Inquiry into Geographical differences in participation in Higher Education.

My family leave in Rochester in regional Victoria, 95 kilometres from Melbourne. The closet university is Bendigo 65 kilometres from Rochester.

I have been complaining for the past 5 years at the cost of Higher Education for rural and regional students and their families. I have been assisting my 2 children through University at a substantial cost. In both cases my children have to move from their home and the cost of rent and living costs are paid by parents.

This is a common theme in our area and I presume in other rural areas. It is important for rural families, not just farmers, to be compensated for this large financial burden. We have spent over $50,000 in rent and bording costs alone over the past 5 years.

My 2nd child attends Melbourne University for Physiotherapy course. This course is 35 hours per week plus additional study, this leaves little time to earn income to assist with costs. Majority of farming families can employ their children which results in assistance through Centrelink. We work as PAYG and this prevents as from employing our children.

Also many students defer for 12 months to earn an income to qualify for centrelink payments when they recommence their studies. My child was older and could not defer as it would further delay his physiotherapy career.

Greg Little, Rochester