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Government and systemic education cheapest in REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Regional Western Australia is the most affordable region in Australia to educate a child at a government or systemic¹ school according to exclusive research released today.

The ASG Planning for Education Index has discovered for a child born in 2017 the forecast cost of a government education in regional Western Australia is \$44,783², 14 per cent or \$7165 less than the national regional average (\$51,948), and well below Australia's most expensive regions, regional Victoria (\$54,510), and regional New South Wales (\$53,806).

The survey also revealed the cost of a systemic education in regional Western Australia is the nation's most affordable at \$147,522, 17 per cent or \$31,171 below the national regional average (\$178,693), and significantly more affordable when compared to regional Queensland (\$199,328) and regional South Australia (\$197,508).

The forecast cost of a private education in regional Western Australia (\$319,135) is also \$22,676 less than the national regional average (\$341,811) and second only to regional South Australia (\$295,924) as the country's most affordable.

The ASG Planning for Education Index also forecasts preschool or kindergarten in Australia could cost parents between \$2818 and \$8506 depending on the school type.

The survey also discovered that the estimated cost of a private education across regional Australia has soared by 61 per cent in the past decade. For a child born in 2017 the forecast cost of a private education across regional Australia is \$341,811, a jump of \$130,148 compared to a child born in 2007 (\$211,663).

The estimated cost of a regional systemic education has also skyrocketed by 52 per cent over the same period to \$178,693, while the estimated cost of a government education has climbed 19 per cent over the decade to \$51,948.

Based on more than 12,500 responses, the index calculates a range of variables including school fees, transport, uniforms, computers, school excursions and sporting trips to determine the cost of education.

School fees, the cost of extracurricular activities including excursions and uniforms have all risen in the past year, however computers and transport costs have fallen when compared to 2016.

ASG member and mother of two Kylie Unkovich says sending Jaxon (year 5) and Caleb (year 4) to a private school in Port Headland is not a cheap exercise.

¹ A systemic education includes religious schools e.g. Catholic, Anglican, Uniting Church, Buddhist, Islamic or Hindu

² These figures are the average estimated costs and represent the highest amount parents and families could expect to pay.

"My husband and I have had to manage the costs quite carefully. We've got an investment property and the rental income went towards paying for their education, but in the past 18 months returns have dropped and we've had to pay the difference to cover our mortgage.

We have definitely felt the pinch, especially when fees are approximately \$5000 on top of textbooks, uniforms, excursions and incursions. I'm looking forward to receiving the ASG funds and we won't know what to do with ourselves when the extra money comes around.

Education is huge for us and we want Jaxon and Caleb to be well-informed and well-rounded individuals, so they can make their own choices and pursue their dreams. Jaxon is considering making movies for YouTube so I always encourage him to keep that aspiration alive. Caleb is my active monkey, so I've promoted the idea of a rescue ranger where he can jump out of a helicopter."

ASG CEO John Velegrinis says the cost of education has risen at two and a half times the rate of inflation over the past decade.

"Our research predicts the cost of education will increase, irrespective of whether you send your child to a government, systemic or private school.

The estimated cost of a government education across regional Australia has jumped \$8443 in the past decade. That is why we encourage parents to start planning for education as early as possible, even from the moment their child is born."

Mr Velegrinis says Australians are fortunate to have excellent government, systemic and private schools to choose from, but costs can spiral out of control.

"If you have three children, the cost of educating them in Western Australia's regional private education system could reach almost \$1 million. That's more than the purchase price of the average family home.

We advocate parents use a disciplined approach by putting a little bit away each week so they can financially afford to meet their children's educational goals and aspirations."

Independent statistician and Managing Director of foreseexchange Charlie Nelson says a range of economic factors influence the cost of education.

"Employment growth, hourly wages and inflation all impact the cost of living, which puts extra strain on the family budget.

With school fees likely to rise further, it has never been more important for parents to financially plan for their child's future."

For more information about ASG call 131 ASG (131 274) or visit www.asg.com.au

Summary of total forecast education costs for a child born in 2017

	Location	Public	Systemic	Private
National	Metropolitan	\$68,613	\$239,672	\$487,093
	Regional	\$51,948	\$178,693	\$341,811

Australian Capital Territory	Metropolitan	\$52,012	\$233,194	\$447,307
New South Wales	Metropolitan	\$75,080	\$250,862	\$575,140
	Regional	\$53,806	\$173,354	\$364,230
Queensland	Metropolitan	\$60,135	\$243,964	\$372,037
	Regional	\$51,299	\$199,328	\$337,027
South Australia	Metropolitan	\$58,587	\$246,786	\$377,131
	Regional	\$50,079	\$197,508	\$295,924
Tasmania	Metropolitan	\$45,832	\$201,212	\$433,990
	Regional	\$48,064	\$165,042	\$350,211
Victoria	Metropolitan	\$77,371	\$224,548	\$536,515
	Regional	\$54,510	\$161,757	\$370,570
Western Australia	Metropolitan	\$56,788	\$235,800	\$407,627
	Regional	\$44,783	\$147,522	\$319,135

A very small number of responses were received from the Northern Territory in the most recent survey. As such, the provision of cost estimates for the Northern Territory in isolation would be highly unreliable and therefore have not been included. It is recommended that those in the Northern Territory refer to the national figures or the figures for adjoining states as a basis for planning. These figures are the average estimated costs and represent the highest amount parents and families could expect to pay. ASG cannot guarantee that they will represent the actual costs of education for a particular child.

Further information

For comprehensive summary sheets detailing the cost of education in metropolitan and regional Australia visit: www.asg.com.au/edcosts

Editor's notes

ASG conducts the ASG Planning for Education Index annually, asking parents to estimate education costs, which cover preschool, primary and secondary schools in Australia. Cost estimates are based on 12,500 responses collected by ASG.

To help with the costs of education, ASG Funding Solutions is an annual education costs payment service that takes the financial pressure off parents, families and guardians and allows you to pay for your child's school fees, uniforms, books and other education items in manageable instalments over the year.

ASG is a member owned organisation, helping to create educational opportunities for children. ASG has been helping families and their children for more than 40 years. During this time, more than 530,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.5 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members. For more information visit: www.asg.com.au

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