



emmasteer@hotmail .co
m
04/04/2006 02:04 PM

To peter.chen@parliament.vic.gov.au
cc
bcc

Subject Website Submission for Youth Inquiry

Name: Emma Jones
Age: 27
Postcode: 3677
Email: emmasteer@hotmail.com
Phone: 0357229759
Story:

Hi,

I grew up in Wangaratta, in the house my parents still live in. As a teenager I was a budding musician and travelled regularly to Melbourne for lessons and school excursions. I loved going to Melbourne, it was always an adventure, and I always thought I'd live there when I went to University. My school was excellent but not many of the kids were 'academically focussed'. Out of the 200 who started in year 7, about 50 finished year 12, and only 8 of us went on to university or TAFE. Mum always insisted that even though she would miss us, we had to leave Wang to see what the rest of the world was like - we could always come back.

I ended up in Canberra studying jazz at ANU. I travelled to New York for a music camp on my own when I was 20, that was a huge experience for me coming from Wangaratta. I got a taste for travel and wanted to take on the world. By the time I graduated, I was more interested in New Media than my saxophone. I won a place in a cadetship funded by the ACT government, talked my way into a job, and haven't looked back. For the last 5 years I've worked as a Flash Developer.

I'm now a freelancer making educational computer games and high-end websites. The worldwide Flash community is fairly close-knit (not unlike Wang or the jazz community in Australia) so I easily found work in London when I moved there in September 2004. The work in London is much more exciting, bigger budgets, and there's just so much of it. These reasons, and curiosity about how my humble beginnings fit in the bigger picture of the world, drew me to London. It didn't take long for me to realise that I wasn't a city girl. I couldn't hack the pace and the fact that so little time is your own in a big city. You have to spend so much money just to relax and feel like you have all the time in the world! The company I last worked for there used freelancers in Tokyo, Sydney, and Toronto; people who used to work for them. I had just become engaged and it occurred to me that I could be doing the same exciting, well payed work from Wangaratta without the hassle of living in London and without having to be away from my family any more.

So, last year, I decided that if I want to settle down and have kids, and still enjoy my career, I probably need to set up a home office. We moved back to Wang because we're happier here. Everything is convenient, nothing is too far away. Melbourne is only 2 and a half hours if we want to pop down for a day or a weekend. My family are here. We can afford a good house with a big yard here. My new husband is a scientist and easily found work with the EPA. To get to work for him it's just a stroll through the park. We only need one car but we don't need it every day because we can walk to work and shops. I've set up my own business as a Flash Freelancer, working for companies in Sydney, Canberra and London. If anything, my income will increase.

When we have a family, I can work from home. My parents are two blocks away.

I loved my 7 years in Canberra and 18 months in London. I have made many friends and experienced more than I ever imagined or ever could if I hadn't left Wang. Without the time away I wouldn't be so happy to be back here.

I really think that as technology advances with superfast broadband in rural areas, video conferencing, VOIP (free or very cheap phone calls via broadband), the world is getting smaller, and it's possible for women like me to have an international career AND raise a family in small town Victoria. It really is working, I'm proving that. It also means I have reason to return to London regularly and also to Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne. Flights from Albury are easily affordable if I need to make a day trip. I'd easily travel to Melbourne once a week for work if it meant I spent the other six days in the peace and convenience that is living in Wangaratta.

I hope you find this information useful. I am passionate about proving that an international career balanced with all the benefits of living in the country is possible. I'd like to see the government pushing to keep up with advancements in technology to make it possible for more IT professionals to keep their skills in rural areas.

I'm more than happy for you to contact me if I haven't rabbited on enough

Good luck with your enquiry,

Emma Jones

Contact me? Please contact me
Anonymous? Don't keep me anonymous