

**Tuesday 16 January, 2018**

## **Regional New South Wales – Australia's most expensive region for a government education**

Regional New South Wales is Australia's most expensive region for a government education, according to exclusive research released today.

The ASG Planning for Education Index revealed that despite a drop in the forecast cost of a government education for a child born in 2018 of \$1,437, parents in regional New South Wales could still spend \$52,369<sup>1</sup> per child. This is \$1,728 above the national regional average (\$50,641), and \$8,089 more expensive than regional Western Australia (\$44,280), Australia's most affordable region for government education.

The index discovered a similar result for parents considering the private school system, with regional New South Wales forecast to be one of the most expensive areas for a private education.

Despite the forecast cost of a private education in regional New South Wales falling \$6,700 compared to last year, it could still cost parents \$357,530, almost \$10,000 above the national regional average (\$347,572) according to ASG's data. However, regional New South Wales parents are projected to pay \$23,654 less than their regional Victorian counterparts (\$381,184).

The ASG Planning for Education Index discovered slightly better news for regional New South Wales parents considering a faith-based education<sup>2</sup> for their children.

The forecast cost remained stable, a drop of only \$50 compared to last year. Regional New South Wales parents are forecast to spend \$173,304. This is \$3,250 below the national average (\$176,554), and \$24,708 less than regional Queensland counterparts, who boasts Australia's most expensive regional faith-based education system (\$198,012).

The fall in the forecast cost of education has been heavily influenced by slower price rises within secondary education.

Despite the fall in the forecast cost of education for children born in 2018, across government, faith-based and private schools in regional New South Wales, the overall cost of education has skyrocketed 61 per cent in the past decade. This has dwarfed the 34 per cent rise in wage growth in the same period.

School fees continue to be a major education expense, but many parents fail to appreciate the additional expenses associated with funding a child's education. This includes extracurricular activities, computers, travel expenses, uniforms, school excursions and camps.

Based on more than 13,500 responses, the ASG Planning for Education Index forecasts regional New South Wales parents who plan to educate a child in the regional private school system over 13 years could pay \$50,418 for other non-fee education costs, more

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<sup>1</sup> These figures have been rounded and are provided as a guide only. ASG cannot guarantee that they will represent the actual costs of education for a particular child.

<sup>2</sup> A faith-based education includes religious schools e.g. Catholic, Anglican, Uniting Church, Buddhist, Islamic or Hindu.

than parents with children at faith-based schools (\$43,323) and government schools (\$39,469).

ASG member Nathan Hunt and his wife enrolled their daughter Ella (Year 8) into ASG to prepare for the costs of high school education.

"Ella attends a government school, which offers international trips to Japan. So, in the next few years we'd like her to benefit from these opportunities and not to be restricted because of financial reasons.

"When Ella finishes school, we would have definitely spent that amount (\$52,369) on her education. That's why we chose the support of ASG, so we don't feel like we're being ambushed when those large bills come in. My wife and I both work full time, so the cost of before and after-school care has been significant. Ella has also been doing swimming since she was one, which is a significant cost.

"It was really important that we prioritised Ella's future education and set her up for success later on in life."

ASG COO Bruce Hawkins says despite the forecast fall, the cost of education has risen at more than double the rate of inflation over the past 10 years, and outstripped the growth in wages over the same period.

"The cost of education in regional Australia has soared by 58 per cent compared to the average growth rate in wages of 34 per cent. This means that education costs are demanding a far greater share of the family wallet than in the past, placing more burden on the average family, already challenged by the rising cost of living.

"The research reveals a child's education is one of the most significant investments a family could make. If you have three children, the cost of education at a regional New South Wales private school could top \$1 million. That's significantly more than the purchase price of the average family home.

"The index also debunks the myth, a government education is a free education, with the latest figures showing regional New South Wales families could spend on average \$52,369 per child on a so-called, free education.

"ASG advocates parents use a disciplined approach by putting a few dollars aside each week, so they can financially afford to meet their children's educational goals and aspirations," says Mr Hawkins.

Independent statistician and Managing Director of foreseexchange, Charlie Nelson says it's unlikely parents will feel the fall in the forecast cost of education.

"Households are in the midst of a double whammy. Wages are stubbornly growing by less than two per cent a year, while essentials like electricity and motor fuel are rising faster than inflation.

"With less discretionary money to spend, it's going to be very hard to pay for the costs of education, which means parents who have saved will be in a better position in the long run."

For more information about ASG call 131 ASG (131 274) or visit [www.asg.com.au](http://www.asg.com.au)

## Summary of total forecast education costs for a child born in 2018

	Location	Public	Faith-based	Private
<b>National</b>	Metropolitan	\$66,320	\$240,679	\$475,342
	Regional	\$50,641	\$176,554	\$347,572
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	Metropolitan	\$50,145	\$234,975	\$424,844
<b>New South Wales</b>	Metropolitan	\$71,614	\$251,143	\$547,414
	Regional	\$52,369	\$173,304	\$357,530
<b>Queensland</b>	Metropolitan	\$58,352	\$251,866	\$368,573
	Regional	\$50,757	\$198,012	\$366,298
<b>South Australia</b>	Metropolitan	\$60,722	\$246,702	\$374,147
	Regional	\$47,316	\$188,745	\$251,705
<b>Tasmania</b>	Metropolitan	\$41,738	\$188,742	\$431,473
	Regional	\$50,687	\$176,035	\$359,961
<b>Victoria</b>	Metropolitan	\$75,263	\$223,318	\$536,683
	Regional	\$51,899	\$163,583	\$381,184
<b>Western Australia</b>	Metropolitan	\$54,766	\$235,017	\$401,191
	Regional	\$44,280	\$142,320	\$277,694

*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 estimated costs are provided as a guide only and ASG cannot guarantee that they will represent the actual costs of education for a particular child.*

## Estimated average costs to educate a child born in 2008 and 2018 across regional Australia

	2008	2018	%
<b>Government</b>	\$42,625	\$50,641	19
<b>Faith-based</b>	\$118,116	\$176,554	49
<b>Private</b>	\$219,865	\$347,572	58

### 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 13,500 responses collected by ASG.

ASG offers a range of education scholarship plans, which provide families with a tax effective means of saving for future education costs. ASG also offers families with a payment service that takes the financial pressure off parents, families and guardians. It allows them to pay school fees, and other education related expenses as billed by the school 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 540,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.8 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members. For more information visit: [www.asg.com.au](http://www.asg.com.au)

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