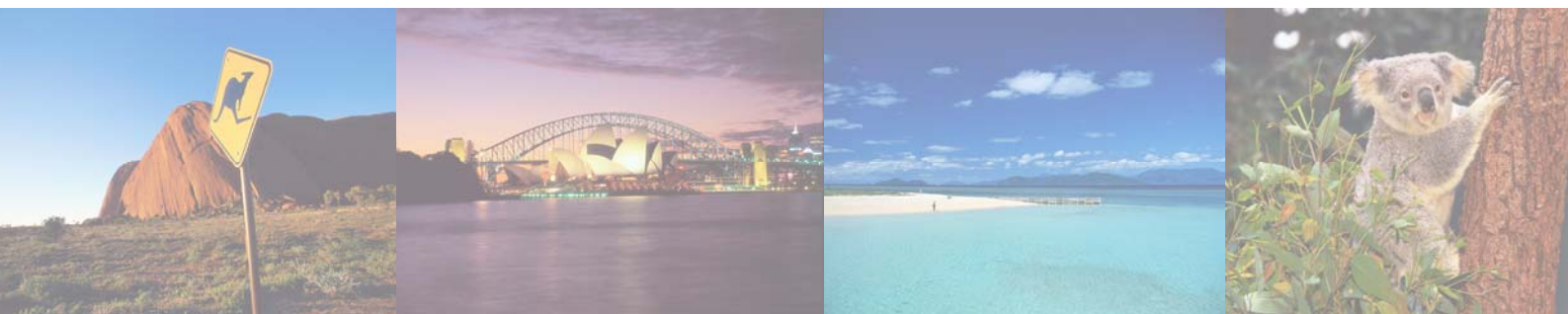




**Welcome to Australia**

**Taylor Coulter Relocation Guide 2010**



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## About Australia

Australia is an independent democracy with a population of over 20 million, with the majority living in the cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Darwin.

Australia is made up chiefly of six states and two territories. Each has its own capital and government, though the commonwealth of Australia has a federal government and a national capital, which is Canberra, located in the Australian Capital Territory, southwest of New South Wales. Australia's lifestyle reflects its mainly Western origins, but Australia is also a multicultural society which has been enriched by over six million settlers from almost 200 nations. Four out of ten Australians are migrants or the first-generation children of migrants, half of them from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people totaled 410 003 at the last census, nearly 2.2 per cent of the population. Two thirds of the indigenous people live in towns and cities. Many others live in rural and remote areas, and some still have a broadly traditional way of life. It is generally thought that Aboriginal people began living on the continent 50 000 to 60 000 years ago, and some authorities believe their occupation may date back 100 000 years.

Australia is the only nation to occupy an entire continent. Its land mass of nearly 7.7 million km<sup>2</sup> is the flattest and (after Antarctica) driest of continents, yet it has extremes of climate and topography. There are rainforests and vast plains in the north, snowfields in the south east, desert in the centre and fertile croplands in the east, south and south west. About one third of the country lies in the tropics. Australia has a coastline of 36 735km.

Isolation of the Australian island-continent for 55 million years created a sanctuary for the flora and fauna. Marsupials were saved from competition with more highly developed mammals. Birds unique to Australia also survived, and distinctive trees and plants developed. Australia's best-known animals are the kangaroo, koala, platypus and spiny anteater. Of more than 700 bird species listed in Australia, 400 - including the large, flightless emu - are found nowhere else. Australia has 20 000 species of plants, including living fossils such as the cycad palm and the grass tree, and brilliant wildflowers such as the waratah, Sturt's desert pea, the flowering cones of banksia trees, and the red and green kangaroo paw.

Australia's national anthem, Advance Australia Fair, is a revised version of a late 19th-century patriotic song. It was declared the national anthem in April 1984, and in the same year, Australia officially adopted green and gold as its national colours.



The weird and wonderful Sturt's Desert Pea

## Anzac Day

ANZAC is the acronym for Australia and New Zealand Armed Corps. On the 25 April 1915 ANZAC troops landed at Gallipoli in Turkey, marking Australia and New Zealand's entry into the Great War, and the first time Australia had fought as a nation following the 1901 Federation.

Anzac day (25<sup>th</sup> April) is the day set aside to remember those who have fought for their country during War. It is a public holiday in all states. Memorial Services are held around the country at dawn and parades of veterans of the wars are held. The traditional Anzac Day pastime involves a simple coin gambling game "two-up".

## Australia Day

Australia's national day falls on 26 January and marks the date in 1788 when Captain Arthur Phillip, of the British Royal Navy, sailed into Port Jackson (Sydney Cove). Phillip formally took possession of the eastern part of the continent for England and established a settlement, now Australia's largest city, Sydney. It is a public holiday in all states.

## Banking

Australia's major banks are –

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| ANZ                     | <a href="http://www.anz.com.au">www.anz.com.au</a>           |
| Commonwealth Bank       | <a href="http://www.commbank.com.au">www.commbank.com.au</a> |
| National Australia Bank | <a href="http://www.national.com.au">www.national.com.au</a> |
| St George               | <a href="http://www.stgeorge.com.au">www.stgeorge.com.au</a> |
| Westpac                 | <a href="http://www.westpac.com.au">www.westpac.com.au</a>   |

#### USUAL OPENING HOURS:

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Monday to Thursday | 9.30 – 4.00pm        |
| Friday             | 9.30am - 5.00 pm     |
| Saturday           | Some city banks open |
| Sunday             | Closed               |

There are many types of accounts, e.g. cheque, savings, cash management, deposit, passbook etc. It is best to discuss with the bank which types of accounts will suit your requirements. Banks charge fees on accounts, which may vary enormously, and some are free of all charges.

#### EFTPOS:

One of the most common ways to pay in shops, supermarkets, and petrol stations is by EFTPOS (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale). The transaction amount is withdrawn immediately from your account. You will be issued with a plastic card from your bank and a Personal Identification Number (PIN).

#### TO OPEN AN ACCOUNT:

If you want to open a bank account within 6 weeks of arrival in Australia you will only need your passport showing proof of current visa. After six weeks the bank is required by law to verify the identity of each signatory to an account. Identification is either through a referee who has to complete a form or on a Point Scoring system, which requires 100 points to verify identity (a passport counts as 70 points, a driving licence is 40 points, a credit card 25).

#### ATMS (CASHPOINTS) AND CREDIT CARDS:

All the major banks have Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) at many of their branches. These machines allow you to withdraw or deposit funds using a plastic card and your PIN 24 hours every day. There are also a number of credit cards available. The major credit cards used in Australia are Visa and Mastercard, which can be used worldwide. All the international credit and charge cards (e.g. AMEX) are recognised and can be used in Australia.

#### TELEPHONE AND INTERNET BANKING:

Most major banks offer both telephone and Internet banking.

### Bank Holidays

In Australia a bank holiday refers to a holiday observed by banks and financial institutions alone, and is different to a public holiday, observed by all private sector businesses. See Public Holidays.

### Buying a Car

#### NEW VEHICLES

If you intend to buy a car, the first step is to organise finances. With new cars it is often possible to borrow from the dealer – with the lending amount arranged through a financial institution.

You should be able to negotiate on price and added extras, and ensure that you know whether registration and compulsory Third Party Insurance have been included in the price, this is known as the "drive away" price. All new vehicles are covered by a 20,000 km or 12-month warranty, and some manufacturers are prepared to extend this.

## USED VEHICLES

You have the option of buying privately, with cars advertised for sale in main city newspapers and in the Trading Post ([www.tradingpost.com.au](http://www.tradingpost.com.au)) on Thursdays. Main points to be aware of are:

- There is no GST payable to a private seller.
- Ask the seller to show you a current certificate of registration and proof that they are the legal owner of the car e.g. sales receipt
- Check that the details on the certificate of registration match the details of the vehicle i.e. engine number, chassis number
- Check that there is no money owing on the vehicle and to make sure it has not been reported to the police as stolen. For more details visit [www.carsafe.com.au](http://www.carsafe.com.au).
- A test drive is important but check that the vehicle is covered by comprehensive insurance to avoid claims being made against you in the event that you have an accident while test-driving.
- Negotiate on price
- Register the vehicle within 7 days
- Arrange insurance

The other alternative is to buy from a licensed Used Car Dealer - Visit [www.carsales.com.au](http://www.carsales.com.au) to search for one in any of the states. Main points to be aware of are:

- GST is payable on the purchase price
- Second hand car dealers should provide a used car warranty to cover any repairs, which may be required after purchase for 3 months or 5,000 km.
- Check that the vehicle is covered by comprehensive insurance before you go for a test drive.
- Check that the registration papers relate to the dealer selling the vehicle and the selling address.
- Check the paperwork carefully - a Form 4 indicates the car has a standard used car warranty. A Form 8 means there is no statutory warranty. Occasionally there may be a Form 6. This means a standard used car warranty applies but the dealer is not going to repair certain items that don't affect safety such as air conditioning.

## Buying Property

Citizens and permanent residents are free to purchase as they choose. However temporary residents will have to apply for approval from the Foreign Investment Review Board. Get more information and download the application forms from the FIRB website at [http://www.firb.gov.au/content/real\\_estate.asp](http://www.firb.gov.au/content/real_estate.asp).

Private housing is purchased by either "private treaty" or by auction, with selling at auction most common. Most properties are sold through a Real Estate agent who receives commission for a successful sale from the seller.

State Governments raise significant revenue through taxes on the sale of property - known as "Stamp Duty". This is paid by the purchaser.

The legal formalities of buying are handled either by solicitors or non-legal specialists. As well as looking at the sale contract they conduct searches (eg for restrictions on land use, validity of title) and can arrange inspections (eg for termites). They also attend the final settlement & ensure all the bills are paid (eg stamp duty).

Tips for potential buyers, together with properties for sale and suburban price indicators, can be found at [www.domain.com.au](http://www.domain.com.au) and [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au).

## Car Hire

Car hire is easy to arrange through airports, hotels, rail terminals and city and suburban offices. In Australia, we insure the car, not the driver; so compulsory third party insurance and collision damage waivers are included in the premiums. Some well-known car hire and leasing companies are:

- Avis Australia [www.avis.com.au](http://www.avis.com.au)
- Budget [www.budget.com.au](http://www.budget.com.au)
- Hertz [www.hertz.com.au](http://www.hertz.com.au)
- Thrifty [www.thrifty.com.au](http://www.thrifty.com.au)

## Car Insurance

### THIRD PARTY

Third party insurance is compulsory in Australia. When people are injured in car accidents they are able to claim compensation from the driver responsible for the accident. Before a car can be registered the owner must produce a Compulsory Third Party Green Slip.

### COMPREHENSIVE CAR INSURANCE

Comprehensive car insurance is highly recommended. It covers the insured car against accidental damage, fire and theft. It also provides liability cover for damage to other vehicles or property.

Most car insurance companies will offer a reduction in the premium if written evidence is produced that a car insurance policy has been held (including from overseas and interstate) and no claim has been made on that car insurance company within the past five years.

Third party and comprehensive car insurance can be obtained from a number of insurance companies. Some of the major car insurance companies are:

|                |                  |   |
|----------------|------------------|---|
| GIO            | Ph: 13 10 10     | Web: <a href="http://www.gio.com.au">www.gio.com.au</a>                 |
| NRMA           | Ph: 13 21 32     | Web: <a href="http://www.nrma.com.au">www.nrma.com.au</a>               |
| QBE            | Ph: 1300 137 440 | Web: <a href="http://www.qbe.com/australia/">www.qbe.com/australia/</a> |
| Suncorp Metway | Ph: 13 11 60     | Web: <a href="http://www.suncorp.com.au">www.suncorp.com.au</a>         |
| AAMI           | Ph: 13 22 44     | Web: <a href="http://www.aami.com.au">www.aami.com.au</a>               |
| Allianz        | Ph: 13 10 00     | Web: <a href="http://www.allianz.com.au">www.allianz.com.au</a>         |

## Child Care within Australia

There are a number of options available depending on cost and personal preference.

### LONG DAY CARE

Ages: 0 - 5 years

Cost: Varies e.g. Sydney range is approx \$40.00 to \$60.00 per day)

Hours: 7.30 am - 6.30 pm Monday to Friday and some include Saturdays

### OCCASIONAL CARE (SHORT PERIODS UP TO 12 HOURS PER MONTH)

Ages: 0 - 5 years

Cost: Varies, between \$4.00 - \$12.00 per hour

Hours: 8.30am - 3.30pm Monday to Friday

### FAMILY DAY CARE (4/5 CHILDREN CARED FOR IN A PRIVATE HOME BY A MOTHER)

Cost: Varies e.g. Sydney \$5.00 per hour from 8.00am - 6.00pm, \$5.50 per hour at other times

Hours: variable

### PRIVATE CARE

Ages: 0 +

A five-day a week nanny, 9.00am - 5.00pm

Cost: from \$600 per week

Live in nanny with food, accommodation provided

Cost: from \$400 per week

## Climate

Being a land mass of nearly 7.7 million square kilometres Australia has extremes of climate, from temperate to tropical. The largest part of Australia is desert or semi-arid – 40% of the landmass is covered by sand dunes. Only the south-east and south-west corners have a temperate climate and moderately fertile soil. The northern part of the country has a tropical climate: part is tropical rainforests, part grasslands, and part desert.

Australia's hottest temperatures may reach 50°C, while minimum's can reach sub-zero temperatures. The continent does not have very high mountain ranges and is surrounded by mostly warm oceans. The result is that extremely cold temperatures are uncommon.

The rainfall patterns across Australia are highly seasonal. Compared to the Earth's other continental landmasses Australia is very dry.

In Australia snow can fall in the mountains of Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Tasmania. Sometimes snow has even been reported in the mountains of South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland though this is very rare.

The majority of the metropolitan cities have a similar climate typified by warm summers and mild winters, with temperatures averaging close to 20°C. Statistically the warmest month is January and the coldest month is July. Rainfall is evenly spread between summer and winter though is generally heavier in the first half of the year.

### CLIMATE IN THE STATE CAPITALS

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Adelaide:  | Temperate.  |
| Brisbane:  | Sub-tropical.   |
| Canberra:  | Temperate.  |
| Darwin:    | Tropical, with Wet/Dry seasons taking the place of Summer/Winter. |
| Hobart:    | Temperate.  |
| Melbourne: | Temperate.  |
| Perth:     | Sub-tropical to temperate.  |
| Sydney:    | Sub-tropical to temperate.  |

For detailed climate information and up-to-date weather forecasts try the Australian Bureau of Meteorology website at [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au).

### **Communications Equipment**

Before you arrive in Australia, you are advised to check if your communications equipment (for example, mobile and cordless phone, fax machine, wireless microphone, laptop computer) is safe and/or legal to operate in Australia.

Technical differences in power voltage or radio frequencies can endanger health and safety and cause interference problems. Power voltage is 240 volts/50Hz.

For more information check the Australian Communications and Media Authority website at [www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au).

For specific information on Mobile Phones and Internet please look at the relevant section in this booklet.

### **Currency**

Australian currency is decimal. Notes come in \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10 and \$5 denominations, and coins in 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, \$1 and \$2 denominations.

### **Currency Exchange**

Exchange facilities are available at all international airports in Australia. Foreign currency or traveller's cheques can be changed at most banks. If you want to calculate amounts in Australian dollars, visit the International Currency Converter at [www.xe.net/ucc](http://www.xe.net/ucc).

### **Customs**

All goods imported into Australia must be cleared by Customs, whether they are imported by air, sea or post. While imports of low value will generally be released by Customs for delivery direct to consignees, importers are responsible for obtaining a formal Customs clearance for consignments of goods above set value limits (currently \$250 for goods imported by sea or air cargo and \$1,000 for goods imported through the postal system).

Goods owned and used for at least 12 months can be brought into Australia without payment of duty and Goods & Services Tax though proof of date of purchase may be required. Goods and Services Tax applies to any imported wines and spirits.

Australian Customs and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service will subject imported household goods to an inspection. Due to Australia's unique island situation, many restrictions are in place to protect flora and fauna.

#### **THE FOLLOWING FOODSTUFFS ARE PROHIBITED ENTRY TO AUSTRALIA:**

Beef jerky (Biltong), salami, bacon, uncanned meat, popcorn, dog and cat food, honey, raw nuts, beans, eggs, fresh fruit, live plants and dairy products.

You **MUST** declare any foodstuffs when arriving in the country and present yourself to quarantine for inspection.

**GOODS SUBJECT TO PROHIBITION OR RESTRICTION ARE MANY AND VARIED. THEY MAY INCLUDE ITEMS/GOODS /SUBSTANCES AS DIVERSE AS THE FOLLOWING:**  
Certain breeds of dogs; toys and other articles containing quantities of lead, mercury, arsenic or their compounds which exceed prescribed limits; explosives; flamethrowers; daggers capable of being concealed; hand-held battery-operated devices designed to administer an electric shock; blowpipes; pistol crossbows; nunchakus; shuriken throwing irons or stars; protective jackets and vests; erasers resembling food; firearms, parts and ammunition including replicas; disposable cigarette lighters which do not meet the construction and performance standards, including child resistant features.

All household goods will be inspected by AQIS officers and may be subject to pest treatment and fumigation at the owner's expense. For more information see 'Moving Household Goods'.

If you are in any doubt about anything you are bringing into the country when arriving simply ask one of the customs officials.

Information is available from Australian Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates, or you can call Customs on + 61 2 6275 6666 or (inside Australia) 1300 363 263. Information is also available from the Customs website at [www.customs.gov.au](http://www.customs.gov.au), and from the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service website at [www.daffa.gov.au/aqis](http://www.daffa.gov.au/aqis).

## Driving in Australia

The easiest way to get around each city is by public transport (train, bus, ferry, tram, monorail). However you may prefer to drive yourself, and your own transport may be preferable if you want to get out of the cities and explore wider areas.

### REGULATIONS

Australians drive on the left side of the road. Speed limits are generally between 50 km per hour (30 mph) in some built up areas (although 60 km per hour is the most usual in towns and cities) to 110 km per hour (70 mph) on freeways, and Speed cameras are common.

The legal limit of blood alcohol while driving is 0.05% - random breath testing is conducted, and strict drink-driving laws apply. Drivers and passengers must wear seat belts. If you plan to drive in Australia you must carry your international driver's license and passport with you, as it is an offence to drive without them.

Annual registration of a car is required, the cost varies greatly depending on the size and make of car. Third party insurance is compulsory as is an annual mechanical check of the car. New cars are exempt from a mechanical check until three years old. It is compulsory for all motorcyclists and bicyclists to wear helmets.

### DRIVING TIPS

If you plan a long drive, then also plan rest breaks; there are frequent rest stops on major routes.

Remember outside of cities to watch out for native animals crossing, especially at night. A street directory is invaluable: saving you a lot of time and frustration. There is an Australian street directory on-line at [www.whereis.com.au](http://www.whereis.com.au).

## Eating Out

All cities and towns in Australia have a wide variety of restaurants and cafes to choose from and as Australia has a naturally warm climate many offer outside seating. As befits a country with such a rich multicultural population, you are able to sample the cuisine of any country that you wish: Thai, Italian, Greek, Indian, Vietnamese, Japanese, Lebanese, Nepalese, Malaysian, the list is endless. To find a specific restaurant visit [www.citysearch.com.au](http://www.citysearch.com.au).

Restaurants may be licensed, or BYO – which means you are able to bring your own wine, but the restaurant will probably charge a corkage fee per head. Tipping is not compulsory in restaurants but is standard practice to reward good service; 10% of the total of the bill is the usual amount.

Most large shopping centres in metropolitan areas have food courts with large seating areas that offer a vast selection of inexpensive take away food, you will also find all the major fast food chains represented along the freeways, highways and in towns.

## Education

The school year begins in January and is divided into four terms (in Tasmania three terms) approximately nine to twelve weeks each, with two week holidays (longer for private schools) in between each term. The summer or Christmas holidays are approximately six weeks from the middle of December until the end of January (longer for private schools).

School hours are from approximately 9 am until approximately 3 pm Monday to Friday, with sporting fixtures between senior private schools taking place on Saturdays. School uniforms are worn at all schools. It is compulsory for primary children to wear a school hat for sun protection during terms 1 and 4; the government motto for this is "No hat, no play".

In all schools there is an opportunity to participate in extra- curricular activities. Some examples of these are tennis, swimming, music, cricket, soccer, drama, ballet, karate, rugby and debating. Each individual school will inform you of the activities they have available.

The Public Health Act states all children who enter preschool or kindergarten should produce proof of immunization. You will need to have these papers available when enrolling your child in school. If you have chosen not to have your child immunized and there is an outbreak of a preventable disease you will be asked to remove your child from school while the disease is active.

Students are entitled to free travel on rail and bus services from their home to and from school. The school will provide an application form.

There are three main types of schools:

### (1) STATE OR GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

The state or government school is run by the Department of Education of each state and funded through the state government. Teachers at these schools are public servants with security of employment from the government. A small yearly fee is charged at government schools to supply the school with extra equipment and amenities. Junior schools are co-educational and are usually on separate sites to senior schools. Senior schools are co-educational or single sex depending on the area in which you live.

There are selective or specialist government schools which cater for gifted and talented students.

To gain admission to these schools children need to sit for the school's examination and meet the school's requirements (usually academic). To gain admission to government schools you need to live within the boundaries of that school; this information may be obtained through the Department of Education or the school itself. If you wish your child to attend a school outside your area an application may be made to that school and if there is a vacancy your child may be accepted.

### (2) PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The second type of school is the private school, which is run by an independent board of managers. Teachers at these schools have similar qualifications to teachers at government schools, although private schools have a much greater degree of autonomy in the hiring and firing of teachers. Fees at these schools are high though on-site facilities and student- teacher ratio reflect this. Fees range from \$6000 - \$13,000 per annum.

An application must be completed for private schools and a deposit paid. These schools are heavily booked though there is usually some allowance made for transfers from overseas and interstate. Some private schools are selective so an examination and assessment process must be completed.

### (3) CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The third main type of school is the Catholic school administered by the Catholic Education Office in each diocese. These schools are designed to serve the Catholic community though a percentage of non-Catholics are accepted.

Catholic junior schools are co-educational and serve different suburbs. In junior school children usually attend the school in their own area. Senior schools are either co-educational

or single sex depending on your preference; students do not need to attend the senior Catholic school in their immediate area, instead the parent and child make the choice. Fees are charged to attend Catholic schools, though they are not usually as high as private school fees. There are some single sex Catholic senior schools where the fees match those of private schools.

The three types of schools mentioned make up the mainstream of schools, but there are also a variety of other schools available.

#### STATE SCHOOLS – MINIMUM ENTRY AGE

| <b>State</b>       | <b>Minimum age at 1 January</b> | <b>Date to be born on, or before, in the year of entry</b> |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| New South Wales    | 4 years, 5 months               | July 31  |
| Victoria           | 4 years 8 months                | April 30   |
| ACT                | 4 years 8 months                | April 30   |
| Queensland         | 5 years                         | December 31 (of previous year)                             |
| Western Australia  | 5 years                         | December 31 (of previous year)                             |
| South Australia    | 5 years                         | January 1  |
| Tasmania           | 5 years                         | January 1  |
| Northern Territory | 5 years                         | January 1  |

#### STATE SCHOOL FEES FOR TEMPORARY VISA HOLDERS (INCLUDING 457 BUSINESS VISA)

Residents entering Australia on temporary visas may be required to pay fees at Government schools, depending on the State. Please refer to the individual State relocation information booklet.

#### **Electrical Items**

Australia's public mains power supply is 240 volts, 50 Hz. If you are uncertain about operating a device in Australia, you will need to discuss your options with a suitably qualified electrician. Information on electrical requirements and safety for visitors to Australia can be found on the ACA website at [www.aca.gov.au](http://www.aca.gov.au). Plugs are 3 pin, though different to those in the UK. Visitors from the UK, US and Europe will need to buy an adaptor. These are readily available in hardware and department stores.

#### **Federal, State/Territory and Local Government**

There are three tiers of government, Federal, State/Territory, and Local. The Federal or Commonwealth government deals mainly with national issues affecting all Australians, for example: defence and foreign affairs, immigration, currency, banking and insurance, social welfare and benefits. Most of the revenue comes from income tax.

The State/Territorial government is responsible for public transport, state highways, education, law and order, health and conservation for the respective state. These governments raise money through a variety of taxes and charges such as payroll tax, motor vehicle registration, stamp duty, land tax, lottery and racing taxes.

Local government councils provide community services such as road maintenance, rubbish collection, parking and traffic control, street lighting, building permits, parks and gardens,

sporting facilities, libraries and museums, and community health and welfare. The councils raise most of their revenue by charging rates to local property owners.

There are two main political parties, the Australian Labor Party and the coalition of the Liberal Party and the National Party. Australia is a Federation of States, which together form the Commonwealth of Australia. The Head of Australia is Queen Elizabeth II represented by a Governor General and by a governor in each of the states. The Federal Parliament consists of two elected Houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

## Flag



The flag of Australia includes a small Union Jack representing the historical link with Britain, the large seven-pointed star represents the states and territories, and the small stars form the Southern Cross - a prominent feature of the southern hemisphere night sky.

## Fuel

Fuel is sold by the litre, in leaded, unleaded or premium unleaded varieties. Prices are reasonable and by shopping around, you can find very competitive rates. Prices range from \$1.05 - \$1.45 per litre for unleaded petrol. Petrol station trading hours vary and most take international credit cards or electronic point of sale (EFTPOS) cards. Large supermarket chains often offer discounts on petrol when you spend over a set amount.

## Further Education

The Australian college system is based on vocational education programs that can be used for employment or as the basis for further academic study. These post-secondary institutions offer non-degree based qualifications. The programs offered by these colleges can be used as employment-based training and qualifications or to enter one of the universities and in that way achieve a degree-level qualification.

An idea about how the college system works can be seen in the following qualifications framework:

| Qualification    | Duration        | Career Path            |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Certificate I    | 4-6 months      | competent operator     |
| Certificate II   | 6-8 months      | advanced operator      |
| Certificate III  | about 12 months | qualified tradesperson |
| Certificate IV   | 12-18 months    | supervisor             |
| Diploma          | 18-24 months    | para-professional      |
| Advanced Diploma | 24-36 months    | junior manager         |

After the diploma and advanced diploma levels a student may be eligible for entry into a university and may also be eligible for credit, in some cases full credit for work already completed.

Most of the publicly funded colleges come under the control of the various state governments that administer the TAFE sector of higher education.

## TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES (TAFE)

These government institutions offer a wide range of vocational and non-vocational courses, resulting in the award of a diploma or certificate.

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (VET) IN SCHOOLS

Vocational education and training (VET) in schools is nationally recognised training that's made available to senior students as part of their normal school curriculum. The options range from programs of a couple of hours a week to part-time school-based apprenticeships, where students become trainees and employees.

Each state varies in its provision of further education for school leavers. For more detailed information please refer to the relocation booklet for the individual state.

## Great Outdoors

Australia is famed for its beautiful coastline and a climate that encourages a healthy outdoor lifestyle. Remember that our sun is very strong, even on cloudy days it is wise to be protected.

Always use a high factor sunscreen (minimum 30 SPF) to avoid the risk of skin cancer, and wear a hat. Young children and the fair skinned need to take particular care.

Follow the Australian Skin Cancer Council advice to "Slip, Slop, Slap" (Slip on a shirt, Slop on some sunscreen, Slap on a hat) and avoid swimming and sunbathing between the hours of 11am – 3pm when the sun does the most damage.

Take care when swimming in the ocean; there can be dangerous cross currents. Make sure you read the safety signs and always swim between the red and yellow flagged areas; these denote areas patrolled by the local surf lifesavers. Sharks are rare but are there, as are stinging jellyfish. Look for beaches with shark nets in place, or swim in the man made ocean pools, and always read and obey warning signs – they are there for your safety.

Always seek local advice about swimming in waterholes and obey safety and warning signs.

Australia is home to some unique flora and fauna. Listen out for the laughing Kookaburra and try to spot the sleepy koala in a ghost gum. If you want to see wildlife in the wild, then head to one of the many National Parks in each state. Please remember to "leave only footprints and take only photographs".

There are also numerous wildlife parks where you will be able to pat a kangaroo, watch a wombat and get up close to a croc.

Australia is also home to some poisonous snakes and spiders, but it is quite unlikely you will even come across these creatures, let alone be bitten. If you are bushwalking or exploring in the outback wear sturdy shoes or boots and make sure you inform someone of your intended trip and expected time of return. Adequate drinking water is essential.



A resident of the Sturt National Park,

## GST (Goods and Services Tax)

On 1 July 2000 a Goods and Services Tax came into operation. Service came within the indirect tax net for the first time, and the existing sales tax system was replaced. There is a standard rate of 10% on most goods and services that is included in the price.

Certain goods and services are exempt from GST and these include basic food, exports, most education and health services, eligible childcare and others.

## Health Care

The standard of Health care in Australia is of a comparative level with that of the UK the US and Canada. Tap water is safe to drink.

## MEDICARE

Medicare is Australia's public health care funding system. It is a high quality system which provides eligible people with access to free treatment as a public (Medicare) patient in a

public hospital, as well as free or subsidised treatment on a private basis by doctors (both general practitioners and specialists), participating optometrists or, in certain circumstances, dental surgeons. Eligibility for Medicare also gives access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), which covers most prescription pharmaceuticals provided by pharmacies.

Australia has Reciprocal Health Care Agreements with the following countries - New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Italy, Malta and Norway. Under these Agreements, residents of these countries have **restricted** access to Medicare while visiting Australia.

These Agreements give **visitors** from these countries access to Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for the treatment of an illness or injury which occurs during their stay, and which requires **immediate or emergency treatment before returning home ONLY**.

The Agreements do not allow for visitors to access Medicare or the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme where the treatment is not immediately necessary. Prearranged and elective treatment is not covered.

In Australia there are both public and private hospitals. The Agreements provide for free accommodation and treatment as a public patient in a public hospital, but do not cover treatment as a private patient in any kind of hospital. People who choose to be treated as a private patient, either in a private or public hospital, will be responsible for all of their health costs.

The Agreements do not cover all health services. Some services not covered under the agreements are:

- Ambulance cover
- Dental care
- Medical evacuation to your home country
- Funerals
- Treatment in private hospitals, or as a private patient in a public hospital
- Treatment that is not immediately necessary
- Elective treatment
- Treatment that has been pre-arranged before arrival in Australia

For this reason it is highly recommended that all visitors to Australia from Reciprocal Health Care Agreement countries buy health or travel insurance designed for overseas visitors.

#### MIGRANTS AND APPLICANTS FOR PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS

It is recommended you wait one week after you arrive in Australia before applying, to allow time for Medicare to receive your visa details from DIMA.

You will need to produce a passport or travel document for each person enrolling in Medicare. A Medicare officer will assist you with the enrolment procedures. If you need language assistance, the Medicare officer can make arrangements.

#### NEW ZEALAND CITIZENS

If you are a New Zealand citizen requesting enrolment as a permanent resident you need to provide both of the following:

- a New Zealand passport with a DIMA entry stamp into Australia
- documents proving you have severed ties with New Zealand or proving your residency in Australia and in some cases both.

Where it is not possible to prove residency, New Zealand citizens who have been living in New Zealand before coming to Australia are entitled to immediately necessary medical treatment under the Reciprocal Health Care Agreement.

## AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS RETURNING FROM OVERSEAS

If you are an Australian citizen who is returning after being overseas for more than five years, you will need to provide:

- proof of your Australian citizenship
- documents to support your residency in Australia or your severing of ties with the previous country of residence and in some cases both.

For more information please visit [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au).

## PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

Private Health Insurance will allow you to make a choice of hospital and doctor, and have treatment as soon as possible. Insurance will also cover you for dentists, ambulances, glasses, physiotherapy, podiatry and pharmaceutical costs. Private health insurance for overseas visitors in Australia is available from Australian registered health organisations, insurance brokers and general insurers. The following are some of the major organisations that offer overseas visitor cover:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| International Medical Assistance Network (IMAN) | <a href="http://www.iman.com.au">www.iman.com.au</a>         |
| Medibank Private Overseas Visitors Cover        | <a href="http://www.medibank.com.au">www.medibank.com.au</a> |
| HBF Overseas Visitors Cover                     | <a href="http://www.hbf.com.au">www.hbf.com.au</a>           |

## Home Insurance

In rented accommodation, the landlord is responsible for the building and public liability insurance, but tenants are recommended to take out their own contents insurance. There is a wide choice in companies offering home insurance, and types of cover and premiums vary greatly. You can get more information and cost indicators/quotes from any of the following websites:

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Royal & Sun Alliance | <a href="http://www.royalsunalliance.com.au">www.royalsunalliance.com.au</a> |
| NRMA Home            | <a href="http://www.nrma.com.au">www.nrma.com.au</a>                         |
| GIO Home             | <a href="http://www.gio.com.au">www.gio.com.au</a>                           |
| AAMI Home            | <a href="http://www.aami.com.au">www.aami.com.au</a>                         |
| CGU                  | <a href="http://www.cgu.com.au">www.cgu.com.au</a>                           |

## Importing your Car

Importing your car into the country involves a lengthy expensive process designed to limit the number of vehicles imported. For further information, look at the Australian Customs Service Guide to Importing a Motor Vehicle found on the ACS website at [www.customs.gov.au](http://www.customs.gov.au).

## Internet

Australia has a number of Internet Service Providers that offer both standard dial-up and broadband (ADSL or Cable) connections, and also providers that offer wireless free connection and mobile Internet.

Charges vary and can be based on downloads/uploads or time.

### CHARGES BASED ON DOWNLOADS/UPLOADS:

Charges based on downloads/uploads vary with the amount of data traffic between the user's computer and the Internet. This includes all graphics, music files, emails and text. An example of this type of charge is 300 MB (megabytes) for \$50 per month.

Some consumers are not always aware of how much data they use in one 'internet sitting' and this can lead to complaints against ISPs, especially if there are a specific number of megabytes included free as a part of the plan. If websites have for example many graphics,

they can quickly use up the download limit and be amazed to find they've exhausted their supply of free usage.

#### CHARGES BASED ON TIME:

The consumer is charged for time spent online.

#### CALL CHARGES:

ISPs have usually been accessed via a modem that is connected to the consumer's phone line. In metropolitan areas this is usually the cost of a local call, unless the consumer is accessing a website that uses a different number (for example a premium 190 number). Internet users outside metropolitan areas may have higher call charges. For many Internet users this is still so, however, new technologies such as broadband cable now give consumers more choice. ISPs can provide up-to-date information on new technologies and their cost so that consumers can make an informed choice based on current needs.

#### CHOOSING AN ISP:

Not all ISPs offer the same deals. Consumers and businesses should shop around and check all details carefully, especially the terms and conditions.

#### BEWARE:

Offers which mention...

"Free"—if something is free then there should be no hidden costs. Check all the terms and conditions carefully for connection fees, admin fees and excess usage fees. Some ISPs offer 'free' access but it is capped and once a time or download limit is up fees will be charged. "Unlimited"—this can apply to downloads or to service. Consumers should note whether there are hidden conditions such as limits on time and data.

Quick checklist to use when choosing an ISP

- Call-connection costs—is this a timed call or a local call?
- Is the charge based on downloads/uploads or time?
- Is the service reliable—will access be immediate every time I want to log on?
- Are there any caps, limits or hidden costs related to connecting to the ISP?
- Are there any caps, limits or hidden costs associated with viewing the material on the internet, for example, excess charges after a defined download level?
- Is there a way to check usage?
- Cost of help lines—will I get help if I have problems?
- What kind of security is available?
- Will my private information be safe?

As with all services, consumers should be as informed as possible before making a choice.

The most common ISPs in Australia, offering dial-up, broadband and wireless options are:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Telstra Bigpond | <a href="http://www.bigpond.com">www.bigpond.com</a>       |
| Optus           | <a href="http://www.optus.com.au">www.optus.com.au</a>     |
| AAPT            | <a href="http://www.aapt.com.au">www.aapt.com.au</a>       |
| Dodo            | <a href="http://www.dodo.com.au">www.dodo.com.au</a>       |
| Unwired         | <a href="http://www.unwired.com.au">www.unwired.com.au</a> |

## Kindergarten/Preschools in Various States

### NEW SOUTH WALES

Preschool enrolment is from 3 years largely in community-based centres. Sessions are normally 9.00 am - 3.00 pm for two days for 3 year olds and 9.00 am - 3.00 pm for three days for 4 year olds.

### VICTORIA

Enrolment from 3 years. Most students attend four half-day sessions.

#### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Enrolment from 4 years attending for four full days.

#### AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Enrolment from 3 years for four half-day sessions

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

From 4 year olds for up to four half day sessions

#### QUEENSLAND

From 4 years for either five half day sessions or five full day sessions per fortnight.

#### TASMANIA

From 4 years for a core programme of ten hours per week.

### Liquor

Most licensed premises are permitted to sell liquor from Monday to Saturday, 10.00am - 10.00pm. Sunday hours vary. Restaurants, clubs and hotel lounges have more flexible hours. Cities also have 24 hour public houses and bars. You must be over 18 to buy or consume alcohol in public. Liquor shops, (Off-Licences) are known as Bottle Shops. Supermarkets are generally not licensed to sell liquor, but may have a liquor store inside.

### Mobile Phones

A mobile phone is now considered as one of life's essentials. If you are relocating to Australia it is probably best to consider getting a mobile phone locally rather than risking the expense of running up large international bills.

You can easily buy a pay-as-you-go phone, and then top up your phone with credits as it runs out. If you have your own phone and it is unlocked, you can either consider buying a prepaid starter kit and credits, or choosing a mobile phone service provider. Or you may wish to consider taking up a service contract, which will include a phone with the extra cost over the contract (usually 24 months) dependent on the model of phone chosen.

#### AUSTRALIAN SERVICE PROVIDERS

Service providers work with specific mobile phone manufacturers to produce phones that are compatible with their networks and feature offerings. The major service providers within Australia that offer mobile phone plans and prepaid sim cards are:

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Telstra       | visit <a href="http://www.telstra.com.au">www.telstra.com.au</a>           |
| Optus         | visit <a href="http://www.optus.com.au">www.optus.com.au</a>               |
| Vodafone      | visit <a href="http://www.vodafone.com.au">www.vodafone.com.au</a>         |
| Virgin Mobile | visit <a href="http://www.virginmobile.com.au">www.virginmobile.com.au</a> |

#### PRE-PAID SERVICES

If you want the convenience of a prepaid service, there are specific phone models, which are available for use with prepaid phone cards. It's easy to buy a prepaid phone at most supermarkets and you can credit phones through the purchase of recharge cards or by credit card.

#### COVERAGE

You may want to confirm with your desired service provider that they can provide the coverage you require in your specific geographic area.

If you plan on using your phone outside of Australia, you may want to choose a Tri Band GSM phone that is able to operate across three GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) frequencies. GSM is the standard network type utilised around the world. If you are

not planning using your phone internationally, then a standard GSM phone is generally sufficient within a metropolitan area. Alternatively, a CDMA network may suit your needs. CDMA in particular is ideal for users in rural and regional areas due to its coverage over longer distances. This network is also used in North America.

### Motoring Associations

If you intend to drive, you should take advantage of membership with automobile associations, which offer free roadside assistance, breakdown services, travel services, maps and accommodation directories. Each state has its own motoring organization. Contact details are as follows:

|                             |       |  |
|-----------------------------|-------|--|
| New South Wales and the ACT | NRMA  | <a href="http://www.nrma.com.au">www.nrma.com.au</a> |
| Victoria                    | RACV  | <a href="http://www.racv.com.au">www.racv.com.au</a> |
| Queensland                  | RACQ  | <a href="http://www.racq.com.au">www.racq.com.au</a> |
| South Australia             | RAA   | <a href="http://www.raa.net">www.raa.net</a>         |
| Western Australia           | RACWA | <a href="http://www.rac.com.au">www.rac.com.au</a>   |
| Tasmania                    | RACT  | <a href="http://www.ract.com.au">www.ract.com.au</a> |

### Moving Household Goods

Australia's unique environment and important agricultural industries are free from many pests and diseases found in other parts of the world - but the movement of household goods and personal effects is one way these could be introduced. For example, outdoor furniture could conceal timber pests or be contaminated with soil or exotic weed seeds, not currently found in Australia.

Because of these risks you must advise the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) of specific items in your consignment. If necessary, AQIS will undertake an inspection of your goods, treat items that could contain pests or diseases, or seize and destroy prohibited items. Common items of quarantine concern include wooden items, garden tools, carpets, skins, toys containing cotton, sand, straw or water; Christmas decorations.

#### WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN PACKING?

Do not use boxes that previously held fruit, vegetable and flowers. Avoid the use of used egg cartons, straw or sawdust to pack your goods. These items are prohibited imports.

1. Check information on bringing items to Australia through the AQIS's import conditions database. By searching ICON you can find if an item is permitted into Australia, if it requires an Import Permit or treatment, or if there are any other Quarantine concerns. Try searching 'personal effects' on ICON, for further information. The ICON database can be accessed via the AQIS website at <http://www.daffa.gov.au/aqis>.
2. When packing your personal effects, prepare a list that includes all the items in your consignment. This should include the package number (for example, Box 1) and a list of items contained in each package. Pack all items of Quarantine concern in one box to aid inspection of your goods.
3. Make sure all used cars and tyres, garden tools, outdoor furniture, lawn mowers, bicycles, sporting equipment, shoes and boots are free of soil and seed contaminants, and empty vacuum cleaner bags. Items with soil contamination will be cleaned at your expense.

If items of quarantine concern are found among your personal effects they will be treated, at your expense. Christmas decorations such as pinecones or dried flowers will be heat-treated: this could damage wreaths and decorations.

Timber items with evidence of insect infestation must be fumigated before they are released. You may consider having these items fumigated before transporting them to Australia.

## HOW CAN I IMPORT MY PERSONAL EFFECTS AND HOUSEHOLD GOODS?

There are two ways these items can be brought into Australia:

1. The first and most common method is to use a removalist or mover that specialises in packing and transporting goods internationally. These companies, with worldwide affiliations, are a dedicated and professional group that can assist with the import of both sea and air freight. They generally charge a total door-to-door fee that may include the costs associated with clearing your goods through Quarantine (but not charges for treatments directed by AQIS).
2. Alternatively, you may choose to use a freight forwarding company to move your goods; once they arrive in Australia you can employ a customs broker who will facilitate the clearance of your goods through Quarantine on your behalf, or you can clear your goods yourself. To clear goods yourself is a complicated process – more information can be found at the AQIS site at <http://www.daffa.gov.au/aqis/travel/entering-australia/moving-emigrating>.

### Postal Service

Mailing items by post is carried out by Australia Post, which has branches in nearly every suburb in Australia, and can often be found in shopping centres as well. Postage stamps can be purchased at any Post Office where non-standard items are weighed and appropriate stamps supplied. Some newsagencies also sell stamps by the booklet. Letters can be posted at the Post Offices or at red letter boxes positioned along streets. Delivery takes 1-3 days within Australia.

If you wish to post parcels internationally you will need to take evidence of your identity to the Post Office and have your ID recorded at the time you post the parcel.

Post Office hours are usually: 9.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Up-to date postage costs and information can be found at the Australia Post website at [www.australiapost.com.au](http://www.australiapost.com.au).

### Public Holidays – 2010

#### National

New Years Day (Except Tasmania)  
Australia Day  
Good Friday  
Easter Saturday  
Easter Monday  
Anzac Day  
Queens Birthday (Except WA)  
Christmas Day Public Holiday (Except NSW)  
Boxing Day Public Holiday (Except NSW/SA)

#### 2010

Friday 1 January  
Tuesday 26 January  
Friday 2 April  
Saturday 3 April  
Monday 5 April  
Monday 26 April (Sunday 25 April)  
Monday 14 June  
Monday 27 December  
Tuesday 28 December

#### State

##### New South Wales

Labour Day

##### 2010

Monday 4 October

|               |                                    |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Christmas Day | Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup> December |
| Boxing Day    | Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> December   |

### **Victoria**

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Labour Day                               | Monday 8 March     |
| Melbourne Cup Day (Melbourne Metro only) | Tuesday 2 November |

### **Queensland**

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Labour Day                              | Monday 3 May        |
| Royal National Show Day (Brisbane only) | Wednesday 11 August |

### **South Australia (SA)**

|                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Adelaide Cup Day | Monday 8 March      |
| Labour Day       | Monday 4 October    |
| Proclamation Day | Tuesday 28 December |

### **Western Australia (WA)**

|                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Labour Day      | Monday 1 March      |
| Foundation Day  | Monday 7 June       |
| Queens Birthday | Monday 27 September |

### **Tasmania (TAS)**

|                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Eight Hours Day | Monday 9 March      |
| Hobart Show     | Thursday 22 October |

### **Northern Territory (NT)**

|            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| May Day    | Monday 3 May    |
| Picnic Day | Monday 2 August |

### **Australian Capital Territory (ACT)**

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| Canberra Day | Monday 8 March   |
| Labour Day   | Monday 4 October |

## **Quarantine of Pets**

### **CATS AND DOGS**

Australia is a rabies free country and so dogs and cats may only be imported directly from approved rabies free countries and from approved countries where urban rabies is absent or well controlled.

There are strict rules regarding the importation of animals into Australia. Cats and dogs entering Australia must meet all of the AQIS import conditions prior to export.

If you want to import a cat or dog into Australia, you need to apply for an AQIS import permit with live animal imports. AQIS officers will assess the application and – provided that the animal meets the import conditions – grant an import permit.

An import permit is required to book a space at a government animal quarantine station. There are currently three government quarantine stations for cats and dogs in Australia – Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

Different import conditions apply for the importation of disability assistance dogs.

You will need to visit the AQIS site to check the import conditions regarding your home country.

Visit <http://www.daffa.gov.au/feedback?query=animalimp> for more information.

### **OTHER PETS**

The import conditions applicable for pets other than cats and dogs can be viewed through the following link: <http://www.daffa.gov.au/aqis/cat-dogs/other>. You will need to visit the AQIS site

to check the import conditions regarding your home country. Visit <http://www.daffa.gov.au/feedback?query=animalimp> for more information.

## Renting Property

In every major city, the most popular areas are those close to the central business districts but still near shops, schools and the water. Prices vary widely (your rent may be 10% - 40% of your weekly wage) and generally, the tenant pays a refundable bond equivalent to four weeks' rent and is liable for utility costs such as electricity, gas and telephone. The bond is lodged with a government agency and is repayable at the end of the tenancy agreement with accrued interest.

Fully furnished accommodation is available though not common. Furniture rental is quite easy to arrange though can be expensive. You can find a range of furniture packages available at [www.pabs.com.au](http://www.pabs.com.au).

Daily and Saturday newspapers in every city advertise rental accommodation in their classified section. Estate agencies display lists of rental accommodation in their windows so it is advisable to become familiar with the agents in the area in which you'd like to live when you arrive. These are probably the best sources of information regarding what is available and how much you might be expected to pay.

Availability of rental properties varies according to the economic climate and the time of year. Demand is highest from November to January. The availability of quality homes for rent is limited, as historically Australians have always sought to purchase their own property. The majority of people renting are therefore young couples saving to purchase, students, elderly and low wage earners. Executive homes are often only available when the owners are themselves away.

You can search online for property at [www.domain.com.au](http://www.domain.com.au) or [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au) – these cover all states, and include most private listings. Inspection of agency properties is best during the week, as on Saturdays, real estate agents are very busy and there are many more people looking, and on Sundays inspections are rare. However the majority of properties advertised through the domain website are available on Saturdays for viewing.

## APPLICATION FOR TENANCY

When a home is selected to rent, the real estate agent will ask for an application form to be completed. This requests personal details and credit references. In order to secure a property, you will need to pay a deposit, commonly the equivalent of a week's rent, later deducted from your first month's rent. This deposit must be paid in cash or with a bank cheque. Once a deposit has been taken the property is taken off the market. Should you decide not to proceed with the tenancy of that property you will receive back a proportion of the deposit paid on a pro rata basis according to the number of days that the property was taken off the market.

## Short Term Accommodation

Hotels and Serviced Apartments in Australia are rated on the international five star rating system and there is plenty of choice, from luxury five star suites to two star hostels. Staying in a hotel incurs a small bed tax, which should be explained to you when you book-in. You can find a great selection of accommodation statewide at [www.wheretostay.com.au](http://www.wheretostay.com.au), or if you are looking for last minute accommodation try [www.needitnow.com.au](http://www.needitnow.com.au).

## Sports

Almost all Australians have a sporting interest of some kind. In coastal areas, everyone enjoys spending time swimming at the beach or the pool in the summer, as well as surfing snorkeling and other water sports. Boating and fishing are also popular hobbies.

National sporting competitions include Australian Rules Football (AFL), National Rugby League (NRL), A-League (soccer) and the National Basketball



Aerial Ping Pong?  
The swans take on the hawks in the AFL.

league (NBL). There is also plenty of Cricket, Netball and Motor Sports on offer.

Australia has more than 130 national sporting organisations and thousands of club bodies. Many are also involved in non-competitive activities like fishing, bushwalking, boating, horseriding and fitness programs.

Children are mainly involved in rugby league, rugby union, Australian rules, baseball, swimming, cricket, athletics, netball, softball, soccer, hockey, basketball and tennis.

Watching sport is also common for most families. Many thousands of people attend professional football games every week and many more watch all forms of sports on the T.V.

The Melbourne Cup is Australia's most famous and richest horse race. It is run on the first Tuesday in November in Melbourne. It is a holiday in Melbourne and the rest of Australia stops to hear or see the race on radio or T.V.

## States and State Capitals



Australian Capital Territory  
Capital Canberra, climate – Temperate.

New South Wales "*The Premier State*"  
Capital Sydney, climate – Sub-tropical to temperate.

Northern Territory "*Outback Australia*"  
Capital Darwin, climate – Tropical, with Wet/Dry seasons taking the place of Summer/Winter.

Queensland "*The Sunshine State*"  
Capital Brisbane, climate – Sub-tropical.

South Australia "*The Festival State*"  
Capital Adelaide, climate – Temperate.

Tasmania "*The Holiday Isle*"  
Capital Hobart climate –Temperate.

Victoria "*The Garden State*"  
Capital Melbourne, climate – Temperate, though can experience hot summers.

Western Australia "*The Wildflower State*"  
Capital Perth climate – Sub-tropical to temperate.

For detailed climate information and up-to-date weather forecasts try the Australian Bureau of Meteorology website at [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au).

## **Taxation**

Taxes are imposed principally by the Commonwealth Government. State governments also levy taxes such as petrol, stamp duty and land tax. The tax year for income tax purposes is 1 July to 30 June with personal income tax returns usually prepared on the basis of that year.

A resident of Australia is taxable on his/her worldwide income unless the income is exempt according to the Income Tax Assessment Act 1986. A person is a resident of Australia if he or she resides in Australia, even intermittently, for more than one half of the year of income unless the authorities are satisfied that the person's usual place of abode is outside Australia and there is no intention to take up residence in Australia. An individual who is a resident of Australia for only part of the year of income is taxable as a resident for that part year.

Australia has a Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) tax system introduced on 1 July 2000. Pay As You Go is a single, integrated system for reporting and paying income tax instalments. If your only income is from a wage or salary, PAYG will not affect you. Your employer deducts your income tax. If you have investment income, for example, The Australian Taxation Office will notify if you have to pay PAYG instalments.

A Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) applies on certain non-cash benefits (eg. motor vehicles, low interest loans) and other cash benefits (eg. reimbursement of personal expenses) provided by an employer to an employee. The liability for the tax lies with the employer, not the employee, although in many cases the gross benefit (cash benefit plus fringe benefits tax) is treated by employees as the true cost in calculating remuneration.

A Capital Gains Tax (CGT) applies to gains on the purchase and sale of many assets. The tax does not apply to a taxpayer's sole or principal residence, certain types of motor vehicles and other minor assets.

A resident individual must generally include all foreign income in his Australian taxation return even if tax has already been paid overseas. Nevertheless, credit can be claimed against the Australian tax for the tax paid overseas. Depending upon the period of service, residents can gain exemption from Australian tax on salary income earned offshore.

Subject to the special provisions of various international double-tax agreements, non-residents are liable to tax on income from all sources in Australia.

Where a taxpayer does not quote a Tax File Number (TFN) in relation to an account or investment held by the taxpayer, tax is payable on all income and interest earned on those accounts and investments at the highest marginal tax rate plus the Medicare Levy. Quotation of the TFN is not compulsory but the tax will be automatically deducted from the account or investment if the number is not quoted. Some taxpayers are, in certain circumstances, not obliged to pay the tax. To obtain a tax file number you will need to fill out an application form. Further details can be found on the Australian Tax Office website at [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).

## **Tertiary Education**

### **UNIVERSITIES**

There is a wide choice of undergraduate degree courses available at Australian Universities. The university year runs from late-February/early March through to November, and is divided into two semesters with exams at the end of each semester.

### **FEES**

As in many countries, tuition fees for Australian residents are subsidised by the Government, in most cases non-residents have to pay full fees. Generally children of expatriates would not qualify as residents.

Quotas for enrolments make entry to universities far from automatic. Selection is usually based on marks achieved in the examinations held in the last year of secondary school. Applications for university entrance by prospective students are received in August/September of the preceding year. Prospective students without permanent residency should apply directly to the university they would like to attend.

### Time Zones

Australia has three time zones:

- Eastern Standard Time (EST) 10 hours ahead of GMT. This applies to Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.
- Central Australian Time (CAT) - 9.5 hours ahead of GMT, and half an hour behind EST. This applies to South Australia and the Northern Territory
- Western Australia Time (WAT) - 8 hours ahead of GMT or 2 hours behind EST. This applies to Western Australia.

All states except Queensland and Northern Territory have daylight saving over summer when clocks move forward one hour.

### Tipping

Tipping is a voluntary practice, with about 10% of the bill in a restaurant being an acceptable amount, but it is not compulsory. In Hotels, taxis, shops and hairdressers tipping is not expected, but is welcomed.

### Useful General Information

The following are some useful websites and phone numbers.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Emergency Service - Police, Ambulance, and Fire | Ph: 000   |
| Directory Assistance                            | Ph: 12455   |
| International Directory Assistance              | Ph: 1225  |
| Yellow Pages                                    | Web: <a href="http://www.yellowpages.com.au">www.yellowpages.com.au</a> |
| Street Directory                                | Web: <a href="http://www.whereis.com.au">www.whereis.com.au</a>         |
| Driving Maps from Google                        | Web: <a href="http://maps.google.com.au">maps.google.com.au</a>         |
| What's on, where to eat and what to do guides   | Web: <a href="http://www.citysearch.com.au">www.citysearch.com.au</a>   |
| Dept of Immigration                             | Web: <a href="http://www.immi.gov.au">www.immi.gov.au</a>               |
| <b>QUICK LINKS</b>                              |   |
| Job searching                                   | Web: <a href="http://www.seek.com.au">www.seek.com.au</a>               |
| House hunting                                   | Web: <a href="http://www.domain.com.au">www.domain.com.au</a>           |
| Domestic flights                                | Web: <a href="http://www.webjet.com.au">www.webjet.com.au</a>           |
| Daily News                                      | Web: <a href="http://www.news.com.au">www.news.com.au</a>               |
| TV guide  | Web: <a href="http://tvguide.ninemsn.com.au">tvguide.ninemsn.com.au</a> |
| Weather   | Web: <a href="http://www.weather.com.au">www.weather.com.au</a>         |