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

Online Submission

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Mr Ryan Monaghan, Student, Ouyen Secondary College

My name is Ryan Monaghan I live on a farm just east of the small town of Tempy, 150 km south of Mildura. I attend Ouyen Secondary College, a Mallee school with a population of approximately 160 students. I attended Primary School at Tempy with a population of approximately 30 students. To attend my Secondary College I first travel on a small feeder bus for 11km to the nearest highway, and then I get on a bigger bus which then travels 40km straight to Ouyen.

As a year 11 student I had the option of 14 subjects. I am completing my VCE at this time and I am also completing a yr 12 subject Health and Human Development. I my self wish to attend University at Flinders University in Adelaide and obtain a P.E degree so HHD is Important to further my studies.

Students in my local area are more likely to go to university as we are a very isolated town, 100km from the nearest Major City of Mildura which cuts us off in a way from the rest of the population. We must travel 100km or more if we want to go shopping or go to clubs or even the footy. In our local are in some cases we must travel an hour and a half just to play footy. As we are isolated students are more likely to move away and experience bigger things such as University or TAFE. This is good as they are moving on in life and experiencing new things, but it is not as good for the community as the younger generation is moving away and the community cannot thrive as it would with younger people.

The popular pathways people often take from this area are either an apprenticeship, TAFE or University. Students in the area are quite informed of university and TAFE as the school has a very good careers teacher who informs the students broadly. We also have Student Recruitment Officers from a wide range of Universities come to the school and tell us a lot about their campus. They can discuss their decisions with our careers teacher, their parents and teachers at the school or to the staff at the TAFE centre up the main street.

Concerns I might have is moving away and to the unknown. Ouyen is a very friendly community and moving away to a UNI or city is a massive transition. So moving away from all of the people you know and rely on is scary and you must make new friends and find new people you can rely on.
As we live in the country we miss out on a lot of opportunities that many city kids may have because we are a long way away from anywhere. An example would be football. City children are close to the action and the selection for state squads is very easy to be involved in, in bigger cities. Country kids are disadvantaged in this way as selection is a lot harder because we are so far away. In our school activities we travel to Bendigo to participate in the zone athletics. We train as a school, but when we get to Bendigo most of them have personal coaches and we get beaten. These are just some of the things we miss out on.