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

Online Submission

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Mr Derek Visser, Wodonga

My family is faced with the prospect of sending two boys off to tertiary education at university in a capital city. It is not an easy financial situation to be faced with. The cost of accommodation and living away from home is frightening, especially when you consider the rental situation at most capital cities. Speaking with other parents most kids will try to work a "gap" year to earn enough money to qualify for "independent" status so that they can get government assistance to go to uni. The kids shouldn't have to be faced with this prospect. We have a skills crisis in Australia and you don't have to understand "rocket science" to realise that the reason for this is that kids are not going to uni in large numbers from rural areas because of the large financial strains they are put under. A lot of kids get sidetracked during this "gap" year, they get used to the money and don't want to go back to being a poverty stricken student after this. It is ridiculous to expect rural parents to sacrifice so much to send kids to capital cities for education. Most city people I talk to don't realise that there is no financial help whatsoever and also find it ridiculous. I think that the reasons why country kids aren't progressing to tertiary education is fairly self evident and if we are to realise their potential and benefit from their future contribution we have to provide assistance to help them go to university.