



The Place To Be

# Media release

Geoff Howard MLA, Member for Ballarat East

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## **More help proposed for students to get to Uni**

A parliamentary inquiry has recommended a broad range of measures which would see more students from rural and regional Victoria and under represented parts of Melbourne going to University

The Victorian Parliamentary Education and Training Committee's report on its inquiry into geographical differences in participation in higher education in Victoria was tabled today in Parliament.

Committee Chair and Member for Ballarat East, Geoff Howard MP, said that there are many reasons why students from rural Victoria, as well as some parts of Melbourne are not attending University at the same rate as other metropolitan students.

"Higher Education generates important benefits for the individuals who go to University as well as for the communities in which they live and work. It is important for all communities that they see that a high percentage of their young people gain university qualifications." Mr Howard said.

"For 18 months, the Committee has listened to students, families, educators and experts across Victoria."

"The message came through loud and clear that greater support is required at school level in these under-represented areas to support greater achievement and to raise the aspirations of more students towards higher education.

"It was also clear that accessibility of University campuses is an important issue as is the cost of University education, particularly the cost of leaving home is a huge concern for young people outside Melbourne who are considering higher education. Many rural families struggle to support their children while they study, while others give up on university altogether."

The report supports the strengthening of rural University campuses and also urges the Victorian Government to lobby for national student income support to go further to level the playing field for prospective students from rural and regional communities.

"We also want to ensure that once students get to university that they are given the appropriate support to help them complete their studies"

The Victorian Government now has six months to respond to the Committee's recommendations.

**For further information on the report or on the Committee's other inquiries please call Geoff Howard MP on 5331 7722 or 0427 334 185 or visit <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/etc/>**

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