



Life in Australia

NOTE: For further information, visit the Study in Australia website which is kept current by the Australian government –

<http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/en/Living-in-Australia>

Australia is earth's biggest island and is the sixth largest country in the world. Despite common images of the Outback and our huge desert interior, 89% of our population of more than 22 million live in modern, safe cities and towns along the east coast. Population density is among the lowest in the world, with an average of 2.5 people per square kilometre – no-one's within cooee (shouting distance) in the outback. Most people live along the eastern seaboard, with a smaller concentration on the south-western coast. Living in one of the world's most culturally diverse countries – 23% is foreign-born – Australians incorporate a wide variety of influences into the way they live and play.

Living Standards

Australia is one of the best places in the world to live while you learn. The standard of living is amongst the highest in the world, yet costs remain competitive. During term breaks, students have a wide choice of activities to enrich their experience - from cultural festivals, concerts and museums, to major sporting events.

Australia also offers excellent value for money and a standard of living which is among the highest in the world. Despite this, living expenses and tuition costs in Australia are considerably less expensive than in the UK and USA.

Ask anyone and they'll tell you that it's not hard to live the good life in Australia. It's easy to eat well, with just about any cuisine in the world being available and fresh produce on offer year-round. It's easy to get

around the cities and towns using world-class public transport. And it's easy to shop to your heart's content, in small country markets to big city shopping strips. Best of all, it's all doable on a student budget.

Culturally Diverse

More than 100 ethnic groups are represented in the Australian population. About one-fifth of all Australians were born overseas. While English is the national language, more than one in every seven, speak another language at home. We are a truly multi-cultural society living in a safe, friendly, sophisticated and harmonious society.

Democratic Government

Australia is the only nation to govern an entire continent. Politically, we are an independent Western democracy. The Australian Government administers national issues and State and Territory Governments care for regional matters.

Education

Australia has a well-developed education system with student rates amongst the highest in the world. Each year Australia welcomes an increasing number of international students, with Australia rating 3rd among English-speaking countries as a student destination (2007). Australian education has a strong international reputation for excellence. The Australian Government takes special interest in the welfare of international students and has special laws for protecting those studying in Australia on a student visa. State and Territory governments ensure that our education system is of high quality.

Australian Language

The language of instruction is English although the Australian accent is unique. Australians have interesting habits of shortening words: afternoon is "arvo" and barbeque is "barbie". Many people's names are also shortened and used in an affectionate, mateship manner: David may be "Davo", Gary, "Gazza" or John may be "Jonno".

The Climate

Our climate has warm to hot summers 15°-32°C (75°F-90°F) from December to February and mild to cool winters 8°C-19°C (50°F-65°F) from June to August. Some summer days will reach over 40°C (100°F) and some winter mornings will be around 0°C (32°F). Even during the wettest and coldest months, an overcoat and umbrella are all that you will need to keep warm and dry. Australia is renowned for its sunny days

and clear blue skies even during winter.

Transport

Australian cities have excellent public (and private) transport systems, making travelling around them simple.

Sydney

Bus - Sydney's bus network extends to most suburbs. Fares depend upon the number of 'sections' you pass through. As a rough guide, short trips cost \$1.60 and most other fares in the inner suburbs are \$2.70. For more information, visit the website at: www.sydneybuses.info/

Ferry - Sydney's ferries provide the most enjoyable way to get around the harbour. There are three kinds of ferry: regular STA ferries, fast JetCats that go to Manly (\$7.90) and RiverCats that traverse the Parramatta River to Parramatta (\$7.40). All ferries depart from Circular Quay. For more information, call 02 9207 3166 or visit the website at: www.sydneyferries.info/

Metro Light Rail & Monorail - The Monorail and Metro Light Rail are good means of transport within the centre. The Monorail circles Darling Harbour and links it to the city centre. The MLR operates 24 hours a day between Central Station and Pyrmont via Darling Harbour and Chinatown. For more information on Monorail call 02 9285 5600 or visit the website at: www.metrotransport.com.au and for Metro Light Rail call 02 9285 5600 or visit the website at: www.metrotransport.com.au

Train - Sydney has a vast suburban rail network and frequent services, making trains much quicker than buses. Trains run from around 5am to midnight. For more information visit the website at: www.cityrail.info/

Environmentally Aware

Australians are environmentally conscious and work hard to preserve the country's beautiful scenery and unique plants and wildlife. Kangaroos are quite common in rural areas and other unique creatures such as koalas, wombats, platypuses and our 'fascinating' snakes are more easily observed in wildlife reserves. Great tourist destinations such as The Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu, Ayers Rock and the Tasmanian Wilderness are among thirteen Australian World Heritage Areas listed by the United Nations.

Time Zones

Australia is divided into three time zones: Eastern Standard Time, Central Time and Western Time. Hurstville Adventist School is in the Eastern Standard Time zone. Daylight saving operates from early October until early April.

Currency

Australia's currency is the Australian dollar, made up of 100 cents. There are 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, \$1 and \$2 coins, and brightly coloured \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 plastic notes. Prices are often marked in single cents and then rounded to the nearest 5c when you pay. Changing foreign currency or travellers cheques is generally no problem at banks throughout Australia or at licensed money-changers such as Travelex or Amex in cities and major towns.

Motor Vehicles

Motorists drive on the left-hand side of the road in right hand drive vehicles. While many makes of vehicles are manufactured in Australia, many are also imported from Asia, Europe and USA.

Australia For Free

There are plenty of activities that cost nothing or very little for those on a budget. Appreciate Australia's stunning natural beauty and native animals with walks through its 500+ pristine national parks. Enjoy endless walks along continuous beaches; go people watching at fantastic markets; learn about Australia's art and heritage at excellent free galleries and museums, or attend some typically Australian festivals, like the surf life-saving competitions on beaches all around the country during summer. The list of free or cheap things to do is endless, so there's no need to let a student budget come between you and good times.

Cost of Living (Sydney)

The costs of some common items are shown to give you some idea of living costs in Sydney. Of course, as in any country, these prices may vary according to brand and where items are purchased. Some foods (especially processed foods and eating out) will also incur a Goods & Services Tax (GST).

| ITEM | AUD |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Bowl of noodles | \$6.50-\$8.50 |
| Bread loaf | \$2.50 |
| Milk (1 litre) | \$1.83 |
| Mineral Water (1 Litre) | \$1.48 |
| McDonalds Big Mac | \$3.60 |
| Newspaper | \$1.25-\$2.00 |
| Cinema ticket | \$14.80 |
| Phone call (local) | \$0.25 |
| Bus/Train/Tram Ticket (single) | \$2.10-\$4.90 |