



sellerstelford@bigpond .c
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To peter.chen@parliament.vic.gov.au

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Subject Website Submission for Youth Inquiry

Name: Emma Sellers
Age: 28
Postcode: 3885
Email: sellerstelford@bigpond.com
Phone: (03) 51550234
Story:

I grew up in a remote part of Victoria called Bendoc on a grazing property. Our family's closest town was Delegate in NSW and hence I was enrolled in the NSW education system. As my sisters and I had quite a long journey to high school if we were to attend the closest school (Bombala, 2hrs travel each day) and because our parents wanted to give us better educational opportunities we were sent to a boarding school.

Hurlstone Agricultural High School is an academically selective boarding and day school located in the outskirts of Sydney with an emphasis on Agriculture.

The school attracts many of its boarding students from regional and remote areas. The school attracts many students from Sydney because of the academically competitive element of the school. Due to the fact agriculture is compulsory as a subject until year ten for all students, many students from city backgrounds are provided with a good understanding of the industry. All students therefore understand agriculture and as they either come from a rural area or now have friends in rural areas, many students strive to build lives in rural areas. These students are not always farmers, but many are involved in agribusiness. Many of the students who find careers as professionals such as doctors, accountants and vets do so in regional and rural areas.

As most students go on to attend university learning how to learn independently in a rural setting with adult learning skills is easier for them.

Students from an ACADEMICALLY SELECTIVE AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL who go on to become young professionals with university educations, who want to settle and enjoy the lifestyle available in a rural areas can create their own opportunities.

Victoria needs a school like Hurlstone.

When I finished at Hurlstone (TER of 95.4, year TER average in the 80's) I studied agriculture at University and with my partner Peter Telford, we landed our first job as farm managers in remote Victoria, both of us aged 20. Since then we have continued working in the agricultural industry and investing in regional Victoria and now we own a grazing property. (Apparently you are not supposed to be able to achieve this unless your family hands you their family farm.)

In the eight years since we started working in rural Australia we have studied to the level of a graduate diploma in Systems Agriculture. I am a member of the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority Board, The FarmBis State Planning Group and several grass roots level producer groups such as Landcare. I am the current Rural Ambassador for the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

Most importantly we have a great lifestyle and a new baby girl. Peter and I are living our dreams, and I believe that a "can do" attitude and educational opportunities of a high level from an early age is why I have all this in rural Victoria.

I think that the biggest hurdle we have faced in our path of creating our

own employment in rural Victoria has been competing against Timber
Plantation companies for farming land. The current tax laws in regard to
plantation timber are keeping young people out of farming and therefore
self employment in rural areas.

Regards

Emma Sellers

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