MUM

As the mum of 6 children raised in country Victoria 3 of whom are now in University (1 in a provincial city and 2 in Melbourne) and another in Year 12 this year and wanting to follow onto University next year, I read with amusement and concern Kate Jones’ article, “Hi Mum, I’m back”, Herald Sun Tuesday, March 5th, 2002.

I applaud Kate for moving back home to save money, however I would like to raise the issue of young people in the country who want to embark on tertiary studies and therefore have NO CHOICE but to leave home and move to the city or provincial city and rent and stay there no matter how “bloody hard” it is (if they want a degree that is).

What about Youth Allowance/ Austudy you might say? Well that’s ok if you can get it but there seems to be some odd rule that the student needs to have earned at least $15,000.00 in the previous 18 months, (while the Year 12 student is studying to get the best possible ENTER score!!) and if both parents are working to support the family as the majority have to these days, particularly if there are more than 2 children then there’s not much chance of getting it that way either.

One way quite a few country students deal with the problem and to assist their parents, is to defer the year after Year 12 and work thereby hopefully ensuring Youth Allowance/ Austudy for the length of their course, provided they don’t get the “money bug” and decide not to return to their studies at all, another dilemma for young students living in the country.

So I say “Good on you Kate” for moving back home to save money. I wish my children could move back home and save us money but it’s just not possible for the country kids who want an education.

It seems this is just another example of the extra burden country people have to bear to enable their children to gain a university degree.

I have no doubt why many capable country students do not continue with their tertiary education.

J. O’Haire

Joan

_Here with Theresa_