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Regional students paying a premium for a university education

The overall cost of a university education for regional students is set to soar according to exclusive research released today.

The ASG Planning for University Index discovered the total cost of Australia's most popular degrees (natural and physical sciences, information technology, engineering, architecture and building, agriculture, environmental studies, health, education, arts, commerce) for students who rent while at university will increase by 29 percent in the next decade.

Students who rent while completing a photography, journalism or nursing degree in 2028 can expect to spend $140,337, a jump of $31,742 compared to 2018 ($108,595).

ASG considered a range of variables to determine the total estimated cost of photography, journalism and nursing degrees for students who rent in 2028 and discovered course fees make up just 18 percent ($25,043) of the overall cost. Rent is forecast ($34,089) to make up 30 percent, with the remainder ($81,205) spent on food, transport, computers, additional study costs, extra-curricular activities and other living expenses.

The index also discovered photography, journalism and nursing students who rent while at university could pay 86 percent more than students who live at home in 2028 for the same degree.

The predicted jump in the overall cost of a university education is expected to hit regional students and their families the hardest. With more than 90 percent of Australia's universities located in major cities, the vast majority of regional students who want to attend university will be forced to relocate and rent to attain a degree.

It's forecast that engineering, industrial design and occupational therapy students who rent while at university in 2028 are estimated to spend $204,049 to get a degree, an increase of 29 percent or $46,054 compared to 2018 ($157,995).

Course fees are estimated to make up 24 percent ($48,164) of the overall cost of engineering, industrial design and occupational therapy degrees for students who live in shared accommodation. Thirty percent ($46,233) will be spent on rent with the remainder ($109,652) spent on transport, computers, additional study costs and extra-curricular activities.

The index also found engineering, industrial design and occupational therapy students who rent while at university in 2028 can expect to pay $88,245 more than their peers who live at home.

The cost of accountancy, law, vet science, dentistry and medical degrees for students who rent while at university are also forecast to soar 29 percent in the next decade.

The overall cost of a four-year law degree is predicted to cost $212,277 in 2028, an increase of $47,778 compared to 2018 ($164,499), with course fees making up 27 percent of the total cost or $56,392.

Medical students who rent while at university will also feel the pinch, with a six-year degree forecast to cost $327,198, an increase of $74,099 compared to 2018 ($253,099).

It's predicted that course fees will make up 26 percent ($86,640) of the overall cost of a medical degree in 2028. Thirty percent will be dedicated to rent ($71,772) with the remainder ($168,786) spent on food, transport, computers, additional study costs and extra-curricular activities.

The ASG Planning for Education Index also discovered medical students who rent while at university in 2028 could pay $137,059 more than their classmates who live in the family home while studying the same degree.

Ex-ASG student Srajan Singh is in his fourth year of a Bachelor of Medical Studies/Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). Srajan has been renting since he started his course in 2015 and says the costs are "horrific". He lived in Sydney for the first two years, and is now based at the Port Macquarie clinical campus.

"When I was in Sydney I forked out about $300 per week on rent and had to be really thrifty on grocery shopping.

"My family lives in Muswellbrook, which is about 150 kilometres from Newcastle. I could have gone to a closer university, but jumped at the opportunity when I was offered a place at UNSW. The costs of travelling back home, once every week or two weeks, also piled up, with a one way ticket about $30.

"If it wasn't for mum and dad, I couldn't have done it. They pay for my uni fees and the ASG scholarships covered all related uni costs for the first three years. I'm a resident advisor at the clinical campus and I also work on the side doing freelance journalism and design work to help pay the bills to take the pressure off my parents."

ASG CEO Tim Mitchell-Adams says the index highlights the intense financial strain a university education can place on the family budget.

"Students, parents and grandparents are often left dumbstruck by the total cost of a university degree," Mr Mitchell-Adams says.

"The Higher Education Loan Program definitely helps with tuition, but course fees make up a small component of the overall cost of a university education.

"Regional families are often hit hardest by the total cost of a university education, with country kids often forced to relocate to the city and rent while studying.

"It's a financial burden many city-based parents don't have to deal with."

"It's smarter to prepare and save for the overall cost of a university degree before you set foot on campus, otherwise you could find yourself trapped by debt."

ASG helps parents create educational opportunities for their children, by providing a structured means to prepare for the cost of their children's education, irrespective of their background.

Parents and students can use ASG's free online HELP debt calculator to model the total costs of a university education. By factoring in the cost of interest associated with this

debt, students and parents are given a comprehensive picture of the total cost of university education.

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

Summary of total university costs in 2018 and 2028.

Course	Total course and living costs in shared accommodation		Total course and living costs in family home	
Start year	2018	2028	2018	2028
Design (3 years)	$108,595	$140,337	$61,265	$75,275
Education (4 years)	$146,633	$189,676	$82,534	$101,431
Computer Science (3 years)	$117,016	$150,989	$69,686	$85,927
Engineering (4 years)	$157,995	$204,049	$93,896	$115,804
Business Studies (3 years)	$121,836	$157,087	$74,506	$92,025
Law (4 years)	$164,499	$212,277	$100,400	$124,032
Veterinary Science (5 years)	$208,242	$268,964	$126,844	$156,731
Medicine (6 years)	$253,099	$327,198	$153,851	$190,139

Further information
For comprehensive summary sheets detailing the cost of a university education visit:
www.asg.com.au/unicosts

To use ASG's HELP debt calculator and predict the cost of education visit: www.asg.com.au/calculator

Editor's notes
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 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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