

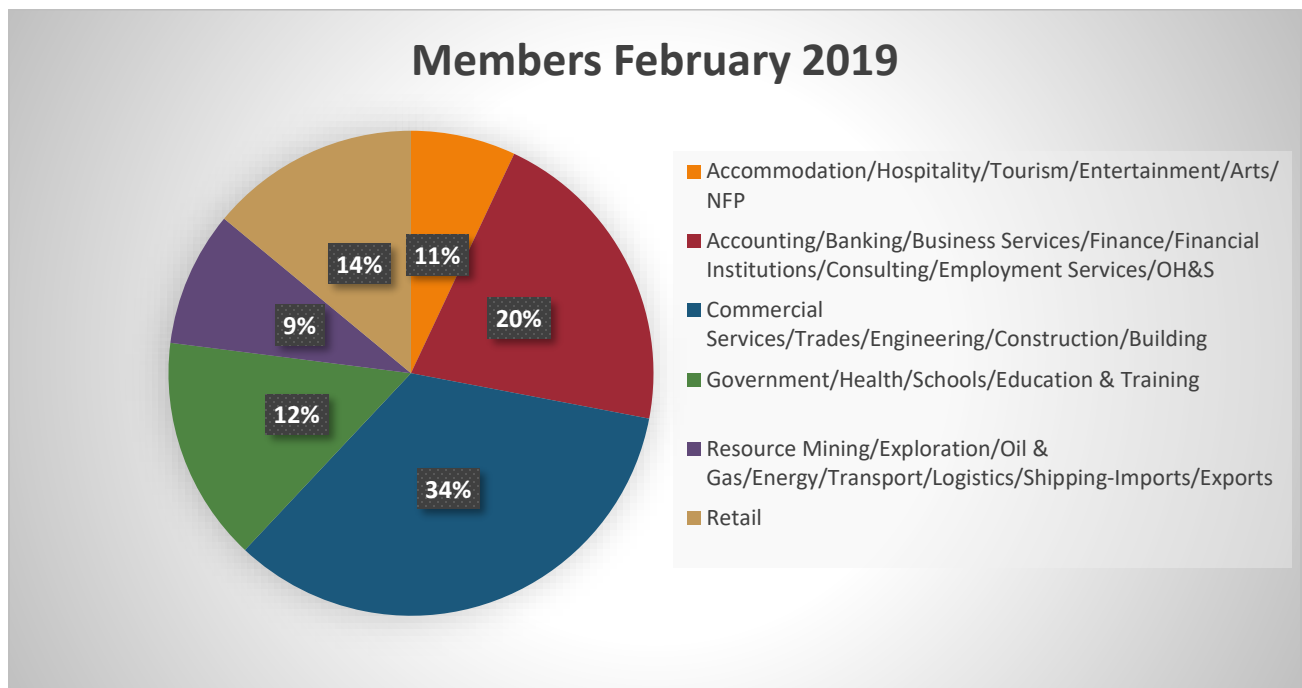


SUBMISSION

REMOTE AREA TAX CONCESSIONS AND PAYMENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Kalgoorlie Boulder Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KBCCI) is a member based not for profit organisation. We currently represent over 500 members, including hospitality, tourism, retail, financial, consultancy, education, mining and resources, transport, not for profits and many more industries throughout the Goldfields.



The KBCCI also sit on the Growing Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Support Business and Industry who will also be making a submission, which the KBCCI supports.

The current rules with respect to the FBT remote Area Housing concessions remain overly complex and produce unfair outcomes as the rules apply differently to different employer employee circumstances, thereby not applying equally to all remote area employers and employees.

In March/April 2019 the KBCCI conducted a survey seeking feedback on living and working in the Goldfields compared to a capital City. 284 KBCCI members and community residence complete the survey, some of the statistics and comments are included below:-

2.0 COST AND QUALITY OF FOOD GROCERIES AND CLOTHING AFFECTS WEEKLY SPENDING

76% of people who responded to the survey confirmed their average weekly spend is more than it was in the City. 12.4% advised that it was less and 11.16 answered unsure/not applicable.

Comments from the survey:-

"Prices are nearly double what they are over east"

"Food is overpriced and fresh veg of poor quality."

"Many items sold in KBC are more expensive, and a lot of items are not stocked and need to be ordered in which adds a freight cost a lot of time. I often turn to ebay for items as they are more cost effective to the tune of hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars over the year. Food is more expensive, fruit and veg quality terrible, fuel higher, flights in and out of Kalgoorlie are ridiculous and freight costs are through the roof."

"The Goldfields is very expensive and the food is not fresh, you cannot get a lot of products"

"...our groceries doubled when we moved here"

"The cost of meat seems more expensive"

"Food prices are ridiculous here. The cost of meat is triple to Melbourne."

3.0 COST OF TRANSPORT (AIRFARES, FUEL, FRIEGHT ETC) COSTS IMPACT

On speaking to our members cost of transport comes up regularly with it affecting the end price of products and services in Goldfields.

Fuel costs are higher in the Goldfields compared to Perth or other major cities.

The KBCCI attended the Regional Airfares Workshop held in the Goldfields on 14 March. It was clear that all businesses in the room (approx. 50) all had the same concerns. Cost of airfares were excessive and as a result impacted on businesses being able to send their staff on training and attend meetings/seminars/conferences in Perth which has an impact on their business. It also has a huge impact on tourism and families being able to fly to and from Perth to Kalgoorlie to visit on a regular basis as it is out of many peoples price range. Airfare costs also impact on Goldfields residence also being able to fly to Perth for medical treatment and specialist appointments.

Comments from Goldfields Lifestyle Survey:-

“Cost of airfares to Perth to access medical services/ specialists and other services escalate the cost of living”

“Flights in and out of Kalgoorlie are very expensive, wish they would provide cheaper flights for everyday people rather than just for the mining sector”

4.0 ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

The KBCCI has previously raised our concerns with the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder CEO, John Walker and Mayor John Bowler, who discussed our concerns below with the Premier in February 2019. We have also raised our issues with Mia Davies MLA, Leader of the National Party in WA.

Issues

- A reported lack of communication between the hospital and health service providers, which prejudices treatment of patients and in some cases results in complications and more extensive and expensive treatment
- Too many fly in fly out health professionals working in the hospital, which leads to a lack of good mentoring, lack of ownership to patients, lack continuity patients
- Local GP’s only being allowed to work at the hospital on Private patients only... town in WA doing this.
- Mental Health Ward at capacity and patients transferred to other unlocked wards leading to tragic outcomes
- Foreign Doctors skills not up to Western standards

Possible Solutions

- Greater willingness on behalf of the hospital to share information regarding patients within privacy parameters
- Reintroduction of Forward Fellowship Program (Rural Health West)
- Financial or lifestyle incentives for GP’s to live in Regional areas
- Minister for Health visiting Kalgoorlie

Comments from recent Goldfields Lifestyle Survey:-

“Very isolated with minimal access to health care and activities for the kids. Mental health issues with most people I know due to lack of facilities and life style choices.”

5.0 COST OF UTILITES, WATER, ELECTRICITY, GAS AFFECTS YOUR HOUSEHOLD & BUSINESS

A number of our members have raised concerns regarding the cost of utility costs and the lack of providers.

Comments from the Lifestyle Survey:-

“Water is too expensive”

“We need more competition for natural gas and electricity”

6.0 COST OF LIVING IN GENERAL

On speaking to our members and the survey results a number of people have advised that the cost of living in general, such as food, fuel, rents and utility charges are high in the Goldfields.

22.08% agreed that in the Goldfields it is cheaper to rent a similar home, 56.67% disagreed and 21.25% unsure/not applicable.

62.55% of people surveyed disagreed that overall its cheaper living in the Goldfields than the city.

Comments from the Goldfields Lifestyle Survey:-

"Distance travelled and food/fuel costs coupled with less choice makes Goldfields expensive"

"Rent in the Goldfields is ridiculously high for the homes that are on offer. You can get better in Perth for a lot cheaper"

"Fuel costs 20c/litre more than in the city. Food is more expensive on average and a lot less fresh i.e. Fruit/Veg. No decent public schooling, have to put kids into private education so they can get an education. Flight costs to regional towns are disgustingly expensive and don't make sense on distance travelled"

Price of meat, vegetables and fuel is massively over inflated in the Goldfields. Similar products on the east coast from a similar distance are no where near the cost of goods in the Goldfields."

"Water too expensive"

"Rent is much higher in Kalgoorlie, I pay \$350 for a small unit, in Perth comparable would be \$200"

"Expensive fuel, no cheap days. Expensive fresh vegetables and fruits are killers, no other choice than Woollies and Coles. No Spudsheds and other cheaper options. Expensive groceries, not much options, Indian and other groceries. Not much retail shops around Kalgoorlie. Expensive house rents"

"Cost of rents high and housing that is affordable is of a low standard"

"Rent in the goldfields is ridiculously high for the homes that are on offer"

"Housing is very expensive in Kalgoorlie"

"Rent is too high for what the quality of houses we have been renting"

"Rent prices in Kalgoorlie are ridiculous!"

The KBCCI welcomes to discuss this information in person.

Regards

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