Inquiry into Geographical Differences in the Rate in which Victorian Students Participate in Higher Education

Online Submission

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I am a second year student at Monash University, and I originally come from Cohuna, which is a 3.5 hour drive from the Clayton Campus of Monash University. As a consequence, I live on campus at Monash. I chose to study here because my course (Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics) is the only Dietitians' Association of Australia accredited Bachelor's degree. I do not have my licence, let alone a car, so travelling home for the weekend to visit my family is very difficult, and is what puts off a lot of people from my area. I leave the Clayton campus at about 3pm to catch a bus, train to Southern Cross and then coach to Cohuna, where I arrive at 8:30pm. 5 and a half hours of travelling is too much for some people from rural areas, and did discourage me from going to University. Students who live at home with their families have an unfair advantage at University in that they do not have to support themselves. Many students where I live (at Monash Residential Services) have jobs which combined with Uni, take up all their time (meaning less time to study outside of contact hours). The cost of living is increasing, as well as the rent charged by the University to live there. This is sometimes too much for rural students, and was another factor which discouraged me from applying. My only suggestions are to encourage students by improving public transport to Universities and providing support to students from rural and regional areas who are already at University, to prevent the dropout rate.