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

Online Submission

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Mrs Carolyn Anne Griffin, Parent, Swan Hill

The main reason why country students do not often to onto tertiary studies or defer for a year is because of the cost of accommodation which their city counterparts do not have to bear.

I currently pay approx. $10,000 per year for my son (that excludes other costs such as electricity, internet connection, living allowance, etc.) for accommodation in Melbourne while he attends Vic. University. Many cannot afford this OR they defer a year and work so they can gain independence and qualify for student allowance independent of parents. It is a big talking point amongst any parents in the country who have tertiary children on the cost of accommodation and other fees. There is no tax break for anyone who say is living more than 150km. from a university (our nearest is Bendigo or Ballarat, both 200km. or more away).

You will find this is the main if not sole reason why country students often don't go onto tertiary studies or defer (often never to take up offer) or even defer during course due to changing financial situation of their parents who can no longer afford it.

Fortunately for me when I was studying many years ago as a teenager I lived in Melbourne, so going onto tertiary was no more a burden on my parents than staying at school. Many of my family/friends back in Melbourne are amazed (or assume otherwise) that we receive no tax break for children attending tertiary study who live so far away from a university.

Cheers,