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The cost of education more affordable in the nation's capital - CANBERRA

Canberra is one of Australia's most affordable cities to educate a child according to exclusive research released today.

The ASG Planning for Education Index discovered for a child born in 2017 the forecast cost of a government education in Canberra is \$52,012¹, 24 per cent below the national metropolitan average (\$68,613) and second only to Hobart (\$45,832) as the nation's most affordable.

The index also revealed the forecast cost of a government education in Canberra is \$25,359 more affordable than Melbourne (\$77,371) and \$23,068 more affordable than Sydney (\$75,080), Australia's two most expensive capitals for a government education.

The estimated cost of a systemic² education in Canberra (\$233,194) is \$6478 below the national metropolitan average (\$239,672) and much more affordable when compared to Sydney (\$250,862) and Adelaide (\$246,786).

The research also found the forecast cost of a private education in Canberra (\$447,307) is eight per cent less than the national metropolitan average (\$487,093) and well below Australia's most expensive cities for a private education, Sydney (\$575,140) and Melbourne (\$536,515).

The ASG Planning for Education Index also forecasts preschool or kindergarten in Australia could cost parents between \$2818 and \$8506 depending on the school type. In Canberra, these costs cover expenditure such as transport and clothing as there are no fees for preschool.

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

School fees, the cost of extracurricular activities including excursions and uniforms have all risen in the past year, however computers and transport costs have fallen when compared to 2016.

ASG member and Bungendore mother of two Rhonda Pilgrim says her parents were very committed to her education and she wants the same for her daughters, Christina (year 10) and Dannielle (recent graduate).

"Having a passion for education was something I grew up with and my husband is also a public high school teacher. We've both got degrees, so for us giving our children the best possible education has been absolutely critical.

Contributing money over time into ASG has been really simple. ASG has allowed us to give our children everything they wanted because we started planning early.

¹ These figures are the average estimated costs and represent the highest amount parents and families could expect to pay.

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

Music is a really big part of our daughter's lives. We have easily spent \$10,000 a year in the past few years just on tuition, ensembles, music camps, performances and uniforms. Dannielle also toured Japan with the ACT senior school concert band and these expenses are on top of school fees which have been approximately \$2000 per year."

The research also discovered that the estimated cost of a private education has skyrocketed by 64 per cent in the past decade across metropolitan Australia. For a child born in 2017 the forecast cost of a private education across metropolitan Australia is \$487,093, a jump of \$190,820 compared to a child born in 2007 (\$296,273).

The estimated cost of a systemic education has also soared by 57 per cent over the same period to \$239,672, while the estimated cost of a government education has climbed 25 per cent over the decade to \$68,613.

ASG CEO John Velegrinis says the cost of education has risen at two and a half times the rate of inflation over the past decade.

"Our research predicts the cost of education will increase, irrespective of whether you send your child to a government, systemic or private school.

The estimated cost of a government education across metropolitan Australia has jumped \$13,587 in the past decade. That is why we encourage parents to start planning for education as early as possible, even from the moment their child is born."

Mr Velegrinis says Australians are fortunate to have excellent government, systemic and private schools to choose from, but costs can spiral out of control.

"If you have three children, the cost of educating them in Canberra's private education system could top \$1.3 million. That's significantly more than the purchase price of the average family home.

We advocate parents use a disciplined approach by putting a little bit away each week so they financially can afford to meet their children's educational goals and aspirations."

Independent statistician and Managing Director of foreseexchange Charlie Nelson says a range of economic factors influence the cost of education.

"Employment growth, hourly wages and inflation all impact the cost of living, which puts extra strain on the family budget.

With school fees likely to rise further, it has never been more important for parents to financially plan for their child's future."

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 2017

	Location	Public	Systemic	Private
National	Metropolitan	\$68,613	\$239,672	\$487,093
	Regional	\$51,948	\$178,693	\$341,811
Australian Capital Territory	Metropolitan	\$52,012	\$233,194	\$447,307

New South Wales	Metropolitan	\$75,080	\$250,862	\$575,140
	Regional	\$53,806	\$173,354	\$364,230
Queensland	Metropolitan	\$60,135	\$243,964	\$372,037
	Regional	\$51,299	\$199,328	\$337,027
South Australia	Metropolitan	\$58,587	\$246,786	\$377,131
	Regional	\$50,079	\$197,508	\$295,924
Tasmania	Metropolitan	\$45,832	\$201,212	\$433,990
	Regional	\$48,064	\$165,042	\$350,211
Victoria	Metropolitan	\$77,371	\$224,548	\$536,515
	Regional	\$54,510	\$161,757	\$370,570
Western Australia	Metropolitan	\$56,788	\$235,800	\$407,627
	Regional	\$44,783	\$147,522	\$319,135

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 figures are the average estimated costs and represent the highest amount parents and families could expect to pay. ASG cannot guarantee that they will represent the actual costs of education for a particular child.

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 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 12,500 responses collected by ASG.

To help with the costs of education, ASG Funding Solutions is an annual education costs payment service that takes the financial pressure off parents, families and guardians and allows you to pay for your child's school fees, uniforms, books and other education items 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 530,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.5 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members. For more information visit: www.asg.com.au

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