



# LIVING IN BRISBANE: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW



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## **Abstract**

Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, Australia, is a vibrant city known for its subtropical climate, friendly locals, and abundant opportunities for work and leisure. With a relatively affordable cost of living compared to other major Australian cities, finding diverse housing options is attainable, from high-rise apartments in the CBD to charming Queenslander-style homes in the suburbs. The city's education system is robust, featuring reputable universities and schools, while its diverse economy, encompassing finance, technology, healthcare, and tourism, offers ample employment prospects.



## **1. Introduction**

Brisbane's laid-back lifestyle encourages exploration of its cultural events, culinary scene, and access to stunning nearby beaches and natural wonders. A well-connected public transportation system makes getting around the city easy, while its low crime rates add to its reputation as a safe place to reside. Embracing a multicultural community, Brisbane warmly welcomes individuals and families seeking a quality Australian way of life that combines modernity with the beauty of nature. So, here in this guide, we are sharing some great things that you should know about Brisbane.

## **2. Why Live In Brisbane: Pros And Cons**

My first impressions of the capital of the Sunshine State weren't that good. I even wondered if Brisbane was worth visiting. It wasn't love at first sight, but it grew on me. I've called Brisbane home for about ten years and I don't see myself living anywhere else for now. So,

why live in Brisbane? And is it a good city for you if you choose to live in Australia? Let me tell you about Brisbane's pros and cons from my point of view.



### **Why live in Brisbane – the pros**

Like many places in Australia, Brisbane is a lovely place to live. For most foreigners, Brisbane – and Australia in general – appears safe and with a lot of free space. The city also has fantastic unique features.

#### **The climate**

I love the climate in Brisbane. Sure, there are a couple of months when it often rains. But it's sunny for most of the year and warmer than in other big Australian cities. The weather is perfect to enjoy the nature-based activities I mentioned above.

#### **House and apartment size and price**

Compared to Melbourne and Sydney, Brisbane housing is more affordable and you'll get a bigger apartment or house for a lower rent. For the same rent budget, my friends had to share an apartment in the Sydney suburbs while I could live in my own apartment in the inner-city of Brisbane.

#### **Good dining options and breweries**

Dining options in Brisbane are still not as good as in Melbourne or Sydney. However, in the past few years, Brisbane has really improved its dining scene. You can find many restaurants with fine food and a good atmosphere. Many small breweries have also popped up around the city.

## **Transportation**

I don't particularly like public transport in Brisbane, but the network is rather good with buses, trains or ferries. Tunnels and tolled bridges help save time if you're commuting by car. Plus, options for active travel (walking or cycling) are constantly improving. You can also easily hire an e-bike or e-scooter with Beam or Neuron.

## **Arts, culture and events in Brisbane**

If the biggest events are often in Sydney and Melbourne, Brisbane is also a vibrant and lively city thriving with sporting and cultural events. South Bank is the famous cultural precinct on the bank of the Brisbane River opposite the CBD. From art galleries and museums to theatre, ballet or live music, there's always something happening in Brisbane.

## **Cons of living in Brisbane**



## **The climate**

I know I listed the climate as a perk of living in Brisbane. But some would not agree with me. The weather could be seen on both sides of the list of Brisbane pros and cons.

Although no one can argue the winter and shoulder seasons are beautiful, some cannot get over the humidity and storms during summer. I got used to the humidity and chose an apartment facing south to avoid the heat in summer. Intense rainfalls and storms can also be worrying for Brisbane inhabitants.

## **Early nights**

Unfortunately, Brisbane doesn't have daylight savings. It means that the sunset is always too early. In summer, it's dark at 7 pm. However, the first light is at 4 am! It's one of the things I complain about the most regarding living in Brisbane.

## **Big village**

This is something some people love about Brisbane. I personally don't. I often feel like I'm in a big village in Brisbane because wherever I go, I meet people I know. There's often one event at a time in Brisbane, so it's not surprising that people gather there. But I've even randomly met colleagues or friends at the top of Mount Barney or in the middle of the forest of Lamington National Park!

## **Construction and roadwork**

Brisbane keeps growing and changing. It's great to see many new places popping up, like the lovely Howard Smith Wharves, new bridges for bikes and pedestrians or new transportation systems like the Brisbane Metro and the Cross River Rail. But it also means a lot of construction and roadwork happen at the same time in the city. It can create traffic jams or other disagreements.

## **Jobs**

Brisbane isn't a bad place to find a job. Brisbane is actually one of Australia's major business hubs as it is the country's third biggest city and the capital of Queensland. However, in some sectors, you may have better career opportunities in Sydney or Melbourne where most of the headquarters and global companies are located.

### **3. How Much Does it Cost to Live in Brisbane?**



Sunny, laidback and full of culture, the Queensland capital is an awesome place to live and study. Brisbane's close proximity to Asia and the Pacific region, as well as its abundance of world-class universities, has meant the city's population of international students has increased in recent years. Now, students from 160 countries have made Brisbane their home.

If you like the thought of studying in Brisbane, here's a guide to how much it'll cost you.

## **The cost of accommodation in Brisbane**

Like any of the major capital cities of Australia, it is going to be more expensive to live directly in the city than it is to live further cost of living in brisbaneout in the suburbs.

### **Inner-city**

In the Brisbane city, you'll probably be spending \$565 per week for a room in a share house (usually living with professionals and other students), \$359 per week for a serviced apartment, or \$620 per week for a one-bedroom unit all to yourself. Additionally, there are homestay options to live with local families that cost around \$305 per week.

### **Suburbs**

In the suburbs around Brisbane's CBD, a one-bedroom unit is significantly cheaper at an average of \$330 per week, while a room in a share house outside the city goes for around \$205 per week depending on the number of bedrooms available.

### **Managed student accommodation**



Managed student accommodation is a great option as the weekly cost usually covers utilities and added extras. For example, Student One has 3 fantastic inner-city properties and rates include bills, unlimited Wi-Fi, gym access, free bike hire, use of the cinema and barbecue area, and more. Weekly rental at Managed student accommodation weekly rates can start as low as \$200 per week.

### **Which one to pick?**

Think about what's important to you when weighing up these options. A private room or apartment in or near the CBD will offer close proximity to nightlife, restaurants and public transport, but a room in the suburbs will give you much more space and is likely to be a bit

quieter. Living in student accommodation means your weekly cost covers extras, plus it's generally located close to or in the CBD.

### **The cost of public transport in Brisbane**

The majority of Brisbane's university campuses are located within or just out of the CBD, and are all easily accessible by train or bus. Other campuses (such as those found in St Lucia's education district, including UQ Business School, the University of Queensland's Riverside campus and the Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology) are best accessed by the city's excellent ferry network. Each campus has a terminal right outside.

The city's transport network is called TransLink. You must purchase a go card for all travel purposes – it works on trains, trams, ferries and buses, including extended trips to the Gold Coast.

### **Concession rate**

Because you are a tertiary student, you are entitled to a 50% discounted fare, so make sure you take advantage! This discount means a single trip can cost as little as \$1.66 during peak times and \$1.32 in off-peak times. Furthermore, if you make eight trips on your go card from Monday to Sunday, all additional trips will be a further 50% cheaper. This means your weekly travel costs will rarely reach more than \$23.

### **The cost of food in Brisbane**

If you want to take full advantage of Brisbane's stellar dining scene, then you will want to make sure you set aside some money to go out for meals. There are plenty of great cafes, restaurants and bars in Brisbane, as well as a significant number of cheap eateries.

### **Eating in**

If you choose to cook and eat at home, you can generally expect to spend around \$2 per breakfast, \$5 per lunch, and \$11 per dinner. Of course, this depends on your grocery preferences.

### **Eating out**

Breakfast at a cafe in Brisbane will cost around \$15, but make sure to budget a bit extra if you'd like to add a coffee. For lunch, you will likely spend around \$16. Dinner will be slightly more expensive at around \$25 a meal.

It's important to remember that in Australia, waiters and servers get paid a liveable minimum wage. This means that your sandwich or salad may cost a little bit more than you expect, but it also means the staff are being paid fairly for their time. Unlike some other places you may have visited, such as the United States, Australia does not have a tipping culture. Places may ask if you would like to tip, but it's not necessary.

## **The cost of entertainment in Brisbane**



### **Nightlife**

If you head to a bar that features music, burlesque or other live entertainment, it will likely enforce a cover charge, but usually no more than \$10.

You can expect a glass of wine, beer or cider to cost approximately \$10-12 each. Spirits might be anywhere between \$15-\$25 depending on the venue and whether you're ordering cocktails.

### **Shows**

Because it costs a lot (and takes a long time!) to travel to Australia, concerts in Brisbane can be more expensive. On average, \$42 cost of living in Brisbane or more per ticket is an expected figure to pay for live music or sporting matches. For a larger act at a stadium or arena, over \$100 per ticket is typical. Other events like dance or theatre performances will usually cost \$49 or more. Make sure to check out the weekly city guides, as there are plenty of regular free events taking place around Brisbane.

### **Movies**

A movie ticket in Brisbane will likely cost around \$17. Make sure you take advantage of any cinema membership programs that will get you discounted tickets and free popcorn and drinks.

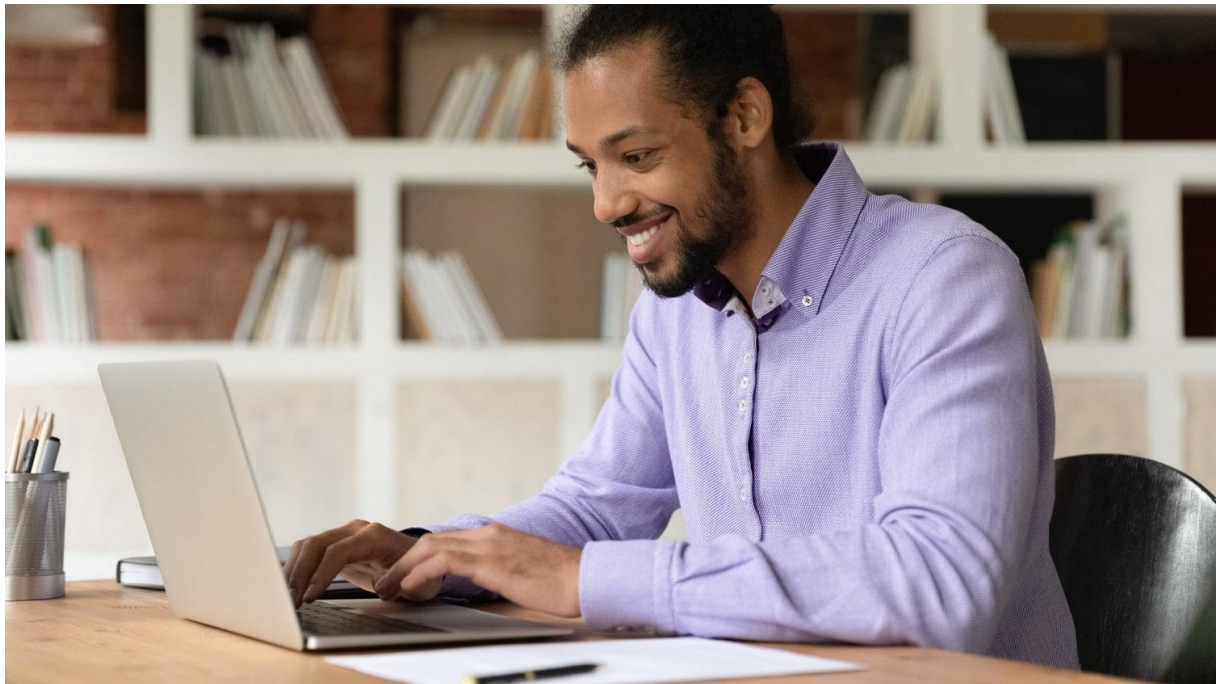
### **Fitness**



If you're keen to work out, a membership at one of the more common gym franchises like Goodlife, Fitness First or Anytime Fitness, will cost around \$14 per week. Make sure to ask about any student discounts on memberships or classes. Otherwise, if you move into managed student accommodation, you can have your gym costs included in your weekly rent.

For more information on the cost of living in Brisbane, make sure to check out our Cost of Living Calculator.

#### **4. Guide On How To Get a Job In Brisbane**



Setting off on your first-ever job search can be daunting, but with some guidance, you'll be well on your way to finding work as an international student or graduate.

We sat down with Dr Dino Willox, the Director of Student Employability here at The University of Queensland, to find out their top tips for getting a full-time job in Brisbane.

##### **Use your university work as a portfolio**

One of the biggest obstacles for students or recent graduates is when they have little real-world experience to demonstrate their skills and abilities to prospective employers. Dr Willox explains that you can overcome this using examples from your study in your portfolio instead.

“Bring a portfolio of things you've worked on during your degree or interning. Not only does this show interviewers you've got the skills they want, but you can always draw on the material in case you get nervous.”

At UQ, a number of courses include Work Integrated Learning (WIL), which helps you get workplace practice, building your employability. These WIL experiences can also be excellent additions to your portfolio. Speak directly to your school or the Student Employability Team to discuss whether WIL opportunities are available to you.

### **Use your network to find a job**

Of course, you can use the usual sites like SEEK and LinkedIn, but Dr Willox explains that a lot of jobs in Brisbane these days will come from your established connections. The ‘hidden’ job market – meaning jobs that are not publicly promoted – can be accessed through word of mouth and people knowing about your skills. Having connections who can put in a good word for you when they hear of jobs becoming available is invaluable.

“One of the best things that international students can do is get involved in clubs and societies at their university or college, as this can exponentially expand their network as well as improve their language skills,” explains Dr Willox. “There are many jobs that are never advertised, so those networks and connections really matter in the current climate.”

### **Keep up to date with the skills employers are looking for**



While you shouldn’t be too concerned with what skills are in demand now while you’re a student – as they can change quite rapidly – it’s a good idea to look towards the future and see what skills might be popular in three or four years’ time.

“The World Economic Forum is the place to go to find out what’s happening globally in this space, and they cast forward to 2025,” shares Dr Willox. “As mentioned, lists of skills can become redundant fairly quickly, but this is a good resource for students.”

Some of the skills the World Economic Forum believes will be important in the near future include:

- Complex problem solving
- Active learning and listening
- Leadership
- Technology design and programming
- Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
- Use your lived experiences to your advantage

A lot of students – and international students in particular – may believe they must present themselves as a ‘finished product’. According to Dr Willox, this couldn’t be further from the truth.

“An interview should be a two-way conversation, not just you sitting there and agreeing with whatever’s being said. Even if you feel inexperienced, try and draw on moments of your life that demonstrate your qualities and values,” they share. “All lived experiences have value. For example, having to move countries to establish yourself somewhere else demonstrates your resilience. Show the interviewers what you’ve been through in life to be in front of them, and it will go a long way.”

If you haven’t made it to the job interview stage just yet, try and integrate examples of your unique background into your cover letter, and explain why this makes you the best candidate for the job.

### **Be genuine and authentic in your interview**

Speaking of interviews, sometimes it’s hard to stand out amongst a sea of candidates. Luckily, there’s a way for you to elevate yourself above the rest and grab the attention of prospective employers.

“Employers right now are finding it difficult to get the best candidate, so making it easy for them by cutting through the usual ‘sales pitch’ and being yourself will go a long way,” says Dr Willox.

### **Be your own boss**

Exploring your entrepreneurial side can be a great way to earn an income and build your experience.

“Don’t forget that you can always start your own business if the perfect job doesn’t seem to be coming your way!” shares Dr Willox.

As an international student, freelancing or starting your own business can be a good way to work, with flexible hours arranged around your study time. If you have a particular unique skill, promote what you can do on websites such as Upwork or Airtasker. If you can speak a language other than English fluently, why not tutor fellow students? There are plenty of options allowing you to leverage off your passions and talents.

## 5. Best Things To Do In Brisbane



We've all had a 'what are the best things to do in Brisbane?' request from a visiting friend or family member and come up with an absolute blank when put on the spot. Or maybe you're always just feeling like your weekends are incredibly empty, and you need a lengthy list of things to fill them with, free, paid or otherwise.

Well, bookmark this site and prepare to start ticking things off (or tell all your friends and take credit for the ideas—we won't tell), because here are 50 of the absolute best things to do in Brisbane, whether you're a local or not.

### Things To Do In Brisbane

1. Bask In The Sun At Howard Smith Wharves: Ask anyone where to take someone who's new to Brisbane and they'll tell you HSW. The wharves have become a quick favourite spot for lovers of great food, vibrant cocktails, and sunset views of the city from under the Story Bridge.

**2. Sample The Best Of Brisbane's Food And Drink Scene On A Tour:** If you don't know where to start exploring Brisbane's ever-growing food and drink scene, Kiff & Culture have you covered with their Artisan Food & Drink Tour, which stops at the likes of Southside, City Winery and Stone & Wood—they'll even drive you around the river city in a funky mini bus with your favourite tunes on full blast.

**3. Keep Calm And Puzzle On In An Escape Room:** Escape rooms are the ultimate bonding experience for the Pink Panthers among us. Look for clues, solve puzzles and enjoy a healthy dose of adrenaline—there's plenty to choose from, and you'll find Brisbane's best right here (there's even one with a bar).

**4. Work Your Way Through Brisbane's Best Restaurants:** Whether you're craving Japanese, Greek, or a mix of cuisines, Brisbane has a golden cohort of dreamy restaurants for you to dine in. From Same Same to Otto, say hello to feeds like no other at the best restaurants in Brisbane.

**5. Hit The Dancefloor At A Live Music Venue:** Nothing makes you forget your troubles like a couple of drinks at a good gig, and Brisbane has plenty of epic live music venues offering up local talent and massive acts who deserve to be heard and appreciated.

**6. Shop Up A Storm At The Markets:** Looking for fresh produce, artisan wares or tasty street food? You'll find all of the above at Brisbane's plethora of markets. Grab your favourite green bag (and pack your appetite) and find them all here.

**7. Treat Yourself To A Bottomless Brunch:** Introduce yourselves to the best meal of the day and before-noon drinking with a decadent bottomless brunch. Is it even brunch if there isn't a mimosa involved?

**8. Get Competitive With A Game Of Putt Putt:** Whether you want to putt your way through a crazy, indoor course with a sugar-laden cocktail in hand or catch the breeze at a chill (but still licensed) outdoor mini golf arena, Brisbane has it all. Find the best places to do it here.

**9. Crack Open A Cold One At A Local Brewery:** Breweries are plentiful in Brisbane so you'll have a great selection of venues to work your way through—preferably not all on the same day. Quench your thirst here.

**10. Start Your Day At A Suburban Cafe:** If there's one thing Brisbane has a lot of, it's amazing suburban cafes, dishing up seriously good breakfasts. In fact, there's so many of them, that we rounded up 50 to eat your way through with ease, and you'll find them right here.

**11. Get Cultured At QAGOMA:** Soak up the iconic permanent curation of art in Queensland Art Gallery or the vibrant, thought-provoking exhibitions at the Gallery of Modern Art, situated next to the State Library and Queensland Museum in South Bank. One of the best things to do in Brisbane, there's always something on for everyone so enjoy the air-con and channel your inner art critic.

**12. Blend Your Own Wines At This Workshop:** If you're keen on blending your own wines, City Winery's team of experts have you covered at this workshop. You'll even be able to take home your personal blend—it's a vino dream come true.

**13. Sample Locally Made Gins At A Gin Distillery:** Brisbane is home to a number of distilleries, all of them crafting smooth gins with a multitude of flavours.

**14. Feel Like Picasso At A Paint And Sip:** Grab that bottle of wine sitting in your fridge and pop on an apron for a BYO paint and sip session. There's a studio in just about every corner in Brisbane (and even a clay and sip class if that's more your vibe), and you'll find them all here.

**15. Enjoy The View From A Rooftop Bar:** One good thing about Brisbane's endless summer is that it always accommodates rooftop bar drinking. Get ready to feel like royalty gazing over the city centre with a cocktail in hand.

**16. Feast On A Nine-Course Degustation:** Deer Duck Bistro in Milton is famed for their incredible degustations, so if you're looking for one of the best foodie experiences in town, this is it. Nibble your way through nine delectable courses in their old world surroundings, and always get the matched wines.

**17. Eat Your Way Through Eat Street:** This riverside containership market is full of all the street food delights you can think of, so wear loose clothing and prepare to feast. We recommend sharing plenty of smaller dishes, so you can eat more.

**18. Take In The City Lights On A Night Climb:** Enjoy Brisbane's night life with a twist on this three hour night climb of Kangaroo Point Cliffs. Everyone is welcome, from beginners to experienced climbers and equipment is provided so just show up and start climbing.

**19. Get Romantic With A Pop-up Picnic:** Picnic in style with a pop-up picnic set up for you in a location of your choice (we'd highly recommend by the water in Kangaroo Point). You'll be greeted with a full set-up—low set table, rugs, cushions, table setting and a picnic hamper.

## **6. Best Suburbs To Live In Brisbane**

Making the move to Queensland's sunny capital? Brisbane has a suburb to suit every lifestyle. With close access to education, community amenities, café culture and easy public transport, it's the quiet achiever of Aussie Cities. While Sydney and Melbourne have been busy arguing about which city is better, Brisbane has been slowly but surely coming into its own.

This sun-soaked city is making a serious splash in art, culture, tech and transport, and while the prices haven't been immune to the cost of living crisis, they're still nowhere near as high as the other major cities. Many Aussies have been flocking to the Sunshine State's capital to seek more affordable options.



Like the weather, the people are warm and welcoming, new restaurants, cafes and bars are open on the regular and every weekend is packed with a swathe of events. As for nature, for a city, there's plenty of it! You'll find stacks of walking and bike tracks crisscrossing the city which also has a picturesque river running right through the middle. Here are the best neighbourhoods in Brisbane currently topping liveability charts.

### **Ascot**

Affluent Ascot is known for its large heritage homes and leafy parklands. With a long culture of horse racing, today the suburb is coveted for its close-knit community and village-like feel. It's just 7km northeast of the city and well connected via train and bus.

With Racecourse Road at its heart, residents are spoilt for choice when it comes to cafes, restaurants and shopping. Next door, Hamilton hosts popular street food market, Eat Street Northshore along the riverfront.

### **Kangaroo Point**

Bound by water on three sides, the peninsula suburb of Kangaroo Point couples idyllic scenery with a lively cosmopolitan lifestyle. Framing spectacular skyline views, its riverfront is preserved with parks, bike trails and scenic picnic spots. Modern new apartments attract young professionals with the inner-city hub offering foodie hotspots, rooftop bars and quick access to South Bank.

### **Newmarket**

Well-positioned in a cluster of highly-sought after northside suburbs, Newmarket is a busy commercial precinct at first glance. Step away from the main hub and the area switches gears.

Newmarket's neighbourly back streets have a genuine community feel, with wide expanses of multi-use green space and beloved family homes.

This transitional pocket of Brisbane is brimming with generous expanses of green public spaces and community sporting facilities, perfect for an active lifestyle within easy reach of the inner-city action of Brisbane.

### **New Farm**



The well-heeled neighbourhood of New Farm entices those looking for culture and convenience right on their doorstep. Trendy young professionals have pushed up prices, lured by the suburb's dynamic lifestyle.

It's home to the Brisbane Powerhouse, riverside New Farm Park and a hefty line-up of restaurants, boutiques and bars. People cross town for the weekly farmers' market held each Saturday.

### **Ashgrove**

The north-western suburb of Ashgrove combines close proximity to the city with a vibrant community feel. Its peaceful streets are lined with traditional 1920s Queenslander homes that offer plenty of space for growing families.

It's also a popular pocket for young professionals with abundant wine bars, bakeries and cafes as well as quick bus connections into the CBD. For those commuting on bicycle, two picturesque trails transport you straight to the city centre.



## **Paddington**

The hilly streets of Paddington are threaded with traditional Queenslanders and workers' cottages that give this historic neighbourhood its enduring charm. One of Brisbane's most sought-after suburbs, it's within walking distance of the city centre and has become a hotspot for shopping and dining.

Find notable brunch spots, institutional restaurants and beautiful antique stores all thrown into the mix. Families benefit from being close to some of Brisbane's most prestigious private schools.

## **Alderley**

With its elevated tree-lined streets and character houses, Alderley is as pretty as a picture. It offers relaxed, suburban living while remaining close to the CBD and has a strong community feel with many young families moving in.

On weekends, residents can be spotted bushwalking through Banks Street Reserve or grabbing a coffee from much-loved local cafes. The suburb also has a strong reputation for its access to private schools and easy public transport links.

## **West End**



For those looking to immerse themselves in arts, nightlife and entertainment, West End remains a firm favourite. The suburb sees a melting pot of cultures coupled with a strong student population that creates an eclectic and ever-changing atmosphere.

A mix of classic cottages, new apartments and share houses, it's the sort of neighbourhood where everyone feels at home. Get your fill of delicious eateries along Vulture and Boundary streets.

### **Indooroopilly**

Indooroopilly is a popular pick with everyone from students and young professionals to families vying for a spot at some of Queensland's best secondary schools.

The riverside suburb is dotted with pretty parks, café precincts and excellent community amenities while being just 7km from the CBD. Everyday conveniences are taken care of by way of a Westfield Shopping Centre and public transport hub providing buses and trains to the city centre.

### **Brendale**



Renowned for a thriving commercial market and industrial development, Brendale 4500 is situated on the South Pine River in the Moreton Bay Region. The famous Bunya Park Drive Convenience Centre is a major attraction for entrepreneurs because it adjoins the areas of Eatons Hill and Albany Creek. It is a beautiful and mesmerising region, offering great opportunities for all types and sizes of businesses.

Brendale 4500 is a commercial hub but offers excellent amenities and affordable housing options. Populated with 2,758 people, the suburb is home to spacious dwellings, restaurants, cafes, boutiques, a healthcare centre, and much more. The median house price for a 3-

bedroom and 2-bathroom is 360,000 – which is quite affordable. You can relocate to this beautiful suburb and enjoy a laidback lifestyle.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, living in Brisbane offers a fulfilling and enriching experience. The city's warm climate, diverse housing options, and friendly atmosphere create a comfortable environment for residents. With a strong economy and ample job opportunities, Brisbane provides a solid foundation for professional growth. Its vibrant cultural scene and access to nature's wonders ensure that there is always something exciting to explore and enjoy. Whether you're seeking a bustling urban lifestyle or a laid-back coastal retreat, Brisbane caters to a wide range of preferences, making it an attractive destination for both locals and expatriates. Embracing the unique blend of modernity and nature, living in Brisbane offers the best of both worlds and promises a high quality of life for those who call it home.

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