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

Online Submission

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My name is Jasmine Marks and I’m a year 11 student at Ouyen Secondary College. Ouyen in a very small town in the Mallee that is quite isolated. The College school population is around 160 kids and our primary school is around 140 kids. The College is also very limited with its subjects for VCE and makes it difficult to please everyone with the subject choices with having 14 subjects to choice from out of the 144.

Thankfully I live 5 minutes away from the College and it makes it easy to get to school at around 8:30am every morning. Other people that attend my school take a bus from anywhere between Underbool, Walpeup, Tempy, Speed and Mittyack and there all around 30-50km away from the town.

Students from this area are more likely to get apprenticeships or go to TAFE rather then go to University. It is a good and a bad thing, because businesses need new apprentices every now and again but there are very few businesses in this area. The closest they have to travel to get one out of Ouyen is at least 100km.

Students vary depending on the interests when deciding which pathway they choose to follow. A lot of the students like sport and are very active because our school is very sport orientated. Uni life and Uni courses are fairly familiar to our area and most of the students in the school at the moment are interested in university because of past students coming back and talking to use about the opportunities and benefits Uni brings to an individuals education.

As for me I don’t know what I want to become but I am very fond of going to Uni after I’ve finished year 12. I’m still deciding whether I want to go to Uni straight after school or take a year off to earn money. I’m also very keen to leave Ouyen and go to either Adelaide or Brisbane for University. The life would be very different as I’m from a town with the population of 1,500 people.

Some of the negatives about living in a small town are you have to travel a fair distance to go on work experience somewhere with what you looking for, you don’t have meaning city like experiences but that can also be a positive thing, you have to travel long distances to get to experience different opportunities available in bigger places and we rely on our parents help and support to get use to places for health reasons because there is no public transport.

However, we also have a lot of positives with growing up in such an isolated
place. We get to experience the freedom of living in an area that doesn't have much violence and vandalism. We have one-on-one with teachers that are very helpful and care about our education, our parents and family give us amazing support and everyone knows everyone and we're all very close as a small town.