

MEDIA RELEASE

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More Australians Choose a Good Time over Kids Education

Almost 400,000 Australian parents are choosing a 'good time' over private schools in a challenge to the widely-held notion that parents are willing to 'go without' for their childrens' education.

The Bankwest "Cost of Kids and School" report has revealed that almost a third of all private school parents would pull their kids out of school before sacrificing everyday luxuries like going to the movies or a holiday.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics more than 1.1 million children are educated in the private school system.

The latest Bankwest Social Indicator Series report shows that nearly 40% of Australians say they are not willing to forgo leisure/recreation activities (going out to dinner with friends, yoga classes, movies etc) to cover private education costs, while one in three say education costs wouldn't get in the way of a holiday.

"It's surprising to see such a large number of parents say they aren't prepared to budge on lifestyle given the widely held perception that parents will sacrifice nearly anything in the interests of their kids," Bankwest spokesman Adrian Bradley said.

"Our research confirms many families feel the education their children will receive from government schools is more than satisfactory and, as a result, are channelling their finances towards other priorities."

Even so, Australian parents are digging deeper to cover a range of non-fee related education expenses at both private and government schools. It now costs \$2100 to send a child to primary school (excluding fees) and \$3200 for a secondary year student (excluding fees).

Significant annual "out of pocket" expenses include:

- Computers (hardware and internet access): \$797
- School uniforms: \$572
- School trips and events: \$557
- Extra-Curricular activities such as sports: \$497
- Textbooks: \$334
- Stationary and incidentals: \$190
- Tutors: \$219

"These costs are broadly the same for parents who choose to send their children to private schools, although private school parents will need to stump up a lot more for additional school fees," Mr Bradley said.

"Before and after school care" at \$614 is the biggest out of pocket expense (excluding fees) for all primary school children, while computers (hardware and internet access) tops the bill for all secondary school children at \$797.

NSW is the most expensive state for primary and secondary school children incidental expenses (\$2639 and \$4912) while Western Australia is the cheapest (\$1432 and \$2799).

More than 500 Australian parents with school children were surveyed nationally for this study in January this year.

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