

# TRANSCRIPT

## ECONOMIC, EDUCATION, JOBS AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

### Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools

Melbourne — 26 March 2018

#### Members

Mr Nazih Elasmr — Chair

Ms Dee Ryall — Deputy Chair

Mr Jeff Bourman

Mr Peter Crisp

Mrs Christine Fyffe

Ms Jane Garrett

Mr Cesar Melhem

#### Witness

Ms Marlee van Mourik, TAFE student, Youth Disability Advocacy Service.

**The CHAIR** — Welcome to the public hearing for the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee’s Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools. All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege. Any comments you make outside the hearing are not afforded such privilege. All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard. This hearing is closed to the public. The transcript for today’s hearing will be made public and published on the Committee’s website.

I now invite you to make an opening statement, and if you can state your name before you start, we would really appreciate it. Thank you very much.

**Ms van MOURIK** — Hello. My name is Marlee van Mourik. I am 16 years of age and I have ASD—autism spectrum disorder. I used to attend Manor Lakes College. The reason why I left was because every day was a living hell. The school forced me to choose between VCAL or VCE. I felt trapped between the two choices so I chose VCE. I was not treated fairly. All of my efforts were undermined and thrown away like worthless garbage. The teachers would often make snide comments in remarks on my performance. Some examples include, ‘You have to write faster’ and ‘Get away from this girl, you’re overwhelming her’.

I had to seek advocacy from YDAS and fight for my right to study my chosen pathway. Manor Lakes College did everything in their power to intimidate me so that I would give up on VCE and either go to VCAL or leave. I ended up seeking personal and creative careers advice from RMIT and visual arts from Melbourne Polytechnic, which I will be attending at the end of April.

I was discouraged from doing VCE, which I wanted to do in a supportive way. I was not included in the SNAP program, which meant I was not able to get my certificate to study visual arts at RMIT. I was not included in any careers expos or open days. I did not receive any careers course counselling. The staff were unwilling and unreasonable and did not help me. I exited the school with low numeracy and literacy skills. They were more concerned with getting rid of me than trying to develop my career.

As I already mentioned, I am going to study visual arts Cert III in design. I was told that it was not suited to me, and the teachers went out of their way to undermine me and my efforts, and every day was a daily fight.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you very much, Marlee. Well done.

**Ms van MOURIK** — No problem.

**Mrs FYFFE** — Thank you for telling your story. You are obviously a very determined young lady and focused on what you are doing. Where did you get the desire for the visual arts and design course? Was it from your family? Did they talk to you about it or was it from someone you met outside your family?

**Ms van MOURIK** — I think it was a mixture of both. I really wanted to show my art to people and possibly try and learn new things—become more of a professional in what I specialise in, because I think it is very important to have a creative mind and to share it with other people that need to be ...

**Mrs FYFFE** — Did you look the course up yourself or did other people help you to look the course up?

**Ms van MOURIK** — Other people, and I saw it at RMIT. That is where I got the idea from.

**Mrs FYFFE** — Great. It is good to hear. Thank you, Marlee.

**Witness withdrew.**