

Cheryl Portch

Burketown

<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/remote-tax/make-submission#lodge>

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To Whom It May Concern

#### REMOTE AREA TAX CONCESSIONS AND PAYMENTS

**Transport** – The only public transport we have is Rex Airlines which we can utilise (providing there is a seat available) three days a week. To catch this plane **one way** to Cairns or Mt Isa will cost you approx. \$700 to fly through Mt Isa or \$1100 to fly through Cairns. –See attached. We have no bus or train and to travel by road is 570km to Mt Isa or 1000km to Cairns. You can see by the fuel prices below that to go to the nearest city (Mt Isa or Cairns) is very costly not to mention the chances of hitting wildlife or doing a windscreen which makes the trip unaffordable.

	Burketown	Albion Brisbane
Super	\$1.76	\$ 147.5
Diesel	\$ 184.2	\$149.7

However if you need to see a specialist, get you car fixed, go to the dentist or just to get your hair done, then the closest place is Mt Isa. So when we go to Mt Isa for services we capitalise on stocking up on groceries (dry & frozen goods ). Given the remoteness of where we live and having no produce farms, groceries are very expensive. By the time our shops buy the goods at Coles, Woolworth prices and then add freight and profit then the costs of everyday items become unaffordable, especially if you had to buy all your groceries locally. A lot of people except those that are not computer literate (50% of the town) order on line which is cheaper but it doesn't help local businesses. We can get fresh food in once a week as long as the roads are open. See below for grocery comparison.

	Burketown	Woolworths
Lettuce	\$6.00	\$2.90
Dairy Farmers 2ltr milk	\$5.80	\$3.00

Education Department made the decision to send our kids to boarding school in year 7 rather than year 8. I guess they didn't take into account the cost to rural people to educate their children having to send them to boarding school for an extra year at approx. \$6000 a term and that is just for boarding and tuition. It doesn't cover travel (see above for those costs), uniforms, extra curricular activities and books. Not only that when your child turns 16 there is no family payment – I guess your child then can get a part time job however when they are at boarding school that opportunity isn't there.

If I had to go to see a dentist, then I would have to take at least 3 days off work. One day to get there and one day to return and hopefully get the problem fixed in one day or I'm up for another \$150 for accommodation. That makes seeing a dentist very expensive and if its an emergency like a broken tooth then bad luck, put up with the pain till you can get to Mt Isa because dentist is not covered with the RFDS- (our medical service that fly in once a week for clinic where we get to see a doctor).

My children live in Melbourne and ask why would I live in such a remote area as we don't see each other as often as we like not only because of the traveling time but because of the expense to get there. People in the cities can go overseas cheaper then the price I pay to get to Melbourne.

**My simple answer is it's my home.**

I have touched on 3 issues in this submission, travel, medical and education, however there are many more issues such as housing, sports, youth programs, aged care, funerals, job choice just to name a few that people in the city take for granted.

Increasing the tax concession isn't going to fix all the problems of living remotely but it can sure help. If you want families to stay in small towns and remote areas then you have to make it affordable and user friendly, especially to families with children. At least make it close to a level playing field with our city counterparts.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to voice my concerns and I implore you to take into consideration the people in remote areas when making polices and the affect it has on them not just their city counterparts.- such as the sending kids to boarding school an extra year.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Portch