Woodall Family Submission

The Parliament of Victoria’s Education and Training Committee
June 3rd, 2008
Inquiry into Geographic differences in the rate in which Victorian Students Participate in Higher Education

My name is Dannalee Woodall and I am currently studying a Bachelor of Education at La Trobe University at the Bendigo campus. My father works for the Department of Primary Industries in Walpeup and my mother is a Division 2 nurse at the Mallee Track Health and Community Services in Ouyen. In 2006, I watched as my sister Carly moved away from home to pursue tertiary education and the financial burdens this placed on my family. Carly was unable to receive any scholarships, and when I moved away this year to also pursue tertiary education, an increased stress was placed on my parents with having two children living away from home.

- Both Carly and Dannalee applied to Latrobe Scholarships Unit for Accommodation and Education Cost Scholarships and were both unsuccessful even though we come from a regional area classified as REMOTE. Eligibility criteria stated that success would be based on those living in remote areas, however it seemed it was means tested on income.
  - Would think this classification should hold some precedence for Accommodation assistance at least for students who are required to move to more regional areas to continue studies
- These types of scholarships, which are, and should be directed at remote / regional students, seem to be unattainable by the appropriate students who require (word of mouth that others have attained scholarships from less deserving/requiring applicants).
- The financial burden of educating children who are unsuccessful in applying for these scholarships is delegated to parents, with no government assistance
- In our case, apart from HECS fees, parents deemed responsible for all accommodation and living expenses
- If student is not deemed as independent of their parents, then they are not eligible for Aust study, Rent assistance, or other Centrelink payments, as parents combined income exceeds the threshold before these benefits are available
- Regional students are required to source some form of casual employment to offset living expenses, stationary, vehicle and other incidental expenses associated with living away from home and to take some financial burden off their parents. However, in larger areas these jobs are difficult to find as student who originate from the university town are first in to find suitable part time or casual employment
- Some scholarships are now awarded prior to academic result notifications. Shouldn’t the universities be offering the high achieving rural students, scholarships to encourage them to attend their facility, as without the financial support, some students miss out on tertiary education altogether.
- No scholarships take into account the number of children from the same family undertaking study at the same university. This should be a consideration as with each individual child in tertiary education, the costs significantly increase.
- Graduating in 2007, Dannalee was successful in gaining the La Trobe Academic Excellence Scholarship which comprises of $2000 each year for the duration of her course.
- Both girls were unsuccessful in applying for the Latrobe Education and Accommodation Scholarships, Carly in both 2007 and 2008 and Dannalee in 2008
- Kevin and Julie contacted Nationals Party member for Mildura Peter Crisp who acknowledged the hardship of rural students moving away to attend university. Suggested applying for the Nationals Young Leaders Scholarship. This scholarship however, is not advertised to students or school and it was pure luck that we were notified of this.
- Dannalee applied for this scholarship and was successful, awarded with a $1000 sum.
- The girls are living together in private accommodation and are now both undertaking casual weekend employment. However, this employment is not sufficient to cover the accommodation costs, so these costs are burdened onto the parents.

[Signature]

Dannalee Woodall
Julie Woodall
Phil Woodall