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**The costs of educating a child in Australia
*Parents could spend more than half a million dollars on education costs***

Families¹ could spend more than \$550,000 on their child's education according to exclusive research released today.

The ASG Planning for Education Index shows for a child born in 2016 the forecast cost of a private education in Sydney is \$552,351, 18 per cent above the national metropolitan average (\$468,397) and significantly more expensive than Melbourne (\$512,283), Canberra (\$431,538) and Hobart (\$421,309). Brisbane is the most affordable city for a private school education (\$360,044).

The survey finds regional Victoria (\$353,857) is the most expensive region in Australia to educate a child in the private school system, eight per cent above the national regional average (\$328,981). Regional South Australia is estimated to be the most affordable region for a private school education (\$287,128), \$41,853 less than the national regional average (\$328,981).

The index also reveals Sydney is the most expensive city in Australia for a systemic² education. For a child born in 2016 the forecast cost of a systemic education in Sydney is \$240,768, \$10,387 more than the national metropolitan average (\$230,381).

Regional Queensland is forecast to be the most expensive regional area in Australia to educate a child in the systemic school system. Parents in regional Queensland are estimated to spend \$193,262, 12 per cent above the national regional average (\$172,331). Regional WA is forecast to be the most affordable at \$143,139, 17 per cent less than national regional average for a systemic education.

The survey shows Melbourne (\$75,193) is the most expensive city in Australia to educate a child in a government school. Melbourne is 12 per cent above the national metropolitan average (\$66,862) and more expensive than Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide.

Regional Victoria (\$53,245) is also forecast as Australia's most expensive region to educate a child in the government system, ahead of regional New South Wales (\$52,598) and regional Queensland (\$50,478). Regional WA is estimated to be the most affordable region (\$43,594), \$7,236 less than the national regional average (\$50,920).

The ASG Planning for Education Index also forecasts preschool or kindergarten in Australia will cost parents between \$2,774 and \$8,330 depending on the school type. In Canberra, these costs cover expenditure such as transport and clothing as there are no fees for preschool.

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

¹ ABS data shows the average Australian family has 1.9 children

² A systemic education includes religious schools e.g. Catholic, Anglican, Uniting Church, Buddhist, Islamic or Hindu

Interestingly, the cost of certain variables measured as part of the ASG Planning for Education Index have not increased over the past year. For example, the costs for computers and transport costs, including the price of fuel, have declined compared to last year, while the cost of books has remained stable.

ASG member and father of three, Paul Preobrajensky says he plans to send his children Noah (year four), Eden (year two) and Abel (kindergarten) to a Catholic high school which will cost him a total of around \$30,000 each year.

"We could absorb those costs if there were no other expenses around, but that's not the reality. The reality is I have three boys and there are other activities to pay for like karate and soccer, and hopefully music and arts in the future.

"Both my wife and I have multiple post graduate degrees and we envisage the boys will have at least one degree each, and that's where it's going to get really expensive. We will support them in whatever they want to do, but not continuing their education is not an option. We joined ASG when the children were young as a savings plan and that will definitely help to offset the costs of education."

ASG CEO John Velegrinis says the cost of education continued to rise at more than twice the rate of inflation over the past decade.

"Regardless of whether you send your children to a government, systemic or private school, the costs of that education will clearly increase which is why we advocate that parents start planning for education as early as possible, even from the moment their child is born.

"We're very fortunate in Australia to have a variety of excellent government, systemic and private schools. If you have two or three children, the cost of a private education could be higher than the purchase price of the family home. We advocate parents use a disciplined approach by putting a little bit away each week so they financially can afford their children's educational goals and aspirations."

Independent statistician and Managing Director of foreseexchange Charlie Nelson says the current economic climate is having an effect on education.

"A sudden increase in education costs would certainly be painful in the current low income growth environment.

"With school fees increasing faster than incomes, it has never been more important for parents to financially plan for their child's future as early as possible."

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

Summary of total education costs for a child born in 2016

	Location	Public	Systemic	Private
National	Metropolitan	\$66,862	\$230,381	\$468,397
	Regional	\$50,920	\$172,331	\$328,981
Australian Capital Territory	Metropolitan	\$50,385	\$223,940	\$431,538

New South Wales	Metropolitan	\$73,063	\$240,768	\$552,351
	Regional	\$52,598	\$167,021	\$349,941
Queensland	Metropolitan	\$58,843	\$235,563	\$360,044
	Regional	\$50,478	\$193,262	\$326,762
South Australia	Metropolitan	\$57,459	\$239,053	\$365,976
	Regional	\$49,593	\$191,973	\$287,128
Tasmania	Metropolitan	\$45,114	\$196,089	\$421,309
	Regional	\$47,425	\$160,664	\$340,214
Victoria	Metropolitan	\$75,193	\$214,958	\$512,283
	Regional	\$53,245	\$154,703	\$353,857
Western Australia	Metropolitan	\$55,250	\$227,442	\$393,870
	Regional	\$43,594	\$143,139	\$308,323

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.

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 Planning for Education Index annually, asking parents to estimate education costs, which cover preschool, primary and secondary schools in Australia. This survey includes 12,500 responses relating to the number of responses acquired from a combination of the 2013 and 2015 surveys. Data from both surveys has been combined to increase the sample size and precision of the estimates. The 2015 estimates reported are an average of the data acquired in the 2015 survey and the 2013 data, adjusted for inflation using known ABS CPI increases.

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 520,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.3 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members. For more information visit: www.asg.com.au

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