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

Online Submission

18/05/08

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My name is Josh Langdon, and I am currently enrolled in Yr 11 at Ouyen Secondary College in North-West Victoria. I live in town, a five minute walk away from school. At Ouyen we pride ourselves on our education and sport which we are both very good at for a small school. At Ouyen Secondary College we have a great student to teacher ratio with roughly 160 students and 22 teachers. Although this is good, subjects are very limited to our VCE as we are not a large school, and do not have the teachers or the students to cover many more subjects. We currently have a choice of 14 subjects in VCE out of more than a 100 possible subjects. Many students of the college come from surrounding areas on a bus as far as 50km away such as Underbool, Walpeup, Tempy, Speed and Mittyack.

A majority of students from Ouyen Secondary College are very willing to attend University if they have the chance, but resources are limited and sometimes moving to the city for Uni is too much and students find themselves back home looking for apprenticeships. This is a bad thing because there is an unusual amount of demand for entry into University at Ouyen Secondary College, but things such as distance, money problems, and parents wanting their children to stay and work in the family business or on the family farm cause students to look past entry to Uni.

In our area, most people’s pathways post-school is usually to look for an apprenticeship. This was not a problem in the past as there were a huge demand for apprentices because of the housing boom around Mildura and apprenticeships were reasonably easy to get. But more recently chances have dried up, and anyone looking for an apprenticeship, or anyone that has run out of work around Mildura, must go elsewhere for work.

Students at Ouyen Secondary College are very well-informed about Uni life and courses, and because of this many people wish to gain entry to a University, but sometimes the move from country town to city is simply too large, and parents may be discouraging if they do not wish their children to be so far away. The teachers at our school are completely centered towards our education and helping us to follow our career pathways. This is great news for us as we know there are plenty of people backing us that all know us personally and wish to help us achieve our goals in life.
Money is usually the main problem in going to Uni, and because of this, most students either need to receive scholarships, or they may miss out altogether. Governments could help people in isolated areas by placing subsidies on entry into University, and they may also even be able to offer more scholarships with greater amounts of money to people from rural and remote areas. Also the government could be more encouraging to students from rural and remote areas, showing them that a move to Uni can be done smoothly, and helping them make the move without any trouble or hassles. These things would greatly contribute to more ‘country’ kids attempting and completing University.