

## **Admin, LACO**

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**Subject:** FW: Submission to regional airfares inquiry

**From:** Amanda Harding  
**Sent:** Friday, 28 July 2017 3:34 PM  
**To:** Committee, Economics & Industry Standing  
**Subject:** Submission to regional airfares inquiry

Hi

I moved to the Kununurra in September 2016 to start a job with Boab Health Services working mainly with the indigenous population across the East Kimberley. I am over 50 with 2 sons who attend University in and live in Perth.

Whilst I knew the cost of living up here would be more than my previous location in York, east of Perth, I did not factor the cost of return airfares back to Perth to be able to see my sons to be so prohibitive.

I enjoy working in the Kimberley and feel I would stay longer if I could get to see my family more regularly (or have them visit me) and be able to access the city more frequently. The work we do is physically and mentally challenging and relies heavily on our ability to develop strong relationships with the communities we visit. Thus, the longer we can stay, the better chance we have of achieving positive outcomes. However, in order to maintain our physical and mental health, it would be great to be able to catch up with loved ones more regularly and generally enjoy the R&R opportunities a city can offer that are not readily available in small remote towns and communities. Unlike some industries, our salaries are not huge so to be able to fly to Perth more regularly is financially prohibitive. Also, in the case of a family emergency recently, the cheapest return flight between Kununurra and Perth was in excess of \$1200 - the cost of a return flight to Europe from Perth!

I believe the high airfares are socially and professionally isolating and would be one of the factors that contribute to the high staff turnover experienced by the health sector and I'm sure other industry bodies as well.

In addition, the Kimberley is such a beautiful destination and I believe more West Australians (and travellers in general) would visit here on holiday if it was cheaper to access. This in turn would generate more tourism income, more jobs and more opportunities for local indigenous people to be able to live and work on their country. This would help towards breaking the poverty cycle that is so evident up here in the indigenous population - a social determinant that we know contributes to poor health outcomes.

I look forward to hearing the outcome of the inquiry and do hope that the positive outcome of much lower airfares can be achieved

Kind regards

Amanda Harding