

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] University of Adelaide SRC

Reference Type: NGO

State or territory: SA

Serial Identification Number: 478541

Responses

Curriculum and assessment

Rating: 0

Teachers and teaching

Rating: 0

Leaders and leadership

Rating: 0

School and Community

Rating: 0

Information and Communication Technology

Rating: 0

Entrepreneurship and schools

Rating:

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

What could be done to expand the opportunities available to regional, rural and remote students to access high quality education?

More effort could be made to make information available to these students, including compiling information on grants and entitlements that pertain to rural students. The University of Adelaide SRC is currently putting together a rural student guide for this exact reason. In consultations, rural students indicated that they had a limited knowledge of what they were entitled to. For those rural students who cannot rely on family support, they may be discouraged to attend higher education if unaware of the assistance they can receive.

Rating for enrolments: 0

Rating for clusters: 0

Rating for distance education: 0

Rating for boarding: 0

Diversity

Rating: 0

Transitioning beyond school

Are there changes that should be made to education, training and employment policies and practices which would improve post school opportunities for regional, rural and remote young people?

Providing additional HEPP-like partnerships and lectures at rural schools to help students realise that they have a path to higher education, if that is what they want. Many bright and talented rural students told me that they almost didn't come to university because they didn't think it was for them.

With regards to employment, universities should extend all opportunities to allow rural students to work in casual and part time roles at university during their degree. Rural students have less of a chance to find work if they move to a city and often the skills that they pick up often aren't applicable to work in a city (for instance, I had only done manual labour and fruit picking before the summer before I started university). Getting their foot in the door of the service industry is what rural students need to compete in the services-dominated job market of cities.

Are there innovative models of accommodation delivery that could benefit regional, rural and remote tertiary students studying away from home?

Currently the accommodation service at the University of Adelaide provides help with students looking for accommodation in private rental markets as well as university affiliated accommodation. Feedback from rural students has been very positive on this service.

One way of providing accommodation services is through a subsidisation program of housing for rural students living away from home. Several universities have some form of subsidisation, normally run by the university or student unions. Though the University of Adelaide has a housing subsidisation scheme it does not advertise this service and does not publish any of the guidelines or figures pertaining to the award. This goes back to the previous themes on making information on rural student entitlements available in a central online location, as not a single rural student I talked to were aware that they were able to access subsidised accommodation.

Rating: 0

Additional Comments

Issues that rural students have raised with me:

The lack of networks of rural students:

The University culture in Australia is that urban students stay in their home city and it is not uncommon for university students to not move out of the same social circles that they moved through in high school. This affords them advantages over any student that has to move to attend their chosen institution. This comes in the form of having a developed social network to go to for emotional support, financial support, friendship and finding employment.

Rural students who go to residential colleges are part of an environment in which rural students can easily build a network of friends and relationships. However, they are prohibitively expensive and out of the reach of most budgets. Rural students not attending these institutions can feel on the fringe of established networks of rural students. In my consultations, those rural students who did not attend a residential college said that they felt isolated, especially in their first one or two years of study.

Why this matters is that students that have strong social networks are supported in numerous ways. Having roots within a city can help in finding employment, something that rural students told me was difficult for them.

Difficulty in Accessing Information:

Rural students often expressed feelings of frustration when it came to determining the support that has been set up to help them. Only one student that I talked to had received an equal access grant from the Adelaide University Union (and students I had been in contact with after this did not know they were entitled to it) and many expressed that they had experienced difficulty in accessing benefits that they are entitled to from government agencies (such as Youth Allowance etc).

The most common complaint was that there is no centralised webpage or resource within the university website that could tell them what they were or were not entitled to and how they could go about accessing these resources.

Some pages on resources that may be accessed by rural students did not indicate anywhere online that rural students were entitled to them.

Accommodation Affordability:

All students commented on the high cost of university accommodation. University students without employment or assistance from family will find it hard to live off of payments and live in university housing. The high cost of even the cheapest university affiliated residential options are prohibitively expensive for students with no source of income outside of government payments considering the cost of groceries etc.

Generally, the cheapest option for accommodation for Adelaide students is the private rental markets. This also places rural students at a disadvantage. Not having an established network limits options to secure accommodation in private rental markets as it is harder to cosign a lease or sublet with people rural students know and trust. Many rural students expressed that they wished they had more guidance in navigating the private rental market when they first moved to the city.