

## Submission regarding regional flights – Steevylee Gow

To whom it may concern,

This topic is something that has been an issue for my husband and I for the past 8-9 years that we have lived in the Gulf region.

My family is from the Sunshine Coast and majority of our healthcare and necessities are in Cairns. For myself to fly from Normanton to Cairns on any given day, I am looking at upwards of \$600. At times, \$1200-\$1300. This is a one-way fare for one person.

If my husband wishes to travel with me (Which we often don't do, as we can't afford it) we are looking at \$1500-\$2000+ one way to Cairns. Cairns to Brisbane or the Sunshine Coast is normally around \$200-\$300 one way, each. This in total, makes it upwards of \$3500 for the 2 of us to travel to visit my family. Hence why I don't see them for 12 months at a time or more. It is not sustainable in this economy.

Generally, because there is only one flight a day we must also overnight in Cairns as the flights don't interconnect. Because they are different airlines, if you risk it and miss the flight to Brisbane, you are unable to get a credit or move your flight, you must forfeit the cost of the flight. The cost of accommodation is then on top of flight costs most times.

Flights are just one instance of the extreme costs involved with living rural. We are currently expecting our first baby in April. We have been cut off since Xmas due to flooding, so have been travelling to Normanton for scans/tests every month in an R22 helicopter. We live approximately 720km from Cairns and 600km to Mount Isa. We have been told that because I am not high risk, I am not eligible for accommodation or travel subsidies if we choose to go to Cairns/Mareeba or Atherton to birth. Only Mount Isa.

We have our helicopters serviced in Mareeba and my husband is a pilot so he can get to Mareeba much quicker/easier when needed. We have friends there who have offered me a room to help us save costs on accommodation, we have a work car based in Cairns if we are still unable to drive out of our station, and Cairns has a lot more medical services if I was to have complications. Mount Isa is not familiar to us, is far more remote and again, will incur huge flight costs for our families to visit once the baby arrives. All these decisions made by government directly affect rural and remote families who already pay top dollar for everything due to their locations.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, we are happy to answer any further questions you may have.

Thanking you,  
Steevylee & Adam Gow