

## Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments

Australian Government  
Productivity Commission

10/10/2019

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you regarding the plan to abolish the remote area tax concessions and payments. I am writing this as a resident of the Pilbara for the last 25 years, and as a home owner, a young parent and someone who has been not only a resident in the Pilbara but a big part of the community through both work and volunteering.

Here is an idea of what it is like to be a Pilbara resident, you might think that it is all massive wages, but unless you work in the mines the wages are minimum wage and on par with everywhere else in Australia. Cost of living in a remote area is increasing and the enticements to stay soon fade, with the Pilbara and other remote areas in Australia being the major resources for not just Australia but the world, then why shouldn't we receive a small bonus in our TAX returns to help us?

I have worked for many local businesses and watch just as many shut their doors due to the ever rising cost of operating a business in the Pilbara.

As a rate payer, the costs of owning a home are almost unaffordable, with water, power and rates constantly rising. Power bills exceeding \$2000 in summer months to run air conditioners that you cannot live without. Not to mention the struggles to obtain a home loan in the first place with some banks wanting 30% deposits due to the unstable property market.

Renting is equally unaffordable with the increased cost of living and recent rent increase with the new mining 'boom' and tenants told that if they don't agree to the rental increases then they have to vacate their houses, keeping in mind that there are only 30 available properties in Karratha to rent/buy. And instead of growing a

town that is meant to be a 'city' the major recourse companies are putting money into camps for FIFO workers rather than building houses and growing a town and community.

The only thing that came out of calling Karratha a 'city' is that we are worse off because subsidies were cut so residents are treated as if they live in a city not a remote area.

As a parent who takes their children to a Dr you have to wait a week to see because there aren't enough Drs available and you don't want to crowd the already over crowded hospital with a non-medical emergency, then when you can finally see the Dr you waited a week for you pay \$85 to see them because no one in the Pilbara bulk bills. If you want to see a specialist you have to fly to Perth or wait two to three months to see one and that's if a specialist consults here in the first place.

The cost of travel by air out of Karratha is one of the most expensive flights in Australia and completely unaffordable by most families.

The quality of fruit and vegetables being 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and some already rotten before you even buy it or having to throw it out after a few days because it doesn't keep.

Many of the people receiving this TAX offset pay so much of their wage in TAX and receive nothing back, sometimes the offset is the only amount they actually receive. I mean really \$388 is small for a hard working person that already pays an enormous amount of TAX that they don't see again.

I could really go on for another two pages about why you shouldn't remove this TAX offset, please consider the people that live in these remote towns and the cost of living here before you remove it.

Yours sincerely

Carissa Ives

Karratha WA