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Regional Queensland – Australia's most expensive region for a faith-based education

Regional Queensland is Australia's most expensive region for a faith-based education¹, according to exclusive research released today.

The ASG Planning for Education Index revealed that despite the forecast cost of a faith-based education falling in regional Queensland by \$1,316 compared to last year, parents could still fork out \$198,012² for a child born in 2018. This is \$21,458 above the national regional average (\$176,554) and \$55,692 more expensive than regional Western Australia, the nation's most affordable region for a faith-based education.

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

The forecast cost of a private education in regional Queensland jumped \$29,271 compared to last year to \$366,298. This is second behind regional Victoria (\$381,184) and \$18,726 above the national regional average (\$347,572) according to ASG's research.

Despite the fall in the forecast cost of education across regional Queensland's faith-based and government schools, influenced by slower price rises in secondary education, the overall cost of education has skyrocketed by 58 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 Queensland parents who plan to educate a child in the regional private school system over 13 years could pay \$63,462 for other non-fee education costs. This is considerably more than parents with children at faith-based schools (\$45,713) and government schools (\$34,633).

ASG mother of two Kristen Armitage sends her children to a K-12 Anglican school and says she chooses not think about the overall cost of school fees.

"I like to break it down into more manageable fortnightly payments. I pay \$650 a fortnight on school fees and private music lessons.

"For the last four years Ally (Year 9) and Milla (Year 7) have also done artistic roller staking, which is quite an expensive sport. It's about \$1000 for each pair of skates and

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

² 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.

they need two sets each, and there's the extra cost of uniforms and travel when they compete interstate.

"Being in a private school they have had amazing opportunities like going on school camps, participating in school plays, tournament of the minds, and waikakiri. Later, they may also go on overseas sporting and cultural tours.

"That's why I started with ASG to help with the costs, because I knew it was going to be hard to pay for everything by myself as I was already a single parent. I want my kids to be able to go to university and it would be impossible to pay university fees upfront without assistance. I only just finished paying off my HECS debt last year and I would like it if my children didn't start their working life having 20 years of debts to pay."

ASG's 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 Queensland 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 Queensland families could spend on average \$50,757 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

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

	Location	Public	Faith-based	Private
National	Metropolitan	\$66,320	\$240,679	\$475,342
	Regional	\$50,641	\$176,554	\$347,572

Australian Capital Territory	Metropolitan	\$50,145	\$234,975	\$424,844
New South Wales	Metropolitan	\$71,614	\$251,143	\$547,414
	Regional	\$52,369	\$173,304	\$357,530
Queensland	Metropolitan	\$58,352	\$251,866	\$368,573
	Regional	\$50,757	\$198,012	\$366,298
South Australia	Metropolitan	\$60,722	\$246,702	\$374,147
	Regional	\$47,316	\$188,745	\$251,705
Tasmania	Metropolitan	\$41,738	\$188,742	\$431,473
	Regional	\$50,687	\$176,035	\$359,961
Victoria	Metropolitan	\$75,263	\$223,318	\$536,683
	Regional	\$51,899	\$163,583	\$381,184
Western Australia	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	%
Government	\$42,625	\$50,641	19
Faith-based	\$118,116	\$176,554	49
Private	\$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

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