

Tuesday 7 March 2017

Regional students are worse off

Students from regional Australia are likely to continue paying a significant premium for a university education according to exclusive research released today.

The ASG Planning for University Index, which considered a range of variables including university course fees, living expenses, transport, computers, study placements and accommodation discovered a widening financial gap between students who live at home while attending university and students who rent.

With more than 90 per cent of Australia's universities located in major centres, the vast majority of regional students who want to attend university are forced to relocate and rent to attain a degree.

It is estimated medical students enrolled at university this year who live at home for the duration of a six year degree will be \$102,580 better off than students who rent.

Students living at home who complete a four year law degree are estimated to be \$66,027 better off, with photography, journalism and nursing students who live at home over three years also better off by \$48,670.

The Index also discovered students who rent are forecast to pay on average \$148,623 to complete a four year engineering or occupational therapy degree, compared to \$82,596 for students who live at home.

The research also found veterinary science and dental students who rent could expect to pay \$196,491 to undertake their five year degree, compared to just \$112,502 for students living at home.

The ASG Planning for University Index indicated the total estimated cost of accounting, economics, human resources, law, veterinary science, dentistry and medical degrees have jumped 22 per cent since 2007, while journalism, nursing, teaching and psychology degrees have risen by an estimated 21 per cent in the past decade for students living at home.

In dollar terms, modern day accountancy, economics and human resources students living at home are estimated to pay \$11,855 more than their 2007 contemporaries.

Students who rent are worse off, with the Index revealing the overall cost of the same degrees has risen by an estimated \$23,404 or 26 per cent in the past decade.

According to the research there is little relief in sight as the trend is set to continue, with the overall cost of a university education forecast to jump up at least 32 per cent for many students by 2027.

When cost of living expenses are added to the mix, students who live at home while studying a three year university degree in 2027 are predicted to be \$68,984 better off than students who rent.

The ASG Planning for University Index also predicts students who rent in 2027 could spend \$316,200 to complete a six year medicine degree, with engineering and industrial design students who rent forecast to fork out \$196,509 to attain their four year degree.

Living at home wasn't really an option for engineering student Joshua Green who is in his fifth year of a Bachelor of Engineering Co-op and Diploma in Professional Practise at Central Queensland University in Rockhampton.

"My family are in Gladstone so I really had to move up to Rocky to study. I live in shared accommodation but even still it added about an extra \$30,000 to my course fees.

I've had a few part-time jobs but fortunately the Co-op course also offers paid placement so that helps pay the bills."

ASG CEO John Velegrinis says the cost of a university education can put intense financial strain on family budgets.

"Many parents plan for the cost of primary and secondary education only to be blindsided by the total cost of attaining a university degree which can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The cost is exacerbated if parents have two or three children who want to attend university, with the Index revealing some families may spend close to \$1 million dollars in 10 years' time."

Mr Velegrinis also says the Index clearly showed that students who live at home while attending university will be significantly better off financially than students who rent.

"Many students, particularly those from regional areas don't have the opportunity to live to home while attending university. Many have no option but to rent if they want to attain a degree."

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, which allows students and parents to model the total costs of a university education. By factoring in the cost of interest associated with any debt because of study, 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 2007, 2017 and 2027.

Course	Total course and living costs in shared accommodation			Total course and living costs in family home		
	2007	2017	2027	2007	2017	2027
Photography (3 years)	\$81,073	\$101,642	\$134,681	\$43,952	\$52,972	\$65,697

Psychology (4 years)	\$110,073	\$137,419	\$182,271	\$59,223	\$71,392	\$88,571
Horticulture (3 years)	\$87,571	\$109,943	\$145,231	\$50,450	\$61,273	\$76,247
Engineering (4 years)	\$118,828	\$148,623	\$196,509	\$67,978	\$82,596	\$102,809
Accountancy (3 years)	\$91,290	\$114,694	\$151,269	\$54,169	\$66,024	\$82,285
Law (4 years)	\$123,839	\$155,035	\$204,658	\$72,989	\$89,008	\$110,958
Veterinary Science (5 years)	\$157,315	\$196,491	\$259,615	\$92,160	\$112,502	\$140,277
Medicine (6 years)	\$191,587	\$239,099	\$316,200	\$111,915	\$136,519	\$170,261

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:
<http://www.asg.com.au/calculator>

Editor's notes

The Australian Scholarships Group (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

Media contact

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