

## **Rural and Regional Access to Secondary and Tertiary Education Opportunities**

As a Principal in rural and regional secondary schools for eight years, I have seen the enormous difficulties faced by rural and remote students in making successful transitions to tertiary study (which in WA is invariably in the city.)

Students from remote areas do not have family support in the city which means immediately that they need to find accommodation which is a cost not borne by city resident students. Sharing with others is always fraught with possible problems.

Students from remote areas deal with the culture shock of moving to a large city. They often experience isolation, loneliness, anxiety and homesickness as their peer groups are fragmented as they relocate.

It is a truism that remote students' participation rates in tertiary education are less than their city counterparts. It is also true that the dropout rate of remote students from tertiary study is higher than city students at all levels of entry.

Therefore, anything that makes it more difficult to access and succeed in tertiary study is nonsensical. It is unjust and discriminatory.

Making it more difficult for rural students to access the Youth Allowance through the proposed changes to this scheme is bound to entrench the current disadvantages of rural youth in Australia.

I urge the committee to consider attempting to redress the imbalances in access to tertiary education for rural and regional youth by rejecting the proposed changes to the current scheme.

Peter Bothe

Principal

St Luke's College

PO Box 971

Karratha WA 6714