abusers through neglect

The card addresses the symptoms, not the cause. The cause is the lack of tertiary education due to government funding cuts, the lack of apprenticeships that are linked to TAFE cuts, the lack of jobs in the local area (partly due to local producers employing backpackers over locals), underemployment and wage cuts.

This card will remove people from their community, it will ostracise them, it will preclude them from supporting local producers through markets and farm gate stalls, it will stop them from being able to purchase items through garage sales/local classifieds and it will stop them spending in local small business as, for one example they will not have the spare change to purchase a coffee/sandwich as many small businesses have a minimum purchase amount for card purchases. It will cause embarrassment and isolation and do nothing to address the lack of jobs in the area.

Unemployment is too high in Hinkler and this card does nothing to address that. The local federal member claims he has held public sessions, he claims he has public support. His following statement to the House of Reps is a gross misrepresentation: "My community supports it. They support it strongly. We have been through all of the social media storm. We have dealt with those people from Sydney, Melbourne and Western Australia." Hansard 21/06/2018

I implore you to hold public meetings in the Hinkler electorate to hear first hand from locals. These meetings should be held at various times that allow all who wish to have a say to attend eg not only during normal business hours. At a recent event facilitated by a Qld Senator there were more people attending who would not be forced onto the card i.e. local service providers, workers, people over 35 years of age and all but a few were against the card. In fact an elderly couple who were in support at the commencement of the evening changed their view after listening to peoples concerns.

In order to get the full picture public meetings must be held in Hinkler and after hours sessions must be part of this process.

Regards

Hinkler constituent