Joint Submission to the Parliament of Victoria Education and Training Committee Inquiry into Geographical Differences in the rate in which Victorian Students Participate in Higher Education

by

Melbourne’s North and West Area Consultative Committee and Western Youth Futures

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Inquiry into geographical differences in the rate in which Victorian students participate in higher education

Introduction
This submission focuses predominately on the rate of participation in higher education, defined as bachelor degree or post graduate courses, and responds to each of the Terms of Reference of the Parliament of Victoria’s Education and Training Committee inquiry into geographical differences in the rate in which Victorian students participate in higher education.

The submission has been jointly prepared by Melbourne’s North and West Area Consultative Committee and Western Youth Futures. Melbourne’s North and West Area Consultative Committee is an incorporated association funded by the Federal Government through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Services and Local Government. Its role is to work with all levels of Government, business and community organizations to facilitate economic growth, increased social participation and environmental sustainability. It covers 14 Local Government Areas in Melbourne’s north and west, including the City of Melbourne.

Western Youth Futures is a regional partnership initiative led by the three Western Metropolitan Local Learning and Employment Networks (Brimbank/Melton LLEN, Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley LLEN and WynBay LLEN), which are incorporated associations funded by the Victorian Government; and the Western Local Community Partnership, which is an incorporated association funded by the Federal Government. The core role of Western Youth Futures is to work to improve the education, training and employment outcomes for young people aged 13-21 years, who are resident in Melbourne’s western region.

We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry and we would be pleased to respond to any further queries the Committee may have.

a. Variations in the number and type of university applications, offers, enrolments and completions in different metropolitan, rural and regional areas

There is no doubt that there are geographical differences in the participation rate of Victorian students in higher education. All non-metropolitan regions have comparatively lower rates of tertiary transition than their metropolitan counterparts (Teese, Richard et. al., 2007, p. 52).

However, proportionally more metropolitan schools had low university offers than did non-metropolitan schools. In non-metropolitan areas only 2% of government and 0% of non-government schools had low university offers¹, while the corresponding figures for metropolitan schools were 11% and 3% respectively (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007).

¹ Low: Schools where less than 30% of students received a university offer.
However, it is the proportionate number of schools that record low university enrolments that is significantly higher for schools in non-metropolitan areas than for schools in metropolitan areas. In metropolitan areas 37% of Government schools and 10% of non-Government schools had low university enrolments\(^2\), compared to the non-metropolitan areas where 57% of Government schools and 20% of non-Government school had low university enrolments. Similarly, high university enrolments were far more prevalent amongst schools in the metropolitan area as opposed to the non-metropolitan area. In the metropolitan area 17% of Government schools and 57% of non-Government schools had high university enrolments\(^3\), compared to the non-metropolitan areas where the corresponding figures were much lower at 4% and 20% respectively (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007).

Thus, the number of schools with low disparity between offers and enrolments is much more prevalent for schools in metropolitan areas than in non-metropolitan areas, with 82% of Government and 84% of non-Government schools in metropolitan areas having a low disparity\(^4\). The number of schools in non-metropolitan areas that have a low disparity between university offers and enrolments is much less prevalent at 17% for Government and 8% for non-Government. Correspondingly, a much larger percentage of non-metropolitan schools recorded a high disparity between offers and enrolments\(^5\) than was the case for metropolitan schools. The figures for non-metropolitan areas were 71% for Government and 82% for non-Government compared to the corresponding figures for metropolitan schools of 9% and 8%. It is of interest that in non-metropolitan areas the disparity between offers and enrolments was particularly high for non-Government schools. Thus, while proportionately more schools in non-metropolitan areas had higher university offers than in metropolitan areas, there were also proportionally more of these schools that recorded low university enrolments compared to their metropolitan counterparts (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007).

Therefore, the destinations of Year 12 completers varies greatly, based on where they live, not only between non-metropolitan regions and their metropolitan counterparts, but also across regions within Melbourne. The inner Melbourne and the southern and inner-eastern suburbs, have comparatively high rates of transition to university, whereas the outer west, north west, south east and outer east of Melbourne have a university transition rate of below 50% (Teese, Richard et. al., 2007, p. 52).

In Melbourne’s western metropolitan region there were proportionally more Government schools that received low university offers (28%), mainly those from the outlaying Local Government Areas of Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham, than was the case for Government schools throughout metropolitan Melbourne (11%). Yet the same is not true for non-Government schools in these three municipalities, none of

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\(^2\) Low: Schools where student enrolment at university was below 30%
\(^3\) High: Schools were student enrolment at university was above 55%
\(^4\) Low Disparity: Less than 20% difference between university offers and enrolments
\(^5\) High Disparity: Difference between university offers and enrolments of 25% and above
which had low university offers (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007). Thus, Government schools in Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham are over-represented in the proportion of Government schools in metropolitan Melbourne that received low university offers.

In terms of university enrolments, Melbourne’s western region had only a slightly greater proportion of Government schools that recorded low enrolments (40%) than was the case for all metropolitan Melbourne Government schools (37%). Government schools in the Local Government Areas of Melton and Wyndham, two of the fastest population growth areas in Victoria, had a relatively high number of schools that recorded low university enrolments, with all three Government schools in Melton and two of the four Government schools in Wyndham doing so. Notwithstanding the small number of Government schools involved, the results indicate that in terms of university enrolments, Government schools in Melton are faring even worse than those in non-metropolitan Melbourne, and those in Wyndham are faring only marginally better than those in non-metropolitan Melbourne. The big difference is in non-Government schools, where none of the schools in Melbourne’s western region had low university enrolments, compared to the corresponding figure for non-government schools in non-metropolitan areas where 20% of schools had low university enrolments. Interestingly, the transition of university offers into enrolments is higher for Government schools in Melbourne’s western region, with 92% recording low disparity between offers and enrolments, than is the case for non-Government schools in the region, where 80% recorded low disparity between offers and enrolments (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007).

Data on applications and completions is not readily available making it difficult to offer a considered comment on these matters.

b. Influences of school retention rates, including enrolments and completions for VCE, VCAL, and VET in schools on participation in higher education

Students that attended schools that offer both Vocational Education and Training (VET) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) programs, scored, on average, much lower university ENTER scores than both private and Government schools that did not offer both VET and VCAL programs (VCAA Website, December 2006). Edwards (2007) seeks to explain this in terms of some schools opting for vocational specialization to the detriment of academic achievement. He argues that since the mid-1990’s subsequent Victorian Governments have devolved responsibility and accountability from the State Education Department to the individual school level. Schools which were unable to compete for enrolments were ultimately closed or merged. Government schools, other than for a handful in the more affluent areas, were unable to compete with the better resourced independent (private, fee-paying) schools, for a diminishing number of university places (Edwards 2007).

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6 Schools with a small number of Year 12 enrolments are not included in any of the data
Accordingly, in order to differentiate themselves in the competitive education market, most Government schools and about 50% of catholic schools have chosen a path of vocational specialization, to varying degrees. Edwards notes that the VCAL ‘has been a particularly useful vehicle for vocational specialization within government schools’ (Edwards, p. 6). The VCAL is an alternative to the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), for students in Years 11 and 12 who are most likely to go on to Technical and Further Education (TAFE), an apprenticeship or to employment. It combines a range of subjects and options including VCE subjects, VET certificates, work placements and specific literacy and numeracy subjects.

Edwards argues that offering the VCAL diverts resources away from improving academic outcomes, so that the spread of resources becomes weighted towards the area of vocational specialization, with the result that students seeking a pathway to university achieve lower university entrance scores than their counterparts in the independent and other Government schools who have focused on the academic, rather than the vocational pathway, with the consequent drift of students aspiring to go to university, from Government to independent schools. Thus, Edwards argues that while the VCAL has been an important introduction for students intending to pursue a more vocational pathway, and also in improving school retention rates, it has been to the detriment of students more intent on progressing to university who are enrolled in those schools (Edwards, 2007).

The strong negative correlation between those attending schools offering both VET and VCAL to the rate of university offers, and the converse correlation of the high university offers amongst schools that do not offer both VET and VCAL largely supports Edward’s analysis. Nevertheless, it cannot be concluded that the introduction of VET and VCAL will inevitably result in a diminished opportunity for students at those schools who wish to proceed on to university. Rather, it may be that the school is tailoring its programs to the nature of their student population and their varying capabilities and aspirations, within a limited resource base.

Further, the Victorian Government is exhorting the need to increase the number of students that are completing Year 12. This is understandable, as it is increasingly necessary to complete Year 12 to obtain an apprenticeship or access to reasonable employment opportunities. However, the result is that many students who are less academically inclined, who may in the past have left school at Years 10 or 11, are reluctantly remaining at school, which may have an adverse impact on the school’s Victorian Certificate of Education results.
c. Influences of participation in other post-school pathways, including TAFE enrolments and take-up of apprenticeships or other employment opportunities, on participation in higher education

The main university located in Melbourne’s West is Victoria University, which also incorporates a TAFE division. Its policy is to have a seamless transition from TAFE to higher education. While it is too early to assess what influence this will have on participation in higher education, it could be expected that being able to easily articulate from completion of a TAFE certificate into a higher education course would increase the opportunities for participation in higher education, particularly since the entry point could be at the second or third year of a degree program, where there would be less competition for entry.

d. Potential geographic, economic, social, cultural and other influences on university applications, offers, acceptances and completions across Victorian communities

Edwards (2007, p. 9), quoting from Department of Education sources, notes that most students beginning secondary education in a Government school ‘will be attending their neighbourhood school’. On this basis, students living in the Local Government Areas of Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham in Melbourne’s West are most likely to be attending their local Government school. As the analysis above demonstrates, proportionally more of the schools in these areas achieve university offers at a lower rate than the rate for all metropolitan or non-metropolitan Government schools, indicating that geographic location does impact on access to higher education.

Nevertheless, geographic location is not the only, nor the most important factor. Indeed, a student’s academic aptitude, impacted on by the socio-economic status of their growing environment, is arguably the most important determinant on participation in higher education.

Given that the independent school sector and some Government schools have achieved greater success in terms of access to university for their students, it naturally follows that they will seek the brightest students to maintain their good record and therefore their appeal, and conversely the brightest students will seek out the schools that will give them the best chance of realizing their aspirations of attending university. Indeed, there is a strong correlation between scores on the General Aptitude Test (GAT) and university entrance. Across Victoria, of those who featured in the lowest quartile of GAT scores, only 19.7% went on to university, compared to 77.5% of those who were in the highest quartile of GAT scores (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007).

Similarly, in Melbourne’s western metropolitan region, a strong correlation between GAT scores and university entrance is apparent. In the Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local Government Areas, the proportion of those who were in the lowest quartile of GAT scores who went on to university was 27.4%, compared to 86.2% of
those who were in the highest quartile. In the Local Government Areas of Wyndham and Hobsons Bay, 20.9% of those who featured in the lowest quartile of GAT scores went on to university, compared to 73.1% of those in the highest quartile. In the Local Government Areas of Brimbank and Melton 17.6% of those who were in the lowest quartile of GAT scores went on to university, whereas 82.7% in the highest quartile did so (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007). Further, noting the observation that the independent schools would be attracting those with the highest GAT scores, it is the Government schools in these areas that would be left with students with the lowest GAT scores or those who are unable to afford the fees to attend non-Government schools.

However, a question that arises is to what extent is the GAT culturally biased? That is, are those from ethnic backgrounds disadvantaged by the GAT test? This could be reinforcing a perception that they are low academic achievers and therefore unlikely to aspire to university, and those with low GAT scores are unlikely to be attractive prospects for secondary schools seeking to maintain their demand by achieving high university entrance scores. Whether there is a cultural bias in the GAT test is a matter for further investigation, which is beyond the scope of this submission.

Notwithstanding the possibility of cultural bias in the GAT, a high score correlates with greater chances of progressing to university. This raises the prospect that by the time students have reached secondary school their general aptitude would have already been well shaped, indicating that to achieve greater equity to higher education, intervention at a much earlier stage of development is required. Indeed, Vinson advocates for educational attainment to be raised by improving early education programs and pre-school attendance, improving primary schools and providing financial incentives to attract experienced and successful teachers to the most disadvantaged schools (Vinson, 2007).

Another predictor of access to university is the socio-economic status of areas. Across Victoria, 36.1% of those who reside in post code areas that are in the lowest quartile, in terms of socio-economic status, go on to university, whereas 64.1% of those who reside in post code areas that are in the highest socio-economic quartile do so. A similar correlation is evident in Melbourne’s western metropolitan region. There are post code areas within the municipalities of Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley that appear in the lowest quartile of areas in terms of socio-economic status. Of the residents of those post code areas, 43.7% go onto university, compared to 67.6% of those living in post code areas which are in the highest socio-economic quartile. Similarly, within the municipalities of Wyndham and Hobsons Bay, there are post code areas that appear in the lowest quartile of low socio-economic areas across the State. Of those who reside in those post code areas, 43.1% go on to university, whereas of those residing in the highest socio-economic quartile areas, 50.9% go on to university. In the municipalities of Brimbank and Melton, of those residing in the lowest socio-economic quartile, 35.8% go on to university, compared to 50.9% of those who reside in the highest socio-economic quartile (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007).
Victoria University who conducted a comprehensive literature review on student aspirations and career decision making, both internationally and in Australia, observed that ‘there is clear evidence that socio-economic status is directly related to academic achievement’ (Pyke, 2005, p. 14). The resultant report noted that socio-economic status combined with other characteristics and constraints to strongly shape opportunities and in turn influence aspirations for higher education. Gender, ethnic and language background and physical abilities were identified as important ‘shapers of choice’. The report concluded that socio-economic status was the major determinant in relation to access and participation in higher education. It also noted that Melbourne’s western region was below the Victorian average in terms of socio-economic status (Pyke, 2005, p. 26).

Vinson noted the particularly strong link between intergenerational poverty and low educational attainment (Vinson, 2007).

e. **Advantages and disadvantages of participation and non-participation in higher education for school leavers and their families and communities in different metropolitan, rural and regional areas**

As noted by Vinson, non-participation in higher education can entrench successive generations of a family in poverty (Vinson, 2007). In a vicious cycle, low income limits access to university, which limits the means to access better paid employment.

The chart below plots median family and household income against educational attainment as a proportion of the resident population aged 15 and over for the different statistical regions of Melbourne. It shows that when arranged in descending level of household income there is also a downward trend in the attainment of graduate and post graduate qualifications by residents of those regions.

Further, an advantage for those who participate in higher education is that their children are more likely to go to university. The VU study confirmed that the level of parental education is one of the most important determinants in relation to participation in higher education. Parents with higher educational qualifications have greater educational expectations of their children, provide a supportive environment for learning and participation in higher education, and generally generate a greater degree of encouraging factors that influence post-compulsory education choices. The reverse is true for students from low socio-economic backgrounds, who often lack family and peer encouragement, and therefore face greater barriers to successful entrance and participation in higher education (Pyke, 2005, p. 60).
Income vs Education - Household Income [Descending] (Postgraduate & Graduate) vs (Diploma & Certificate)

Source: ABS, Census data 2006.)
Potential effects of geographical differences in participation in higher education on skills shortages and the Victorian economy

There is a definite trend towards a more knowledge based economy, particularly in the Melbourne metropolitan area, evidenced by an increase in the number of Managers and Professionals, as a proportion of the number of people working in all occupations. The number of residents in the Melbourne metropolitan area that were employed as Managers and Professionals, as a proportion of residents across all occupations, rose, on average, by 1.9% from the 1996 census period to the 2001 census period, and by a further 1.7% from the 2001 census period to the 2006 census period. By contrast, the number of residents of the Melbourne metropolitan area working as Technicians and Trade Workers, as a proportion of the number of people working in all occupations, decreased by 0.9% between the 1996 and 2001 census periods, and by 0.4% between the 2001 and 2006 census periods (ABS, Census Data).

The trend towards a knowledge-based economy is likely to continue and to diffuse throughout the Victorian economy. ‘Australian Jobs 2007’ (DEWR, 2007) predicts that about 70% of new employment to 2011-12 will come from four industries, with the largest contribution from the Health and Community Services industry, with an anticipated 170,000 increase in jobs over the five year period to 2011-12, growing at 3% per year. The next largest industry sector in terms of jobs growth to 20011-12 is expected to be Property and Business Services, with an increase of 136,200 jobs over the five year period to 20011-12, then retail trade, 128,200, and Construction, 82,500 (DEWR, 2007, p. 10).

Both the Health and Community Services sector and the Property and Business Services sectors require a comparatively high skilled workforce. Currently, almost 40% of the workforce of both these sectors have a Bachelor Degree or higher qualification, compared to the corresponding figure of 24.2% of the Australian workforce in all industries. As shown in Chart 2, there is a strong correlation between the proportion of residents with higher qualifications and those working as managers and professionals, and a disproportionate number of both cohorts reside in Inner Melbourne and Inner East Melbourne. It is therefore likely that a disproportionate number of those who qualify to work in these industry growth sectors will be from Inner Melbourne and Inner East Melbourne. As these graduates are likely to want to work close to where they live, and in a tight labour market industry is more inclined to set up close to a supply of skilled labour, this could result in skill shortages in other areas of Melbourne, particularly the outer areas. An example is Wyndham in Melbourne’s West, which is experiencing considerable difficulty in attracting health professionals to work in its municipality. It would be preferable to have a greater proportion of higher education graduates available to work in their local and immediately surrounding communities.

Also, skills shortages in some geographic areas act as a brake on the level of economic growth which could otherwise be realized. Even if those who are qualified are willing to travel considerable distances to take up the growing demand for
Chart 2
Higher Education vs Proportion of Professionals & Managers

(Source: ABS, Census data, 2006).
professionals and managers, the amount of time spent on travel amounts to a loss of productivity and an increase on the costs of infrastructure servicing, and therefore a negative impact on economic growth. Further, as shown in Chart 1, there is a strong correlation between academic qualifications and household income. It is in the interests of economic growth to have high income dispersed across geographic areas, as high income is associated with greater discretionary spending, which has a positive effect on the local and Statewide economy.

Accordingly, taking action to facilitate more equitable participation in university education across geographical areas will help address skill shortages and will contribute to the growth of the Victorian economy.

g. Strategies to address any barriers contributing to geographic differences in participation in higher education

The destinations of young people in the west of Melbourne are influenced by both diverse demographics and geographic position. This diversity can be a valued resource if the communities in which they live have the capacity to make informed decisions and take advantage of the educational opportunities available. To strengthen this capacity, young people and their families need to be aware of the relevance of education, the varied pathways available to them and have access to the ‘right’ program at the ‘right’ time. This begins with early childhood where there is scope to trial the implementation of a rich pre-school structured program in the west. This needs to be accompanied by programs for parents that will assist them to support their children in education, including developing personal skills.

Availability and access should be considered separately – as provision does not necessarily imply usage. This applies to the system as a whole or individually and includes transport, accommodation, programs and support services. For young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, whether that is due to low socio-economic status (SES) or geographic barriers, system effectiveness is influenced by prior learning and learning experiences, knowledge and confidence to use the system and having the resources available to access the system. Remedial strategies need to be innovative; add to community resources that can support young people in education and influence parent and youth aspirations; and focus on the key areas of achievement, participation and addressing disadvantage.

- Achievement

As discussed under (d) above, there is a strong correlation between results on the General Aptitude Test (GAT) and university enrolment. Therefore there is a need to provide the best early development opportunities to ensure young people score well on the GAT, thereby increasing their post school options. Specific initiatives include the following:

- Improve literacy and numeracy – Increased resources are required in schools in highly disadvantaged areas to combat poor literacy and numeracy skills. Resources should target programs that have demonstrated high levels of effectiveness. Resources should be allocated to teacher
professional development, implementation strategies, resource development, assessment mechanisms and evaluation.

- Introduce a year 13 on university campuses, for students up to 25 y.o.. Target particular disciplines in skill shortage areas or that address local industry needs. Align the academic components with vocational components, eg accounting and financial services; sciences with lab skills; biological sciences and community health; IT and engineering, or electro-technology, or business management, or logistics… etc.

- Expand VCE curriculum to include applied learning versions of academic subjects. These subjects should not be able to be completed by those doing more academic streams. This will prevent increased competition from students from advantaged backgrounds that result in those students gaining high TER scores whilst others doing the subject as a stand alone end up with a lower score. For example, Further Maths is a practical application of maths designed to cater to those who need a VCE maths, but do not necessarily want to study maths beyond VCE, and should not be available to those doing Specialist Maths or Maths Methods.

- Explore the option of senior VCAL Pathways to Higher Education

- Ensure best leadership and teaching practices at schools of high disadvantage – with well resourced support being matched to high expectations from teachers. Use models of good practice eg Mount Gambier HS.

- Participation
  The aim is to increase the number of students participating in higher education and decreasing the number of students who receive a university offer but don’t take it up. Specific initiatives to include:
  - University to work closely with schools to develop an induction/familiarity program to university, so as to raise awareness amongst students and parents of the opportunities that a university education provides. And to provide a taster to university for students in years 11 and 12, through conducting the occasional class at university, using existing students as ambassadors for a university education and acting as research assistants to year 12 students. This would be an arrangement of mutual benefit, particularly for students at university who are studying education. Victoria University through its ‘Access and Success’ program is trialing a more outreach approach by establishing a stronger relationship with some local secondary schools. Existing university students assist secondary school students to develop portfolios, which are given a certain weighting when assessing who will be given a university offer
  - Increase the pathways between TAFE and Uni
  - Cut TAFE fees and lower HECs fees for those from low SES – increase means tested scholarships
  - Public Transport fees abolished for students from low SES backgrounds
  - Increase awareness of the range of pathways available
- Provide incentives to employers who offer full-time students part-time work or work experience.

- Addressing Disadvantage
  As noted above there is a strong correlation between the extent of disadvantage and access to higher education. Specific initiatives to improve this situation could include:
  - Begin early and trial a pre-school program that is free, well connected to primary schools in the area, that delivers a structured learning program (literacy, numeracy, personal development, motor skills) for children and delivers a structured program for parents (good parenting skills, how to support your young people in education, why education is important, where to get help when needed, how to improve parents’ levels of education)
  - For more senior students from low SES backgrounds, repeat the above parenting program with the addition of career’s advice
  - Additional support for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds – free homework support, night classes - concurrently with parents involved in another class (eg IT, literacy, numeracy, ESL, VET, careers planning or parenting skills).
  - Establish well resourced Centres of Flexible Learning in highly disadvantaged local government areas, that allow young people to study and work part time, complete programs that motivate and are responsive, in a timely fashion, to the skills needed. These Centres should be an extension of schools into the community and allow for both young people and adult learning.
  - Encourage flexible learning in schools
  - Guarantee well resourced and supported learning, at no cost, for all up to at least year 12.

Other strategies that specifically address geographic influences could include:

- Ensure public transport is available, accessible, safe (at all hours of day and night) and free
- Establish campuses in outer regions that provide a range of programs
- Provide means tested scholarships, that include accommodation support and provide regular return fares home
- Ensure all universities have supported student accommodation
- Ensure universities support students in finding part-time work

**Conclusion**
This submission examined a range of data to address the parliamentary inquiry into factors that impinge on participation in higher education. The data on university offers and enrolments indicated that proportionally more schools, both Government and non-Government, in non-metropolitan areas recorded low university enrolments than did schools in metropolitan areas. In both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas,
proportionately more non-Government schools achieved higher university enrolments than was the case for Government schools. Accordingly, it was concluded that both geographic location, and the attendance at either a Government or non-Government school, were significant factors impacting on access to higher education.

However, it was argued that the combination of the socio-economic status of a household and the intelligence of students, as measured by the General Aptitude Test, was an even more important factor in determining access to higher education. To redress this situation intervention at an early stage of the child’s development was required, along with additional resources to overcome a more disadvantaged early learning environment.

It was also shown that there is a strong correlation between the attainment of higher education qualifications and both household incomes and the rate of employment as professional and managers. The data indicated that residents, aged 15 and over, of certain geographic areas are disproportionately represented in the attainment of higher education, higher incomes and in employment as managers and professions, compared to those of other geographic areas. While this disparity may be more evident between metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions, it was nevertheless quite pronounced within different regions of the metropolitan area.

It was further argued that in an increasingly knowledge based economy, such a disparity between income levels and educational levels between geographical areas was a contributor to skills shortages in certain areas, and acted as an inhibitor to the growth the Victorian economy could otherwise realise.

The submission concludes with a range of practical suggestions on how the issues raised could best be addressed.
References


5. Pyke, Joanna (2005). Educational Aspirations of Equity Target Group Schools in Years 9-12, from Western Metropolitan Melbourne: Phase 1 Study, Victoria University, unpublished.

