

Good morning/afternoon everyone.

My name is Dean Warwick and I am a current student living in Canberra but studying through distance education at Tabor Adelaide. The name of the degree that I am studying is a Bachelor of Applied Social Science which majors in Youth work.

To put my story into some context, you need to understand that I have worked with children and young people for a long period of time both in church contexts and school contexts. This led me to engage with some of the issues that young people face and thinking back to my own childhood and the issues that I faced, I could have really have done with some help to navigate my way through my childhood and adolescence. Through my involvement with local churches and the chance to go into schools, I realised that I could be that person that is willing to get beside young people and firstly be safe enough for them to talk to me and secondly that I can understand what they are facing and thirdly, to be that person that will stand beside them and help them to institute procedures and processes in their lives to empower them to see that they are worth the air that they breathe and so much more.

With this in mind, when I felt ready to go back to school, having had full-time employment for a substantial period of time, my wife and I researched the best place for me to study at. As I was looking more at becoming a youth pastor/youth worker, and not all universities offered degrees which majored in this area, we decided that a Christian university would be a good place to study at. This came about by also looking at what they did offer and the degrees that were available in the public system offered youth work subjects mixed in with other social work courses. After narrowing this process down to Christian universities, we came across Tabor Adelaide and we found that the degree that they offered fit better with what I wanted to study.

The benefit of completing this degree is that I will be able to help young people that are in both church and secular contexts. Also, I have spoken to people that have been involved in the public system and they have told me that while they have gained a lot of theory through their studies, they don't feel that this path has given them the valuable hands on experience that cannot be gained through textbooks. Being the kind of person that learns better by doing the task rather than just reading about it, Tabor Adelaide was a much better fit than anywhere else. This

means that instead of landing a job and taking time to find my feet and get my head around applying the theory that I have read about, I already have an understanding of the issues that young people are dealing with and because I have that hands on experience, I can put things in place to help them sooner.

The point of view that I am operating under with this issue is that if I complete my studies and graduate and leave with a similar degree that someone from a public university gains, and end up working with the same young people that the person from the public university is going to work with, why should I be disadvantaged and have a larger debt because I chose to study the degree that I thought would be more applicable to work with youth then a different degree that had youth work subjects thrown in?

So to give you some actual figures about how much I will have to pay for my degree, I have added up the figures so far <sup>as of the start of this year</sup> and they come to a total of \$21474. This, however will not be the total figure as I still have a year ~~to go before I complete my degree.~~ <sup>to go until the end of this year</sup>

What this comes down to really is that any reform that provides equity has to be beneficial to those that are looking at higher education and those studying right now to further themselves and to benefit their community.

Thankyou for your time.