

MEDIA RELEASE

August 18, 2008

Report confirms regional disadvantage in tertiary study

A report released today confirms that young students from rural and regional Victoria are disadvantaged when it comes to taking up their tertiary offers. The report, commissioned by 14 Local Learning Employment Networks (LLENs) and the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria found that in 2007, 15.7% of regional Victorian school completers deferred a place at university. This is two and a half times the rate of deferral found amongst metropolitan students.

The report is part of a longitudinal study carried out by the Centre for Post-Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of Melbourne and provides information on the first 12 months of data gathered from 897 respondents.

The study tracks the regional deferrers from the 2006 Year 12 cohort, who were first contacted in 2007, with a survey conducted in April/May 2008. A further survey will be conducted in April/May 2009 to provide the overall results of the longitudinal study.

In a worrying trend cost-related factors and financial barriers are prominent in the reasons given by these young people for deferring a place at university. Such barriers are cited by approximately two thirds of those respondents not in education or training.

“The LLENs and YACVic have been concerned for some time that the impact of the drought in rural and regional areas of Victoria, coupled with high petrol prices, rental market increases and other higher costs of living are all impacting on these young people’s opportunities to take up their tertiary offers” YACVic CEO Georgie Ferrari said.

There are, however some positive findings in the study's interim report. "We were pleased to find that when contacted in 2008, the regional deferrers in this study displayed a range of mainly positive outcomes, including 7 out of 10 having taken up a place at University" Ms Ferrari said.

"What remains to be seen however is whether this cohort will be able to maintain their tertiary study in the coming 12 months, with the increasing financial pressures many will no doubt face" Ms Ferrari said.

Over all the study found, eight in ten (82.3%) of the respondents were in some form of education or training. Of the remaining 17.7% of respondents, most were working (16.3%). While these results, on the surface seem positive only a re-contact of the cohort in 2009 will allow an assessment as to whether these transitions prove to be successful in the longer term.

For further media comment, please contact:

Georgie Ferrari
YACVic CEO
0411 484 428

Copies of the report can be obtained by emailing info@yacvic.org.au

The report will be released tomorrow (Tuesday August 19) and will be available at www.yacvic.org.au

The Local Learning and employment Networks involved in the study are:

Baw Baw Latrobe LLEN	Northern Mallee LLEN
Campaspe Cohuna LLEN	South Gippsland Bass Coast LLEN
Central Ranges LLEN	South West LLEN
Central Grampians LLEN	Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN
Gippsland East LLEN	Goldfields LLEN
NE Tracks LLEN	Hilghlands LLEN
North Central LLEN	South East LLEN

For further contact details: www.llen.vic.gov.au