

Our son, Lachlan, completed Year 12 in Warrnambool in 2008 and received a place at the Photography Studies College at Southbank in Melbourne. He successfully deferred his photography course and accommodation to 2010 to save around \$19,000 required to gain Independent Youth Allowance. He worked part-time at Super Cheap Auto whilst at school until mid way through Year 12 when he resigned to concentrate on his final exams. He gained part time employment in our family business after exams and then received full time employment in April this year at Toyota washing cars and delivering clients back to their homes or work places. He receives \$10.73 per hour. He was on track to earn his required amount for Independent Youth Allowance when the Federal Budget in May changed the requirements. With the new regulations he has to work 30 hours plus until October 2010 whilst studying photography in Melbourne. Obviously these courses only defer for one year so we are wondering how these requirements can be achieved concurrently. This course cannot be done in Warrnambool so he has to go to Melbourne to realize his ambitions. The photography course is not HECS funded and costs \$15,000 per year for three years and accommodation is estimated to be around \$20,000 each year. Our family business is reasonably successful and I work 15-20 hours per week but we do not have a spare \$35,000 every year for 3 years to enable our son to become a photographer. The town we live in has a population of 1,500 people and is 300 kms from Melbourne and we don't believe our son should have to work full time and study full time, if that was possible, whilst he is becoming familiar with the lifestyle changes of Melbourne. We choose to live in rural Victoria but we shouldn't be penalized for this when our youth need to gain tertiary education in Melbourne. It is generally agreed that further education is an excellent position to be placed in for greater employment choices and better wages in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Clare and David Mathison