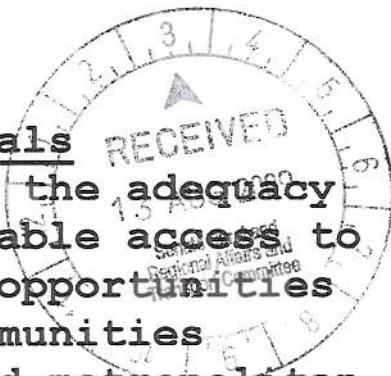


7/8/09

A submission from the Tasmanian Principals Association regarding an assessment of the adequacy of government measures to provide equitable access to secondary and post-secondary education opportunities to students from rural and regional communities attending metropolitan institutions, and metropolitan students attending regional universities or technical and further education (TAFE) colleges, with particular reference to:



Please note some examples shown are from the rural Huon region into Hobart and would be similar if not more extreme from other outlying rural and regional areas into Burnie, Launceston or Hobart. The Huon region is approximately 1 to hours travel time from central Hobart.

the financial impact on rural and regional students who are attending metropolitan secondary schools, universities or TAFE;

Transport costs are one of the largest financial impacts on students from rural areas attending metropolitan high schools. For example it costs \$18 per day to travel from Dover to Hobart as a student. These days require travel starting at 7 a.m. and ending at about 5 p.m. Rental housing in Hobart is expensive and not fully compensated by allowances. Young adolescents renting in urban centres is not always a preferred option. This issue alone may account for much of the low retention figures for Tasmanian students.

the education alternatives for rural and regional students wanting to study in regional areas;

In many areas these are limited by access to courses and by low numbers of students. On line courses are not as engaging for many students as face to face contact.

the implications of current and proposed government measures on prospective students living in rural and regional areas;

We are not aware of any significant initiatives in this area in Tasmania except the Tas. Tomorrow project. The new Tas. Tomorrow initiatives in Tasmania are yet to establish patterns of influence in this area.

the adequacy of government measures to provide for students who are required to leave home for secondary or post-secondary study;

Apart from some hostel accommodations (which does not suit

all students). Financial assistance is available for students but does not cover the full costs of living away from home.

the educational needs of rural and regional students;
Our students require access to the full range of all mainstream courses offered in urban centres. Their needs are just the same as urban based students.

the impact of government measures and proposals on rural and regional communities;

Government measures do not enable full access for rural and regional students to quality post secondary education.

Access to broad courses, financial assistance and access to quality accommodation are three key issues.

Hence education is more limited and poor retention and lower educational outcomes are real issues for these students. These impacts then impact on the broad local community and can lead to community development issues over time.

Access to quality local bridging courses for 15 to 18 year old students is one possible answer as they grow through this critical period in their lives. High quality pastoral care and mentoring (with sensible financial support) is another possible answer for students that must move away from home.

other related matters.

The financial issues above are further amplified when young Tasmanians need to move to the mainland to study. We must ensure our brightest young people are not marginalised by lack of appropriate government funds to support them when they need to move from their home base.

The Tasmanian Principals Association invites the senate committee to do a specific case student tour of Tasmania. Actual cases of students being inhibited in their ability to gain a full education tells the most powerful story and may surface key opportunities for change. We would be keen to support this inquiry.

Rob Banfield
President TPA

for the Tasmanian Principals Association