



AN EXPAT GUIDE

TO LIVING IN BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

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Abstract

Brisbane, Australia's third most populous city and the capital of Queensland, has a sub-tropical climate with pleasant average temperatures all year round.

Is Brisbane a good place to live as an expat? Let's discover it in this pdf.

Here in this pdf, you will find answer all of the questions, from the cost of living in Brisbane to all the related information for moving to Australia.



Getting Started

GET TO KNOW THE RIVER CITY

Known for the eponymous river that meanders from the Coral Sea through the city, Brisbane is a gorgeous and vibrant expat destination.

One of Australia's biggest cities, it has a rapidly expanding population of close to 2.5 million and is home to a significant expat population from all over the world, including New Zealand, the UK, China, India and South Africa.

Living in Brisbane as an expat

Brisbane is a laid-back city with an assortment of interesting and lively areas. While the centre is fairly compact, the suburbs sprawl outwards in all directions, offering wide-open spaces for outdoor entertainment. If expats should tire of their immediate surroundings though, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast are great weekend getaway spots.

As one would expect from a growing city, the economy is ever-expanding and expats should be able to find work in Brisbane fairly easily. Some of the main industries include IT, finance, administration, education and construction.

To help you get settled, start with the basics.



Brisbane is the capital city of Queensland and home to over 2.5 million people. It's considered to be a friendly and welcoming city with a vibrant family lifestyle, hot summers, mild winters, great parks, and easy access to the coast and sub-tropical rainforests. It's easy to see why many more people are choosing to call Brisbane home, and if you're thinking of moving to Brisbane, here's what you need to know.

BRISBANE AND GREATER BRISBANE AT A GLANCE

Brisbane City sits either side of the Brisbane River. It has a world-class international airport, extensive public transport network, sports stadiums, bay islands, numerous theatres and entertainment venues, incredible public spaces and parklands, AND Brisbane is the host of the 2032 Olympics!

There are five Local Government Areas within the Greater Brisbane region: Brisbane City, Redland City, Logan City, Ipswich, and Moreton Bay. Logan City, Ipswich, and Redland City are to Brisbane's south, while Moreton Bay is to the north.

In the 2016 census, the median age for people living in Brisbane was 35, with children aged 0-14 years making up just over 19% of the population. Approximately one-third of Brisbane residents were born overseas, with their most commonly stated countries of birth listed as New Zealand, England, China, India, and South Africa.

Brisbane is one of Australia's major business hubs, contributing over 9% of the national gross domestic product. Imports and exports teem through Brisbane Airport and the Port of Brisbane, which is the third busiest seaport in Australia for value of goods passing through. Major industries in Greater Brisbane include tourism, banking, transportation, information technology, and international education.

Infrastructure and housing, and jobs are predicted to boom in the Brisbane region in the lead up to the 2032 Olympic Games. To ensure you can afford to live here, check out our tips for saving money on the cost of living in Brisbane.



LIVING IN BRISBANE

Brisbane is a vibrant and multi-cultural city with a strong connection to the arts and a long-held love of sport. The city centre has its own artificial beach alongside the river at South Bank, which is also home to the cultural precinct (Queensland Museum and Science Centre, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, and Queensland

State Library) as well as extensive parkland, gardens, numerous playgrounds, the Wheel of Brisbane, and many more attractions.

The city is also home to Botanic Gardens, accessible by both street or ferry; the River Stage, which hosts international music performers and the city's Lord Mayors Christmas Carols, and the iconic Story Bridge, which is one of only FIVE bridges in the world that offer bridge climbs.



The Ekka, Brisbane's Royal Queensland Show, takes place in August. Over nine days (which include LGA-specific public holidays), families head to the Brisbane Showgrounds for fairground rides, handicraft displays, agricultural exhibitions, animal encounters, musical performances, and produce sampling – and for the famous showbags, Dagwood Dogs, and Ekka strawberry sundaes.

In September, the city comes to life with the Brisbane Festival, a month-long cultural extravaganza of indoor and outdoor live performances and artistic installations, culminating in the spectacular Brisbane Riverfire display.

Brisbane has something to entertain and amaze both young and old!

Housing

The median house price in Brisbane as at September 2021 is \$691,000. Compared to Sydney at \$1.3 million and Melbourne at \$954,000, if you're shopping for houses for sale, Brisbane could score you a bargain. The prediction is that the median house price of Brisbane properties will increase significantly – to an anticipated \$1.5 million – in the years leading to the 2032 Olympics.

While buying a house in Brisbane is relatively affordable in comparison to other major Australian cities, renters have it slightly tougher with the median rent in Brisbane sitting higher than the median rent in Melbourne. Renters can expect to pay between \$440 and \$600 per week for 3-bedroom city living. More affordable Brisbane rental options can be found outside the city in its suburbs.

The city centre has extensive apartment living, with many new luxury apartment blocks being recently built. The older city suburbs are filled with character homes in the 'Queenslander' style (elevated on stilts to allow cooling airflow all around, with large verandahs and ornate railings), brick-built art deco homes, and post-war homes. Over the years, many larger blocks have been sub-divided to accommodate modern duplex homes and town houses.

Overall, there is a good variety of housing styles and options to suit most family requirements.

Employment

In the 2016 census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that 93% of the population aged 15 and over (1.07 million people) was in employment. Almost 23% were classed as professionals, with clerical workers making up around 15%, followed by technicians and trade workers, managers, and community and personal service workers.

Health care and education were the biggest employment sectors, with cafes and restaurants, State Government administration, and retail close behind.

Education

In Queensland, formal education officially starts in the January after your child turns 4.5 years old, i.e. if your child turns 4 in June, they will begin compulsory prep the following January. If your child turns 4 in July, they will begin prep around 18-months later at approximately 5.5 years old. At a minimum, children must be five years old by June 30 of the year in which

they commence prep. Under some circumstances, you can opt to delay prep entry for another year of kindy if you feel your child is not ready. Students are entitled to 13 years of formal education, from prep to Year 12.

Greater Brisbane has an abundance of high-quality childcare establishments, state and private primary and high schools, special schools, and schools of distance education. Early learning centres include those offering the Montessori and Reggio Emilia approach to learning, and higher education options include TAFE, Australian Industry Trade College, the University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, and campuses of six Australian Universities including Griffiths University, which is ranked in the top 3% worldwide.



- **Greater Brisbane primary schools**

State and private primary schools offer education for children from Prep through to Year 6. Some provide religious-based learning, and some are non-secular. If you want to find out more about the education performance of various schools in the area, visit www.myschool.edu.au.

- **Greater Brisbane secondary schools**

There are many excellent state and private high schools in the Greater Brisbane region offering a range of ATAR and practical/trade pathways to future careers. Keep in mind that the public school your child attends will generally be based on catchment areas, or you can live in the area of your preference and opt for private education instead. Some state schools will take children out of catchment under certain circumstances, but many are enrollment-managed and strictly for catchment only. If your child excels in

certain academic, sporting, or cultural areas, they may be able to apply for a scholarship at some private schools.

Cost for schooling varies. While tuition at public schools is free (uniform, annual stationery list, and extra-curricular/camp costs apply), private high schools across Greater Brisbane will range anywhere from \$800 a year up to over \$28,000, and Greater Brisbane private primary schools from \$800 per year to over \$23,500. Bear in mind that these are tutoring fees only and additional costs may apply.

Healthcare in Brisbane

Health insurance and medical care are two extremely important topics for expats all over the world. You'll be glad to hear that Australia in general has a good healthcare system, especially in urban areas, and Brisbane is certainly no exception.

However, before you can start looking for a new family doctor or consult a dentist, you need to take care of your health insurance plan to cover for related costs.

Medicare and Private Health Insurance

Australia has a government-sponsored healthcare system called Medicare. If you have a permanent visa, for example as a skilled migrant who has decided to settle in Brisbane, you and your dependent family members have automatic access to this scheme. Otherwise only visitors from selected countries are entitled to benefit from Medicare in medical emergencies. These countries include Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, and the UK.

However, even visa holders from these states need to enter into a private insurance plan first and then claim an official exemption once they arrive in Australia. Only then do they have access to Medicare coverage.

It's also important to know that the Medicare plan does not pay for all health-related costs. For instance, dental care or glasses are excluded from this policy. Therefore, many Australians and overseas residents take out additional health insurance from private companies. And if you aren't eligible for Medicare at all, you usually have to provide medical insurance as part of your visa application — so remember to check out privatehealth.com.au well in advance.

Healthcare Services in Brisbane

Once you have moved to Queensland, you can easily find all sorts of medical services (e.g. a dentist, an ENT doctor, or an ob/gyn) online via a specialized directory. However, your GP (general practitioner) should always be your first point of referral. He or she can send you to a specialist appointment at an outpatient clinic, if necessary.

If you should ever need hospital care during your time in Brisbane, it is good to be informed about the various medical facilities beforehand. Queensland is divided into several healthcare districts: Residents of Greater Brisbane usually belong to Metro North, Metro South, or parts of West Moreton.

Just click on your district in this map provided by the Queensland Department of Health, and then scroll down a little to go to the page called “More information on healthcare facilities” in the respective area. The district profile will provide you with a list of all hospitals and community health centers in your general vicinity.

Local Emergency Resources

In case of a medical emergency or health-related question, here are several numbers of interest for Brisbane residents:

- ✓ 000 (serious and urgent cases)
- ✓ 13 43 25 84 / 13 HEALTH (advice on minor ailments and information on available medical services)
- ✓ 13 12 33 (ambulance for non-emergencies)
- ✓ 13 11 14 (lifeline for mental health issues)
- ✓ 13 11 26 (poison hotline)
- ✓ 1 800 010 120 (helpline for survivors of sexual assault)

In the entire state of Queensland, ambulance services are provided for free. A so-called annual “ambulance levy” was scrapped by the regional government in 2011. However, this is not the case in all other Australian states and territories. So, if you travel outside Queensland a lot, ask your insurance provider if they reimburse ambulance fees as well.

Transportation in Brisbane

Brisbane Airport

As an expatriate, you will arrive by plane, at the international terminal of Brisbane Airport. The airport is located 14 km northeast of Brisbane’s central business district, in a suburb of its own. It’s an important hub for the Australian airlines Virgin, Qantas, and Jetstar, serving 41 domestic as well as

28 international destinations — mostly in the Asia-Pacific Region, in the Middle East, and on the West Coast of the USA.

From the airport, you can easily reach Brisbane or other places in the Southeast Queensland area by shuttle bus, Airtrain, or taxi.



Public Transport: Taxis and Translink

Speaking of taxis — business people and night owls in particular will be interested in knowing more about Brisbane’s local cab companies. Taxis belong either to the fleet of Yellow Cab (whose vehicles are bright orange) or Black & White Cabs (whose vehicles are actually black and white).

Fares are regulated depending on the time of day, with prices currently including a basic fee of at least 2.90 AUD, 2.17 AUD per kilometer, and 0.82 AUD per minute. The basic fee is most expensive between 0:00 and 5:00 when Brisbane’s public transport network is closed, except for a few night buses on the weekend.

Public transport in the Brisbane metropolitan area is provided by Translink, which runs the bus service, the boats and catamarans to the outlying islands, and the Citytrain lines. Once you have found a place to live, you can use the Translink online journey planner to see if there are any convenient and fast connections for your daily commute, to the nearest shopping facilities, or the central business district.

If you are going to travel frequently with Translink, you might want to purchase a “go” electronic card. It’s a pre-loaded, top-up smart card which is considerably cheaper than a paper ticket. For example, the adult fare to travel through one zone of the Translink area is 4.80 AUD; with an electronic ticket, you only pay 3.35 AUD at peak times and only 2.68 AUD for the same trip.

Driving in Brisbane

In Brisbane, public transportation does not seem quite as accepted as in other major Australian cities. Indeed, the public transport network is less frequented than that of metropolises like Sydney or Melbourne. If your new home or place of work should be in a remote location, driving will be the better option. But don’t forget that Australians drive on the left side of the road!

If you’d like to go by car while living in Brisbane, you can simply keep using your overseas license as long as you fulfill the following conditions:

- ✓ The old permit is still valid.
- ✓ It has not been suspended or withdrawn in your home country.
- ✓ It is for the proper class of vehicle (i.e. you cannot drive a car with an overseas motorbike license, or vice versa).
- ✓ You are medically fit to drive.
- ✓ You have an official transition for any non-English license.
- ✓ You have been living in Queensland on a resident visa for less than three months.

Getting a Queensland Driving License

If your license has expired or if you simply want to exchange it for a local driving permit, you usually can trade in a full overseas license for a car or motorcycle for the Queensland version.

However, you need to pass both a written exam and a practical driving test — unless your original license is from one of the following countries:

- ✓ Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Denmark
- ✓ Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guernsey, Ireland, Italy
- ✓ Japan, Jersey, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal
- ✓ Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, the USA
- ✓ Isle of Man (if issued on or after 1 April 1991) and Malta (if issued on or after 2 January 2004)

If you have a license issued in one of the states listed below, you don't need a test, either, as long as you are at least 25 years old.

- ✓ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic
- ✓ Estonia, Hong Kong, Hungary
- ✓ Latvia, Lithuania, Poland
- ✓ Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
- ✓ South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan

To swap your license, just go to your nearest customer service center of the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads. The department also offers an overview of the local road rules, in case you'd like to familiarize yourself with them before you hit the road.

Weather

Brisbane is sub-tropical with an average high-low temperature range over summer of 29° – 21°, and 21° to 10° in winter.

Summers can be humid with locals heading to the beach, elevated lookouts, and air-conditioned venues to keep cool. Humid days frequently end with spectacular thunder and lightning displays and the occasional storm. September is the driest month, and January and February see the most rainfall. If buying a house in Brisbane, check that the property is not in the river's floodplain. Although flood defences have been significantly improved since the 2011 floods, insurance policies will need to be looked at carefully.

Brisbane winters offer perfect conditions of warm days often filled with sunshine which can mean more beach and pool trips all year round!



Getting there and around

Brisbane is around a 10-hour drive from Sydney and 18.5-hour drive from Melbourne. Both cities offer regular direct flights to Brisbane Airport, and interstate train services are available, though lengthy.

The Greater Brisbane area is well served by wide multi-laned motorways, linking north and south from the Sunshine Coast to the Gold Coast, and west through Ipswich and out to Toowoomba.

At peak times, traffic can move slowly in and out of the city, but a great amount of money is being invested in public transport with the new Cross River Rail set to commence service in 2025. This high-capacity rail system will link the northern and southern suburbs with a twin rail tunnel beneath the Brisbane River.

Getting around the city is fairly easy with options including buses, taxis, ferries (including the free City Hopper ferry), rideshares, and electric scooter hire. There are several vehicle and pedestrian bridges linking the river's north and south banks.

All Brisbane LGA's promote a healthy and active lifestyle with extensive cycle and walking paths. Keen cyclists may be willing to try the Moreton Bay Cycleway; 150kms of picturesque coastline cycling linking Bribie Island in the north to Redland Bay in the south.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO AROUND BRISBANE

The city and its surrounds are full of wonderful family-friendly venues, with a great lifestyle to be had in Brisbane for kids. We've mentioned many already: the Cultural Precinct, South Bank, the Wheel of Brisbane, Botanic Gardens... but there are many more activities and venues to explore.

Mount Coot-tha offers several hiking trails, many culminating at the summit with its spectacular city views – well worth seeing both in daytime and after nightfall.

Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary can be reached by road or river ferry and is an incredible small zoo with domestic, native, and exotic species (their platypus display offers guaranteed sightings of these elusive creatures!).

Getting out on the bay is a popular activity, with many people visiting Stradbroke Island (Minjerribah), Moreton Island (home of the Tangalooma

resort where the public can hand-feed wild dolphins), and the many smaller bay islands in-between for kayaking and fishing.



SELECT BRISBANE SUBURB PROFILES

While you could easily see yourself setting up home in Brisbane city, we're throwing the spotlight on a few select suburbs to give you a broader sense of the region.

Moving to Logan

The Logan LGA covers a large area to the south and west of Brisbane. There are many suburbs in the area offering a mix of urban (Logan Central) and rural (Logan Village) living. The median house price at time of writing is \$334,000 for a 3-bedroom home, with the median rental being \$340 per week.

Logan has its own hospital, Entertainment Centre, water play park, and leisure centres, as well as a good selection of childcare centres, and state and private schools.

Kids will love Kingston Park Raceway, Daisy Hill Koala Centre – which has free entry and is great for families – and Karawatha Forest Discovery Centre. You can find more things to do in Logan with kids here.

Moving to Chermside

Chermside, on Brisbane's north side, is home to Queensland's largest shopping centre. It is ideally located for access to the city, Brisbane Airport

and DFO shopping outlet. There are very good state high schools close by and a hospital with an emergency department.

Properties for sale in the Chermside area have a median sale price of \$760,000, and rent at between \$400 and \$500 per week.

Chermside is fabulous for families and kids. There is so much to do, including iFly indoor skydiving, and the many adventures to be had at Chermside Hills Reserve. You can find more activities for kids and places to go around Chermside here.

Moving to Nundah

Renowned for its high-rise apartment buildings and spacious cottages, Nundah 4012 is a beautiful inner suburb of Brisbane, offering excellent local facilities. Populated by 12,1141 people in 2016, this thriving region is home to several industrial activities, a village shopping precinct, schools, hospitals, bus and railway station and much more. The median house price in Nundah is \$840,000.

Moving to North Lakes

North Lakes is perfectly situated for M1 motorway access, linking easily with the city and Sunshine Coast. It's in the heart of the Moreton Bay region, close to the beaches at Redcliffe and great shopping centres that include an Ikea and Costco.

The median house price is \$565,000 for houses and \$397,000 for units. Rents vary from \$350-\$500 per week.

North Lakes is close to conservation parks, great playgrounds, and – of course – many lakes where families can enjoy water activities and fishing.

Moving to Wynnum

Wynnum is a beautiful established beachside suburb in Brisbane's east, with views to St Helena Island (a historic museum island that offers character-led tours) and North Stradbroke Island. The median property price is just under

\$900,000, but as the location ticks many boxes, this is expected to rise significantly.



The seawater wading pool and Wynnum Whale Park have recently been redeveloped, providing safe water play for young families, and a modern multi-screen cinema complex has recently opened. Adding to the family-friendly fun, the area neighbours the suburb of Manly, which hosts several events and festivals throughout the year.

Moving to Springfield

Greater Springfield is unique in that its schools, TAFE, and university have all joined together to form a learning coalition to provide the best possible educational outcome for the city's students.

It's a new city area so all housing is modern, streets are wide, and parklands are plentiful. There is a huge free water park, bright modern shopping centres, and a brand-new public hospital.

The city was specifically designed to attract young families, and at the moment, property is still fairly affordable at a median of \$550,000 to buy and \$420pw to rent. It's definitely an area worth a closer look.

Moving to The Gap

The Gap is the perfect area to live for families who like an active outdoors lifestyle. Although it is only 10km from the city, its bushland surrounds make it feel a million miles away.

The area is hilly with leafy streets and established gardens. The Gap is bordered by mountainous nature reserves offering bushwalks, spectacular views, lake activities, and the Walkabout Creek Discovery Center.

There are no large shopping centres, but this is an exclusive area where families go for a tranquil lifestyle. The median house price is \$900,000 and the median rent \$565 pw.

Well, have you decided to shift homes in any of above suburbs and want to move in a stress-free and peaceful manner? Well, this is possible if you hire a good removalist service and avoid any moving scams whilst relocating in Brisbane.

How To Handle Moving Company Scams



Hiring a moving company is an important decision that involves much more than money. Trusting a company to get all of your possessions from here to there, without damage and at the agreed-upon price, is a lot. Unfortunately, all too often, that doesn't happen. With the rise of long-distance moves as well as interstate moves, moving company scams seem to be increasing as well.

The Better Business Bureau has over 1,300 moving companies with an "F" rating due to unresolved complaints. On average, the BBB receives around 13,000 complaints about moving companies each year.

We created an up-to-date list to kick start your research selecting the best moving companies based on a methodology that includes moving company complaints and reviews.



Red Flags and Indicators of Fraud

Some moving companies will appear legit online, but in reality, they're professional scammers who don't complete moves, steal belongings in the process or overcharge for their services. These are some of the major red flags and indicators of fraud to be on alert about:

- Not accepting credit cards and requiring payments be made by direct deposit or cash
- Requesting large deposits before the move during off-season periods
- Not registered with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
- Offers instant quotes instead of agreeing on an onsite inspection to give an accurate estimate
- Don't provide a copy of "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move," a booklet movers are required by Federal regulations to supply

- Having too many unresolved customer complaints or no reviews at all
- Require customers to sign blank contracts or paperwork before the move

What Constitutes as a Scam

It is essential to learn what to do if scammed by a moving company to take legal actions against them. Some of the most common moving scams include:

- Altering, copying, publishing or making a fraudulent bill of lading. The bill of lading details the type, quantity and destination of all goods being shipped
- Giving you a questionably low estimate to lure you in and then withhold or threaten to withhold your house goods unless you pay significantly more than the quote provided
- Assigning a fraudulent weight or volume to your shipment, also known as “weight bumping”
- Obtaining money on pretenses like falsifying the number of packing materials and other supplies provided for the move

What Does Not Constitute as a Scam

All moves experience minor inconveniences that aren't bound to guarantees or protection. These inconveniences, in most cases, might not be enough to take legal action or warrant claims:

Minor damage to furniture, appliances and other belongings is widespread in most moves

- Minor losses and having items disappear during the move
- Delivery delays of a few days—you might still be able to receive compensation for a delivery date, but this generally doesn't constitute a scam
- Some cost increases (less than 10%) might occur; these are usually the result of inaccurate estimates and quotes

How to Report Moving Frauds and Scams

If you are sure you've been scammed by a moving company, learn how to report and take legal actions to fight and protect your rights.

1. File a Complaint With the Moving Company
2. Report the Moving Company to the Appropriate Organization
3. Assess Suing the Company

Final Words

Brisbane, Australia, offers an incredible and enriching experience for expats seeking a new place to call home. This vibrant city, with its warm climate, friendly locals, and diverse cultural scene, welcomes expatriates with open arms. From its stunning outdoor attractions and recreational activities to its bustling urban life, Brisbane caters to various interests and lifestyles. Additionally, the city's efficient public transportation and well-developed infrastructure make settling in a breeze. Expats will find themselves immersed in a welcoming and multicultural community, making the transition to living in Brisbane a seamless and gratifying adventure. Embrace the unique opportunities and experiences this city has to offer, as it becomes a cherished home away from home for every expat.

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