



Smart way to make your career choice

By LAURA CENCIGH

WHEN it comes to choosing a course to study, it's advisable to shop around and consider all your options.

This is the best time of the year to do it, as educational institutions are opening their doors to show prospective students what they're all about.

After all, the course you choose will absorb a significant amount of your time, energies and money. It could also influence the range of career opportunities which will be open to you once you graduate.

This is especially the case if you're not sure whether to study at university, TAFE or at a private college.

Marketing and administration coordinator for the School of Audio Engineering (SAE), Tennille Hogan, said going to open days were a great way to get familiar with the facilities and environment on offer at different educational institutions.

"There's so much emphasis on theoretical classes. However, seeing the facilities for practical learning is very important," she said.

"It also gives students the ability to go somewhere to see the space and decide whether or not they can see themselves there in the future."

Some colleges offer the option to participate in workshops before enrolling in a course. This enables prospective students to get a sense of the course content and teaching style. These workshops usually cost between \$200 to \$500, but according to Hogan, can be a wise investment. "If you are going to be accumulating a \$40,000 hecs debt, \$500 is not a bad investment to make sure

you're doing the right thing first," she said.

The University of Western Sydney open day will be held at their Parramatta campus tomorrow. Science students will conduct experiments for the crowd, while those considering studying law can sit in on a moot court trial.

Academics will be on hand to answer any question, and information on scholarships and alternative entry opportunities will also be available on the day.

Marketing officer, Steve Kerr, said the event would also give visitors the opportunity to get a sense of the social side of campus life.

"The student representative council will be there to talk to them about social clubs and social activities that you can get involved in," he said.

Kerr emphasised the need for anyone looking at tertiary education options to do their research.

"One of the best ways is to make comparisons," he said. "Go to two or three different places you had in mind, compare the facilities, the teaching staff and the specific subjects taught in each course and make an educated decision.

"If you're going to university, you're going to be spending three to five years there, so the decision should be based on something that you can interact with and see, rather than just read about."

Many institutions keep their prospective students entertained with live performances and offer showbags and free lunches at open days.

So, doing the rounds between TAFEs, universities and colleges can also make for a fun day out.

