

Catherine Heatley  
36 Renny Street  
Paddington NSW 2021

31 January 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

**Submission on the Proposed Changes to LAFHA/Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT)  
Reform – Living-Away-From-Home Benefits**

Just under a month ago I arrived in Sydney through a transfer with a company I have worked with for over 12 years.

My family and I are both thrilled and excited to have been given the opportunity to work and live in Australia, and we have been able to do this by been eligible for LAFHA.

We have been fortunate enough to find a property to lease, which is well over the LAFHA and our initial budget, but we have signed a lease for a minimum of 12 months due to the competitive rental property currently in Sydney.

Our daughter starts her first day at pre-school this week and my husband is currently looking for work.

Whilst I can appreciate that some people may be exploiting and taking advantage of the LAFHA programme, there are those of us who are not and genuinely require this in order to be able to live in Australia.

After uprooting my family and arriving only 3 weeks ago I am extremely worried that if this allowance were to be taken away I may have to resign from my job, break a lease, pack our bags and return home - as there is no guarantee from my employer to pick up the additional cost as part of my salary.

I am pragmatic and accept that things do change and appreciate that reviews are necessary. What I ask is that you consider reforming the allowance so those who aren't exploiting it are still eligible through provision of certain proof points.

And if the intention is for removing LAFHA permanently that it be staggered so those already on the allowance have time to adjust accordingly and make the appropriate changes to property leases etc.

Please also consider the following points that are generating additional tax revenue:

- Every dollar I earn goes back into the Australian economy;
- The skill base I bring to my employer makes them money;

- The skill base I bring to my employers clients makes them money;

Please accept this submission with the sincerity that it has been written and think about the consequences for a lot of the families on LAFHA that will be hugely affected by the proposed changes.

Please consider making the application for LAFHA more evidence based so it minimizes the exploitation of it and/or consider staggering the changes so families have time to adjust and cut their cloth accordingly.

Regards,

**Catherine Heatley**